



Withdrawal of NHL Designation Executive Summary



Name of Property:	<i>Falls of Clyde</i> (Four-Masted Oil Tanker)
City, State:	Honolulu, HI
Period of Significance:	1878-1922
NHL Criteria:	1, 4
NHL Theme:	V. Developing the American Economy 6. exchange and trade; VIII. Changing Role of the United States in the World Community 2. commerce
Previous Recognition:	National Register of Historic Places, 1973 National Historic Landmark, 1989

National Historic Context: Maritime Heritage of the United States: Large Vessels

NHL Significance:

- *Falls of Clyde* was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1989 as the world's only surviving four-masted fully-rigged ship. Built in Glasgow, Scotland in 1878, *Falls of Clyde* made several trading voyages to western US ports before being sold to American owners in 1898. The vessel was subsequently involved in the Hawaiian transpacific sugar trade as part of Capt. William Matson's Matson Navigation Co. fleet. *Falls of Clyde* is the oldest surviving vessel from the Matson fleet.
- After 1907, *Falls of Clyde* was modified as a sailing oil tanker for the maritime petroleum trade, making multiple voyages every year between California and Hawai'i. The period of national significance ended in 1922 when the vessel was converted for use as a fuel barge in Ketchikan, Alaska. At the time of NHL designation, *Falls of Clyde* possessed exceptional national significance as the oldest surviving American tanker and the only surviving sailing oil tanker left afloat in the world.

Integrity:



- At the time of NHL designation, *Falls of Clyde* had recently undergone restoration and retained a high level of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, as represented by the hull, rigging, fittings, equipment, machinery, and furnishings. The ship deteriorated over the ensuing years; and in 2005, the NHL Program listed the vessel’s status as “threatened” due to a loss of hull integrity from corrosion that was causing leaking. Since then, the ship’s condition has continued to decline, resulting in structural failures and substantial loss of historic and architectural integrity. Currently berthed at Pier 7 in Honolulu Harbor, the ship is partially flooded and heavily corroded, with many of the features that qualified it for designation now severely deteriorated, structurally compromised, or missing. As a result, *Falls of Clyde* no longer retains the high level of integrity required to meet NHL criteria for designation.

Owner of Property: Friends of Falls of Clyde

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

Origins of Withdrawal: In May 2023, maritime historian James P. Delgado, author of the original NHL nomination, prepared a report recommending the vessel’s delisting from the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and withdrawal of NHL designation due to substantial loss of integrity.¹ On November 17, 2023, the Hawai‘i Historic Places Review Board evaluated the petition and determined that *Falls of Clyde* had ceased to meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP. In a letter to the National Park Service on December 14, 2023, the Hawai‘i State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the Review Board’s finding, stating that *Falls of Clyde* “has lost sufficient integrity and ceases to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or to be considered a National Historic Landmark.”² *Falls of Clyde* was removed from the NRHP on February 1, 2024.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: The severely deteriorated vessel is at imminent risk of sinking and poses a safety and environmental hazard. Efforts to preserve the ship since 2008 have been unsuccessful, resulting in it being delisted from the NRHP. As a result, while members of the preservation community and others may prefer that NHL designation be retained, there is potential for a positive response among segments of the general public to withdrawal of designation.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: Despite the poor condition of the ship, loss of integrity, and delisting from the NRHP, members of the preservation community and others who have worked towards or supported the vessel’s preservation may respond negatively to delisting.

Public Comments Regarding Withdrawal (received as of August 12, 2024): Bruce McEwan, President, Friends of Falls of Clyde

Landmarks Committee Comments: No suggested revisions.

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the withdrawal of the National Historic Landmark designation for *Falls of Clyde* in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, because the property has lost its historic

¹ James P. Delgado, PhD, SEARCH, Inc., “The Four-Masted Iron Ship Falls of Clyde: Evaluation of Loss of Integrity and Recommendation for Delisting from the National Register of Historic Places,” 2023.

² Hawai‘i State Historic Preservation Division, Letter to National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, Re: NRHP Request to Delist Falls of Clyde National Historic Landmark (NHL#73000659), December 14, 2023.



integrity and the qualities which originally led it to be designated as an NHL.

Advisory Board Recommendation: