



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 15, 2010 REPORT NO. HRB-10-030

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of July 22, 2010

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 –Pilot National Register Nomination**

APPLICANT: Scott Baldwin, Maritime Museum of San Diego

LOCATION: 1492 N. Harbor Drive, Center City Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Review the National Register Nomination of the Pilot

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommend to the Office of Historic Preservation the listing of the Pilot, a 1914 wooden plank on frame pilot boat at the San Diego Maritime Museum, 1492 N. Harbor Drive, on the National Register of Historic Places for its role in the maritime history and development of San Diego and San Diego Bay, with a period of significance of 1914-1946, rather than the proposed 1914-1996



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## BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board pursuant to the Office of Historic Preservation requirement that the local jurisdiction be provided 60 days to review and comment on the nomination. The vessel is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A. Pilot is a 52 foot vessel of traditional, wooden plank on frame, round bottom construction specifically designed to deliver San Diego harbor pilots to and from large ships arriving to and departing from San Diego. The boat was constructed in 1914 in the San Diego shipyard of Manuel Goularte at 1964 Atlantic Avenue (now Harbor Drive), and now is located at the San Diego Maritime Museum.

In 1998, ownership of the Pilot was transferred to the Maritime Museum of San Diego. In 2001, the Maritime Museum completed an extensive restoration of the Pilot, partially funded through the National Maritime Act for Historic Preservation.

The vessel is not listed on the San Diego Register and has not been previously reviewed by the HRB.

## ANALYSIS

A National Register of Historic Places Nomination Report was prepared by Scott Baldwin of the San Diego Maritime Museum, which concludes that the resource is significant under Criterion A. Staff concurs that the structure is a significant historical resource under National Historic Register Criterion A, as follows:

*CRITERION A – Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.*

Pilot is moored at the San Diego Maritime Museum and used for daily educational and historical tours of the San Diego Bay. As stated in the nomination, “located on San Diego Bay where she spent her entire working life. She is berthed about 300 yards from where she was built.” The Maritime Museum is an ideal setting and the Pilot maintains integrity of location in its home port.

Pilot underwent a major restoration which was completed in 2001. Pilot's restored hull retains its original design and specifications as built in 1914. As described in the nomination, “it was painstakingly restored to its 1943 configuration, with careful attention paid to retain its historical detail.” Changes from the original as built appearance and design include a deck railing added in the 1920's. The smokestack has been enlarged and the original wheel house had a more “box like” shape which was enlarged by the Coast Guard when the vessel was commandeered for wartime service in 1943. These alterations are in keeping with Pilot's continuous operation and the incremental maintenance and replacement of equipment as warranted by active use. As stated in National Register Bulletin 20, "*Nominating Historic Vessels and Shipwrecks to the National Register of Historic Places*," “a vessel, like any other structure, changes with time. Vessels may be lengthened, deckhouses added or removed, and interior spaces modified for new uses. Changes occur over time, particularly those associated with a shift to different owners or trades,

if those owners or trades are historically significant, acquire significance in their own right." Because these changes were made during the Pilot's period of significance from 1914-1946, and because the changes (enlarging of the wheelhouse and smokestack) show its shift in service to its wartime role, these changes are historic in their own right and therefore consistent with the National Register standards for integrity.

Pilot's 2001 restoration to its 1943 configuration also included restoration of its hull to its original design with new laminated frames of Douglas fir carefully installed one by one, to replace the rotted frames. Much of the oak stem was rotted, and replaced with Douglas fir, due to the lack of appropriately dimensioned oak available. As stated in the National Register Nomination, "every attempt was made to duplicate original materials where possible," and "about 30% of the hull planking had to be replaced, and specifically ordered Spanish cedar was used to match as close as possible, the original cedar planks. The wheel house was extensively rebuilt with Douglas fir recycled from old buildings." Integrity of materials and workmanship were maintained and the National Register acknowledges the corrosive nature of the marine environment on historic vessels in the quotation from maritime historian Allan Villiers who observed that "historic vessels maintained and/or operated in the water ultimately become reconstructions or wrecks." Therefore, changes made to Pilot during its restoration were "in kind" and necessary for its continued operation as a historic vessel.

The Pilot was San Diego's first propeller driven pilot boat and was commissioned by senior pilot captain Peter Johnston, the only harbor pilot in San Diego to be killed in action, after falling while boarding a cargo ship in 1925. The National Register of Historic Places nomination states, "her heavy construction was typical of highest standards and best materials in the period and reflects the traditional craftsmanship and maritime heritage of her Portuguese-American master builder." Pilot delivered harbor pilots to every type of commercial and navy ship including regularly delivering harbor pilots in 1924 to the USS Langley, the first US aircraft carrier. Pilot was also used during the 1933 and 1934 tour of the USS Constitution. In 1946, the Pilot was returned to civilian service and in gratitude the Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, authorized Pilot to officially display six chevrons on its stack in recognition of its wartime service.

The Pilot is eligible under National Register of Historic Properties Criterion A for its association with water-related transportation between 1914 and 1946. The Coast Guard commandeered Pilot in 1943 for wartime service both as a pilot boat and patrol boat. At this time the pilot house was enlarged by the Coast Guard from the original "box like" construction to its present design/shape. Pilot was then taken over by the Navy to serve in the same capacity. During the Second World War Pilot delivered harbor pilots to many of the most significant naval vessels in the Pacific including the Enterprise CV-6, both Yorktowns, the Arizona BB-39, the flagship of the 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet CA-35, the Indianapolis and President Roosevelt's flagship.

"She is a part of San Diego Naval history, delivering harbor pilots to every manner of navy ship for many years. Aircraft carriers, destroyers, frigates, cruisers, battleships, colliers, troop transports and oilers all took on harbor pilots from this little vessel," as stated in the National Register Nomination. Applicable areas of significance for Pilot according to National Register Bulletin 20 would include Maritime, Military significance for its service during World War II,

Assisting Military Ships in the interwar, and postwar period, and the Commerce area for it assisting commercial vessels throughout its period of significance (1914-1946).

CONCLUSION

Based on the information submitted, it is recommended that the Historic Resources Board forward a positive recommendation for Pilot to the Office of Historic Preservation for listing on the National Register of Historical Places and with the recommendation that the period of significance be 1914-1946 rather than the proposed 1914-1996. If listed on the National Register, this resource would be eligible for listing on the San Diego Register.



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Attachment: Applicant's National Register of Historical Resources Nomination Report under separate cover