

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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Iceland
other names/site number Berkeley Iceland; East Bay Iceland

2. Location

street & number 2727 Milvia Street not for publication
N/A
city or town Berkeley vicinity N/A
state California code CA county Alameda code 001 zip code 94703

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

Signature of certifying official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	buildings
	district
	site
	structure
	object
1	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Moderne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: CONCRETE
roof: OTHER (built-up composition)
other: GLASS
WOOD (boarding)
METAL
Plastic

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Berkeley Iceland property contains a 58,920-square-foot ice-rink building that covers most of the 1.9-acre parcel and is technically one-story, though the arena's main portion is very high-ceilinged. The building is of reinforced concrete construction, with steelwork supporting its arena's wooden roof. Its architectural style is Moderne. Looking very much as it did when it first opened, Iceland has retained strong historic integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The property is in fair physical condition. On the front pavilion, concrete wall surfaces are smooth and feature formwork-created rectangular panels. Elsewhere, wall surfaces are plainer, with normal board-formed impressions, but are strategically articulated by scored lines. Windows have multi-light metal sashes. The flat-roofed front pavilion faces Milvia Street with three bays. Its central bay has a recessed porch, rounded corners, a canopy, a neon sign, decorative lamps, and flagpoles. The arena has a tall, gable-roofed portion that is flanked by lower, flat-roofed side wings. The gable-roofed portion's west facade features twelve tall windows, and stepped pilasters in between them. Its east facade has windows partly echoing that pattern, while its north and south sides have clerestory window bands. The arena's side wings have multiple small windows and exit doors, and have rounded corners at the outer ends. The building's rear pavilion is flat-roofed and narrow. The front pavilion's interior has an entrance hall with fireplace and incised mirror, various facilities such as a skate rental counter, and a warming room whose windows look east into the arena. The spacious arena has a 200 feet X 100 feet ice surface, flanked to north and south by bleachers. Inside the rear pavilion are the mechanical room and other spaces including changing rooms. The property has open parking lots at its northwest and southwest corners. The arena's long side wings are flanked by the open parts of packed-earth berms. Iceland is adjacent to public, residential, and commercial land uses.

Narrative Description

General Description of Iceland. The Iceland property has what is counted as a single resource: a contributing building.

Type, Size, and Style. The building is an enclosed ice rink (with incidental facilities) that contains 58,920 square feet¹ of gross floor area. It covers most of the 1.9-acre parcel (see Figure A). It is technically one-story, though the arena's main portion has a very high ceiling. It is of reinforced concrete construction, with steel beams and trusses supporting its arena's roofing. The building's roofs are wooden, surfaced with built-up composition material. The architectural style is Moderne (often called Streamline Moderne or Streamlined Moderne).

Historic Integrity. Notable alterations have been few. Iceland looks very much as it did when it opened in 1940. Neither alterations nor physical deterioration have substantially weakened historic integrity. The property has retained strong integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Physical Condition. The property is in fair physical condition. The building is in need of substantial deferred maintenance. City staff have declared that certain refrigeration equipment is unsafe. At present about 37 of the building's small windows are boarded up. Reportedly some of them have broken glass, due to vandalism.² At least much of the boarding-up of windows, and of various doors, was done in or after 2007. There are graffiti on some wall surfaces. The open parts of both packed-earth berms are now fenced off, and the southern one is quite unkempt.

The Building's Exterior. The building has three main sections: the front pavilion that faces Milvia Street, the very large arena, and the rear pavilion at the parcel's east end.

On the front pavilion, concrete wall surfaces are smooth and feature rectangular panels defined by joints that were specially created by formwork (see for instance Photograph 4). Elsewhere, wall surfaces are plainer, with the impressions from normal board forming, but are articulated by strategic scored lines (like those seen in Photographs 5 and 6).

The walls are currently painted in the following general series of three colors: white, then a band of gray, and (at the top) a band of blue that helps to represent a cornice. (However, the front pavilion's central bay has a greater number of bands—and part of the

¹ Gordon Commercial, "Properties for Sale."

² Without present access into the property, it cannot be determined how many of the windows have broken glass.

arena's east facade has now been discordantly painted over to cover graffiti.) The relative height of these bands differs as between the building's various masses. The present white-gray-blue color scheme may well date from 1986.³ Paint color was different before then.

The building's windows (except for the front pavilion's ticket windows and the four middle windows in the arena portion's east wall) have multi-light metal sashes.

Front Pavilion. The front pavilion has an average east-west depth of about 60 feet, and measures roughly 140 feet from north to south. It is flat-roofed and faces Milvia Street with three main bays.

The central bay (see Photograph 3) is slightly taller than the others, projects slightly forward, and has a rounded corner at each end. Recessed into it is a terrazzo-paved porch that leads to three pairs of glass-and-metal doors. Above each pair of doors there now is a simple fixed transom light (evidently changed, at some undetermined time, from the multi-light version that the original plans⁴ depicted). Facing into the porch's south side (and thus not visible in Photograph 3) are two ticket windows, with double-hung sashes (probably of metal) behind metal bars. Facing into the porch's north side is a similar window, which at some past time was also used for ticket sales. Extending across most of the central bay is a simple fixed canopy (probably of plastered concrete) with rounded ends. Immediately below the canopy are twin Moderne-style lamps (see Photograph 4)—whose visual thrust is continued far upward by twin flagpoles. Above the middle of the canopy is a blue-neon sign saying "Iceland" in quasi-cursive slanting letters.⁵

Away from its central bay, the front pavilion has a total of about 20 windows. Probably nearly all of these have metal sashes that were designed so they could open out awning-style. However, all but one of them (seen in Photograph 3) now are boarded up. The front pavilion also has four glass-and-metal skylights.

At each of the front pavilion's northeast and southeast corners (visible in Photographs 1 and 2), there is a small bay that projects slightly upward and outward. The northern one was designed with two pairs of metal-covered-wood exit doors, with a multi-light transom above each pair and with each individual door containing its own glazed portion.⁶ However, the transoms and other glazed portions are now boarded over. The southern small bay originally had a pair of big paneled, metal-covered-wood doors.⁷ But those have been replaced (at some undetermined time) by a large metal and/or wood, possibly roll-up door and, cutting into one corner of it, what looks like a plain metal door.⁸

Arena. The arena has overall dimensions of roughly 230 feet from west to east and 190 feet from north to south. It includes a tall, gable-roofed portion that is flanked—all along its north and south sides—by lower, flat-roofed side wings.

The gable-roofed portion by itself has a north-south dimension of about 135 feet. Its west facade features twelve tall windows—escalating in height toward the middle so their tops parallel the roof slopes—and similarly ascending stepped pilasters between the windows (see Photographs 1, 2, and 5). The sashes of these windows are now fronted by what look like sheets of translucent plastic. (The plastic sheets were not indicated by the original plans, and are not discernible from an early photo⁹; it is not known when they were placed here.) The east facade (see Photographs 6 and 7) has a rather similar twelve-window pattern paralleling the roof slopes. But here the four middle windows are much smaller, parts of them may always have been covered by metal sheets (possibly openable), and their upper parts have been painted over. The sashes of the east facade's other eight windows are fronted by sheets of translucent plastic, at least much of which has now been painted over. Each of the gable-roofed portion's north and south facades has a continuous clerestory band of 36 windows, some of which contain awning-type elements that can open outward. The roof is low-pitched. Along its ridgeline there are five small vents and, toward the east end, the east-facing neon "Iceland" sign that is visible in Photograph 7. This sign (which resembles the one facing Milvia) was not here when the building first opened. It is not known when it was added.

Each of the arena's side wings (see for instance Photograph 8) has a north-south dimension of roughly 27 feet. The northern wing has three¹⁰ windows (all now painted over) in its west facade; two windows (also painted over) in its east wall; and 18 windows (nine of them now boarded up, and some of the others now fronted by wire screens) in its north facade. The other side wing has three windows (painted over) in its west facade; two windows (also painted over) in its east wall; and 18 windows (seven of them boarded up, and

³ In 1986 Gust, "A Wintry Institution Reopens," mentioned "a spiffy new paint job."

⁴ Ambrose and Chace, "Ice Skating Rink."

⁵ This sign resembles the one shown here by certain 1940 drawings and by an early photo, but is smaller. In testimony to the City of Berkeley's Landmarks Preservation Commission, former general manager Bob Skrak indicated that in 1990 the old sign was taken down and a "rebuilt" version was put up.

⁶ Ambrose and Chace, "Ice Skating Rink."

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Describing these doors is impeded by lack of access onto the property.

⁹ The photo is in Fairchild, "Berkeley Iceland."

¹⁰ The advertisement's drawing contained in Figure C, which showed four windows in the west facade of each side wing, must have been a preliminary version. In the final plans dated May 1940, the number in each case had been reduced to three.

some of the others fronted by wire screens) in its south facade. The northern side wing's north facade and the southern wing's south facade each have four pairs of metal-covered-wood exit doors. According to the original plans,¹¹ there is a multi-light transom above each pair and each individual door has its own glazed portion. But all these doors' transoms and other glazed portions are now boarded over. Both side wings have rounded corners (as Photographs 5 and 6 illustrate) at their outer ends.

Rear Pavilion. The building's rear pavilion has an east-west dimension of about 25 feet and a north-south one varying from roughly 145 to 155 feet. It is flat-roofed and low, but a middle portion is higher than the rest of it. Its east wall (partly visible in Photograph 7) is blank. Its northern part (see Photograph 6) has two now-boarded-up windows and a pair of exit doors, with any glazed portions of the doors similarly boarded over. The south facade (see Photograph 11) has a pair of exit doors, probably of metal-covered wood with glazed portions now boarded over. It also has what looks like a metal or wood roll-up door (probably not original) with a chain-link double gate immediately in front of it.¹² Nearby on the roof are a brine tank and other equipment. Judging by the original plans,¹³ the roof has six glass-and-metal skylights.

The Building's Interior. The interior is similarly describable in terms of the building's three main sections.

Front Pavilion. Immediately behind the doors of the front pavilion's central bay there is an entrance lobby with a marble fireplace at the center of its east wall (see Photograph 13). Directly above the mantel is a large, decoratively incised mirror.

Branching to right and left from the entrance lobby are what the building plans called the "north skate lobby" and "south skate lobby."¹⁴ Along the north lobby's west side are restrooms and what originally were locker rooms but at some unknown time were converted to offices. Lockers now line wall space in the north end of the north lobby, which at some point was extended to replace what originally was a storeroom.¹⁵ Along or near the south lobby are a counter and shelving, for skate rental, and offices. Short corridors branching from the north and south lobbies lead to entry doors to the arena, as well as exits to the outside. Under the north exit vicinity there is a small basement space that the original plans called the "heater room."¹⁶

Much of the front pavilion's east side is occupied by a long room that the original plans called "cafe soda fountain" (see Photograph 14). It has tables and benches, and windows that look out into the arena. The room used to serve food and drinks, but that function ceased a long time ago. In recent years it has been used for parties and as a warm place to sit and watch the skating.¹⁷

Arena. The arena's Olympic-scale ice surface is 200 feet long and 100 feet wide.¹⁸ Because Photographs 14 through 17 were taken after the rink closed, the ice itself had of course melted and the refrigeration system's brine pipes beneath it were exposed to view.¹⁹ The ice surface is surrounded, except at a few access points, by a low fence (presently with netted railing above much of it).

All along the arena's north and south sides there are multiple tiers of wooden benches (see Photographs 16 and 17). On each side there are lower bleachers with three rows, then an east-west walkway, and finally the upper bleachers with 10 rows. The upper seating is located in the arena's side wings. In each case the upper bleachers are divided into sections by four stairways that lead to the side wing's four exit doors.

Cantilevered out from partway up the arena's west wall (see Photograph 15) is the music/announcers box. This small room's glazed front gives it full view of the ice surface. It is accessed via stairs, a fixed ladder, and a catwalk.²⁰ The west side also has a second, rather similar projecting box, whose function is not known. (Neither of these projecting boxes was in the original plans; judging by comparison of relevant photographs that accompanied articles published in 1944 and 1996, the boxes were added sometime between those dates.) Nearer the west side's left and right ends there are metal-railed open balconies for access to lighting.

Along much of the base of the arena's east side (see background of Photograph 16) there is a low open stage or bandstand. This used to be employed in concerts and shows. High above its center is a large scoreboard. Far to the right and left are metal-railed open lighting balconies. Much of the east wall is painted as a panoramic winter scene with snow, fir trees, and cabins. This mural originally was done in the 1950s by Bert Gorman, who at the time was serving as an assistant manager at Iceland.²¹ He was also a scenic artist for Hollywood. The mural was restored later on, probably with some changes.

¹¹ Ambrose and Chace, "Ice Skating Rink."

¹² Here, as in other cases, description is impeded by lack of access onto the property.

¹³ Ambrose and Chace, "Ice Skating Rink."

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Grassetti, landmark application, 3.

¹⁸ The ice surface even slightly exceeds Olympic dimensions, which technically are 98 feet 5 inches X 196 feet 10 inches.

¹⁹ The present brine pipes were installed in the 1950s, replacing the original ones.

²⁰ Grassetti, landmark application, 3.

²¹ Fairchild, "Berkeley Iceland," 24–25.

Sprouting from several locations within the bleachers, big steel beams thrust up and/or outward. These connect to east-west trusses and work with them to support the arena's low-pitched but lofty main roof.

Rear Pavilion. In the rear pavilion's southern part is the "mechanical [or 'machinery'] room." This houses a chiller, compressors, and related facilities. (The existing compressors date from 1960.²²) Elsewhere within the rear pavilion there are changing rooms, with toilets and showers, and a ballet or multi-purpose room.

The Property's Open Portions. In the parcel's northwest and southwest corners (see Photographs 1 and 2) there are small open parking lots. These are partially adjoined by shrubbery, which also extends along much of the front pavilion's west facade. In about 2007 gated metal fencing was installed between the parking lots and the public sidewalks. At the parcel's extreme southwest corner there is a tall freestanding sign saying "ICELAND." This sign dates from about 1975, when it replaced an earlier Iceland sign that had once been along the Eastshore Highway but was brought here (and placed on the present twin poles) in about 1953.

Between the arena's northern side wing and the adjacent stretch of Derby Street is the open part of a lengthy packed-earth berm (see Photograph 8). There is a similar lengthy berm along the arena's southern side wing and Ward Street (see Photographs 9 and 10). In both cases the upper seating area inside the arena rests on the berm's inner slope. Both berms were also intended to facilitate emergency egress from the arena. The northern berm has along its level top an east-west paved walkway, which connects with two stairways that descend directly toward the Derby Street sidewalk. (Judging by the 1940 plans²³ the northern berm may originally have had a third stairway, at its east end descending laterally to the open area in the parcel's northeast corner.) For many years the northern berm's walkway was adjoined by hedges, but those have been removed since the rink closed. The southern berm now has neither a walkway nor stairways. It has an unkempt look, though this is partly mitigated by the continuous row of trees that were planted many years ago along its base. It originally had an east-west paved walkway, one stairway descending directly to Ward Street, and one lateral stairway connecting with the southwest parking lot. (Judging by the original plans²⁴ the southern berm may also have had a lateral stairway descending into the parcel's southeast portion.) For many years it had hedges along its walkway. But all of the southern berm's stairways and hedges were removed probably before 2000. Even its walkway's paving was broken up then. Also probably before 2000, cyclone fencing was erected to separate both berms from the adjacent sidewalks and parking lots.

That cyclone fencing also controls access to the open areas in the parcel's northeast corner (which Photograph 6 shows) and southeast corner (see Photograph 11). The latter area has a driveway/utility yard directly adjoining the big door to the rear pavilion's mechanical room.

The Surroundings. Directly across Milvia Street from Iceland is the Berkeley Unified School District's King Child Development Center. Beyond that are a special high school and some units of public housing. The block immediately southwest of the Milvia/Ward Street intersection has many smallish private dwellings. Directly across Ward from Iceland is part of a large residential complex called Savo Island Cooperative Homes. Iceland's eastern property line abuts commercial uses that are part of a commercial strip running along Shattuck Avenue and Adeline Street. Directly across Derby Street from Iceland is an industrial-looking warehouse/office building (with related open parking) owned and used by the University of California. The open block immediately northwest of the Derby/Milvia intersection is owned by the school district and is planned to become a ball field.

Iceland is located less than a mile from the University's main campus.²⁵

²² Ibid., 26.

²³ Ambrose and Chace, "Ice Skating Rink."

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Back when the site for Iceland was chosen, proximity to Cal was a major factor. Because the arena would host the University hockey team, it needed to be located within what was then a one-mile no-liquor zone around the campus.

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) N/A

Property is:

- 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1940–1966

Significant Dates

1940

1947

1957

1966

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

William Clement Ambrose (architect)

Thomas Franklin Chace (structural engineer)

W.A. Bechtel Co. (builder)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance regarding entertainment/recreation started in 1940, when Iceland was constructed and opened. Its indicated end date of 1966 was the year when, for the third and final time, Iceland hosted the U.S. National Figure Skating Championship competition. Activities that began during the period thus defined actually continued to have importance after 1966, but no suitable later end date can be identified. Though Iceland closed its doors in 2007, the organization called Save Berkeley Iceland is actively seeking to achieve the rink's reopening.

The period of significance regarding architecture was 1940, when Iceland was built.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Iceland is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the subject area of entertainment/recreation and the context of sports in Northern California, 1920–1966. In this regard the property’s period of significance was 1940–1966, and its significant dates were 1940, 1947, 1957, and 1966. Iceland is a rare major survivor from a golden age of ice skating. It played a very important role in the history of skating on the West Coast. Persons very important in skating history have trained or coached here. The U.S. National Figure Skating Championship competition was held at Iceland three times. Iceland accommodated all types of ice-rink activity, from figure skating to hockey training and competition to ice extravaganzas to simple recreational skating by countless people of all abilities. It originated from a unique and remarkable campaign to build a community-funded facility for the benefit of Bay Area residents. Berkeley Iceland is the Bay Area’s oldest surviving ice rink and has been called the “Kingpin” rink of Northern California. The property strongly recalls its important historical associations. Iceland is also significant at the local level under National Register Criterion C in the subject area of architecture and the context of commercial architecture in Northern California, 1920–1966. In this regard the property’s period of significance was 1940, and so was its significant date. Iceland well embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction. The spacious arena is very impressive. The building with its skillful use of features such as stepped massing and pilasters and rounded corners is an excellent example of the Moderne style. The property retains ample historic integrity to convey its important design qualities.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)

Brief Chronology of the Property. Down through the 1930s, the parcel of land remained undeveloped. In December 1939 the Berkeley City Council approved the proposal to construct Iceland on it. The land was acquired about then by East Bay Iceland Incorporated. Building plans were completed in May 1940, and building permit # 49006 was issued the next month. The completed building had its festive public opening on November 1, 1940. The opening was a major social event, emceed by nationally popular radio personality Art Linkletter.

In the 1950s there was a six-month hiatus for work that included replacing all the brine pipes and inserting a concrete floor and styrofoam beneath the ice surface.²⁶ In 1986 there was a five-month closure to allow installing a sub-floor heat grid and cleaning and reinsulating the header system.²⁷ But with just those two notable breaks, Iceland stayed in operation for two-thirds of a century, till its doors closed at the end of March 2007.

Significance regarding Entertainment/Recreation. Iceland is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the subject area of entertainment/recreation. The pertinent context is sports in Northern California, 1920–1966. In this regard the property’s period of significance was 1940–1966. Its significant dates were 1940, when the building was constructed and opened—and 1947, 1957, and 1966, in each of which three years Iceland hosted the U.S. National Figure Skating Championship competition. The relevant property type consists of arenas suitable for ice skating. Iceland is strongly representative of this type and in some ways outstanding.

General Background. By the 1920s sports in general had burgeoned in popularity. Ice-rink sports came to share in this. Ice hockey was played at the 1920 Olympics. The Olympic Winter Games in 1924 included figure skating.²⁸ In the 1930s interest in skating grew, partly because of iconic athletes including Gold Medal winner Sonja Henie, who became a movie star. Skating was popular as inexpensive recreation during the Great Depression and World War II. The era that included the 1930s and 1940s was a golden age of ice skating in America.

Meanwhile, the nine-county Bay Area’s population grew enormously: from 1,182,911 in 1920 to 1,734,308 in 1940 and 3,638,939 in 1960.²⁹ Berkeley’s population increased from 56,036 in 1920 to 85,547 in 1940 and 111,268 in 1960.³⁰ Total regular enrollment at UC’s Berkeley campus grew from 10,796 in 1920–1921 to 17,013 in 1940–1941 and 23,974 in 1960–1961.³¹

²⁶ Fairchild, “Berkeley Iceland,” 26.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Grassetti, form and continuation sheets, 8.

²⁹ Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments, “Selected Census Data...Bay Area.”

³⁰ Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments, “Selected Census Data...Cities.”

³¹ Stadtman et al., *The Centennial Record*, 218, 222, 224.

However, development had been patchy in Iceland's immediate vicinity. Here two whole blocks—and large portions of other blocks, including Iceland's future site—long remained open. During or around the time of World War II, the federal government acquired much of the open land and the Navy built housing on the portions south of Derby Street. In later years the Berkeley Unified School District acquired the land west of Milvia Street and built structures on much of it. The former Navy housing was demolished in 1972,³² and a subsequent redevelopment project enabled replacing it with the present Savo Island Cooperative Homes. The University's big warehouse/office structure was built during that same general period.

Other Properties for Comparison. Northern California had many other ice rinks during the era when Berkeley's Iceland was built, but nearly all of them are gone now. For instance, the Oakland Ice Arena closed by the 1940s and the structure that had contained it was torn down in about the 1960s. Even the big Blyth Arena that was constructed in 1959 in Squaw Valley for the next year's Olympic Winter Games was demolished in 1983.³³ Today Northern California has a number of ice rinks, but most of them were built after 1960.

Briefly described below are three surviving facilities that existed during or close to Berkeley Iceland's period of significance.

- *Iceland in Sacramento.* Sacramento's Iceland is located on Del Paso Boulevard in what used to be the separately incorporated city of North Sacramento. It opened in 1940.
- *Belmont Iceland.* Belmont Iceland, which is under the same ownership as Berkeley Iceland, is located in the Bay Area city of Belmont. This rink probably opened sometime around 1960.
- *Cow Palace.* Technically named the California State Livestock Pavilion, the huge facility generally called the Cow Palace is located in Daly City just beyond the San Francisco city line. It is a multi-use arena that has accommodated very diverse exhibition, sports, and other events. It has relevance here because for some uses its central floor has been temporarily converted into an ice rink. The building was completed in 1941.

Specific Evaluation of Berkeley Iceland. Berkeley's Iceland is a rare major survivor from a golden age of ice skating. It played a very important role in the history of skating on the West Coast, where it is one of the largest rinks. Its capacious and well-lighted arena offered special advantages to users. This enabled Iceland to attract the best skaters and coaches.

It became one of the most significant training facilities of the time. Internationally recognized skating coach and authority Maribel Vinson Owen coached at Iceland³⁴ for several years, starting in the 1940s. In her life's previous stage as a competitor in the 1920s and 1930s, she had won the U.S. National Figure Skating Championship nine times in women's singles and six times in pairs skating, and had won a bronze medal at the 1932 Olympics.³⁵ Eugene (Gene) Turner coached at Iceland for several decades.³⁶ Previously as a competitor, he had won the U.S. National Figure Skating Championship in men's singles in 1940 and 1941 and in pairs skating in 1941.³⁷ In the late 1950s one of the skating students at Iceland was a pre-teen girl who showed promise; her name was Peggy Fleming.³⁸ She would go on to win the U.S. National Figure Skating Championship five times in the 1960s, and a gold medal at the 1968 Olympics.³⁹ In 1960 Iceland was one of the U.S. teams' local training facilities for that year's Olympic Winter Games. (After those games, the U.S. and Japanese hockey teams played an exhibition match at Iceland.) In later years the rink was practice ice for celebrated figure skaters Brian Boitano, Kristi Yamaguchi, and Rudy Galindo. All three of them were, like Peggy Fleming, Bay Area natives.⁴⁰

Iceland also accommodated various major and minor competitions. In 1947 it was the first rink west of the Mississippi River to host the U.S. National Figure Skating Championship competition. It again hosted that event in 1957 and 1966.

³² Berkeley Redevelopment Agency, *Draft Savo Island Environmental Impact Report*, 2.

³³ Wikipedia, "Blyth Arena."

³⁴ Grassetti, form and continuation sheets, 9.

³⁵ Wikipedia, "Maribel Vinson."

³⁶ Grassetti, form and continuation sheets, 9.

³⁷ Wikipedia, "Eugene Turner."

³⁸ Gust, "A Wintry Institution Reopens."

³⁹ Wikipedia, "Peggy Fleming."

⁴⁰ Grassetti, form and continuation sheets, 9. Boitano won a national championship four times in the 1980s and a gold medal at the 1988 Olympics. Galindo won the national championship in men's singles in 1996. Yamaguchi won both the national championship and the Olympic gold medal in women's singles in 1996. Galindo and Yamaguchi skated together to win the national pairs championship in 1989 and 1990.

Iceland accommodated all types of rink activity. It was the longtime home of the St. Moritz Figure Skating Club (California's oldest such club, founded in 1931) and the University Figure Skating Club (founded in about 1939).⁴¹ It was the longtime home ice of UC Berkeley's redoubtable hockey team. It hosted exhibition matches, and thousands of boys and girls played here in youth hockey teams. During the 1970s Iceland was the official practice ice of the Bay Area's first National Hockey League team, the California Golden Seals. From the early 1940s to the mid-1950s it staged widely acclaimed annual "Icetravaganzas" involving professional musicians, scores of skaters, and in some years ballet dancers. Wednesdays regularly were "Family Night," when—enabled by the rink's great size—people of all ages and abilities could take lessons simultaneously. In cooperation with the nearby campus's physical education department, Iceland offered to UC students regular skating classes that were very popular.⁴² And throughout its many decades of operation, Iceland served countless people who came to have wholesome fun and socialize, in a safe and truly unique environment. Gene Turner recalled, "As a rink, Berkeley topped them all. It was a popular place that brought all ages together. Everyone knew where Iceland was."⁴³

Iceland originated from a remarkable campaign to build a community-funded facility for the benefit of Bay Area residents. In 1939 a group of Bay Area citizens, many of them with the University or the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce, formed East Bay Iceland, Inc.—"a community owned, community funded corporation"—aimed at creating a world-class skating facility.⁴⁴ The group's Financial Campaign Executive Committee included noteworthies like former Governor C.C. Young, UC President Robert Gordon Sproul, real estate developer Duncan McDuffie, and Nobel laureate Ernest O. Lawrence. This committee issued a stock-subscription prospectus titled "East Bay Iceland: A Community Enterprise." The prospectus stressed that the enterprise was to be "owned and financed by the citizens of the Bay Area."⁴⁵ Stock would be offered for sale only to California residents. The campaign proceeded, with some of the stock being sold door to door by members of skating clubs, and sufficient funds were timely raised to implement the project. This was a unique way to create what in effect would be a large community facility. Especially in that period, such facilities were usually built with WPA or other federal funding or perhaps bond issues by local governments.

The committee's hope was summed up thus in the prospectus: "The large committee of citizens is sponsoring East Bay Iceland because it believes this project will contribute to the pleasure, physical well-being, and entertainment of residents of the Bay Area."⁴⁶ Iceland has returned the gift many times over, for generations enriching the life of Berkeley, the University and its students, and the greater Bay Area—supporting and strengthening "community."

The most noticeable physical changes at Iceland have been wall-paint changes, boarding-up of various windows and doors, removal of outdoor stairways from the southern berm, and fencing-off of the open areas. But these changes are superficial and reversible. Except for the boarding-up and wall-paint changes, the building's outward appearance has hardly changed at all since Iceland opened in 1940. Its interior still looks very much as it did then. The property strongly retains its original feeling and vividly recalls its important historical associations.

Berkeley's Iceland is the oldest surviving ice rink in the Bay Area and either the oldest or second oldest in Northern California.⁴⁷ (Sacramento's Iceland opened sometime in the same year.) In the 1980s Gene Turner remarked that "Iceland has always been the Kingpin rink in Northern California."⁴⁸

Sacramento's Iceland and Belmont Iceland are much smaller than Berkeley Iceland. The Sacramento facility's ice surface measures only 70 feet X 140 feet.⁴⁹ The Belmont rink's ice surface appears to be about that size.⁵⁰ Although the Cow Palace has a huge amount of seating, its actual ice surface (when set out) apparently is smaller than Berkeley Iceland's.⁵¹ Because it is an extremely multi-use arena, the Cow Palace has never offered the chance for year-round skating. Finally, none of those facilities can match Berkeley Iceland's broad and illustrious role in skating history.

Significance regarding Architecture. Iceland is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion C in the subject area of architecture. The pertinent context is commercial architecture in Northern California, 1920–1966. In this regard the property's

⁴¹ Ibid., 7.

⁴² Studley, "Iceland," 21.

⁴³ Fairchild, "Berkeley Iceland," 25.

⁴⁴ Grassetti, landmark application, 4.

⁴⁵ East Bay Iceland Inc., Financial Campaign Executive Committee, "East Bay Iceland," sixth page (unnumbered).

⁴⁶ Ibid., seventh page (unnumbered).

⁴⁷ Grassetti, landmark application, 7.

⁴⁸ Gust, "A Wintry Institution Reopens."

⁴⁹ KVIE, "Frozen in Time."

⁵⁰ Yelp, "Belmont Iceland."

⁵¹ Wikipedia, "History."

period of significance was 1940, when Iceland was built, and its significant date was the same year. The relevant property type consists of arenas suitable for ice skating. Iceland is strongly representative of this type and in some ways outstanding.

General Background. The increased popularity of ice skating induced a rink-building boom starting in the late 1920s. Rinks constructed in the Bay Area included the Oakland Ice Arena (1928); New Dreamland Auditorium (1928), a multi-use facility later renamed Winterland, in San Francisco; New Iceland (1932), also in San Francisco; the San Francisco Ice Rink (1935); a rink at Sutro Baths (1938); and of course Berkeley's Iceland (1940). Except for the rink in Berkeley, all of these have since been demolished.⁵²

Meanwhile, architectural styles in general were changing. The "zigzag" phase of Art Deco, which had become popular in the mid-1920s, morphed into the Moderne style of the 1930s with its streamlined and sparer look. Moderne reflected in part the tightened economics of the Depression years. The style came to be used for numerous commercial and public buildings.

Other Properties for Comparison. Sacramento's Iceland, Belmont Iceland, and the Cow Palace are also suitable for comparison as to architecture.

Specific Evaluation of Berkeley Iceland. Berkeley's Iceland well embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction.

It contains the kinds of facilities typical of a major ice rink. The building, erected by the renowned W.A. Bechtel Co., well exemplifies reinforced concrete construction and the use of steelwork to support a large roof. Structural engineer Thomas F. Chace had previously worked on the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, Kezar Stadium, California Memorial Stadium, and a retrofit of the Berkeley High School Gymnasium.⁵³

The large arena, with its Olympic-size ice surface, vaulting steelwork, and broad high ceiling, is very impressive. The long northern and southern clerestory window bands and multiple windows in the west and east walls bathe the arena with natural light during the day: something rare in rink design.⁵⁴

In a 2007 letter to the City of Berkeley's Landmarks Preservation Commission Michael F. Crowe, author of two books on Art Deco, called Iceland "a superb example of the later phase of the Art Deco Style, often called Streamline Moderne."⁵⁵ The building indeed significantly displays features that are very characteristic of Moderne. They include stepped massing, rounded corners, horizontal scoring, stepped pilasters, multi-light steel-sash windows, and Moderne lamps. The style is used here skillfully, and aptly.

The front pavilion's central bay, with its handsome lamps, canopy, neon sign, and terrazzo porch, is distinctive and welcoming. The arena's gabled west facade, with its tall windows and pilasters increasing in height to parallel the roofline above, is majestic and memorable. The building's essential feeling is importantly carried all around the arena, by devices that include scoring, rounded corners, and the window pattern at the arena's east end. The building's sleek lines suggest the speed and fluidity of ice skating. The curves at the arena exterior's four outmost corners even seem to refer to the curved corners of the skating surface inside.

Having strong historic integrity, Berkeley Iceland amply conveys its important design qualities.

Sacramento's Iceland—whose interesting facade makes extensive use of glass block—can be described as Moderne in style. However, the building is much smaller than Berkeley's Iceland and its arena space evidently is much less dramatic.⁵⁶ The Cow Palace contains an arena with a great amount of seating, and the building might loosely be described as Moderne. But an architectural guidebook has called it "a particularly graceless work of architecture."⁵⁷ Belmont Iceland, which was built after the period when Moderne was in vogue, has a plain circa-1960 look.⁵⁸ Its arena is significantly less spacious than that of Berkeley Iceland.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

(These matters are addressed above within the Narrative Statement of Significance.)

⁵² Grassetti, form and continuation sheets, 8.

⁵³ Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, "Berkeley Landmarks Designated in 2007."

⁵⁴ Grassetti, form and continuation sheets, 4.

⁵⁵ Crowe, letter to Landmarks Preservation Commission.

⁵⁶ KVIE, "Frozen in Time."

⁵⁷ Gebhard et al., *The Guide to Architecture*, 122.

⁵⁸ Advameg, "Skating Rinks: Belmont Iceland Ice Skating."

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Assn.

There is also considerable information in records at the City of Berkeley's Planning and Development Department.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.9
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 _____

3 _____

Iceland
Name of Property

Alameda County, CA
County and State

Zone Easting Northing
2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Zone Easting Northing
4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundaries of the nominated property are the same as those of Assessor's parcel 054-1723-002-00.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the contributing building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Sutton English (as consultant, for Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association)
organization Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association date Revised May 28, 2010
street & number 2500 Hillegass Avenue, Apt. 3 telephone (510) 845-6116
city or town Berkeley state CA zip code 94704-2937
e-mail kn_johnenglish@knpanel.com

The street address, phone number, and e-mail address shown in section 11 are those of John Sutton English himself, who prepared the application for the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA). That organization's mailing address is P.O. Box 1137, Berkeley, CA 94701. Its office and archives are at 2318 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704. Its phone number is (510) 841-2242. Its e-mail address is baha@berkeleyheritage.com.

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: December 19, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking southeast toward Iceland's front pavilion and west facade of the arena.

1 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: December 19, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking northeast toward Iceland's front pavilion and west facade of the arena

2 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: December 19, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking east toward central bay of front pavilion.

3 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: December 19, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Close-up view looking east toward lantern and corner of central bay and canopy of front pavilion

4 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: November 14, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking southeast toward west facade of the arena

5 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: November 14, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking south toward rear portions of Iceland

6 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: November 14, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking west, through adjacent commercial property, toward east facade of Iceland

7 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: November 14, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking east showing the arena's northern side wing and the berm along Derby Street

8 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: December 19, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking east or northeast, past freestanding sign, toward the arena's southern side wing and the berm along Ward Street

9 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: November 14, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking northwest toward the arena's southern side wing and the berm along Ward Street

10 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: December 19, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking north or northwest toward rear portions of Iceland

11 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: December 19, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking south along Milvia Street past Iceland's front pavilion (left) and the King Child Development Center (right), toward residential buildings in the background

12 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: John Sutton English

Date Photographed: November 14, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking east (through a front door's glass) into entrance lobby with fireplace

13 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: Tom Killilea

Date Photographed: February 5, 2008

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking south inside warming room (former "cafe soda fountain")

14 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: Tom Killilea

Date Photographed: October 20, 2008

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking northwest toward the arena's west side

15 of 17.

Iceland
Name of Property

Alameda County, CA
County and State

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: Tom Killilea

Date Photographed: October 20, 2008

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking east through the arena

16 of 17.

Name of Property: Iceland

City or Vicinity: Berkeley

County: Alameda

State: CA

Photographer: Tom Killilea

Date Photographed: October 20, 2008

Description of Photograph(s) and number: View looking northeast toward the arena's northeast corner

17 of 17.

Photographs 1 through 13 above were shot on film. The original negatives for them are at the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association. Photographs 14 through 17 were shot digitally. TIFF files for them are on the accompanying CD-R.

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name East Bay Iceland Inc.

street & number 7212 San Ramon Rd telephone (925) 829-4444

city or town Dublin state CA zip code 94568-3244

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.).

Iceland
Name of Property

Alameda County, CA
County and State

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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.