

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Wednesday Club of Suisun **DRAFT**

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

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## 2. Location

Street & number: 225 Sacramento St.

City or town: Suisun State: CA County: Solano Zip: 94585

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

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## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ **national**      \_\_\_ **statewide**      \_\_\_ **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ **A**      \_\_\_ **B**      \_\_\_ **C**      \_\_\_ **D**

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**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**

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	Total

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

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/clubhouse

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/clubhouse

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/ Mediterranean Revival

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

foundation: concrete  
walls: wood-frame and plaster  
roof: composite  
floor: wood  
other: river rock, brick

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State

### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### **Summary Paragraph**

A wood-framed, stucco-clad structure built in 1925 on a reinforced concrete foundation, the single-story Wednesday Club of Suisun has a rectangular floor plan of 4387 square feet. It is of California Mediterranean Revival design and occupies a lot of 0.46 acres. Designed by San Francisco-based master architect William Henry Crim, Jr., the Wednesday Club has a central gabled entrance pavilion and capacious main room with a raised stage at one end and a lounge with river rock fireplace at the other. The building also contains a kitchen, pantry, several niches and restrooms. There are no ancillary structures. There have been no additions to the clubhouse, and only minor repairs and kitchen updates have been made since construction was completed. The Wednesday Club of Suisun sits at the southwest corner of Sacramento Street and Washington Avenue two short blocks west of Main Street, which was the longstanding social and commercial hub of central Solano County before the State Highway bypassed the town. The surrounding homes date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and are clad in painted shiplap.

### **Exterior**

Set back from Sacramento Street in a residential neighborhood, the clubhouse is wood frame and stucco-clad, with a Gabled pavilion, painted plaster relief around the doors, iron sconces, and windows trimmed with shutters. A cornerstone marking the construction date and naming the architect is set to the left of the doorway. The California Mediterranean Revival design imbues the clubhouse with an air of repose and significance. This sense is accentuated by a spacious front lawn presided over by two mature magnolia trees. A circular driveway and red brick walkway connect the front door of the Wednesday Club with Sacramento St. Carefully pruned shrubs line the walk. Four parking spots exist on the east side of the building (Washington St. frontage) with several more behind the clubhouse in a small asphalt lot bordered by a lush garden and accessed via three sets of arched double doors opening onto a broad patio.

### **Interior**

The clubhouse interior is primarily an open floor plan with a central seating/dining/dancing area flanked by a lounge with a river rock fireplace at one end and a platform stage for performances, presentations, and speeches at the other. The interior walls are smooth plaster over lath. Smooth plaster also covers the high ceiling from which depend the original glass globe lamps. The flooring is of narrow-slatted hardwood that has attained a mature amber hue. Large windows on the north and south walls provide views of the front and rear gardens; three sets of arched multipaned double doors at rear allow in ample natural light and grant additional views of the grounds. Original, character-defining features are extant throughout, the most notable being period lighting, decorative details, river rock fireplace and built-in bookcases. In addition

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State

to its principal spaces, the interior contains several ancillary spaces including a sizable kitchen, pantry, restrooms/dressing areas, storage room, and office.

### **Additions, Alterations, Repairs**

Aside from the addition of recessed ceiling lighting, the replacement of a few unsalvageable windows, and periodic garden beautifications, the Wednesday Club stands in the same stoutly elegant condition as the day it was built. Some of the smaller interior spaces have been repurposed for contemporary needs, but no structural modifications have been made. The design elements have been carefully curated since construction of the clubhouse was completed in late 1925. The kitchen appliances and countertop have been updated.

### **Character-Defining Features**

Horizontal emphasis with low and long lines

Painted stucco exterior with painted plaster reliefs around front door

Gabled pavilion

Multiple sets of multipaned double doors

Glass-globed hanging lamps in central hall

Large river rock fireplace

Handsome narrow-slatted hardwood floor of aged oak

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### **Narrative Description**

The Wednesday Club of Suisun is located at 225 Sacramento Street, near the center of town and two blocks west of Main Street. Built as the meeting place for a group of civic-minded women dedicated to community improvement via expanded health, educational and cultural programs, the Wednesday Club of Suisun was designed by San Francisco architect William Crim, Jr. and was first occupied in early 1926. It is a splendid single-story example of the California Mediterranean Revival style whose synthesis of Italian and Spanish motifs enjoyed high regional regard during the boom years of the 1920s. Clad in smooth, cream-colored stucco, the elegant Wednesday Club is unlike any other building in the vicinity, the other lots in the neighborhood being occupied by more modest private residences of painted shiplap.

The Wednesday Club is a wood-frame construction with interior walls of smooth plaster over lath. The building's gabled front entrance and spacious foyer lead to an airy central hall lit by glass-globed lamps depending from the ceiling. This main room is flanked at its east end by a lounge with a large river rock fireplace and by a platform stage at its west end. The oak hardwood floors are original, as are the other design elements such as built-in bookcases, lamps, fireplace and mantle. The fenestration admits ample natural light, as do three sets of multi-paned double doors opening on to a rear patio and garden. All elements contribute to the aptness of the building for its intended purpose as the focus for community events, social gatherings and lectures. In addition to the clubhouse proper, the 0.46 acre lot includes a front lawn with shade trees, a circular driveway, a red brick walkway, and a rear patio and garden.

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State

Well-maintained and in excellent condition, the Wednesday Club possesses all seven aspects of historic integrity identified by the National Park Service: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The clubhouse retains its original site, setting, and design. Where minor fixes have been necessary, the workmanship and material used have matched the original in craft, quality, and finish. The feeling and association remain as the Wednesday Club has functioned continuously in the same capacity for which it was built nearly a century ago.

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### 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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture  
Social History

**Period of Significance**

1925-1969

**Significant Dates**

1925

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Crim, William Henry Jr. (architect)  
Barenchi, George F. (builder)

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Wednesday Club of Suisun is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Social History, at the local level of significance, for its role in early 20<sup>th</sup> century women’s clubs and civic improvement in the community of Suisun, and under Criterion C as locally significant example of the work of master architect William Henry Crim, Junior. The period of significance is 1925-1969, from the date of construction of the current building until 1969, the year that marked a significant decline in club membership and its community influence.

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Criterion A: Social History**

Established in 1911, the Wednesday Club of Suisun is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the area of Social History. Known for its philanthropic ambitions and its attention to women's educational, social, and political engagement, the Wednesday Club of Suisun is a regional representation of the California women's club movement and embodies the progressive goals of civic activity in early 20th century America. The spread of such women's clubs across the country was a notable development during the decades before and after 1900, a period that would come to be known as the Age of Reform or the Progressive Era in American history. Among the local improvements to which the women of the Wednesday Club turned their attention were social welfare programs, issues of public health and public recreation, the opening of a free branch library, and the founding of a community college. The Wednesday Club's good works and pursuit of higher ideals exemplify the vital role played by the women's club movement in America at the local level, thereby meeting the requirements for designation under Criterion A (Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history). As time passed, the large number of city, county and specialized bureaus assumed ever more civic duties and welfare responsibilities, with the Great Society programs implemented during the Johnson Presidency being the culmination of this shift. By end of the 1960s, the Wednesday Club had lost much of its aspirational appeal for a new generation of younger women, despite the members' reorientation to an emphasis on social and cultural activities. The period of significance, then, extends from 1925, the year of the clubhouse's construction, to 1969, the year that marked the start of a sharp decline in membership numbers and in community influence.

Settled in 1852, platted in 1854, and incorporated in 1868, Suisun lay at the head of a slough navigable by deep-draft boats and just fifty miles distant by water from both Sacramento and San Francisco. Blessed with a mild climate and proximity to great expanses of fertile land, Suisun thrived as a sectional shipping point for the hay, grain, fruit, nuts, and livestock raised for sale in northern California's mining camps and boomtowns. When the transcontinental railroad arrived in 1869, establishing a depot at Suisun City and connecting the area to national markets, the town's prospects grew brighter still. Suisun would retain its regional primacy as a social and trade center for many decades to come, the land stretching back from the slough having proven itself to be among planet earth's most fertile.

As the nineteenth century waned, the formation of women's clubs in the United States waxed. San Francisco's first women's club, the Century Club, had been founded by a group of socially prominent women after the 1888 visit there by the celebrated Julia Ward Howe. Dedicated to

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State

enhancing the educational and cultural opportunities of their members and the larger community, the women who joined these organizations sought to bring a broader, better world into their homes and neighborhoods. The prosperous agricultural depot town of Suisun, a mere 49 minutes northeast of San Francisco on the Southern Pacific Railway, had its own group of young women who shared the interests and aspirations espoused by members of the established Bay Area clubs they now and then had occasion to visit. Their interest in the welfare and the future of Suisun and its environs was part of a larger movement toward civic improvement, health and hygiene during what would become known as the Progressive Era or the Age of Reform.

Among the oldest women's institutions of Solano County, the Wednesday Club of Suisun was founded on September 11, 1911 by a group of sixteen women who possessed the ambition to make their community safer and better for all; many of the founding members descended from or had married into pioneer settler-families. Invitation to join the Wednesday Club was by recommendation of a member and approval by the directors. It immediately proved to be a popular organization. Lacking their own building, the women of the Wednesday Club held their initial meetings at the local old grammar school with officers elected on November 18, 1911. By the end of that month, Wednesday Club membership had swelled to 106. To accommodate this increase, the meeting place was moved to Armijo Hall at the union high school of the same name in adjacent Fairfield. Four years later, a Wednesday Club committee set out to find and acquire a permanent home for the membership; a large, white-framed building adjacent to the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks was selected and bought for \$350, the purchase loan arranged with the Bank of Suisun. The building was soon moved to a quieter site on a lot provided by Suisun City for just \$5 per year.

During that first decade, the Wednesday Club was instrumental in bringing several positive campaigns to the area. When, in 1917, the United States entered World War I, members gave monetary support to the Red Cross, participated in the sale and purchase of thrift stamps, promoted home conservation of food, and endeavored to rally the public behind its good works. Later, Club members helped persuade local officials to hire a Community Nurse and to open a Free Branch Library for Fairfield-Suisun and its environs; additionally, the Club sponsored a free Well Baby Clinic which was to last over seventy years. Once armed with the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, members sent letters and telegrams to Sacramento and Washington, placing the Wednesday Club stamp of approval or disapproval on significant issues and policy proscriptions; the Community Property Law then being proposed by the State of California garnered their unanimous approval. Turning their attention to local improvements, the Wednesday Club focused on social welfare programs, issues of public recreation and the founding of a community college.

The respect gained through its members' committed efforts toward the public good earned the Wednesday Club of Suisun a reservoir of goodwill it would soon draw upon to see its ambitions realized. Despite concerted beautification efforts and the installation of electricity, their wood-

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State

clad headquarters proved unsatisfactory to the members' vision of the Wednesday Club's potential. Needing a meeting place spacious enough to accommodate the Club's growing membership and gracious enough to do tribute to the elegance of its ambitions, the Wednesday Club, in October 1922, was deeded a valuable vacant lot in Suisun City for a future club house so "that the good works of the club would be carried on, and [its] greater ideals accomplished." A building campaign was immediately established, with the agreement that an architect would be hired when the fund reached \$5000; the regard that the Club had gained in its eleven years was evidenced by the generous support and donations made by area service clubs, special interest groups, merchants, and friends. The old clubhouse was sold for \$500, with meetings held at the Odd Fellows Hall until a new building could be completed. When the Wednesday Club met its initial fundraising goal in late 1924, San Francisco-based architect William H. Crim, Jr., was hired and his design approved the following year. A low bid of about \$15,000 to build the clubhouse was accepted. Incorporation was necessary, and the Certificate of Incorporation was duly received from the Secretary of the State of California.

Again a loan was secured from the Bank of Suisun and construction began in 1925, the total cost eventually running to just under \$16,000. On February 24, 1926, the new clubhouse was accepted from architect Crim, and an open house was held on March 3 for the building's dedication, with many neighbors and friends of the club arriving with 'housewarming' gifts. The first regular meeting of the Wednesday Club in its new central Suisun City home followed on March 11, a pleasant social hour being passed after the members had seen to their official business. The next year, on March 19, 1927, the clubhouse's 'birthday' was celebrated with the Club's first Anniversary Tea; two months later, 150 members and guests would attend the annual May Fete, acclaimed by area papers as the "outstanding social event of the season" and the "biggest social event of the year."

The high times ended after the stock market crashed in October 1929—annual dues proved a luxury some members could do without, and initiation fees were out of the question for many. Faced with the Depression, the leadership of the Wednesday Club directed member efforts toward feeding and clothing the needy and raising contributions for the March of Dimes and other local and national charities. A number of politically-motivated members joined the Lions Club in petitioning for a Mosquito Abatement District, which came into being in 1931. Three years later, the Wednesday Club wired resolutions to Washington supporting the Supreme Court Plan and the Social Security Plan. Educational and cultural programs continued, in more or less equal measures of entertainment and edification on issues of the day. At the Anniversary Tea in March 1939, the building mortgage held by the Bank of Suisun was ceremonially set aflame, the final debt payment having been made. Nearly three decades had elapsed between the founding of the Wednesday Club of Suisun and the Club's taking title to its clubhouse, a paragon of elegance for the semi-rural town.

The Wednesday Club continued to serve many social and community functions through the 1940s. During World War II, the clubhouse opened its doors to the Red Cross and Blood Banks,

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State

with members giving assistance as requested; permission was also granted to the USO to present monthly concerts and entertainments there for servicemen and their families. Members performed volunteer work at and for the Fairfield-Suisun Air Force Base Hospital, and participated in other war-related efforts as opportunity arose. After the war's end, the Wednesday Club was the community headquarters for the National Clothing Drive; members collected, sorted, and prepared clothing for shipment to war-torn Europe. In the last half of the decade, as post-war prosperity climbed, the clubhouse became the "party palace" of the Fairfield-Suisun area, and the Wednesday Club hosted a succession of celebratory occasions, pageants and member-related wedding receptions. Through the decade, the Club capped membership at 200.

New industries and businesses brought enterprising young professionals, merchants, workers and their families to the area, making Fairfield-Suisun one of Northern California's fastest-growing communities in 1950. To accommodate the increase in invitees, the maximum number of members was increased to 225 before being raised to 250 shortly afterwards. The decade opened with a luncheon tribute to Brigadier General Robert F. Travis, killed in an airplane crash in August 1950; shortly after his death, the local base was renamed Travis Air Force Base to honor its former commander, a man much-admired for the many significant contributions made to the community and the Club during his tenure. The next year, using a bequest from a former member-president's estate and a fund set up for the purpose, the Wednesday Club bought a grand piano for just under \$2500. Relatedly, a music scholarship was established as a memorial to Isla Wight, a club member and pianist with a gifted voice; Miss Wight's cousin and the sponsor of the scholarship was Anna Kyle, for many decades Solano County's Supervisor of Music and herself a treasured Club member who would later be honored by a Memorial Scholarship in her own name. A Fall Festival was inaugurated, thereafter becoming an annual event and the year's main moneymaker. The women made time to support Care for Korea (a program to clothe the children of that nation), to raise money for polio research, and to update the Club's kitchen.

The Wednesday Club celebrated its Golden Anniversary in 1961, the thirty-fifth year of its clubhouse's existence, with the president commemorating the hundreds of women who had dedicated their time and energies to making the club a success. From its founding, the Wednesday Club of Suisun had been integrally engaged in the social and civic concerns of its members and of central Solano County, more broadly; its clubhouse continued to play congenial host to its members, their guests, and countless speakers and performers throughout. During the next six years a choral group was organized, \$750 was pledged to the construction of the new Intercommunity Memorial Hospital, and the drinking of spirits was deemed permissible as was dancing. The Wednesday Club's membership was composed of dedicated women advancing worthy causes, playing bridge, tasting a bit of culture, and enjoying one another's company within the walls and in the patio garden of their charming Suisun clubhouse. As time passed, the large number of city, county and specialized bureaus assumed ever more civic duties

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State

and welfare responsibilities, and the Wednesday Club pivoted to an emphasis on cultural and social activities.

By 1969 the membership was declining in number. Times were changing, and a smaller proportion of younger area women involved themselves with the Wednesday Club, whose influence as a social and cultural hub was fast waning. When financial problems surmounted the Club, members voted to open the clubhouse for rental to the public for wedding celebrations, parties, and other events. Fund-raising from luncheons, fashion shows, bridge tournaments, and Fall Festivals would continue to help keep the Club solvent, but by 1969 the bulk of the income needed to maintain the building and grounds as well as to fund the Wednesday Club's scholarships and public endeavors came from the renting out of their beloved clubhouse.

### **Criterion C: Work of a Master Architect**

The Wednesday Club is eligible for designation under Criterion C as an architecturally significant building that represents the work of a master. Designed by San Francisco master architect, William H. Crim, Jr., the clubhouse stands as an exemplar of California Mediterranean Revival architecture on a small-scale. Before establishing his own firm and later winning the Wednesday Club commission, Crim worked with some of the Pacific Coast's most exalted fin-de-siecle architects, among them Percy & Hamilton, Willis Polk, and Daniel Burnham, the Chief Architect/Director of Works for the Neo-Classical splendor of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. By early 1906 Mr. Crim had attained master architect status and established a San Francisco office, on his way to becoming "one of the leading [Pacific Coast] architects of his time." (That an architect of Mr. Crim's exalted regional stature would take on a modest commission such as the Wednesday Club in a small town 50 miles distant from the city where he was based is explained by an as-yet-uncertain personal connection to the locally prominent banker, businessman and philanthropist, R. D. Robbins, whose fifth child, William Crim Robbins, born in 1880, was named for architect Crim's own father, William Henry Crim, Sr.) Clubhouse construction was completed late in 1925, with final building costs coming to \$15,900, just about nine hundred dollars over the accepted bid estimate of \$14,984. Crim's hallmark application of classical forms, balance, and order are exhibited by the clubhouse he created for the Wednesday Club. Well-built, well-maintained and minimally altered, the clubhouse retains the architectural integrity it possessed when it was formally dedicated in 1926; a harmonious summation of the first quarter-century of his professional career, the Wednesday Club was among Mr. Crim's final commissions before a late career turn toward Art Deco design. Since its completion, the Wednesday Club of Suisun has been an eminent local presence and a composed reflection of its members' commitment, through organization, to the betterment of themselves, their neighborhoods, and their community; no less, the clubhouse stands as a sophisticated encapsulation of the technical discipline and aesthetic touchstones drawn upon by a gifted architect who, during a distinguished career cut short by an early death, produced many of the San Francisco Bay Area's "most beautiful and substantial structures." Today, but a few of these buildings still "stand as monuments reflecting the skill and genius of" master

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Solano, CA

Name of Property

County and State

architect William Crim, Jr. The Wednesday Club of Suisun maintains the seven aspects of integrity defined by the National Park Service: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its intact, character-defining features endow the clubhouse with an overtly high level of integrity, resulting in its significance under Criterion C (Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values).

**Context:**

In the second half of the nineteenth century, architecture in the greater San Francisco area tended to display the same general progression of styles that the eastern U.S. and Europe moved through, though delayed by a number of years and with regional differences. In response to plentiful West Coast lumber, especially redwood, versions of designs originally rendered on the East Coast in brick or masonry, were built in San Francisco using wood. Greek Revival style flourished in the 1850s and 1860s, Gothic Revival style less so. Italianate style dominated throughout the 1870s, Stick/Eastlake style characterized the 1880s, and Queen Anne and Shingle styles appeared in the 1890s. Leading up to and after the turn of the twentieth century, important shifts and innovations in San Francisco's architectural development occurred. New building technologies, such as elevators, reinforced concrete and steel frames, led to the rapid vertical development of Downtown, including construction of the city's first skyscraper in 1889.

Shifts in popular styles accompanied the new building technologies. The asymmetry and elaborate ornament that had distinguished San Francisco's late nineteenth century architecture lost favor to the order and restraint of Classicism, which was widely introduced at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. This stylistic shift was embodied in San Francisco by the completion of the Beaux Arts-style City Hall, as well as by the classically designed structures erected for the Panama Pacific International Exposition, in 1915. However, a similar exposition in San Diego, held the same year, provided a different architectural focus attuned to the American West. This California-based vocabulary drew primarily from Mediterranean influences, which in addition to referencing the Spanish-Mexican heritage of the area, were easily adapted to California's climate and natural environment. Consequently, in the latter 1910s and 1920s, styles such as Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Mediterranean Revival were popularized in California. Other local architectural influences that were then popular included those associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement such as Craftsman and First Bay Tradition styles

**The Architect--William Henry Crim, Jr.  
(1879-1930)**

**Capsule Biography:**

William Crim (1879-1930) was a local San Francisco architect who practiced for six years in the offices of Percy and Hamilton. He was later employed by Willis Polk and Daniel Burnham in

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State

1904, and formed a partnership with Earl Scott in 1906. Crim & Scott dissolved in 1911, at which point Crim operated his own firm until his death on July 12, 1930. At the time of his passing, Crim had become one of San Francisco's leading architects. Notable buildings designed by Crim included the Second Church of Christ Scientist on Dolores Street, Mission Savings Bank Building on 16th Street, and Tadich Grill at 240–242 California Street. Crim generally worked on larger-scale projects, but his portfolio also included a number of residential commissions throughout the City and Bay Area. His hallmark design application of classical forms, balance, and order are present in his several extant buildings. In its own favorable consideration of another still-standing Crim structure for eligibility for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3, the San Francisco Planning Commission deemed William H. Crim, Jr. as being "generally regarded as a master in the field of architecture."

### Career:

Born and raised in San Francisco, Wm. H. Crim, Jr. was a member of the first graduating class (1897) of the California School of Mechanic Arts, known as Lick, after its patron, the land baron and patron of the sciences, James Lick. Embarking upon his career, Crim apprenticed under some of San Francisco's most heralded turn-of-the-century architects as he worked towards earning master status. He entered professional life in the offices of Percy & Hamilton, Architects, a partnership regarded as the most successful of Victorian-era San Francisco—among the commissions completed during Percy and Hamilton's prolific nineteen-year union were Greystone Cellars in St. Helena, the Sharon Building in Golden Gate Park, and Stanford Art Museum. When Hamilton died in 1899, Percy formed a new professional partnership with the brilliant but controversial Willis Polk, the architects keeping young Mr. Crim in their employ. In 1900 the Percy & Polk team designed the Hayward Office Building on Montgomery Street at California, one of the first steel-frame "flameproof" buildings in San Francisco. (Five years after its 1901 completion the building would survive the earthquake and fire barely scathed, and it still stands today.) The Percy and Polk partnership's five designs also included downtown Honolulu's Alexander Young Building, commissioned by the Scottish-born sugar mill magnate of that name. This would be Percy's final commission, as he died suddenly in December 1900, just a year after joining forces with Polk.

After the successive deaths of its principals and the departure of Polk, the firm of Percy & Hamilton was run by Henry H. Meyers, a master architect who had begun work there as an apprentice around 1890 before becoming chief draftsman. Mr. Crim, Jr. remained with Meyers until 1903 when he was again professionally affiliated with Willis Polk, who had returned to San Francisco after a stay in Chicago and a tour of Europe. Polk was then the West Coast representative of the Chicago-based D.L. Burnham & Company, founded by Daniel Burnham, the Chief Architect/Director of Works for the Neo-Classical splendor of World's Columbian Exposition in 1893; Burnham was also the man behind such renowned designs as New York's Flatiron Building (1901) and Chicago's Marshall Field and Company Building (1902). Burnham himself was an active and familiar presence at the San Francisco office; among the Burnham-Polk collaborations was their Beaux Arts design for the 15-story, steel-framed Merchants

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State

Exchange Building, which became the city's tallest building upon its 1904 completion. Throughout these years Polk and his employee Crim also worked with Burnham in producing the latter's large-scale, City Beautiful-inspired master plan for San Francisco modeled on the Parisian plans by Baron Georges-Eugene Haussman.

Being a journeyman architect under Polk and Burnham did not preclude Crim's securing independent commissions as well, however, and he was able to complete significant designs during these years. His commissions included the Pacific Coast Envelope factory at Second and Harrison streets, the Pacific Folding Paper Box works, the John Hoey Company's mattress factory, and the Tobacco Company of California building. Unquestionably the most notable of these solo projects, however, was his design for a wharf and warehouse at the C & H Sugar Company refinery in Crockett. Completed in 1906, the California & Hawaiian project showcased Crim's experience and comfort with doing industrial architecture. As a contemporary commented, "This plant was built with a view to permanency and absolute protection against fire, and it is without doubt one of the best built refineries on the Pacific Coast." The California & Hawaiian project was William Crim, Jr.'s 'masterpiece'; after almost 8 years as apprentice and journeyman, the craft status of *master architect* was conferred upon him mere weeks before the earthquake and firestorm of April, 1906.

The disruption caused by the earthquake was evidenced by the need of the San Francisco Architects' Club to find suitable new quarters for the club, since their former home was destroyed. Crim was one of a four-man committee tasked with finding permanent quarters for the Architect's Club. A civic-minded man, Crim became an active member of the leading organizations of his profession; the San Francisco Chapter, American Institute of Architects, and the San Francisco Architectural Club were foremost among these. With the city in ruins, Crim joined forces with another young architect, Earl Scott, who had apprenticed under William Curlett. Their partnership was announced in *The Architect and Engineer of California* (May 1906): "Wm. Crim Jr. and Earl Scott have opened offices at 1400 Webster street, and are prepared to do architectural draughting and the construction of buildings." With San Francisco still smoldering, it was a propitious time to be starting an architectural practice.

Following the rebuilding of the financial and business sections of San Francisco, construction activity turned to meeting the demand for apartment houses, flats and private residences, and Crim and Scott were among the many Bay Area architects to center their energies on this type of construction. Between 1906 and 1910, "Messrs. William H. Crim, Jr. and Earl B. Scott...have been very successful in designing apartment buildings of moderate cost, say from \$15,000 to \$40,000, with from four to twenty apartments to a building, each flat being a complete home in itself. No particular style is followed by this firm, although the majority of their buildings have a tendency to the Colonial. The Mission or Spanish order is also followed, a splendid example being found in the new Mission Savings Bank building, at Sixteenth and Valencia Streets." (p. 37, 64). Another of the partnership's commercial commissions from this period was their

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State

much-heralded design (1909) for the Tadich Grill at 204 California Street in San Francisco's Financial District.

The post-earthquake reconstruction coincided with an explosive rise in automobile use. With the automobile's popularity surging during the two decades between the great fire of 1906 and the beginnings of the Great Depression, new buildings had to be conceived and constructed to provide parking spaces and repair facilities. Crim & Scott saw opportunity in building some of San Francisco's earliest grand public garages. The public garage was a new form of free-standing transportation depot, many of the best examples of which employed architectural symbolism to communicate the ascendancy of the automobile over the train. Among Crim's work along these lines was a garage at 64 Golden Gate Avenue, a 1910 building that "exemplified the greater compositional freedom exercised by designers of the single-story brick box...[W]ithin an overall picturesque Mission composition, the Golden Gate façade is...organized and considered. The repeating arched motif imposes formal unity over an asymmetric programming of glazed and open bays." In its emphasis on the whitewashed wall, with the large ratio of solid to void, and its stout attachment to the ground, the "design is reminiscent of Mission train stations...built by the Southern Pacific Railroad throughout California at about the same time." Replete with a covered arcade, hipped Spanish-style roof, and arched porticos with flanking towers, the resulting structure was evocative of a Mission collage that simultaneously harkens to the past while asserting that "the garage is the successor to the train station, and the car is successor to the train." Both nostalgic and forward-looking, 64 Golden Gate Avenue was "stately, refined, and allusive," fulfilling the rhetorical role of celebrating and elevating the stature of the automobile "by adapting the imagery and architectural vocabulary of the train station" to the public garage. (The garage remains locally influential to this day.)

The next year Crim designed another public garage at 624 Stanyan (1911) for the firm. Named the Acme Garage, this building, too, evidenced "a disproportionate functional load carried by the façade, which was, in actuality, a dimensionally and materially small part of the whole." As conceived, "most of the unique programmatic events occur on the façade or within the front structural bay: entry, vertical circulation (ramps), gasoline service, administrative office, lounge, store and retail display...[vying] for space along a limited street frontage...with the scale of its entry openings...sized to accommodate automobiles, not people." A conventionally-sized door was not provided, as the entries were designed to remain open during business hours in order to admit as much light, fresh air and customer patronage as possible. As with 64 Golden Gate Avenue, the garage at 64 Stanyan exhibited "an architectural presence and standard of care exceeding that of the formulaic 'cornice, wall and storefront' retail structure." By venturing into the design of public garages, Crim and Scott were among a small number of like-minded, local professionals to design both apartments and automobile-related buildings in the same neighborhood in order to produce "a harmonious group of structures that share a single, classically oriented visual imagery using similar materials and details." Shortly after

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State

construction was begun at 64 Stanyan, Crim decided to buy out Earl Scott and end their partnership.

Having moved his office to 425 Kearny Street, Crim secured a succession of desirable commissions. Crim's contracted work was both steady and varied over the next few years, encompassing everything from warehouses to movie palaces. His first project was the Columbarium at Colma's Mount Olivet Cemetery, completed in 1911. In 1912, this notice Crim had under construction two fireproof warehouses, representing a total cost of over \$150,000, with plans under way for a third warehouse to cost about \$60,000. He was also building the new Wigwam theater in the Mission and had let contracts for a store and factory building and an apartment house. One of the projects alluded to above was described by a later article as "A Concrete Warehouse with Pleasing Architectural Lines." This commission was a continuation of the work that Crim had done for C&H six years earlier, and was adjacent to the refinery. "An attractive warehouse has just been constructed by the California and Hawaiian Sugar Refining Company, on its property at Crockett, California. It presents a very unique construction, being built over the waters of Carquinez Straits. The foundation consists of 2772 wooden piles, driven by steamhammers ...in clusters of twelve each...tied together with heavy timbers, on which the forms of the concrete superstructure rested." Designed to carry 30,000 tons of raw sugar, the warehouse had a superstructure of heavy steel construction. "The building is as fireproof as human ingenuity can make it, all windows and doors being protected by automatic closing fire sprinklers," the author wrote. "The California and Hawaiian Sugar Refining Company believes in beauty as an asset, and has not hesitated to spend a considerable amount of money to make the outside of the building architecturally attractive." The estimated cost of the completed structure came to some \$170,000.

In addition, Crim would complete several significant civic and commercial commissions during the next few years. In 1913 he finished the Wigwam Theater (mentioned above), and designed the neo-classical Los Gatos Town Hall #2 that same year. The last months of 1913 saw Crim begin work on the L-shaped, red brick Hotel Eastman at 1666 Market St. (between Gough and Rose.) Constructed with a steel and concrete frame in the Colonial Revival style, the residential hotel had 5 stories (the ground floor being commercial) and stood 55 feet high. The hallmarks of Crim's designs—classical forms, balance and order—were on display in this building, which was capped by a flat roof and a parapet topped with a four-part balustrade. And in the August, 1914, issue of the Architect and Engineer, this notice appeared: "Architect William H. Crim of San Francisco has had his plans approved for a new edifice for the Second Church of Christ, Scientist. A feature of the structure will be a great dome sixty feet in height, supported by steel frame. The building will be erected on the southeast corner of Dolores and Cumberland streets and will be in the classic design. It will cost about \$65,000." (This would turn out to be one of Mr. Crim's most iconic commissions, its renown not enough, however, to keep the building from being subdivided into three multimillion dollar condo units recently.)

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Solano, CA

Name of Property

County and State

In 1916 Crim completed two major commissions, one a collaboration. The first contract was for rural Suisun City's new Grammar School, the student body having outgrown its existing facility. "William H. Crim, Jr., and Ed. J. Sims, associated, are preparing plans for a one-story-and-basement frame and plaster schoolhouse for the Suisun School District. It will cost \$30,000." The Mission Revival-style school was completed that same year. "In addition to the four classrooms, there was a domestic science room, manual training room, teachers' lounge, principal's office, and neighborhood club hall, which doubled as an extra classroom." Crim's other major commission completed in 1916 was the Second Church of Christ Scientist in San Francisco's Mission District. An elegant example of the Classical Revival and Beaux Arts style in San Francisco, Crim's building conformed to its steeply sloping Dolores Street site. Having the form of a domed Roman temple with Tuscan columns, the Second Church of Christ Scientist was something of a stylistic exclamation point for Crim. The symmetrical massing, window treatments, use of marble, temple-like portico, stucco finishes, monumental wooden doors, the siting and location all contributed to the Church's architectural distinction. Its crowning glory was a massive, majestic wood-framed truss system dome which rested on the octagonal walls of the auditorium.

World War I choked the supply of both the capital and the material required for large-scale construction. It also deprived the architect and developer of skilled labor, most able-bodied young men serving in the armed forces. As Crim himself explained, "During the period of the war building operations ceased almost entirely, due first, to the demand for materials for government use and the consequent upward tendency of prices, and second, to very large export shipment to the Allies." With prices high, the labor supply low, and major commissions few, Crim managed to stay busy with notices of his projects appearing regularly in trade publications. "Hotel Alterations—Mr. William H. Crim, Jr., 425 Kearny street, San Francisco, has completed plans for extensive alterations to the five-story Class "C" store and hotel building on Shattuck avenue, Berkeley, owned by Mr. Bruce Cornwall. The bids for the work have been taken. Mr. Crim has also completed plans for a factory building to be erected on the southwest corner of Fifteenth and Vermont streets, San Francisco, for Mr. Edward A. Norton." Shortly thereafter an article in *The Architect and Engineer* (January, 1919) profiled William H. Crim, Jr. as an example of "the growing tendency among leading architects of the country to organize their own construction forces." The author noted that Crim's recent work had "declared his intention to surround himself with an organization that will not only develop plans for a building, but will carry the construction through to completion." The author provided a clue to Crim's relatively elevated standing by admitting that most architects were prevented from such a consolidated design-and-construction venture by "the amount of capital required...[to] maintain an organization made up of men who are experts in the various branches of the building industry."

In 1924, Crim returned to public garage design with his building at 550-560 O'Farrell and re-established his professional association with the Mt. Olivet Cemetery Associates. With a rather bare façade "suggesting that the architect's intention was to evoke structural rationalism rather

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State

than Victorian embellishment," the garage's "entire composition is organized on the basis of one basic unit—the square quatrefoil panel that runs across the parapet." Constructed as the cemetery's Abbey Garage, the building "articulates a central compositional theme—a symmetrical variation in bay width. Here, the arches are stretched over three-different sized openings....The composition is a variation of the wide ABCBA façade, with the center bay compressed to the width of a doorway (the door accessed a small office." The entirety of the ABCBA composition was broken down into "a ratio of 6:8:3:8:6, where each term represents the number of quatrefoil panels in a given bay." Given the utilitarian nature of the building, the application of "sophisticated design strategies—as exemplified by the modular underpinning of the composition—is surprising..." Ultimately, 550-560 O'Farrell Street firmly established Crim as one among a select group of San Francisco architects to have designed distinguished public garages in the 1910s and 1920s, decades during which automobile use boomed and the building of such structures exploded. (The garage at 550 O'Farrell still stands and is, according to the San Francisco Planning Commission, "Individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3 as a good example of the Gothic Revival architectural style designed by William H. Crim Jr., who is generally regarded as a master in the field of architecture."

Having completed his work on the Wednesday Club in 1925, Crim stayed busy in the years that followed with an impressive array of commercial projects. In 1927, in association with fellow master architect, G. Albert Lansburgh, the designer of over 50 theaters and auditoriums nationwide, Crim won the commission for the El Capitan Theater at 2351-2361 Mission St. (Lansburgh was known for his application of fantasy to architectural ornamentation and had earlier designed the Warfield on Market St. as well as the Golden Gate Theater.) Spanish Baroque in style with a grand entrance pavilion rising to a curvilinear parapet, the El Capitan turned out to be a contentious commission, with much squabbling between client and architects. A final, "compromise" design was effected, with construction completed in 1928. That year also found William Crim, Jr. in Suisun City again when he was contracted to design the second Bank of Suisun building at 601 Main St. (The first bank, a narrow brick building a few doors down at 607 Main St., had been constructed in 1876.) Built in the Spanish Renaissance style with reinforced concrete, tile floors, and modern equipment and furnishings, this second Bank of Suisun cost \$40,000 to build.

The final years of William H. Crim's career marked a late career turn to Art Deco design as well as a reengagement with public school architecture, as exemplified by his designs for Park Presidio Junior High School and James Lick Middle School in San Francisco's Richmond district and Noe Valley, respectively. Contracted between Crim and SFUSD just before the collapse of 1920s prosperity, the three-floor, Italian Romanesque Park Presidio school was designed with a steel and concrete structure (years before this seismically-resistant framing method became mandated by the Field Act.) It cost \$731,962 to build in 1929-1930 and was designed to accommodate 1,600 students. Also in 1930, four years after the Art Deco impulse first flashed across the Atlantic, its hold on Crim found its grandest expression in his design for James H. Lick Middle School. Wm. H. Crim, Jr.'s career had come full circle: having started as a teen-age student at "Lick" (the School for Mechanical Arts established by an endowment from James

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State

Lick), Crim finished his career with with his arresting design for a San Francisco middle school that would bear his benefactor's name. This would prove to be the architect's last commission, as Crim died in July of 1930 shortly after construction had commenced. James Lick Middle School was completed in 1932. (Lick School is still in use and served as the inspiration for the protagonist's grade school in the 2015 animated feature film *InsideOut*.)

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

\_\_\_\_\_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** 0.46

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude:  |
| 38.140908    | -122.022231 |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The 0.46 acre property is situated at the southwest corner of Sacramento and School Streets. From that corner, the northerly boundary line of the property extends 143' west along Sacramento Street. From the westerly property corner on Sacramento Street, the westerly boundary line of the property extends 125' south to the southwest property corner. From the southwest property corner, the property boundary line extends 50' east, thence 25' south to the southerly boundary line. The southerly boundary line extends 93' east to the southeast corner of School Street. The easterly boundary line extends north 150' along School Street to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Wednesday Club of Suisun ownership from 1922 to the present. The boundary justification is based on the current Assessor's Parcel Map for the City of Suisun.

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: David Sroaf  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: city or town: 19 Country Club Drive  
Fairfield state: CA zip code: 94534  
e-mail davidsroaf@gmail.com  
telephone: 310.801.9229  
date: October 31, 2019

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



**AERIAL PLAN**



**EXHIBIT**

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Wednesday Club of Suisun

Solano, CA  
 County and State

Name of Property

POR. N.W. 1/4 SEC. 36, T.5 N., R.2 W., M.D.B. & M.

Tax

DD32-113-050



Pg. 105

REVISION	DATE	BY
114-05&06 (RS)	11-4-05	JS
115-09 COMB.	3-1-93	PD
S.B.E. 315-C	9-29-83	DJ
112-7&8	3-21-67	KM

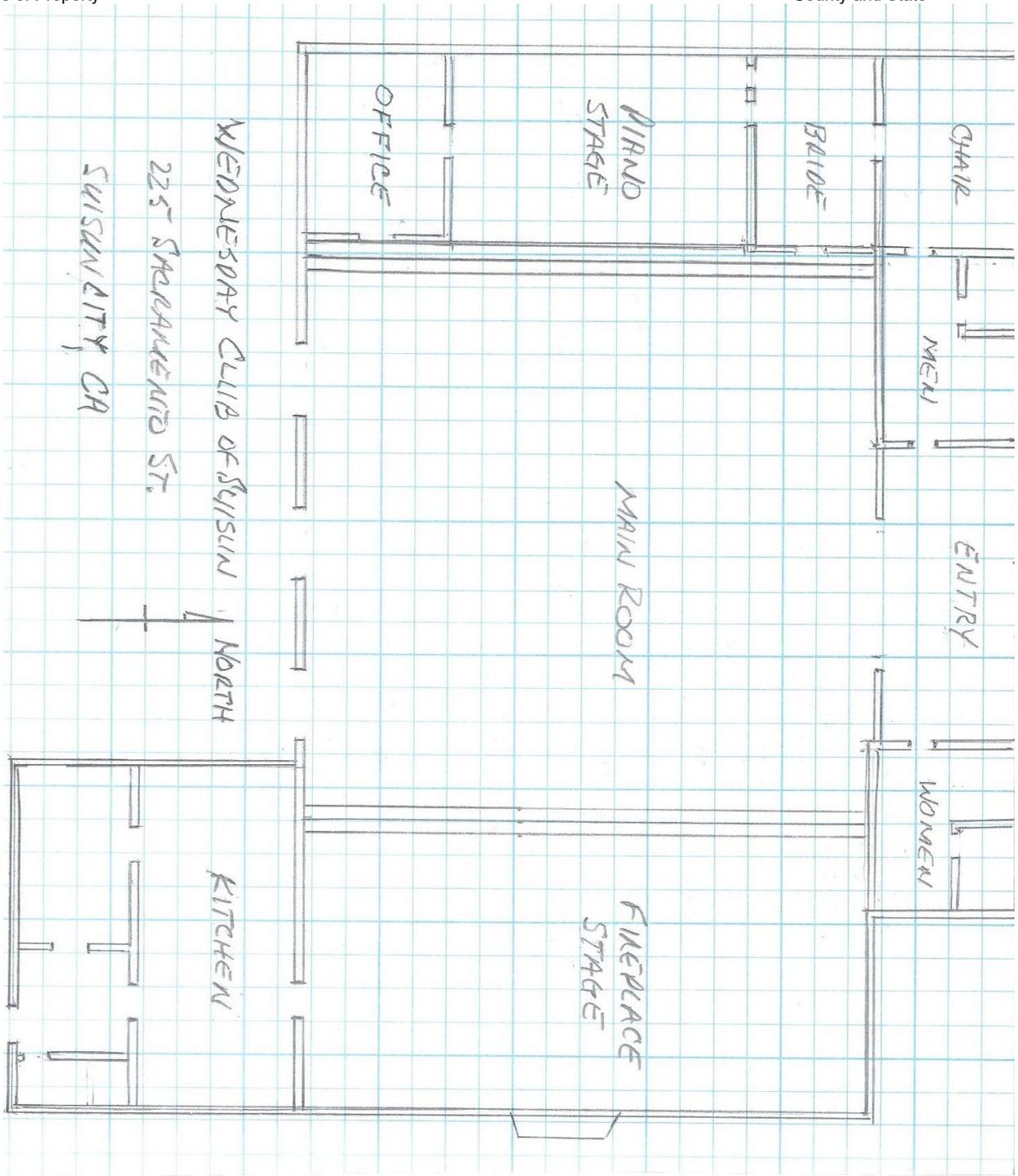
NOTE: Assessor's Block Numbers Shown in Ellipses  
 Assessor's Parcel Numbers Shown in Circles

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CITY ( )  
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Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Wednesday Club of Suisun  
City or Suisun City  
County: Solano: State: CA  
Photographer: Lea Fisher  
Date Photographed: September 8, 2020  
Location of Digital Photos: Wednesday Club

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 11: Front Entrance looking South \_\_.

Photo 2 of 11: Cornerstone at front steps

Photo 3 of 11: – North Elevation looking Southeast

Photo 4 of 11: East Elevation looking West

Photo 5 of 11: South Elevation looking North

Photo 6 of 11: West Elevation looking Northeast

Photo 7 of 11: Main Room looking South

Photo 8 of 11: Main Room looking West

Photo 9 of 11: Piano Stage looking Southwest

Photo 10 of 11: Fireplace Stage looking East

Photo No. 11 of 11: Kitchen looking East

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Photo 1 of 11: Front Entrance looking South

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Photo 2 of 11: Cornerstone at front steps

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Photo No. 3 of 11: North Elevation looking Southeast

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Photo No. 4 Of 11: East Elevation looking West

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Photo No. 5 of 11: South Elevation looking North

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Photo No. 6 of 11: West Elevation looking Northeast

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Photo No. 7 of 11: Main room looking South

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Photo No. 8 of 11: Main Room looking West

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Photo No. 9 of 11: Piano Stage looking Southwest

Wednesday Club of Suisun  
Name of Property

Solano, CA  
County and State



Photo No. 10 of 11: Fireplace Stage looking East

Wednesday Club of Suisun

Name of Property

Solano, CA

County and State



Photo No 11 of 11: Kitchen looking East

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.