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 **Ray Gibson Caballeros Club**

other names/site number Caballeros Club

2. Location

street & number 1516 S 28th Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Tacoma ☐ vicinity

state Washington code WA county Pierce code 053 zip code 98409

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this __X__ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property __X__ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide __X__ local

Applicable National Register Criteria

__X__ A ___ B ___C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

WASHINGTON STATE SHPO
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

Ray Gibson Caballeros Club
Name of Property

Pierce County, Washington
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [X] private
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		site
	2	structure
		object
1	2	**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

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: Clubhouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: Clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: WOOD: plywood
roof: SYNTHETICS: Rubber
other:

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.)

The Ray Gibson Caballeros Club sits on a large site at the southern edge of the Hilltop neighborhood in Tacoma, Washington. Hilltop is an eponymous sobriquet, as it has the highest topography in the city. The southern end of the neighborhood is situated at the edge of a steep bluff that borders an industrial area known as Nalley Valley. First constructed in 1946 as a single-family residence, the nominated building began its use as the clubhouse in 1962 and was extensively remodeled in 1972. The building features a flat roof and other design elements that relate to mid-century Modern design and does not reflect its original residential use. The building design follows the natural slope of the hill, with additional construction at the basement level. Overall, the building form is rectangular.

Site:

The clubhouse site is a semi-rectangular lot which accommodates a large, paved parking area on the north and east sides of the lot. Landscaped areas are minimal and are located at the periphery of the building site and within the parking lot. A row of large Juniper bushes lines the northern boundary and shield the clubhouse from the surrounding residential properties. Minimal foundation planting can also be found. The club building occupies the center-south of the lot.

The site slopes steeply to the south, accommodating a daylight basement and rear concrete patio at the southeast corner of the building; facilitating expansive views of Nalley Valley and Mt. Rainier to the south and east. At the southern and eastern borders of the site is a 6’ tall chain link fencing. A chain link fence also extends around the main clubhouse room and protects a driveway at the east side of the building. The driveway gives direct access to the main clubhouse room for ADA and service needs. The western side of the lot has a gravel, overflow parking area, defined by large concrete ecology blocks.

Exterior:

The building form has three primary masses: the original 1946 residence (a two-story structure on the western end of the building); the 1972 main clubhouse room addition (a one-story, concrete structure built into the hillside on the eastern end of the building); and the 1972 stairwell which connects the original residential portion of the building to the addition. The walls and foundation of the original 1946 residential structure remain. In 1972 the walls were re-clad, the roof removed, and a new flat roof was installed. The roof has shallow, overhanging eaves and is finished with a rolled asphalt membrane. Attached to the front of the building is a flat roof porte cochere, which shelters visitors as they arrive to the main entry.

The mid-century modern building features a stepped design following the natural slope of the hill. The overall footprint and form are irregular, due to the phased development. The building had a rectangular footprint in its early days, before the 1972 remodel (see included site plan). All exterior finishes and the roof forms reflect the 1972 remodel.

Typical siding includes a combination of notched vertical boards, T-1-11, and plywood sheets with battens. Typical windows include both aluminum (likely installed in 1972) and vinyl sash units (installed at a later date), along with fixed picture window glass on the southern facade stairwell and at the eastern addition. A small, one-over-one wood double-hung window in the north façade is the only remaining window from the original 1946 house. Typical exterior window trim consists of full height vertical wood trim pieces integrated into the façade composition as battens for the siding.

North Elevation:
The primary elevation is the northern façade. It comprises a modernist porte cochere leading to a covered porch housing the front door. The entry door is composed of painted panel double doors forming the club's logo, flanked by decorative obscure glass sidelights. The logo consists of a red circle enclosing a yellow circle featuring a black silhouette of the upper ¾ of a figure wearing a hat. The words “Ray Gibson’s Caballeros Club” are written in white letters.

Under the porte cochere, poured concrete steps lead up to a concrete landing (porch) and the double entrance doors. Three decorative metal balustrades line the steps – two at either side and one central. The exterior walls feature T & G grooved siding installed over asbestos shingle siding. Plywood covered with closely spaced vertical battens defines the main entrance porch. Forming the eastern side of the entry porch, turning the corner and extending east, is a wood framed freestanding wall with board and batten siding. This wall screens the roof of the Main Hall from view at the main north entry.

Projecting eaves define the roofline of the building. The closed fascia and flat soffit give the eaves the appearance of a box cornice. The bottom side of the port cochere roof has an exposed rafter system.

West Elevation:
The western facade of the building is characterized by a board-formed concrete foundation exposed towards the north, T-1-11 and notched vertical board siding, and vinyl sash replacement windows. Two of the windows are 1:1 single-hung and one is a fixed single lite. The window jambs are accented by full height vertical battens. The southern portion of the facade is full height siding.

South Elevation: The southern façade is the rear of the building. The primary features are the T-1-11 and notched vertical board siding, the asymmetrical massing (including the projecting stairwell bay), and aluminum framed ribbon windows. The two non-contributing outbuildings described below are sited towards the western side of the south elevation. An added patio enclosure obscures most of the southern windows of the Main Hall. One set of glass double doors accesses the Main Hall space towards the east end of the south elevation.

Fenestration on the western end of the façade consists of aluminum frame windows and doors at the lower level. The lower level contains a commercial aluminum frame glass door and large sidelight on the western end and three more aluminum sash windows lighting the bar area.

A covered patio for weather protection was added to the south side of the main hall in 1992. The enclosure consists of a shed roof, metal pipe columns, and poured concrete slab floor. It is enclosed on the south with corrugated polycarbonate and on the east with vinyl sheeting.

East Elevation:
The east elevation of the Caballeros Club features a covered entry drive/entry porch. Adjacent to this is an area that should have vertical siding matching the exterior but is currently occupied by the screen wall described above which is clad in plywood siding. Towards the south, the wall frame lacks siding but is painted to harmonize with the color scheme of the club.

A ribbon window adorns the ground floor, but the lower floor windows may be obscured by the club's extension which now houses the main hall and outdoor covered seating. Noteworthy elements include a cast iron vent pipe and the roof deck of the lower floor main hall.

Interior:

The 1946 portion of the structure includes the main (north) entrance, kitchen, restrooms, and a small café (dining area) on the main floor and a bar area in the basement. The 1972 addition on the east side of the building is a single-story, large open space (main hall, or club room) approximately one foot lower than the basement of the original structure. The Main Hall (club room) serves as the primary social space for the club; the social function extends to the west into the basement bar space.

From the main north entry, the primary space is the entry hall with a display of photographs of former club presidents. Track lighting illuminates their portraits and other informational displays on the walls. The entry hall extends north-south and transitions in color scheme, changing from white-painted wooden boards to glossy wood finishes and finally to red-painted boards towards the staircase, defining a virtual demarcation of the areas within the building.

The entry hall leads south to an added stairwell with more framed pictures of club members and events from the past. Red decorative columns are located along the hall approaching the stairwell. A white painted paneled double-loaded corridor leads west from the entry hall to a small café/dining room located in the southwestern corner of the plan and a small kitchen area to the east of that. The finishes in the dining area consist of laminate flooring, textured gypsum drywall, and painted ceilings. On the northern side of the hall is a restroom and pantry.

The U-shaped staircase has floating double-stringers with thick wooden treads spanning the approximately 4-foot width. Stair railings consists of oak turned balusters, a rail cap, and narrow turned newels at each turning. Windows on three sides of the stair volume offer views of the Nalley Valley as one moves from each building level.

At the base of the staircase, folding accordion-style partitions access the main hall to the east. The main hall is a large rectangular space stretching east-west, on the eastern side of the building. Added as an event space, it features a small wooden stage at the east end. There are two sets of glass double doors with sidelights that open to the southern patio. These doors flank eight large windows, grouped in two sets of four, which provide sweeping views of the Cascade Mountain range, Mount Rainier, and the valley edge.

Character-defining features of the main hall are the deep, exposed wood ceiling beams and the wooden chair rail which rings most of the room. The flooring transitions from vinyl to laminate at the stage area.

The bar is a small space opposite the main hall, at the western end of the basement level. It is characterized by regularly spaced windows along the exterior (southern) wall and a service entry at the southwestern corner. The bar is decorated with more framed pictures and a logo like that on the main entry doors.

Alterations:

Although an architectural sketch[1] informs of a grander vision of the designer for the club's expansion, the actual construction was modest. Since the 1972 remodel, building permits suggest the club building has undergone few alterations, and today it maintains a high level of integrity. Those completed have been cosmetic in nature, and have not required building permits. Renovations in 1972 included a complete reworking of the dwelling to facilitate the club's operations.[2]

After traffic and parking concerns were raised by the neighbors, a special use permit was granted in 1963. This allowed the establishment an off-street parking area in an "R-2" one-family dwelling district[3]. Later, a waiver of

[1] "Caballeros To Remodel And Expand," *Tacoma News Tribune*, March 12, 1967.
[2] Inspection Record E16487, City of Tacoma, 1963, https://www.govme.org/E-BLUS/ScannedDocs/InspCards/F18/000227CB.pdf (accessed March 19, 2024).
[3] Special Use Permit File No. 121.1203, City of Tacoma, 1991, https://www.govme.org/E-BLUS/ScannedDocs/SUP/F1/000037EB.pdf (accessed March 19, 2024).

off-street parking development standards led to the construction of a gravel parking lot[4]. Later permitted alterations include the construction of a detached storage shed in 1994[5], and additional plumbing[6] and heating upgrades[7].

Note: some aspects shown on the 1972 remodel drawings were not completed, such as a planned doorway in the east elevation and a north window removal. Wrought iron railings were originally planned to create a balcony level over the main hall but were never completed. Additionally, a door at the southwest corner was proposed to be a window in the drawings.

Non-Contributing Structures:
Partially obscuring the southern façade are two non-contributing outbuildings at the rear of the building, both used for storage. The smaller shed, constructed in 1994 and has a partially finished exterior, with exposed OSB sheathing. This light wood frame 8' x 10' structure has a shallow gable-front roof and single-leaf, six-panel metal door located on the east wall facing the outdoor patio. The building is partially hidden by the enclosed covered patio.

The larger shed outbuilding, tucked into the southwest corner of the club building is a windowless shed. It is oriented east/east with a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles and moderately overhanging eaves. It has a single-leaf six-panel metal door on the west façade. Painted beige, it is clad with T1-11 siding. There is no construction date known for the second shed.

Recorded Building Permits

Date	Description (Permit No.)
May 28 1946	Building: Residence $8000. (Owner- R. I Gerlack) (8889)
Oct 09 1946	Plumbing: 1 Toilet, 1 L. Tray (Owner- R. Gerlack) (14879)
Oct 09 1946	Sewer: Noted- no sketches
Apr 23 1947	Building: Chicken House $150. (Owner- R. Gerlack) (1712)
Aug 29 1963	Building: Remodel basement for S/F dwell. for private club. $2200 (Special Use Permit granted) (Owner- Caballeros Club) (E16487)
Sep 10 1963	Plumbing: 2 wash basins, 2 floor drains, 1 urinal, 1 bar sink (Owner- Caballeros Club by Grosser & Co.) (C8263)
Nov 12 1971	Building: Remodel $5,000. Addition $38,000- interior remodeling & addition to club (Owner- Caballeros Club by Boddie's Bldg. Const.) (E39275)
Jan 21 1972	Plumbing: 4 water closets, 4 wash basins, 2 floor drains, 2 urinals (Owner- Caballeros Club by Union Plumbing.) (D12087)
Feb 14 1972	Heating: 1 Basement furnace, 1 gas piping (Owner- Caballeros Club by Western Furnaces) (A31677)
Feb 24 1972	Heating: 1 conversion burner (Owner- Caballeros Club by Wash. Nat. Gas) (A31720)
Dec 02 1983	Building Inspection Record (834465)- null and void/ expired permit
Apr 16 1991	File No. 121.1203: A special use permit to allow an off-street parking area serving the Caballeros Club in a "R-2" One-Family Dwelling District. File No. 122.459: A waiver of off-street park lot development standards to allow the development of a gravel park lot.
Mar 19 1993	Plumbing: Permit WH1 (Water Heater) (931201)-null and void/expired permit
Sep 07 1994	Construct storage shed at club site (943034)
Jul 18 2006	Repair of side sewer (77659)

[4] Special Use Permit #121.204, City of Tacoma, 1979, https://www.govme.org/E-BLUS/ScannedDocs/SUP/F1/000038DC.pdf (accessed March 19, 2024).
[5] Building Inspection Record 943034, City of Tacoma, 1994, https://www.govme.org/E-BLUS/ScannedDocs/InspCards/F18/000227CE.pdf (accessed March 19, 2024).
[6] Inspection Record D12087, City of Tacoma, 1972, https://www.govme.org/E-BLUS/ScannedDocs/InspCards/F18/000227CB.pdf (accessed March 19, 2024).
[7] Inspection Record A31677 and A31720, City of Tacoma, 1972, https://www.govme.org/E-BLUS/ScannedDocs/InspCards/F18/000227CB.pdf (accessed March 19, 2024).

Ray Gibson Caballeros Club
Name of Property

Pierce County, Washington
County and State

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.)

- [X] 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.)

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.)

Ethnic Heritage: Black
Social History
Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance
1962-1972

Significant Dates
1962
1972

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Boddie, A.O. (contractor)
Petty, Alfred (designer)
Hansen & Chalker (structural engineer)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

The Ray Gibson Caballeros Club in Tacoma, Washington, is historically significant under Criterion A as a resource that is directly associated with the Black community of Tacoma. Serving as the home of the Caballeros Club, a community-based men's social club, since it's opening the clubhouse has served as a social, recreational, and cultural hub for hundreds of events ranging from birthdays, dances, weddings, anniversaries, lectures, and performances for 60+ years.

The building was originally designed as a single-family dwelling and underwent a significant remodel and expansion in 1972. Established in 1957, the club, who purchased the nominated site in 1962, is one of the oldest Black-owned establishments in the city. The building provided one of the only safe places where Black Americans could congregate and celebrate during the years of racial segregation in the 1960s and 1970s. Renamed to honor one of the clubs most influential founders, Ray Gibson, the club's early membership was largely military members stationed at the nearby military bases of Fort Lewis and McChord who arrived in the Pacific Northwest as part of the great migration at the beginning of WWII.

Over the years, numerous members of the club (both men and women) have played important roles in shaping the community of Tacoma. Many have been involved in the cultural, civic, and social networks of the city including the "Colored Masons", the Urban League, and NAACP. To this day the building continues to function as a nexus for the leaders of the Black community in the city and as a cultural hub for the Black community.

The period of significance begins in 1962, the year the club purchased the nominated building, and ends in 1972, the year the club remodeled an existing dwelling into the present modern clubhouse.

Segregation in Tacoma

Despite the existence of de facto segregation and race-based violence, the city of Tacoma had long been known as a place for opportunity for African American men. Horace Cayton, who wrote about Tacoma in the Seattle Republican: Northwest Negro Progress Number newspaper in 1909 described the city as one of "the few towns on the Pacific Coast to offer better opportunities to the Negro Man." [8] However, in the same paper Gustave B. Aldrich, a prominent attorney in Tacoma, also wrote about widespread racial discrimination in Tacoma:

> *"The habit of constantly depreciating the Negro People, despising Negro efforts, instead of helping the situation, has developed a timidity, a fear to branch out, a distrust of Negro enterprises and of Negro businesses and professional men."* [9] [10]

[8] Horace Cayton was a well-known African American newspaperman and publisher in Seattle, Washington in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. *The Seattle Republican: Northwest Negro Progress Number*, vol. XIV No. 1, p.28, 1909

[9] Gustave B. Aldrich, Attorney, "For the Right Kind of Negro, What Does Tacoma Offer," *The Seattle Republican: Northwest Nego Progress Number*, vol. XIV No. 1, p.28, 1909

[10] Language in this document may reflect outdated terms that are not socially acceptable, such as "Colored" or "Negro." In the past these terms were used to identify a race of people who have also been termed, "Black", and "African American" when being identified as a person of African descent. These "race" identity markers were used as a social construct to marginalize and exclude a people. In this document each of these terms may be referenced interchangeably as one ethnicity. According to the website of Mission US, a public media project implies that, "terminology for people of African descent, in particular, has evolved, been contested, and remains malleable to this day. Terms such as "Colored," "Negro," "Black," and "African American" have come in and out of usage and acceptance for a number of reasons." (Pamela N. Walker) https://www.mission-us.org/2022/11/08/historical-terms-and-why-they-matter, accessed website June 23, 2023.

In the early part of the 20th century the Black American population in Tacoma was not large, just 778 individuals in 1910.[11] Initially they resided across the city and were not restricted in where they could live. However, due to economic factors, there were concentrations of Black Americans in the city. Among them was the Alliance Addition (known today as the Hilltop neighborhood, the site of the nominated property). Established c.1870 by George P. Riley and the Joint Workingman's Stock Association, it soon became a dense area where many non-white citizens settled and called home, creating a de-facto segregated city.[12]

At the turn-of-the-century racially restrictive covenants began to more formally restrict where non-whites could live in the city. The first such covenant in Tacoma was put forth by Seattle-based real estate developer Clarence D. Hillman on March 20, 1907. Utilized by developers for 60+ years, the legal status of the use of covenants remained uncertain until a 1926 U.S. Supreme Court case validated their use. Afterward the real estate industry promoted the use of restrictive covenants in cities and towns across the country. As the covenants grew in popularity, in Tacoma alone by 1948 there were 87 subdivisions in the city with racial restrictive covenants covering thousands of parcels in the northern, western, and central areas of community. These covenants left the neighborhoods of Hilltop, Hawthorne Hill and much of south Tacoma as the only areas where people of color could live.[13]

The effort to segregate Tacoma was spearheaded by the Tacoma Real Estate Board (TREB) and their use of the so called "Redline Maps" produced by lenders in the 1930s. With the backing of the Homeowners Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Agency (FHA), the maps defined areas of communities where investments were safe and where they were not.[14] Areas with Black residents were automatically given a red, or "hazardous," grade. These racist designations would severely limited access to homeownership and wealth building opportunities for people in certain areas cities for generations to come.[15] It was under these restrictions that the Hilltop neighborhood (the location of the nominated clubhouse) developed as an enclave of Black Americans in Tacoma.[16]

When the United States entered WWII, maritime industries on the west coast required manual labor and Tacoma's shipyards boomed at the behest of the war effort. Black Americans were recruited from other parts of the United States to work in the defense industry. Many moved into homes formerly occupied by Japanese Americans who had been interned by the federal government. Others were housed in Salishan Project, a racially integrated wartime housing development. Some came for military service.[17] Stationed at Fort Lewis and McChord AFB, located just south of Tacoma, both bases established temporary housing for Black soldiers. Still a segregated military force, in 1941 Fort Lewis received 110 wood-frame temporary mobilization buildings as a separate camp for Black

[11] Hatch, Addy, "Black History in the Pacific Northwest," Washington State magazine, Spring 2024 https://magazine.wsu.edu/2024/02/01/black-history-in-the-northwest/#:~:text=Washington's%20Black%20population%20grew%20slowly,civil%20rights%20law%20before%201950.
[12] Dr. Turkiya L. Lowe "George Putnam Riley (1833-1905)" January 11, 2018 https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/riley-george-putnam-1833-1905/
[13] Mapping Inequality – Redlining in New Deal America https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/map/WA/Tacoma/context#loc=12/47.2361/-122.4748 History Link: redlining, Racial Covenants, and Housing Discrimination in Tacoma: https://www.historylink.org/File/22992
[14] Racial Restrictive Covenants Project - https://depts.washington.edu/covenants/segregation_tacoma.shtml
[15] Even though redlining practices were banned under federal and state law in the 1970s, discriminatory lending practices remain a problem still today
[16] Ibid.
[17] History Link: redlining, Racial Covenants, and Housing Discrimination in Tacoma: https://www.historylink.org/File/22992

American soldiers. After the war, racial segregation in the military was ended by President Harry S. Truman with Executive Order 9981 on July 26, 1948.

Due to this migration, between 1940 and 1970 the Black American population of Tacoma grew by over 10,000 persons. By 1970 nearly one-third of Pierce county's Black American population were military personnel at Fort Lewis.[18] The Caballeros Club benefited greatly from this influx and initially pulled many members from the nearby military bases.

Military desegregation did not translate to desegregation elsewhere. In the Pacific Northwest, while segregation was less encoded by law (de jure) it still was firmly encoded in practice and culture (de facto). Under "De facto segregation," Black Americans were still denied opportunities to buy property in "white" areas. They were denied access to financial services and were still mainly kept to the redlined areas of communities established in the 1930s. The sentiments regarding race were also reflected in social norms. Black Americans continued to be denied service as a matter of course in bars, restaurants, theaters, and other gathering spaces. To help combat such racism, in Tacoma numerous organizations were formed. Among them was the *Tacoma Inter-Racial Council* formed in the early 1940s.[19] Led by Nettie Asberry and a Longshoreman Ernie Tanner, together they fought hard to end various forms of discrimination across all aspects of society in the city. Despite their efforts and others, the practice of "De facto segregation" led to the rise of social clubs such as the Caballeros Club which catered to the Black community.

Civil Rights and Social Clubs

While Washington State passed a civil rights act in 1959, civil rights and equal treatment under the law were not practiced in Tacoma and many other places in Washington State. In his memoir *Fighting for Dreams that Mattered*, former Tacoma Mayor, Harold Moss, describes the atmosphere of segregation in Tacoma in the post-war midcentury era of Tacoma:

> *"Well, in 1954, this is how it worked, folks. Discrimination in hiring, public accommodations, and housing in the Northwest was just dressed in a clean white shirt and tie, spoken by a pillar of society or from the mouth of a community leader, but it was just as debilitating as coming from the mouth of an avowed racist."*[20]

While Tacoma in the 1960s did not experience the violence that enflamed many northern cities, the "Mother's Day Disturbance" in the Hilltop neighborhood bore the seeds of similar frustration and served as a turning point in the struggle for equal rights in the city.[21] By then, the black population of Tacoma was mainly concentrated in Hilltop, a deteriorating inner-city neighborhood, with little political representation and a lack of economic opportunity.

Under Tacoma City Manager David Rowlands, the city in the late 1960s had successfully applied for a variety of federal urban renewal grant programs to help address the conditions in the Hilltop area. However, newly elected white Mayor A.L. Rasmussen (1967-69) opposed many of the

[18] Racial Restrictive Covenants Project - https://depts.washington.edu/labhist/maps-race-tacoma.shtml
[19] "Tacoma's Struggle for Civil Rights" – Washington State Historical Society https://www.washingtonhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Tacomas-Struggle-for-Civil-Rights-UPDATED.pdf
[20] Harold G. Moss, *Fighting for Dreams that Mattered*, 2016, p. 13
[21] https://blackpast.org/african-american-history/mother-s-day-disturbance-1969/

programs (particularly the Model Cities Program). He attempted to oust Rowlands and to dismantle both the city manager form of government and Tacoma's *Human Relations Commission*.[22]

Triggered by a police officer stop and an attempted arrest on the Hilltop, the "Mother's Day Disturbance" on May 11, 1969, sparked a night of angry, youthful confrontation and property destruction, and the shooting of a policeman. When the conflict broke out, a group of emerging Black American civil rights advocates—including Thomas Dixon Executive Director of the *Tacoma Urban League*, James Walton (who would become Tacoma's first black city manager in 2003), and Harold Moss (who would become Tacoma's first black mayor in 1994). All were members of the Caballeros Club and helped successfully contain the violence, negotiated with the City Council, and won concessions. In the days immediately following the Mother's Day Disturbance, black spokespersons demanded increased neighborhood services and black representation on the police and fire departments, which they achieved.

Out of this pivotal moment grew several community groups and organizations that catered to Black citizens of the city. Among them was the "Concerned Black Citizens", a dedicated group of individuals who met once a week to directly address issues concerning the Black American community of Tacoma and Pierce County.[23] Other Black-focused organizations included the Tacoma Urban League; the Black Businessmen's Association of Tacoma and Pierce County; the Price Hall Masons; the Tacoma Association of Colored Women's Club; and the Caballeros Club. Many of these organizations in the late 1960s and early 1970s built new buildings and/or updated existing buildings to help facilitate their discussions about equal rights and to uplift the community as a whole.

Although churches were often the epicenter of the Black community social life, individual social clubs and other organizational spaces offered supplemental spaces to meet. Clubs, like the Caballeros, would be devoted to social enjoyment, philanthropy, mutual aid, civil rights, urban development, and civic service.

Caballeros Club

As a social club, the Caballeros Club took shape in the mid-1950s. In 1956 George A. Strickland and Howard Woods met to discuss the possibility of establishing a community-based social club specifically for the local Black men of Tacoma. After gathering a group of like-minded individuals, an organizational meeting was held in January 1957. At the first meeting Arthur Fox was elected President; Howard Woods (Vice-President); Sidney Breckenridge (Recording Secretary); John Harper (Corresponding Secretary); and Junior Collins (Treasurer). The Club members chose "Caballeros", the Spanish word for "gentlemen", as their club's name. There was a precedent for social club. Similar clubs had already been formed in cities like Seattle (The Royal Esquire Club 1947) and Portland, Oregon.[24]

The original members included: Louis W. Bazar; James Burnett; James Kors (a civil engineer - Horace Whitacre & Assoc); Paul Johnson; Robert H. McConnel; Willie "Vollie" Johnson; Ernest Edenwood; Hardy Crisp Jr. (a laborer - Fort Lewis); Charles Horne; Robert M. Morris (a mechanic – MROD); Charles Owens; John Webb; James Watson (a laborer – Boeing); Charles James (a mechanic - Boeing); Wilmer Catley (an equipment operator - Fort Lewis); Edward Claxton (a

[22] https://blackpast.org/african-american-history/mother-s-day-disturbance-1969/
[23] Today known as the "Tacoma-Pierce County Black Collective", the volunteer leadership organization, continues to work to cater to the problems that affect the Black American population in the city.
[24] Pinkney

longshoreman); Joe Wilson; Herbert N. Palm (an employee - Carsten Packing Co.); and Herbert Handy.[25, 26] Most of the initial membership were young men in their 20s and 30s and the first Club bylaws indicated that members were required to memorize the liquor laws and regulations, presumably in case any members were questioned regarding their rights when they congregated together.[27]

At the time, there were few gathering places in or around Tacoma that were safe to socialize for members of the Black community.[28] The Caballeros Club would fill a void were Black men and their families could relax, and express solidarity and joy. Author and early member of the club Harold Moss recounted that restaurants in Tacoma commonly denied service to people of color, and members of Caballeros Club were not able to find spaces to rent for club meetings and social activities. [29], [30]

Instead, the club gathered in a variety of locations, initially member's homes. Their first known regular meeting location was the Cassia Lodge No.5 F&AM – Prince Hall (1702 S "K" Street (now known as M.L.K Jr. Way)), an all-Black Masonic lodge.[31] In May 1960 the club began renting space in the Carmichael Building (1555 S Tacoma Avenue).[32] Home to various restaurants and night clubs, as well as apartments on the second floor, the building had long been used as a safe place for Black Americans. Per the "Green Book", in the 1940s and 50s it was a stopping for Black motorists. Then known as the Monte Carlo Restaurant, it was within the so-called "Redlined" area of Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood. [33] By 1962, the name of the business had shifted to the Cavalier Club, but the space continued to host the Caballeros Club until 1963.

However, the space was too small for large gatherings. By 1959 the Caballeros Club had already grown to 76 members, and they desired to have a home of their own. [34] Members began searching for a proper meeting location in Tacoma. The most logical location was within the Hilltop neighborhood, the area in which many of their members lived. In 1962, members Charles Stubblefield and Ray Gibson found the current site at 1516 S 28th Street and purchased the lot from R.I. Gerlack. [35] Included on the site was a small house which would serve as a basement meeting space.[36] At the time however, the land was zoned residential, so the Club had to request a Special Use permit from the city to operate the venue as a social club.[37] Despite some objections, the City Planning Commission approved the permit on August 19, 1963.[38] Club member Carl T. McDaniels, who joined

[25] Pinkney
[26] Christina Abby, image shared with author, April 20, 2024.
[27] Ibid
[28] Oral History by Carl T. McDaniels 2.22.2024
[29] Harold G. Moss, *Fighting for Dreams that Mattered*, 2016, p.25
[30] Personal Communication at Caballeros Club 4.20.2024
[31] The Lee Grant Rogers Lodge #61 PHA F&AM is referred to as the "Masonic Hall" later in the text
[32] The News Tribune, "Caballeros To Elect" December 7, 1960 p.49
[33] Historic Tacoma, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/HistoricTacoma/posts/pfbid0sbpz3dQDhxE2b9ECMTU3B3gtm1yQvZEJN2JduKYXAWbzt796DL7z6iV3QyaH8RXol (accessed Feb. 13, 2024)
[34] The News Tribune "Caballero Club (sic.) Seats Officers" January 4, 1959 p.18
[35] Ibid. Initially, The Carmichael functioned as an apartment building atop a pharmacy and transformed in the 1910s to become the Monte Carlo Hotel. Mrs. Mary Smothers managed the hotel alongside the adjacent Ford Hotel. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Carmichael Building and its lounge called the Ebb Tide were managed by the Gentleman's Club. The hotel was repurposed into apartments. However, the building eventually succumbed to demolition leaving behind a vacant lot at its original location. Notably, only two structures listed in the 1949 edition of the Negro Motorist Green Book still stand today: 1226 S State Street and 1017 S Trafton Street.
[36] Gerlack was born on February 17, 1904, in Canada and worked as a longshoreman for most of his life.
[37] The News Tribune, August 18, 1963, p.23
[38] The News Tribune, "Caballeros Club Site Approved" August 20 1963 p. 40

the club in 1962, recalled that noted civil rights attorney Elizabeth Shackleford assisted with legal matters that were required to establish the club.[39]

The existing house on the site worked for the club for a few years, but growth in membership and a desire to hold bigger events prompted the need for expansion. Plans began in early 1967 to double the size of the clubhouse.[40] As part of the permitting for the expansion, the club was granted an alley vacation between Cushman Street and Sawyer Street.[41] After funding was secured and plans were drawn, in 1972 the building underwent renovations, financed by twenty members who mortgaged their own homes to secure a $40,000 loan for the refurbishment and expansion of the property. This debt was fully repaid within four years. The contributors to this endeavor included Louis Bazar, Edward Claxton, Charles James, Robert H. McConnel, James Burnett, Charles Owens, Arthur Fox, Vollie Johnson, James Kors, James Watson, Charles Home, Ernest Edenwood, Robert Morris, Paul Johnson, Herbert Palm, Wilmer Catley, Hardy Crip, Joe Wilson, and John Webb.[42]

The grand opening of the remodeled clubhouse was held on May 6, 1972. At the end of the remodeling, the final cost of the work was reported to be $100,000.[43] Among the first events to be hosted in the newly remodeled building was a benefit for the Tacoma City Association of Colored Women's Clubhouse.[44] For the next 60+ years the newly remodeled clubhouse continued to house a variety of events. Typical events have included: birthday parties for the members, holiday parties for children, buffets, and formal dances, lectures, town meetings, game nights, reunions, memorial services, and live performance events. At its height, the Caballeros was known for regularly hosting weekly dances with live music and served as an important third place for many of its members.[45] Among the more important events is the annual Texans Juneteenth Celebration which began celebrating at the site in 1989 under the leadership of David Ware, a Texas native and military veteran stationed at Fort Lewis. [46]

Although the Club was and still is primarily a Black social club, membership was not restricted by race. In fact, Tacoma's divisive Mayor A. L. Rasmussen, a white man, was granted an honorary membership in the Caballeros Club, but his membership was rescinded in 1967 after he made his derogatory remarks about the Hilltop neighborhood regarding the Model Cities Program.[47]

Due to the location of the nearby Fort Lewis, military service members made up a significant number of Caballeros Club members. However, as the reputation of the Hilltop neighborhood declined, and crime in the neighborhood was reported in the news, Fort Lewis leadership began to discourage service members from joining the Caballeros Club. In fact, in the early 2000s, they banned membership in the club which resulted in an overall decline in membership.[48]

In 1989 the Caballeros Ladies Auxiliary was formed. Early members included: Theresa Bennett, Dr. Cynthia Jones, Anita Polk, Debera Porter, Bonnie Pinckney, Leveria Scott, and Karen Tillis. While

[39] Oral History by Carl T. McDaniels 2.22.2024
[40] The News Tribune, Caballeros To Remodel And Expand" March 12, 1967 p. 68
[41] The News Tribune "Other Approvals" September 19, 1967 p.29
[42] Pinkney
[43] The News Tribune, "Caballeros Club Quarters Ready," April 30, 1972 p.78
[44] The News Tribune, "Matrons Club Ready To Mark Anniversary," May 25, 1972
[45] Pinkney, Bonnie, "Caballeros turns 60 this year," Hilltop Action Journal, July/August 2017 p.14
[46] Oral History by Club member Mrs. Ware 4.20.2024
[47] The News Tribune "Caballeros Club Drops Rasmussen," December 7, 1967 p.69.
[48] Oral history by Daymen Smith on 4.20.2024

longtime club member Carl T. McDaniels reminisced that it was ladies who were the backbone of the club and who kept the place active, women were not allowed to become full formal members until October of 1994.[49] Then in 1998, after the untimely death of the Club President, Eugene Ellis, then Vice President, Bonnie Pinckney became the first female club President in 1999. During this period, Dr. Cynthia Jones served as Chair of the Executive Board, Theresa Bennett as treasurer, and Jo Ann Taylor as the Bar Manager.[50]

Today the Ray Gibson Caballeros Club remains an institution of high regard with a strong commitment to civic engagement and social progress. [51] The clubhouse serves as a vital home and nexus for Tacoma's Black community. Over its 70-year history, the club's leadership, presided by both men and women, have provided a safe and welcoming space for generations of Tacoma's citizens hosting numerous community, and private events, solidifying the club's status as a cornerstone of community life.[52]

Ray Gibson

One of the most influential and integral members of the club was charter member Ray Gibson. He chaired the Executive Committee for over 15 years and served as club manager for 11 years until his passing on April 10, 1974.

Referred to colloquially as both "Pops" and "Uncle Ray", among numerous affectionate sobriquets, Gibson's personal and financial commitment to the club was instrumental to its survival during the early years. Following his death, the club was closed for four days.[53] To commemorate his significant contributions, sometime prior to 1977 his name was officially incorporated into the club's name.[54]

Gibson was born in Tacoma on March 22,1899, to parents Daniel Webster Gibson and Edith M. Rascoe.[55] The couple moved to Tacoma from North Carolina in 1892 and there together they raised three sons: Daniel M. Jr., Edward, and Ray. [56] [57] Teaching his sons the importance of civic involvement, Daniel was active in the community and was a fixture at the Allen AME Church, and the Grand Order of Odd Fellows, Mt. Tacoma Lodge #3211. [58]

After graduating from Stadium High School in 1917, Ray took a job as a mechanic for the North Coast Bus line. Known as their number one mechanic, he stayed employed at the same company throughout his career and the consolidation of bus lines, and eventually retired from the company in 1964.[59]

At the age of 22, in 1921 Gibson married Nebraska native Madelyn Z. Roberts (sometimes spelled Madeline). Together they had three children, Ray Jr., Jaqueline Alice, and Robert D. Raising the family at 1112 S. M Street in Tacoma (demolished), together they were active in the community.[60]

[49] Oral History by Carl T. McDaniels 2.22.2024
[50] Pinkney
[51] Pinkney
[52] Pinkney
[53] The News Tribune "Lodges" April 12, 1974 p. 40
[54] The earliest reference per news papers to the name change is found in 1977 newspaper article. Tacoma News Tribune: Oct 5, 1977.
[55] Ancestry.com, "Ray Gibson 1899-1975 LifeStory," Accessed Jan 6, 2025.
[56] Samuel DeVow and Edward Pitter, *Who's Who in Washington State*, 1926-1927
[57] Tacoma Times, June 28, 1939 p.15
[58] Samuel DeVow and Edward Pitter, *Who's Who in Washington State*, 1926-1927
[59] Ray Gibson Caballeros Club 65th Anniversary program.
[60] Tacoma News Tribune "Program at Church" May 7 1932 p.3

Ray served as the treasurer and later exalted ruler of the Mount Tacoma Elks Lodge No. 142 (known as the "Colored Elks") in 1939, was a member of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge No. 27, and was a member of the Cassia Lodge No. 5 of the Free & Accepted Masons.[61] [62] In his spare time, he served as manager for the amateur baseball team "Tacoma Little Giants" (also known as the "Colored Giants" or "Meca Giants") from 1921 to 1926. He was also an active Democratic precinct committeeman for District 27.[63]

Throughout the years, Gibson acted as a strong role model in the community, providing mentorship and financial support to various members of the Caballeros Club. Willie B. Davis, one of the original members of the club, recalled that not only did Gibson mentor him as a young single military man, but he also provided him money to travel back home when Davis's father died.[64] Gibson also provided financial support to club contractor A. O. Boddie.

His first wife Madeline died suddenly in 1942.[65] Eventually Ray remarried in 1957. His second wife, Anita Barbee was also active in civic and community affairs, obtaining similar affectionate sobriquets to Ray. To friends she was known as both "Gaga" and "Aunt Neats" at the time of her death in 1998.[66]

Designer: Alfred Petty

To remodel the existing home into a clubhouse, the Caballeros Club hired Alfred Petty. A civil engineer by training, Petty was also an early member of the club. Born on November 25, 1926, in Ashville, North Carolina, he grew up in Washington D.C. After receiving his civil engineering degree from Howard University in Washington D.C., he was drafted into the Army. Serving in Korea, he worked with the Army Corps of Engineers erecting and dismantling strategic supply route bridges. Stationed out of Ft. Lewis in Tacoma, it was there he met his wife Annie Delores Carr. They married in August 1950 and together raised four children. Rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, he fully retired from the Army Reserves on November 25, 1986.

After his discharge, Petty took a job at the Boeing Company where he served as one of the first Black Americans to be hired as a civil engineer with the company. While working full-time, he decided to go back to school, earning a Master of Science degree in civil engineering at the University of Washington (1962). Petty was heavily involved in designing Boeing's newly designed air-to-ground missile systems and served as the equipment manager for their Airborne Suspension and Launch Equipment System. While at Boeing he also was sponsored to attend the MIT Sloane Fellows MBA Program, an elite mid-career Boeing executive degree program designed to accelerate leadership trajectories of top-tier employees.

After working for Boeing for seventeen years, in December 1970 Seattle Mayor Wes Uhlman appointed Petty (then age 44) to become the Superintendent of Buildings for the City of Seattle. His appointment as the first Black man to lead a city department was not without controversy, but he endured and assumed his new job in January 1971. While serving in this capacity for eight years, he approved the construction plans for hundreds of Seattle's buildings. After his tenure as Superintendent, he returned to his position at Boeing and retired from the company after 40 years of

[61] Tacoma Times "New Officers Head Colored Elks" July 16, 1940 p.8
[62] "Ex-Greyhound official dies," *Tacoma News Tribune*, April 13, 1974.
[63] "Ex-Greyhound official dies," *Tacoma News Tribune*, April 13, 1974.
[64] Oral History by Mr. Willie B. Davis, 01.24. 2024
[65] Tacoma News Tribune, "Mrs. Ray (Maelyn Roberts) Gibson" May 18, 1942, p.2
[66] Obit: The News Tribune "Anita Gibson, "Gaga" – "Aunt Neats"" September 21, 1998 p.B-3.

service. He then continued his involvement with the Boeing Company as a consultant.[67] Petty passed away in Seattle on March 21, 2013.

Building Contractor: A. O. Boddie

To complete the remodel of the building, club members hired local building contractor A.O. Boddie.[68] Born on April 3, 1933, Algernon Owen Boddie spent his early years in Demopolis, Alabama, before the family moved to Montgomery. After graduation from high school, he enrolled at the Tuskegee Institute. He excelled at his studies and joined the Omega Psi Phi fraternity - a historically Black fraternity known for its strong emphasis on community uplift, academic excellence, and civic action. Upon graduation, at the age of 22, in 1954 he joined the U.S. Air Force. After completing a tour of duty in France, he rose to the rank of First Lieutenant and was then transferred to McChord Air Force Base in Lakewood, Washington, where he was assigned to the 2701st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squadron.

After being discharged in the mid to late 1960s, he and his wife, Velma, started a construction company – Boddie Construction Company. Velma, who had also attended the Tuskegee Institute where she met Algernon, was a valuable asset to the team. She had a degree in business administration and served as Vice President of the company. Officially incorporated in 1970 the company had a steady stream of business for the next 40 years.

Known projects are scattered across the south sound region and include:

- Remodel of Madsoe Building into Prince Hall Masonic Temple, 1702 S. K St., Tacoma (1969)
- City Association of Colored Women's Club, 2316 S. Yakima, Tacoma (1970)
- Duplexes – 1720 & 1724 S. Sheridan, Tacoma (1970)
- VA Hospital remodel, American Lake (1972)
- McChord AFB gatehouse, Lakewood (1977)
- Fire station at US Navy's Trident nuclear submarine base, Bangor NB (1976)[69]
- State Highway Dept storage building, Kent (1977)[70]
- Totem Boat Haven Marina expansion, Tacoma (1979)
- Paradise Inn lodge rehabilitation, Mt. Rainier National Park (1975,1980)
- U.S. Coast Guard Station addition and gymnasium, Port Angeles (1981)
- Pierce County sheriff's precinct building, Tacoma (1985)
- Bates Technical College KTPS-TV Station remodel, Tacoma (1989)

Well respected among his peers, in 1982 Boddie was named to the executive committee of the Tacoma chapter of the Association of General Contractors (AGC), and in 1985 was elected president of the Tacoma Chapter.

Outside of work, Boddie was integral to his community, volunteering for public service on numerous boards and commissions. Among them was serving as head of the Tacoma Library Board (1978)[71]. In 2004, the Tacoma branch of the NAACP awarded Algernon and Velma their distinguished Community Service Award. At the award ceremony, the company was described as "a fixture in

[67] "Civil Engineers Will Install New Officers," Tacoma News Tribune, Jan. 14, 1971.
[68] "Caballeros Club Quarters Ready," Tacoma News Tribune, April 30, 1972.
[69] "Local firm ends Trident work," Tacoma News Tribune, June 22, 1976.
[70] "New Building," Tacoma News Tribune, Aug. 31, 1977.
[71] "People in business," Tacoma News Tribune, Feb. 07, 1985.

Tacoma's black community and the area at large for decades." Velma passed away on December 21, 2011, and Algernon, currently age 93, is retired and lives in Tacoma.

Hansen & Chalker Engineers

Key to the project was the hiring of the Tacoma engineering firm of Hansen & Chalker Engineers. They completed all of the structural details for the Caballeros Club remodel.[72] The firm had just opened for business five years prior to the Caballeros Club commission. However, they quickly grew and soon became one of the more prominent engineering firms in the city. Together they helped design numerous apartment buildings, large warehouses, subdivisions, and schools scattered around the south sound region.

The team of initial partners included Donald L. Hansen, a University of Washington civil and industrial engineering graduate; Noel R. Adams, a Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy; and Ray L. Chalker, an Oregon State University graduate. Other engineers followed including Cecil L. Browder, Lyman F. Bush, R.J. Fairbanks, Charles Juergens, Albert Mitchell, and John Stopforth. Formed in fall of 1965, Adams left the firm in 1969. Hansen left in 1973 to start a construction firm, Helico Construction, Inc.[73], but the firm retained its name for a few years before being renamed Chalker Engineers of Tacoma. In 1987 it was renamed PCS Engineers and remains in operation today as PCS Structural Solutions.[74]

[72] Drawings on File at the City of Tacoma
[73] "Firm here reorganized," Tacoma News Tribune, Oct. 14, 1973
[74] "Raymond Chalker Obituary," *Mountain View Funeral Home & Cemetery – Tacoma*, accessed February 11, 2026, https://www.mountainviewtacoma.com/obituaries/raymond-chalker.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

__X__State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

Ray Gibson Caballeros Club
Name of Property

Pierce County, Washington
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.44 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References ____NAD 1927 or ____NAD 1983

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1				3			
2				4			

Or Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
1	47.235245°	-122.454083°	3	47.234697°	-122.452954°
2	47.235242°	-122.452941°	4	47.234559°	-122.454088°

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

The nominated area is located in Section 08, of Township 20, Range 03 east of the Willamette Meridian in Pierce County, Washington and is legally described as Lots 1-7 of Block 2 & Lots 1-8 of Block 3 of the Railback Addition. It is otherwise identified as Tax Lot 7105000051 at the said location.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property encompasses the entire urban lot that is occupied by the Ray Gibson Caballeros club.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen Mirro, Monette Hearn (Edited by DAHP Staff)
organization Studio TJP date August 2026
street & number 5500 Rainier Ave S telephone 206-523-1618
city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98118
e-mail ellen@tjp.us

Ray Gibson Caballeros Club
Name of Property

Pierce County, Washington
County and State

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.)

Ray Gibson Caballeros Club

Pierce County Assessor Map

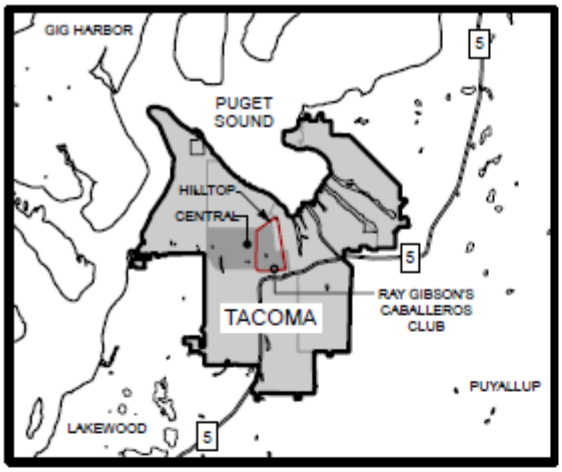
Parcel No. 7105000051

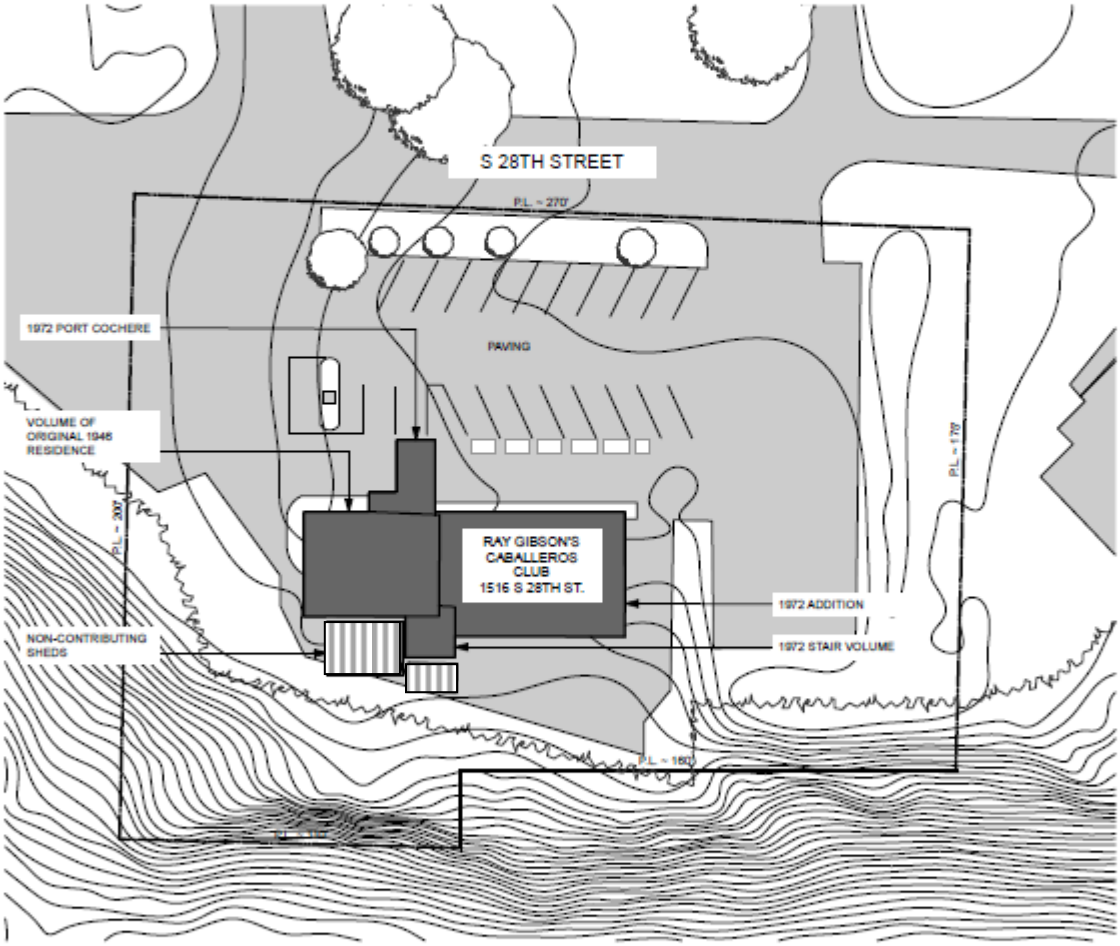
1	47.235245° Latitude	-122.454083° Longitude	3	47.234697° Latitude	-122.452954° Longitude
2	47.235242° Latitude	-122.452941° Longitude	4	47.234559° Latitude	-122.454088° Longitude

Ray Gibson Caballeros Club

Pierce County Assessor Map

Parcel No. 7105000051





STUDIO TJP
5500 Rainier Avenue S
Seattle WA 98118
206 523 1618
tjp.us

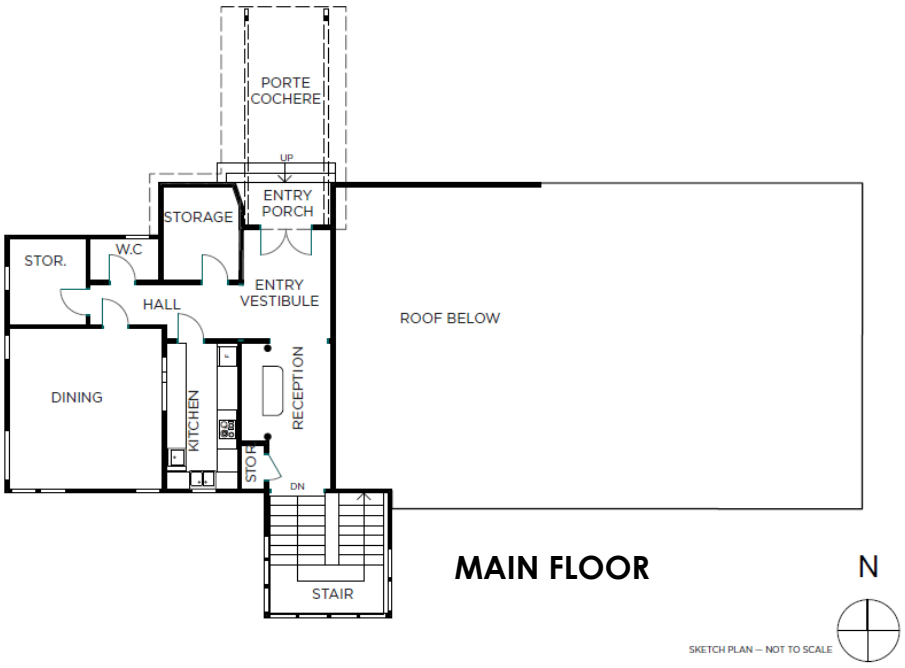
DATE 5/2/25

SITE PLAN

RAY GIBSON'S CABALLEROS CLUB
1516 S 28TH ST.
TACOMA, PIERCE CO. WA.

Ray Gibson Caballeros Club
Name of Property

Pierce County, Washington
County and State



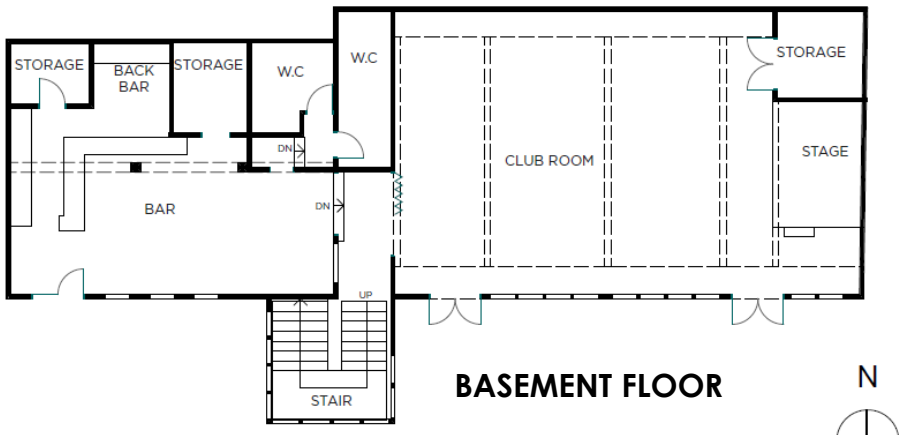
MAIN FLOOR

N

SKETCH PLAN — NOT TO SCALE

STUDIO TJP
5500 Rainier Avenue S
Seattle WA 98118
206 523 1618
tjp.us

RAY GIBSON'S CABALLEROS CLUB
1516 S 28TH ST.
TACOMA, PIERCE CO. WA.
3/3/26



BASEMENT FLOOR

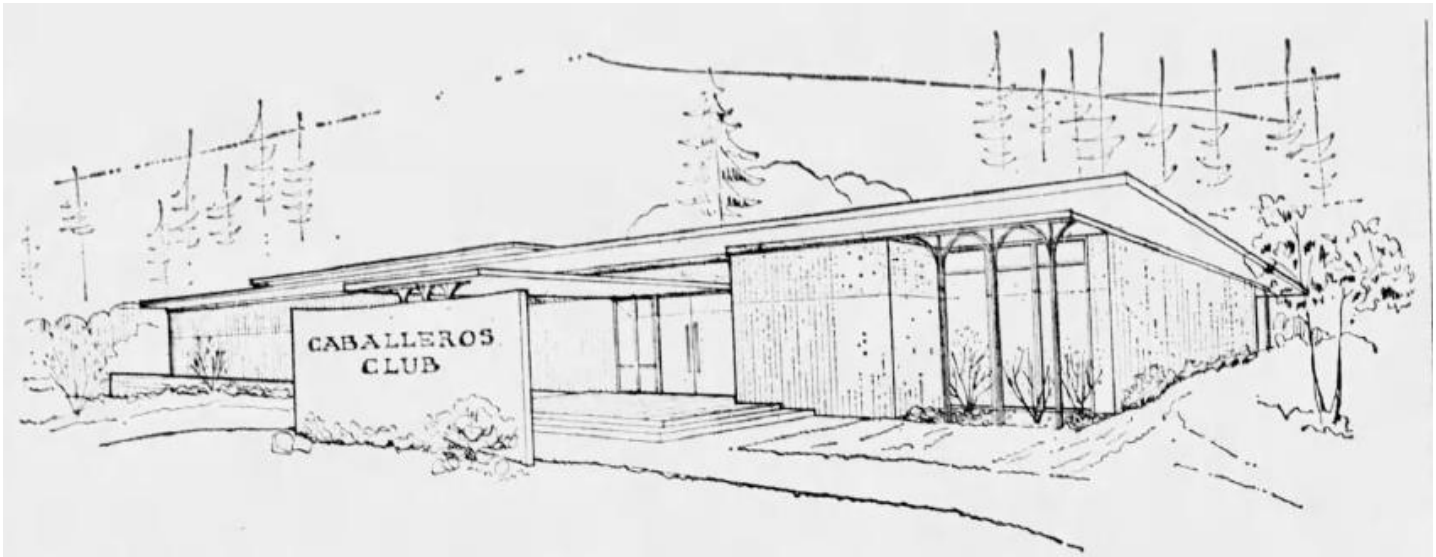
N

SKETCH PLAN — NOT TO SCALE

STUDIO TJP
5500 Rainier Avenue S
Seattle WA 98118
206 523 1618
tjp.us

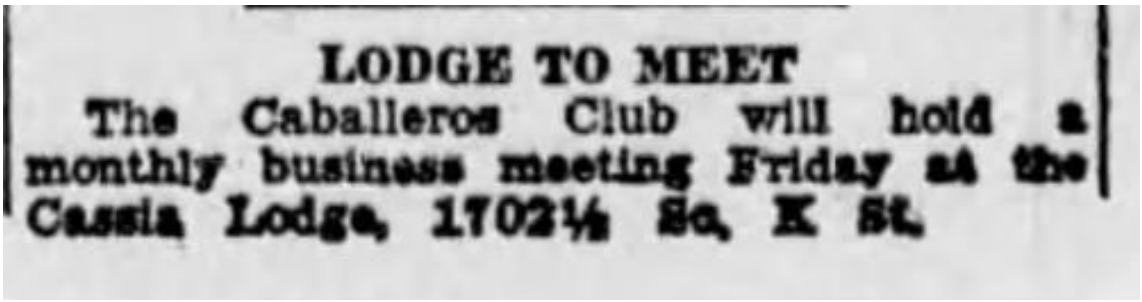
RAY GIBSON'S CABALLEROS CLUB
1516 S 28TH ST.
TACOMA, PIERCE CO. WA.
3/3/26

Caballeros Club members – (left) 1958, (right) c. 1980. Source: Caballeros Club



PROPOSED NEW LOOK FOR CLUB—This architect's sketch illustrates plans recently completed for the proposed expansion and remodeling of the Caballeros Club, at 1516 S. 28th St., near Cushman Avenue. This club will celebrate its 10th anniversary with open houses at its present building on this and next Sunday, and with an Easter smorgasbord on March 26, according to Charles Stubblefield, president.

Architectural Rendering of Clubhouse. "Caballeros To Remodel and Expand"
Source: The News Tribune – March 12, 1967.



LODGE TO MEET

The Caballeros Club will hold a monthly business meeting Friday at the Cassia Lodge, 1702½ So. K St.

"Lodge to Meet"
The News Tribune – April 29, 1959.

CABALLERO MEETING

The Caballero Club will meet at 7:30 this evening at the clubhouse, 1555 Tacoma Ave., it is announced by Charles Johnson, corresponding secretary.

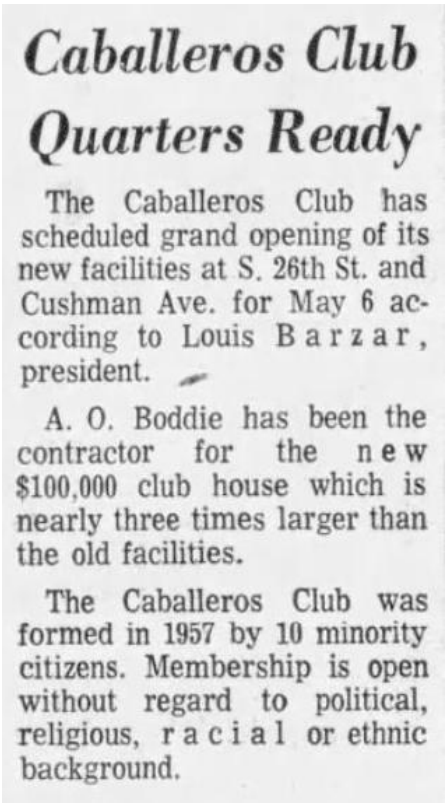
"Caballero Meeting"
The News Tribune – August 3, 1960.

Ray Gibson

Obituary "Ex-Greyhound official dies"
The News Tribune – April 13, 1974.

MRS. RAY GIBSON
Tea Chairman

"Clubs to Introduce Directory During Tea"
The News Tribune – May 10, 1967.



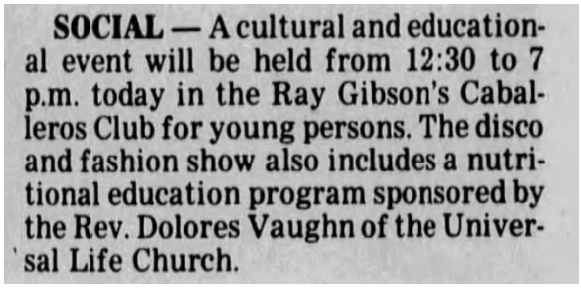
Caballeros Club Quarters Ready

The Caballeros Club has scheduled grand opening of its new facilities at S. 26th St. and Cushman Ave. for May 6 according to Louis Barzar, president.

A. O. Boddie has been the contractor for the new $100,000 club house which is nearly three times larger than the old facilities.

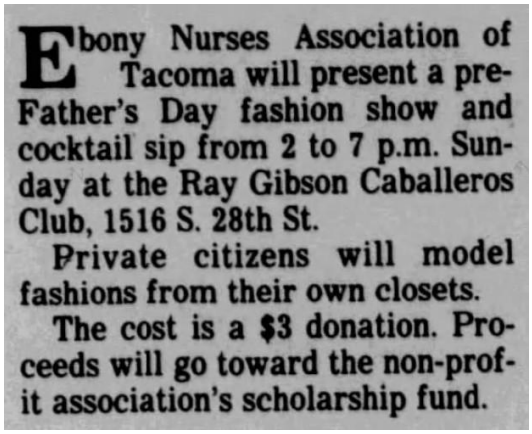
The Caballeros Club was formed in 1957 by 10 minority citizens. Membership is open without regard to political, religious, racial or ethnic background.

"Caballeros Club Quarters Ready"
The News Tribune – April 30, 1972.



SOCIAL — A cultural and educational event will be held from 12:30 to 7 p.m. today in the Ray Gibson's Caballeros Club for young persons. The disco and fashion show also includes a nutritional education program sponsored by the Rev. Dolores Vaughn of the Universal Life Church.

"Social" The News Tribune – April 7, 1979.



Ebony Nurses Association of Tacoma will present a pre-Father's Day fashion show and cocktail sip from 2 to 7 p.m. Sunday at the Ray Gibson Caballeros Club, 1516 S. 28th St.

Private citizens will model fashions from their own closets.

The cost is a $3 donation. Proceeds will go toward the non-profit association's scholarship fund.

"Ebony Nurses Association of Tacoma…"
The News Tribune – June 6, 1985.

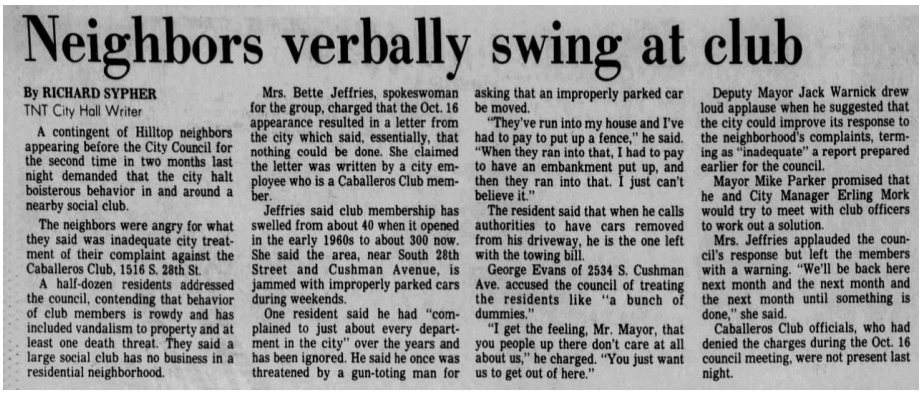
Matrons Club Ready To Mark Anniversary

The Matrons Club will observe its 45th anniversary with a tea and no-host cocktail party Sunday between 3 and 6 p.m. in the newly redecorated Caballeros Club. The affair will be a benefit for the Colored Women's Clubhouse which is located on South Yakima Ave. The public is invited.

The club was formed with nine charter members who met in the home of Minnie E. Aldrich. Minutes reveal that the place of meetings were to be in homes of the members, that membership would be restricted to 15 and that a ten-cent fine would be imposed on late members. Still active members of the club are three of the original group, Mrs. Helen Stafford, Mrs. Cora Spencer and Mrs. Aldrich.

Mrs. Hattie Harden is the present president; Mrs. Ruth Jeffries, vice president; Mrs. Juanita Watson, secretary; Mrs. Aldrich, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Stafford, treasurer.

"Matrons Club Ready To Mark Anniversary"
The News Tribune – May 25, 1972.



Neighbors verbally swing at club

By RICHARD SYPHER
TNT City Hall Writer

A contingent of Hilltop neighbors appearing before the City Council for the second time in two months last night demanded that the city halt boisterous behavior in and around a nearby social club.

The neighbors were angry for what they said was inadequate city treatment of their complaint against the Caballeros Club, 1516 S. 28th St.

A half-dozen residents addressed the council, contending that behavior of club members is rowdy and has included vandalism to property and at least one death threat. They said a large social club has no business in a residential neighborhood.

Mrs. Bette Jeffries, spokeswoman for the group, charged that the Oct. 16 appearance resulted in a letter from the city which said, essentially, that nothing could be done. She claimed the letter was written by a city employee who is a Caballeros Club member.

Jeffries said club membership has swelled from about 40 when it opened in the early 1960s to about 300 now. She said the area, near South 28th Street and Cushman Avenue, is jammed with improperly parked cars during weekends.

One resident said he had "complained to just about every department in the city" over the years and has been ignored. He said he once was threatened by a gun-toting man for asking that an improperly parked car be moved.

"They've run into my house and I've had to pay to put up a fence," he said. "When they ran into that, I had to pay to have an embankment put up, and then they ran into that. I just can't believe it."

The resident said that when he calls authorities to have cars removed from his driveway, he is the one left with the towing bill.

George Evans of 2534 S. Cushman Ave. accused the council of treating the residents like "a bunch of dummies."

"I get the feeling, Mr. Mayor, that you people up there don't care at all about us," he charged. "You just want us to get out of here."

Deputy Mayor Jack Warnick drew loud applause when he suggested that the city could improve its response to the neighborhood's complaints, terming as "inadequate" a report prepared earlier for the council.

Mayor Mike Parker promised that he and City Manager Erling Mork would try to meet with club officers to work out a solution.

Mrs. Jeffries applauded the council's response but left the members with a warning. "We'll be back here next month and the next month and the next month until something is done," she said.

Caballeros Club officials, who had denied the charges during the Oct. 16 council meeting, were not present last night.

"Neighbors verbally swing a club"
The News Tribune – December 5, 1979.

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: Caballeros Club
City or Vicinity: Tacoma
County: Pierce **State:** WA

Photographer: Ellen F. C. Mirro & DAHP Staff (photos 3, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15 - August 2026)
Date Photographed: January 31, 2024

1 of 15:
Description: Northwest corner of building viewing southeast.

2 of 15:
Description: North (front) elevation viewing south.

3 of 15:
Description: West elevation viewing east showing rear shed.

4 of 15:
Description: South elevation viewing north.

5 of 15:
Description: East elevation view to the west.

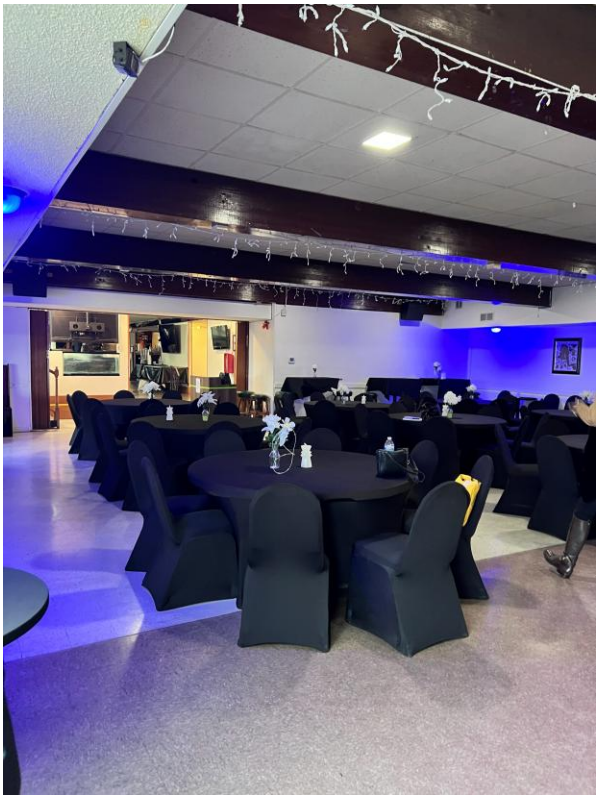
6 of 15:
Description: Detail of front entrance, viewing south, featuring door with club logo.

7 of 15:
Description: Interior entrance hall, looking south from main entry.

8 of 15:
Description: Interior entrance hall, looking north towards main entry doors.

9 of 15:
Description: Interior hall – Main floor, looking west.

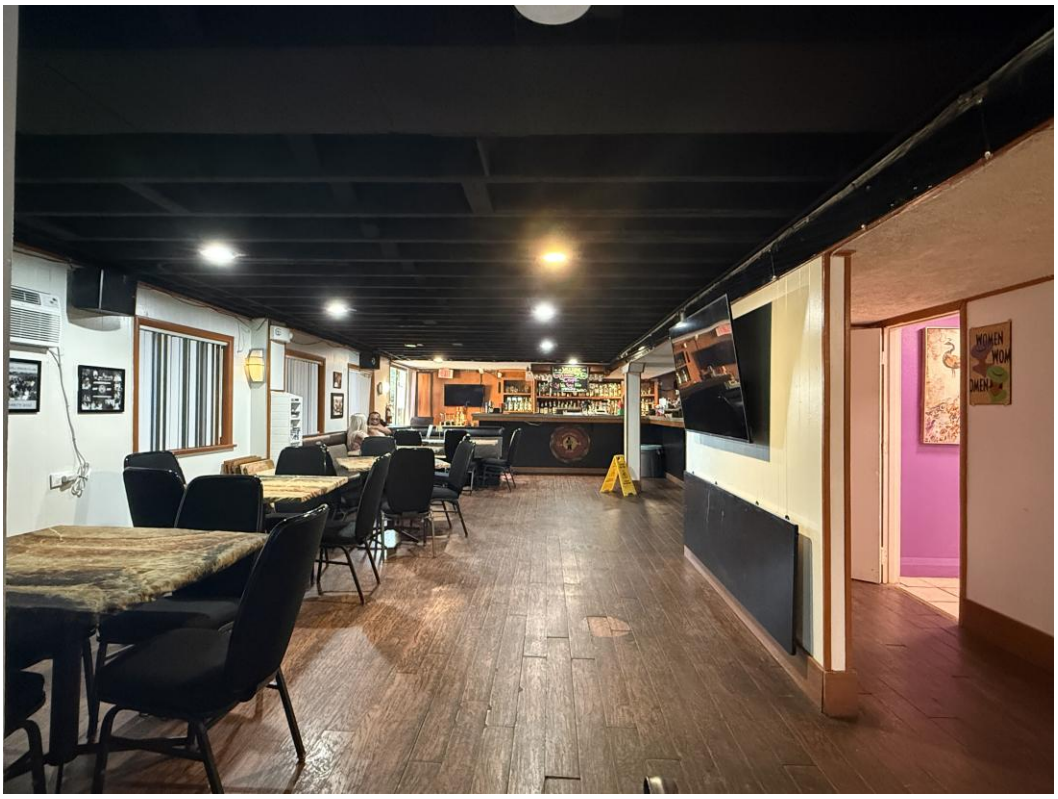
10 of 15:
Description: Interior detail of stairwell, looking southwest.



11 of 15:
Description: Interior Main Hall, looking northwest.

12 of 15:
Description: Interior Main Hall, looking southeast towards stage.

13 of 15:
Description: Interior Main Hall, looking northeast towards stage area.



14 of 15:
Description: Interior basement bar, looking west from main hall – restrooms on right.

15 of 15:
Description: Interior basement bar, view looking east into ballroom.

Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Ray Gibson Caballeros Club

street & number PO Box 1075 telephone (253) 572-9681

city or town Tacoma state WA zip code 98401-1075

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 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.