NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

702

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name *Circle Line X* (sightseeing vessel)

other names/site number LCI (L)–758; *Normandy Two*; *Normandy*; *Circle Line Sightseer X*

2. Location

street & number Pier 83 and West 42nd Street [ ] not for publication

city or town Manhattan [ ] vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10036

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 as 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 [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth Pierpont DSHPO 7/21/14
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

[X] entered in the National Register
[ ] see continuation sheet
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register
[ ] see continuation sheet
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register
[ ] removed from the National Register
[ ] other (explain)

for Alexis Abramson 9/22/14
Signature of the Keeper date of action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	**0**	**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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

DEFENSE/naval facility
TRANSPORTATION/water-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS
RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation
walls
roof
other Metal

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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 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 that 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 boxes that apply.)

[ ] **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] **B** removed from its original location

[ ] **C** a birthplace or grave

[ ] **D** a cemetery

[ ] **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure

[ ] **F** a commemorative property

[ ] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance:
(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance:

1951-1964

Significant Dates:

1951; 1953; 1955

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Commercial Iron Works

U.S. Navy Bureau of Ships, engineering

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 Building Survey
_____
[ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
_____

Primary location of additional data:

[ ] State Historic Preservation Office
[ ] Other State agency
[ ] Federal Agency
[ ] Local Government
[ ] University
[ ] Other repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	584234	4512834	3	18		
2	18			4	18		

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Mackey, Historic Preservation Specialist

organization New York State Historic Preservation Office date July 2014

street & number Peebles Island State Park telephone 518-237-8643

city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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

name New York Cruise Lines, Inc., c/o Costas N. Markou

street & number Pier 83 and West 42nd Street telephone 212-630-8187

city or town New York state NY zip code 10036

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. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

Narrative Description of Property

The *Circle Line X* is a sightseeing vessel that was refitted from a World War II landing craft – LCI (L)-758, built in 1944 in Portland, Oregon. A Landing Craft Infantry (LCI) is an amphibious assault ship designed to convey troops and equipment from ship to shore. The *Circle Line X's* official number is 262270. She is currently moored at a berth at Pier 83 on West 42nd Street in New York City, where the Circle Line Sightseeing Cruises fleet is located. She is registered at 325 gross tons. Length overall is 158 feet and 5 ½ inches. Beam is 23 feet and 3 inches. Depth is 11.3 feet. Cummins QSK19 inline, 6-cylinder engines have replaced the original GM diesels. The vessel has a welded steel hull with a pointed bow, raked stem, and transom stern. The hull is framed with angle iron and contains nine thwart-ship bulkheads. The bulkheads are 100-percent welded on all sides to the main deck and hull. This configuration is unchanged from the original construction. Simple construction and stock components made the LCI well adapted to peacetime uses. A decade after the war, some 40 former LCIs were documented as merchant vessels. Some needed as little as a coat of paint; others, such as LCI (L)-758, required adaptations that allowed her to carry passengers around Manhattan Island. Although the nominated ship does not retain sufficient integrity to represent its wartime use, it is in pristine condition as a sightseeing vessel.

Upper Deck

The upper deck is accessed by a companionway on the main deck leading to the enclosed passenger compartment on the upper deck. The round, faceted pilothouse (also referred to as the wheelhouse), on the forward boat deck is six feet wide on the centerline, stepped back from the perimeter of the boat deck, allowing access to the outside of the wheelhouse and providing a bridge deck outside the port and starboard wheelhouse doors. Each facet features flat windows. The wheelhouse contains World War II equipment: binnacle, telegraph, electrical steering levers and auxiliary electrical steering. Morse control serves as engine control, with an engine telegraph as the backup engine-control system. On the forward overhead are two modern radar monitors, RPM gauge for the left engine, rudder indicator, and RPM gauge for the right engine. Mounted on the wall adjacent to the doorway are the telephone, cease-fine alarm - used in the modern era as the general alarm - and the electrical panel for running lights – all World War II-era equipment. The original pilothouse, which was mid-ship, could not clear the Harlem River bridges.

The central portion of the upper deck features windows roughly three feet high, starting 40 inches from the deck, which continue down the port and starboard side of the vessel. The original life vests are stored in the exposed ceiling rafters.

On either side of the companionway that leads down to the main deck are doorways leading to the stern. The stern section features a translucent canopy that extends about 40 feet with the rear-most section of the vessel open.

Main Deck

The main deck has open sides under the wheelhouse, with the wheelhouse serving as an overhead. Closed chocks and eight-inch double bits are mounted on the deck, bow and stern, in the open areas. A deck hatch on the bow of the main deck on the port side leads to the afterpeak (the aftermost part of a ship's hold – or large compartment below deck for the stowing of cargo - closest to the stern). Fifteen feet from the stem, the main deck is open. The main compartment is 45 feet aft, with a companionway enclosure protruding forward, on the centerline, housing the full width companionway from the main deck to the heads below deck for the passengers; on either side of this protrusion are doors accessing the enclosed main deck compartment. The all-around window configuration is similar to that of the upper deck. An emergency steering station with steering stand, wheel, and Hose-McCann telephone is located at the stern.

Below Deck

The forepeak (the foremost part of a ship's hold) serves as a crash compartment with no access from the main deck. There is a bolt-on hatch at bulkhead No. 1 for access from the afterpeak to the forepeak. The afterpeak contains mostly ground tackle. Behind the afterpeak is the passenger head compartment or restrooms. It is accessed by a wide companionway in the forward end of the enclosed main deck compartment.

The fresh water tank room is accessed through a hatch on the main deck on the starboard side immediately forward of the enclosed compartment on the main deck. This room contains the fresh water tank for the sanitary system, two large sanitary pumps, and sanitary tankage below decks.

The engine room is accessed through a bulkhead on the main deck and a steep ladder that extends below deck. The engine room contains primarily World War II vintage DC machinery. In the forward portion of the engine room is a large open GE electrical panel. On either side of this panel are two 71 generators. Outboard of the generators are two large ventilators. Secondary fire pumps are located on the starboard side. The fuel oil transfer pump and the aft bilge and ballast pump are located on the port side. On the centerline are two Cummins QSK19 inline six-cylinder propulsion engines. Behind the main engines is a raised deck in the middle of which is the engineer’s control room – referred to as the telegraph room. It contains two large telegraphs on either side, one for each engine, for emergency communication. A

Hose-McCann telephone and a large porthole overlooking the machinery are also located in the telegraph room. Port side of the telegraph room is an engineer's wash station.

The crew compartment is accessed through another hatch in bulkhead No. 8. On either side of a passageway to bulkhead No. 9 are the crew quarters, port and starboard. Port crew quarters - currently storage - was the magazine for the LCI (L)-758. A centerline hatch at this level leads to the steering compartment.

The steering compartment is accessed through the centerline hatch in the No. 9 bulkhead. A large-toothed quadrant is mounted on the rudder post, the teeth going to a gear box on the forward end, with electric steering motors on either side. The steering compartment also contains auxiliary electric control levers and a standard Hose-McCann telephone on the forward bulkhead of this compartment. A rudder-angle indicator is on the after side of the quadrant. An emergency hatch with a chain ladder to the main deck is located on the starboard side.

These features reflect *Circle Line X's* virtually complete integrity as a 1950s-era sightseeing vessel, reconfigured from a World War II landing craft.

Statement of Significance:

The *Circle Line X,* a sightseeing vessel with New York City's famed Circle Line Sightseeing Cruises Company, satisfies Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for its direct association with New York City's tourism industry at a time when the nation was emerging from the privations of war to enjoy the leisure and prosperity that marked the second half of the twentieth century. The *Circle Line X* started life as a Landing Craft Infantry (LCI) Large (L) in World War II. Originally named LCI (L)-758, it was built at the Commercial Iron Works in Portland, Oregon in 1944. When she was decommissioned, she was reconfigured as a sightseeing vessel. The design that made these boats uniquely suited to landing on beaches during significant World War II battles worked equally well on the rivers that surround New York City. In 1951, she was acquired by Normandy Sightseeing and renamed *Normandy Two*. In 1953, Day Line Sightseeing bought her and renamed her *Normandy*. Circle Line Sightseeing Yachts, Inc., bought the vessel in 1955 and refitted her to Circle Line standards. Her new name was *Circle Line Sightseer X*, which was later shortened to *Circle Line X*. She carried 500 passengers on the 35-mile cruise around Manhattan Island. The vessel was retired in 2007 and plans call for it to become a museum. *Circle Line X* is one of a number of WWII landing crafts that were altered after the war to serve peacetime uses. Some became merchant vessels, but a number, like *Circle Line X*, were redesigned to serve as sightseeing vessels. Of those known to have served in this capacity, *Circle Line X* is one of six purchased by the Circle Line Sightseeing Company; the vessel is highly intact and has the most decorated history by far.

Sightseeing by Boat Around Manhattan Island

Water was and always will be New York City's defining feature. According to Mike Wallace, author of *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*, some 17,000 years ago, the ice sheet that covered what is now New York's boroughs began to melt. Back then, the region was experiencing its own form of global warming. As ice continued to melt, the ocean flooded the land and broke through the tidal strait that we now know as the Narrows. This created what is today New York City's Upper Bay, which would become bustling New York Harbor. It also created the wide tidal river, which we call the Hudson.

Much of the city's maritime history is well-documented – from the birch-bark canoes of the Lenni Lanape to the massive container ships that ply the waters of the Kill Van Kull. But tucked into this timeline and little known to most is the significant role a tough little World War II ship played in New York's burgeoning post-war tourism industry. There is no better way for tourists to see the island city of New York than by boat. But it wasn't until 1895, with the opening of the

Harlem Ship Canal – which connected the Harlem River, Spuyten Duyvil, and the Hudson River – that circumnavigation of Manhattan was even possible.

Fourteen years later, in 1908, a steamer named the *Herman S. Caswell*, later christened the *Tourist* and piloted by Captain John P. Roberts, is thought to have offered the first sightseeing tours around Manhattan. Built in Noank, Connecticut, in 1878, the wooden-hull steamboat measured 82 feet. Roberts promoted his service as the "Seeing New York Yacht" and eventually expanded his fleet to include four different vessels.[1] Roberts reportedly died suddenly in 1918, and Thomas J. Goodwin, of the Goodwin Steamboat Company, purchased the entire Roberts fleet and continued to operate sightseeing service under his company name. Two different ventures provided the first serious competition for Goodwin's sightseeing service around 1939. The first was from partners Jeremiah T. Driscoll and John W. Nugent, who put their vessel *Sylph* into service carrying passengers between the Coney Island residential community of Sea Gate in Brooklyn and downtown Manhattan.[2] Manhattan Yacht Cruises was the second competitor, which also advertised as an around-Manhattan tour service.

The Second World War, and the fuel shortages it caused, prevented any possible expansion of around-Manhattan Island service in the early 1940s; in fact, operations were reduced. Driscoll and Nugent suspended their operation entirely, as two of their vessels were recruited for wartime service with the U.S. Navy, and Manhattan Yacht Cruises disappeared during the war, never to be seen again. Goodwin kept his boats running but hardly on a full schedule.[3] However, in the 1940s few potential passengers really paid attention to the little sightseeing boats anyway. New York City was, after all, an excursion boat mecca in those days, and on summer mornings it was possible to book passage on several excursion steamers bound for a dozen or more points a few hours sail away. "Who really wanted to cruise around Manhattan Island and end up precisely where one began, when there were exotic and 'far away' ports to visit?"[4] This would all change after the conclusion of World War II. Highways and automobiles virtually wiped out New York City's once thriving excursion boat business. But the novelty of a three-hour boat ride around Manhattan Island somehow or other caught on.[5]

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[1] Brian J. Cudahy, *Around Manhattan Island and Other Maritime Tales of New York* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 3.
[2] Ibid., 5.
[3] Ibid., 6.
[4] Brian J. Cudahy, "The Circle Line Story: D-Day Veterans on the Hudson River," *Sea Classics* (November 1977), 52.
[5] Ibid., 52

Circle Line Company History

In the April 1945, the Circle Line Company (now the Circle Line Sightseeing Cruises) was launched by Frank Barry, Joe Moran, the Driscoll brothers, and other partners, who merged a variety of competing sightseeing services. Barry was a customs broker; Moran (no relation to the renowned Moran tugboat company) owned Battery Sightseeing Boat Company; and the Driscoll brothers owned a Sheepshead Bay fishing concern. The company's fleet was then a collection of modified craft, including surplus landing crafts from World War II, retired Coast Guard cutters, and private yachts.

The timing of the Circle Line's birth is significant. Wartime fuel rationing had eased, and it was discovered that certain ships, LCIs (landing craft infantry), that were used during the war could be repurposed as sightseeing vessels. Companies ruled out new construction due to cost, and yet to operate within the constraints imposed by the around-Manhattan route required a highly specialized craft. It had to be a boat that could handle 500 or so passengers comfortably, plus feature a snack bar, rest rooms, and a little space for tourists to walk around; it had to be able to float under any low bridges along the Harlem River; it had to stand up to occasional rough water in Upper New York Bay out by the Statue of Liberty; and it had to be able to complete the 35-mile course, in all tidal conditions, in less than three hours.[6]

John W. Nugent, a former partner of the Driscolls, owned Normandy Sightseeing. He was reportedly the first to see the potential for a series of ships the U.S. Navy had offered for sale at the end of the war. It was the LCI(L), an abbreviation for "landing craft, infantry; large," a class of ships known more popularity during the war as "lice." The "lice" were a product of wartime necessity for transporting battle-ready troops across open water and landing them on hostile, enemy-held beaches.[7] Soon, four sightseeing companies in New York would be using these mass-produced LCIs.

Before 1946, the Circle Line had berths on Pier 1 at the Battery and at the far western reaches of 42nd Street. After 1946, 42nd Street became its only headquarters. The partners realized that they could take advantage of nearby Midtown, with its hotels, railway stations, and tourist attractions. Nothing has changed. Today, the line occupies Pier 83 on 42nd Street; some 75 percent of Circle Line passengers are from outside the New York metropolitan area.

The fleet of Circle Line Sightseeing Cruises circumnavigates Manhattan, a hub of business, finance, arts, culture, and entertainment – not just for New York, but for the nation and the world. The *Circle Line X* is thus an important link to the

[6] Brian J. Cudahy, "The Circle Line Story: D-Day Veterans on the Hudson River," *Sea Classics* (November 1977), 52.
[7] Ibid., 52.

city's world-class historic sites. Each day, a third of a million people pass through one of Circle Line's nearby attractions – Times Square. Tourists among them are often not sure whether they are up, down, east, or west. But if they first view the city from the water, they can get their bearings. From a Circle Line sightseeing vessel, they will see the entire borough booked-ended by the huge expanses of the George Washington Bridge (GWB) to the north and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge to the south. The GWB was so named because it is adjacent to important Revolutionary War sites. The Verrazano was named for Florentine explorer Giovanni daVerrazano, who entered New York Harbor in 1524.

Moving north to south, passengers can spot the spire of Riverside Church, whose pulpit has hosted such luminaries as Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela; the dome of Grant's Tomb; the distinctive outlines of the Citicorp building, Chrysler building, and Empire State building – all jewels in the city's architectural crown – and then downtown to the 1,776-foot Freedom Tower, rising from the ashes of Ground Zero, which commemorates arguably the most earth-shattering event of the young twenty-first century. In the harbor itself, Circle Line vessels sail past Liberty Island offering up-close glimpses of Lady Liberty, the statue presented to the United States by the French in 1886. They also pass Ellis Island, the immigrant inspection station that brought millions of new Americans to these shores between 1892 and 1924. The Museum of Immigration opened there in 1990. In 2010, some 48.7 million visitors to New York City spent some 31 billion dollars. That same year, the Circle Line reached the one-million passenger count for the first time in a calendar year. Since 1945, some 60 million passengers – from around the country and around the world – have taken the Circle Line. In her more than 60 years as a sightseeing vessel, *Circle Line X* has hosted many of them. In her long career, she has contributed significantly to the city's tourism industry.

Circle Line X: Construction and History

The vessel was built at the Commercial Iron Works in Portland, Oregon, in 1944. The company, which was established in November 1916 by William T. Casey, Otto J. Hoak, and Robert Boogs on a 30-acre site just south of the Ross Island Bridge, is best remembered for its contribution to our country's emergency shipbuilding program during World War II. Company records show that it built only one ship prior to World War II, a small 140-ton tender for the U.S. Coast Guard in 1935. However, Commercial Iron Works turned out close to 200 small warships during the war, including net layers, minelayers, submarine chasers, and –significant for *Circle Line X* – LCI and LCS landing craft. The shipyard was acquired in 1946 by another local firm, the Zidell Machinery and Supply Company, which transformed the yard into the nation's largest ship-breaking operation, the Zidell Ship Dismantling Company, which dismantled many World War II-era naval ships.

Speedy wartime construction of the LCIs required three critical circumstances: They needed to be built by available workers who had minimum skills. They needed to be built at existing shipyards, which were already being used for heavier marine construction. And they needed to have dependable, off-the-shelf engines that were already in production. On early LCIs, troops went ashore from a pair of awkward-looking gangways mounted outboard on either side and immediately abaft of the bow. Later models abandoned this design because the gangways punched holes in adjacent vessels. Instead, a bow door was built into the hull itself. Also in early models the raised pilothouse amidship was square. In later models they were round. The resulting vessel featured a straight and angular design with uncomplicated lines, a flat-bottomed, heavy-duty hull for beach landings and a squared-off stern. Based on historic photographs, the *Circle Line X* originally had a pair of gangways on each side, but she featured a round pilothouse and therefore was constructed during the transition in design. A total of 912 LCI (L)s were built, 662 of which were used by the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard. The United Kingdom received 220, and Russia received 30 under the Lend Lease program. The LCI (L) was the smallest steel ocean-going ship in the U.S. Navy during World War II. It needed to accommodate some 200 men over two days, which required that bunks be built. During World War II, LCIs were used to transport Allied troops to enemy-held beaches as part of the U.S. amphibious strategy. A smaller and more efficient substitute for large transport steamers, they accommodated 200 soldiers for four or five days in cramped, uncomfortable quarters.

The former LCI (L)-758 was assigned to the Asiatic-Pacific Theater. These vessels had to travel greater distances than those operating in France, Italy, and Sicily. As a World War II vessel, *Circle Line X* participated in several campaigns between 1944 and 1945, including Leyte landings, the Lingayan Gulf landing, and the Mindanao Island landings. The vessel was also credited with shooting down two enemy planes and was awarded several medals, including the American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and the Philippine Liberation Medal. Gerard "Jerry" Marder was captain of the LCI (L)-758. In the book, *USS LCI*, he reported that he and his crew had "five invasions under our belt with Japanese planes shot down" during 18 months overseas. He refers fondly to the heroic LCI (L)-758 as a "pip-squeak bedpan amphib."[8]

In 1951, John W. Nugent, owner of Normandy Sightseeing, added the former World War II vessel that would become the *Circle Line X*, to his fleet. He called it the *Normandy Two*. The name did not reflect her military career, as she did not operate in the European theater. In 1953, Day Line Sightseeing bought her and renamed her *Normandy*. In 1955 the

[8] *USS LCI – Landing Craft Infantry* (Paducah: Turner Publishing Company, 1993).

Circle Line Sightseeing Yachts, Inc. purchased the *Normandy* and rebuilt it to Circle Line standards at the company's maintenance facility in Brooklyn's Mill Basin. Alterations included a reconfigured pilot house, new windows in the passenger cabin, and an upper deck canopy. Her new name was *Circle Line Sightseer* X, which was later shortened to *Circle Line X*. She carried 500 passengers on the 35-mile cruise around Manhattan Island. The fleets spent the off season at Mill Basin. In the early days, sightseeing vessels did not operate in winter.

Mike Duffy, Circle Line Port Captain, and Kenneth Corcoran, Circle Line Captain, both captained the *Circle Line X* before she was retired in 2007. They describe the handling challenges of a World War II-era vessel, which, though reconfigured, retained some of its vintage features. "The [*Circle Line*] *X* had unique handling characteristics that not all captains could master," Duffy said. "She was top heavy, slower, didn't have as much power, and had a cramped pilot house. She demanded respect and became one of our favorites. Being a landing craft she had a shallow draft and could go anywhere." The *Circle Line X's* flat bottom demanded expert captaining. "You didn't want to be broadside or let the current take her broadside," Duffy said. "You'd knock the bottom out from underneath." Corcoran agreed. "You needed special training to get an OK on the [*Circle Line*] *X*," he said. "It took you extra time to command the vessel."[9] Both captains value the beautiful distinctive lines of the *Circle Line X*, which has, as Corcoran said, "the best-looking boat bow, with waves curling off the bow as she pushes a bit of water in front." The steering compartment of the *Circle Line X* is so authentic that it was used in the TV series *Zero Hour* to depict the inside of a German submarine. On the electric board in the engine room you can still see the original inscription: "Department of U.S. Navy."

In addition to circumnavigating Manhattan, the *Circle Line X* hosted charters to the Jersey Shore, including weekly luncheon cruises to Atlantic Highlands. She was the first Circle Line vessel to be upgraded for the corporate charter business. Upgrades included carpets, a wood-faced bar and snack stand, and soft-pink lighting. When the Circle Line acquired World Yacht, Inc. in 1988, the *Circle Line X* went back to her traditional role as a sightseeing vessel. She was retired in 2007.

The *Circle Line X's* career as both a warship and a sightseeing vessel documents an unusual aspect of maritime history of the United States; however, it is being nominated solely for its importance in recreation. Though the *Circle Line X* has retired, she retains integrity as a 1950s-era sightseeing vessel, reconfigured from a World War II landing craft.

[9] Kate Rounds interview with Michael Duffy, Port Captain, January 14, 2013.

Bibliography:

Cudahy, Brian J. "The Circle Line Story: D-Day Veterans on the Hudson River." *Sea Classics,* November 1977, Vol. 10, No. 6

_____. *Around Manhattan Island and Other Maritime Tales of New York*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1997.

Heath, Robert F. *With the Black Cat USS LCI Flotilla 13*. Chico: The Technical Education Press, 2003.

NavSource Naval History: http://www.navsource.org/archives/10/15/150758.htm.

Rounds, Kate. Interview with Michael Duffy, Port Captain. January 14, 2013.

_____. Interview with Kenneth Corcoran, Circle Line Captain. January 14, 2013.

USS Landing Craft Infantry Association: http://www.usslci.com.

USS LCI – Landing Craft Infantry. Paducah: Turner Publishing Company, 1993.

USS LCI – Landing Craft Infantry Volume 2. Paducah: Turner Publishing Company, 1995.

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary encompasses only the historic vessel, which is docked at Pier 83, near West 42nd Street, Manhattan, NY 10036.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the entire historic vessel, which is the property documented in the nomination.

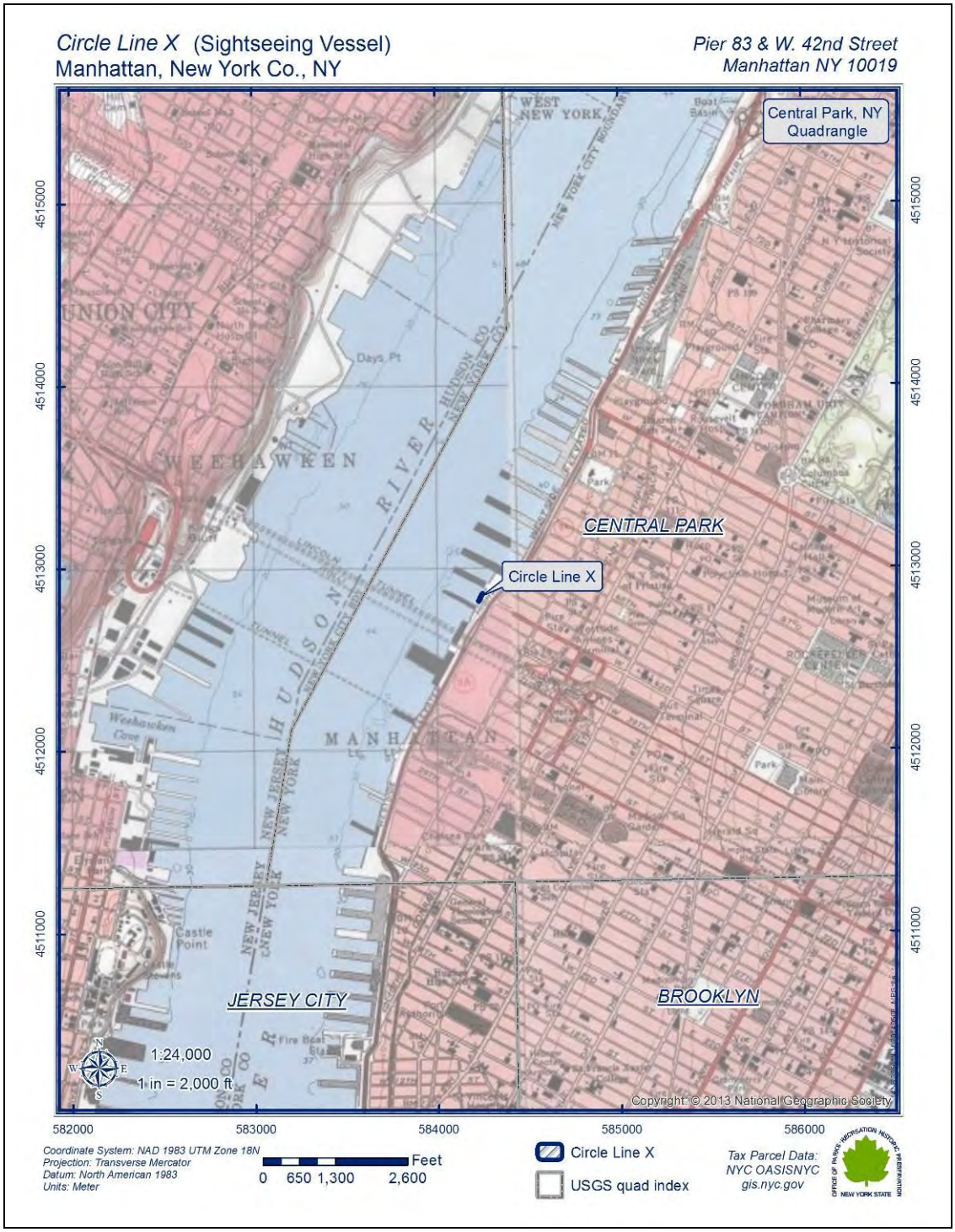

Figure 1 – Location Map

Figure 2 – Property Location

Additional Information

Research and documentation prepared by:
Ms. Kate Rounds
Magazine Editor-In-Chief, Bayonne Community News Editor
Hudson Reporter Assoc., L. P.
1400 Washington Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030

***Circle Line X* as former LCI (L)-758, ca. 1945 in Samar (island in central Philippines)**

***Circle Line X*, ca. 2008**

Photo Log

Name of Property:	*Circle Line X*
City or Vicinity:	Manhattan
County:	New York
State:	NY
Name of Photographer:	Linda Mackey
Date of Photographs:	May 2014
Location of Original Digital Files:	P.O. Box 189; Peebles Island State Park; Waterford, NY 12188
Number of Photographs	10

Photo #1 –*Circle Line X*

Photo #2 – Starboard side of *Circle Line X*

Photo #3 – Main deck

Photo #4 – Upper deck

Photo #5 – Companionway

Photo #6 – Telegraph Room

Photo #7 – Passageway in Crew Compartment

Photo #8 – Steering Compartment

Photo #9 – Pilot House

Photo #10 - Bow of the *Circle Line X*

Landmarks Preservation Commission

Robert B. Tierney
Chair

Kate Daly
Executive Director
kdaly@lpc.nyc.gov

1 Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

212 669 7926 tel
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May 6, 2014

Ms. Ruth Pierpont, Deputy Commissioner
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 189
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Re: *Circle Line X, Manhattan, New York*

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

I write on behalf of Chair Robert B. Tierney in response to your request for comment on the eligibility of the Circle Line X, located at Pier 83 and West 42nd Street in Manhattan, for the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The New York Landmarks Preservation Commission's Director of Research Mary Beth Betts has reviewed the materials submitted by the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau and has determined that the Circle Line X appears to meet the criteria for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kate Daly

cc: Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Mary Beth Betts

CIRCLE LINE

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