NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Expires 10-31-87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic USS SEQUOIA (AG-23)

and/or common Presidential Yacht SEQUOIA

2. Location

street & number Hains Point ___ not for publication

city, town Washington ___ vicinity of

state D.C. code county code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	x occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	x private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
x structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	x entertainment	___ religious
___ object	x in process	x yes: restricted	x government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	x transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Presidential Yacht Trust

street & number 1320 19th Street, N.W. Suite 400

city, town Washington ___ vicinity of state D.C. 20036

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. N/A

street & number

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? x yes ___ no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
_x_ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	___ original site
___ good	___ ruins	_x_ altered	___ moved date N/A
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The former Presidential yacht U.S.S. Sequoia (AG-23), is moored on the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., at the National Park Service dock at Hains Point. Sequoia has undergone extensive restoration and rehabilitation to prepare her for resumption of Presidential use in November, 1988.

Sequoia As Built and Maintained

Sequoia, designed by noted yacht designer John Trumpy and built by the Mathis Yacht Building Company of Camden, New Jersey, in 1925, is a 104-foot long wooden vessel with an 18.2-foot beam and a 4.5-foot draft. Sequoia displaces 90 tons. [1]

Sequoia's hull was originally planked with juniper. During her career the United States Navy replanked her hull with Douglas Fir for reasons of availability and cost. [2] The vessel has always been painted white. The decks and deckhouse are teak and have been maintained in-kind. The railings are the original mahogany. Seven coats of varnish maintain the bright finish of the joiner's work in the vessel. All brightwork, such as cleats, portholes, and other fittings, are the original chromed bronze.

Sequoia was originally powered by twin 225-h.p. Winton diesel engines which drove 36-inch diameter bronze screws. The engines exhausted into the water rather than through the stack to avoid soot on the boat deck. The engineroom was refitted with G.M. 871s in 1965; these were replaced in 1986 with new Detroit diesel engines which allow the vessel to maintain her designed speed of 12 knots. The exhaust system was maintained in the latest refitting. The engineroom also received new 50kw generators in 1986, when Sequoia's entire electrical system was replaced. [3]

Sequoia has a large open boat deck atop the deckhouse; forward is a seating area which is protected by a removable awning. The stack, which is used as a storage area and for ventilation, separates the sitting area from the remaining area of the boat deck. The yacht's single mast is attached to the after part of

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8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	___ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
x 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	x politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates 1931-1977 **Builder/Architect** John Trumpy/Mathis Yacht Building Co.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The former Presidential yacht Sequoia (AG-23), one of four surviving Presidential yachts, was used by nine Presidents--Herbert C. Hoover, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, and Jimmy Carter--between 1931 and 1977. As a floating symbol of the office of the President of the United States, and as the setting for social, recreational, and official activities of nine Presidents, Sequoia is of exceptional national significance.

Sequoia was the setting not only for presidential social and recreational activity (including President Kennedy's last birthday party) but also for crucial domestic and foreign policy meetings and decisions, including President Truman's post-World War II conference with Great Britain and Canada, America's partners in the development of the atomic bomb, on the exchange of nuclear weapons technology. President Lyndon B. Johnson lobbied Congressional leaders for support of his "Great Society" programs on board Sequoia. President Richard M. Nixon actively used Sequoia for foreign policy meetings and decisions, involving American intervention in Cambodia, withdrawing from the Vietnam War, detente with the Soviet Union, strategic arms limitation, and his historic resignation from the Office of President of the United States.

Sequoia was altered during her career of Presidential use. These alterations do not affect the integrity of the vessel. She has been restored to excellent condition by her current owners and modernized without altering her historic appearance or function. In fact, she has been made sound and ready for renewed service as the Presidential yacht. Sequoia is scheduled to be turned over to Ronald W. Reagan, 40th President of the United States, on November 15, 1988, to resume her important career after an eleven-year hiatus.

The above statement of significance is based on the more detailed statements which follow.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .1

Quadrangle name _____ Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

All that area encompassed within the extreme registered dimensions of the vessel.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James P. Delgado, Acting Maritime Historian

organization National Park Service date June 30, 1987

street & number P.O. Box 37127 telephone (415) 556-9827

city or town Washington state D.C. 20013-7127

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

GPO 911-399

the stack. Abaft the stack on the port side a stairway leads below to the main deck. The boat deck houses a modern fiberglass lifeboat and two liferaft canisters.

The main deck has an open forecastle which mounts the original windlass. The vessel has two Navy-pattern anchors. The pilothouse is flanked by two compasses on Perlorus stands. The pilothouse, which is teak, has been modernized by the introduction of new navigational and radio equipment; the engine controls and wheel are original, however. The deckhouse abaft the pilothouse contains the pantry and the main saloon. The saloon is panelled with mahogany and contains the original saloon table installed in 1925 and used during Presidential service. A stairway in the saloon's after starboard corner leads below to the staterooms. Adjacent to the stairway is an open bay which formerly housed an elevator installed for the use of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The elevator was removed and converted into a wet bar during Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency.

A small sitting room, referred to as the after saloon, is located abaft the main saloon. The after saloon was open during the presidential terms of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Dwight D. Eisenhower, but was enclosed during the Presidency of John F. Kennedy. Abaft this sitting room, at the fantail, is an open deck which is protected by a removable awning. The saloons, as well as the staterooms, have been decorated by New York designer Carleton Varney, who also helped decorate the White House. The main saloon is decorated with a specially-woven carpet with the President's seal. Antique sconces, built-in cut crystal decanters, dark solid wood furniture, wicker furniture, and framed presidential photographs and naval prints impart a feeling of style and presidential association similar to that of the White House. [4]

Below decks aft are four staterooms. The farthest aft is known as the "Secretary of the Navy's stateroom" and has separate bunks on the starboard and port bulkheads. Another stateroom is to the port side of the hull; the stairway to the main deck is opposite this stateroom. To starboard, and partially beneath the stairway, is the captain's stateroom. Each stateroom has a private head. All staterooms are panelled in ash, with dark brown trim. The staterooms have been decorated in the same manner as the saloons on the main deck.

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Opposite the captain's stateroom is the ship's office, a small room formerly used as a mail/communications room and for liquor storage. The office now houses the ship's modern air conditioning system, installed in the 1986 refit. All electrical fixtures are modern and were installed in 1986; the original overhead fire-sprinklers (with chromed pipe) are operational.

Forward of the office and captain's stateroom is the President's stateroom, which contains a large double bed installed during John F. Kennedy's term of office. There is a small head with shower, and a walk-in cedar closet at the fore end of the President's stateroom, the head on the port and the closet on the starboard side. The doorknobs on the President's stateroom door are not original; they are larger and were installed during Lyndon B. Johnson's Presidency as "Texas" style knobs to fit the President's large hands. At the same time the deck was lowered in the shower of the Presidential stateroom to accomodate President Johnson's 6-foot, 3-inch frame.

Immediately forward of the Presidential stateroom is the heavily sound-proofed engineroom. Forward of the engineroom is the galley, which has been extensively remodeled and modernized with domestic ranges, freezers, and a walk-in refrigerator. A steep stairway leads from the galley to the pantry on the main deck. Forward of the galley are the crew quarters, with a day bunk, modern laundry facilities, the crew's head, and the forecastle, with four fold-down pipe berths. A ladder passing through a trunk leads from the main deck down into the forecastle. Forward of the forecastle is the chain locker.

Sequoia, while modernized in some respects, retains her significant original construction features, presidential modifications, and a strong feeling of association with the office of President of the United States of America.

Sources

1
James L. Mooney, ed. Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Center, 1981) Vol. VI, pp. 444-445.

2
"Sequoia: Fitting Out the Presidential Yacht," All Hands, September 1975, p. 36.

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3
Interview with Capt. Giles Kelly on board Sequoia, June 22, 1987. The description of the vessel's layout and interior is based on that interview, conducted during the official site visit to the vessel. Also see Fred E. Crockett, Special Fleet: The History of the Presidential Yachts (Camden, Maine: Down East Books: 1985) pass.

4
Lavinia Edmunds, "The Sequoia Returns," Mid-Atlantic Country, August 1986, pp. 18-20, pass. and Patsy Rogers, "Sequoia: Refurbished, Refitted, Refined," Washington Home (Washington Post) January 27, 1983, pp. 10-13, pass.

Sequoia's Pre-Presidential Career

The yacht Sequoia was designed by John Trumpy, whose vessels were considered to be fine well-built craft. Laid down in 1924 and completed in 1925 at the Camden, New Jersey, yard of the Mathis Yacht Building Company, Sequoia was built for Philadelphia banker Richard M. Cadwallader, Jr. Sequoia was owned by Mr. Cadwallader until 1928, when she was sold to William H. Dunning of Fort Worth, Texas. Sequoia was sold again in 1931, being purchased by the United States Department of Commerce for $200,000. Accounts vary on the vessel's use by the Commerce Department; some indicate she was an inspection vessel, while another states she was employed as a decoy for rum-runners, who would approach a seemingly-harmless luxury yacht in hopes of a sale, only to be caught for violating the Volstead Act. [1]

Sequoia's Presidential Career

Even though she was not formally designated a presidential yacht until his term ended, newsreel footage and photographs indicate that Sequioa was used by Herbert Hoover, 31st President of the United States, for fishing cruises in the last months of his troubled term. Following the inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, an avid yachtsman, Sequoia was transferred to the United States Navy and commissioned as the presidential yacht U.S.S. Sequoia (AG-23) on March 25, 1933. [2]

Sequoia was actively used by President Roosevelt during his first term of office for fishing trips on the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay and for two trips along the inland waterway to New London, Connecticut, in 1933 and 1935 so that the President could attend the annual Harvard-Yale races and the Yale commencement exercises. [3] During this time a small elevator was installed in the vessel for the handicapped President's use and a fishing deck was added to Sequoia's fantail. [4] Franklin Roosevelt used Sequoia as his official yacht until 1935, when Sequoia was replaced by U.S.S. Potomac (AG-25). Sequoia was replaced because of her small size and her being a potential fire hazard due to her wood construction. Redesignated as the official yacht of the Secretary of the Navy, Sequoia was not designated a formal presidential yacht again until 1968.

Despite Roosevelt's switch to Potomac, Sequoia was occasionally used by the President during his four terms of office to entertain foreign dignitaries, including British Prime Minister

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Winston Churchill. Franklin Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, 33rd President of the United States, entertained on board and occasionally conducted business on Sequoia despite his choice of U.S.S. Williamsburg (PG-56) as his Presidential yacht. Most significant was Truman's use of Sequoia as the meeting site for the first nuclear technological and scientific exchange conference conducted by the United States, Great Britain, and Canada, at the end of 1947. President Truman, whose proclivity to piano-playing was well demonstrated, also had a piano installed on board Sequoia for his use in 1947. [5]

Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States, used Sequoia rarely, but his successor, John F. Kennedy, a yachtsman, used the vessel more frequently. President Kennedy's last birthday, his forty-sixth, was celebrated on board Sequoia. A special bed to support Kennedy's ailing back was installed in the Presidential stateroom during his term. Lyndon Baines Johnson, 36th President of the United States, was initially reluctant to use Sequoia because of her close association with his predecessor but in time used the vessel actively. Johnson used Sequoia to lobby for Congressional support of his "Great Society" programs; he also modified the vessel for his use, ordering larger doorknobs to fit his hands in the Presidential stateroom and having the shower floor lowered to accomodate his tall frame. President Johnson also replaced Franklin Roosevelt's elevator with the wet-bar that occupies the space today. In 1968, near the end of Lyndon Johnson's term of office, Sequoia was once again formally designated as the Presidential yacht.

Johnson's successor, Richard M. Nixon, used Sequoia more frequently than any of his predecessors, often conducting extensive foreign policy meetings on board. The decision to mine Haiphong Harbor in North Vietnam was made on board the yacht, and Nixon's discussions with Soviet Chairman Leonid I. Brezhnev on board Sequoia were an important part of his detente and S.A.L.T. initiatives. The only President to resign his office, Nixon retreated to Sequoia during the crisis of Watergate. [6] Henry Kissinger, a frequent guest, criticized Sequoia's decorations and the "infernal noise" of the engines but noted she "served an important purpose in enabling Presidents to escape the claustraphobic tension of the White House....The Sequoia provided a quiet sanctuary; it was handier than Camp David, easier for casual, informal discussions...." [7]

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Nixon's successor, Gerald R. Ford, used the vessel for numerous social occasions, including a reception in honor of the Apollo/Soyuz astronauts. Despite a long tradition of use for Sequoia, Jimmy Carter, 39th President of the United States, announced early in his term that he intended to dispose of her as an austerity measure and as part of his program of a less "extravagant" Presidency. Accordingly, on March 30, 1977, Carter wrote to the Secretary of Defense: "deactivate the SEQUOIA and have it disposed of through public sale. Despite its distinguished career, I feel that the Presidential yacht SEQUOIA is no longer needed." [8] On May 18, 1977, Sequoia was sold at auction for $286,000.

Sequoia's Post-Presidential Career

Sequoia's new owner, Leisurecraft, Inc., of Cranston, Rhode Island, promptly sold her to Norman Pulliam of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The vessel was rehabilitated by Pulliam in the winter of 1977-1978. Between 1978 and 1980, Sequoia was publicly exhibited in Myrtle Beach. On March 25, 1980, however, the vessel was again sold at auction, being offered by Sotheby Parke Bernet at Manalapan, Florida. Acquired by the Ocean Learning Institute of Palm Beach, Florida, Sequoia was used by the institute to entertain potential donors while docked at Lake Worth near Palm Beach. [9]

In 1981, Sequoia was purchased for $1.3 million by a non-profit group, the Presidential Yacht Trust, with the announced intention of restoring, refurbishing, and returning the yacht to Presidential service. After initial financial and organizational difficulty, the Presidential Yacht Trust succeeded in its task, rehabilitating and restoring the vessel, which made a 6,000-mile good-will cruise in 1984. Sequoia also participated in the parade of tall ships and historic vessels at the 1986 re-dedication of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor. A Concurrent Resolution of Congress and discussions with President Reagan cleared the way for Sequoia's return to service. Now moored at a National Park Service dock on the Potomac, Sequoia is again being used by senior government officials and Congressional leaders prior to recommissioning and designation as the Presidential yacht scheduled for November, 1988.

Sources

1
James L. Mooney, ed. Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

(Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Center, 1981) Vol. VI, pp. 444-445, Fred E. Crockett, Special Fleet: The History of the Presidential Yachts (Camden, Maine: Down East Books, 1985) p. 54; and ship history file, U.S.S. Sequoia, Ships' History Division, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

2
Mooney, p. 444.

3
Crockett, pp. 56-57.

4
Ibid.

5
Harry S. Truman, Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Years of Trial and Hope (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1956) Volume II, p. 298, and Crockett, p. 57.

6
Crockett, pp. 58-59.

7
Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1979) pp. 1174-1175.

8
Memorandum to the Secretary of the Defense from the White House, March 30, 1977. Ship's history files, U.S. Navy.

9
Crockett, pp. 61-62, Lavinia Edmunds, "The Sequoia Returns," Mid-Atlantic Country, August 1986, p. 20, and Ben Cotten, "The Saga of the Sequoia," Capitol Hill, Summer 1984, pp. 10-11.

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Kissinger, Henry, White House Years. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1979.

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Truman, Harry S., Memoirs by Harry S. Truman: Years of Trial and Hope. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1956. Volume Two.