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.

1. Name of Property	
Historic name: New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club	
Other names/site number:	
Name of related multiple property listing:	
N/A	
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing	
2. Location	
Street & number:5353 Laurel Street	
City or town: New Orleans State: LA C	County: Orleans
Not For Publication: Vicinity:	, <u> </u>
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation	Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this <u>X</u> nomination <u>request</u> request for determinathe documentation standards for registering properties in the Nationa Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for In my opinion, the property <u>X</u> meets <u>does not meet the National Registering Places and March 1981.</u>	l Register of Historic orth in 36 CFR Part 60.
I recommend that this property be considered significant at the follow level(s) of significance:	
nationalstatewideXlocal Applicable National Register Criteria:	
_X_ABCD	
	_
Signature of certifying official/Title: Carrie Broussard, State Historic Pr	reservation Officer Date
Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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In my opinion, the property meets doe 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 Registe	er
removed from the National Register	
other (explain:)	
Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
5. Classification Ownership of Property	
(Check as many boxes as apply.) Private: Public – Local Public – State Public – Federal	
Category of Property (Check only one box.)	
Building(s)	
District X	

lew Orleans Lawn Tenni	s Club	_	Orleans Parish, LA
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Site			
Structure			
Object			
Object			
Number of Resour	_	-	
(Do not include pre	viously listed resour	rces in the count)	
Contributing	·	Noncontributing	
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2		1	sites
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7		2	Total
		ously listed in the Natio	nal Register0
6. Function or Us	e		
Historic Functions	}		
(Enter categories fr			
Recreation and Cul			
Recreation and Cur	lute/sports facility		
-			
Current Functions	1		
(Enter categories from			
Recreation and Cul	ture/sports facility		
<u> </u>			

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7. Description	
Architectural Classification	
(Enter categories from instructions.)	
Modern Movement	
Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)	
Principal exterior materials of the property: _brick, concre	ete, wood, glass

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club (NOLTC), 5353 Laurel Street, is a 2.8-acre private tennis club facility completed in 1973 in the Uptown neighborhood of New Orleans. The facility was designed by architect and NOLTC member Eduardo Lucotti of local architecture/engineering firm Waldemar S. Nelson and Company. The property is being nominated as a district with seven contributing resources: 1) twelve clay tennis courts (site); 2) clubhouse (building); 3) pool (object); 4) pool equipment shed (structure); 5) tennis court storage shed (structure); 6) parking lot (site); and 7) fencing (object). There are two non-contributing resources: 1) a splash pad/play area (2015); and 2) a small metal storage shed (c. 2000s). The property retains all of the key historic features that define it as a tennis club, most notably all twelve of its clay courts. The clubhouse has undergone several changes over time, including two compatible additions, the construction of an attached one-story pavilion, the enclosure of one balcony and the partial enclosure of a second balcony, painting of exterior brick, and updates to some interior finishes. However, the majority of its character-defining features are intact. Overall, the NOLTC site appears largely as it did in 1973 and, therefore, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club	Orleans Parish, LA
Name of Property	County and State

Narrative Description

NOLTC is located in the Uptown Historic District (NRHP, 1985) but was constructed after the period of significance (1820-1935).

Site and Setting

The New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club (NOLTC) occupies 2.8 acres in the Uptown neighborhood of New Orleans. The property is bounded by Laurel Street to the south, Jefferson Avenue to the west, Leontine Street to the east, and Magazine Street and Poydras Home (an upscale senior living facility) to the north. Poydras Home has leased the land to the club since 1972. The neighborhood context is characterized primarily by low-rise historic housing stock (to the west, south, and east). Poydras Home comprises several small- to large-scale institutional buildings set among well-landscaped grounds. Magazine Street is a busy historic mixed-use thoroughfare with densely packed low-rise commercial and residential buildings.

The entrance to the NOLTC site is located on Jefferson Avenue on the western property boundary, near the corner of Laurel Street, with a vehicular driveway exit on Laurel Street to the south. The entirety of the site is bordered by tall chain-link and painted-wood fencing, with dense privacy hedges and trees concealing much of the chain link.

Contributing Resources

1. Clay tennis courts (1973) – Contributing Site (Photos 1-7; Figures 4, 6)

Twelve historic regulation-size tennis courts comprise the site's primary and most character-defining resource. Eight courts are located along the north side of the property (adjacent to Poydras Home; "north courts") and four are located to the southeast along Leontine Street ("east courts"). The courts are covered in "rubico," a quick-drying green-colored clay material that NOLTC has played on since the 1940s. Between the two sets of courts is a narrow concrete-paver path bordered by chain-link fencing with gates that provide court access; at the eastern end of the path is the tennis court storage shed (Photos 4; 22; Resource #5).

The placement, size, number, and materials of the courts have remained the same since 1973.

2. <u>Clubhouse (1973)</u> – Contributing Building (Photos 5-23; Figures 4-7)

The clubhouse (1973) is an approximately 15,000-SF two-story building with an L-shaped footprint that separates the pool area from the tennis courts. It is constructed of load-bearing concrete masonry walls with painted brick veneer and vertical wood paneling, concrete-slab floors, steel web joists, and wood-frame interior partitions and roof. According to period accounts the building was designed in the "West Indies" style, which is most clearly expressed in

New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

the distinctive roof form. The tallest point of the roof is a flat-topped pyramidal shape located where the two legs of the L meet (and corresponds to the interior location of the second-floor lounge), while the rest of the roof is a steeply pitched flat-on-hip roof with eaves that extend beyond the exterior wall plane. This distinctive feature is virtually all that is visible from the public rights-of-way due to historic perimeter fencing. (Photos 5-10)

Exterior walls are a mix of painted-brick veneer, painted CMU, painted-wood paneling, and expansive glazing at balconies and the first-floor grill/lounge (facing the east courts). The exterior brick was originally reddish-white in color and was painted in recent years with the current cream color. Wood wall paneling and exposed CMU are historic exterior features that have always been painted.

Balconies for watching tennis matches are located on the north and east elevations; a section of the east balcony was enclosed with glazing in recent years to extend the conditioned upstairs lounge area while still allowing observation of the east courts. The balcony on the south elevation, overlooking the pool, was enclosed with glazing around the same time. All balconies retain their original painted-steel tube columns supporting them from below, and open balconies have the original painted-steel picket railings with wood top rails. (Photos 5-11)

Most historic bronze-finish aluminum windows and doors are extant. The multi-panel solid wood doors at the parking lot entry were replaced c. 1990s with glazed wood doors to increase daylight into the lobby.

The clubhouse was expanded with two additions in the late 1990s: 1) an enlarged, two-story porte-cochere at the parking lot entrance (1998; Photos 8-9, 22) and 2) the enclosure and expansion of a small formerly covered seating area next to the pool. (1999; Photos 8-10, 18) The two-story porte-cochere replaced a smaller, one-story covered entry and incorporates the original square brick pillars, which have been stuccoed. The second floor of the expanded structure provides a small gym. Both additions are compatible with the historic building in their scale, glazing patterns, and roof forms. The porte cochere addition is differentiated from the historic exterior via its stuccoed and louvered-panel exterior and contrasting dark paint color. The enclosed seating area is readable in the glazing infill between the original brick columns.

A stuccoed-brick open-air pavilion was added at the western end of the clubhouse in 2015 to provide covered seating and separate the pool area from a small children's splash pad and play area. (Photo 10)

The clubhouse interior was designed as a functional space to support the club's primary activity: playing tennis. Finishes throughout were generic, easy-to-maintain materials consistent with a casual, high-traffic athletic club, including stone tile floors and acoustical-tile ceilings, and gypsum-board walls with areas of brick and wood-veneer panel. The historic layout is largely intact and consists of a small entrance lobby with the original stair (Photo 12); men's and women's locker rooms (Photos 16-17); a grill and dine-in/lounge area (Photo 13-15); a pro shop

¹ "New NOLTC Now Open," *Times-Picayune*, November 18, 1973.

	New	Orleans	Lawn	Tennis	Club
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Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

for the purchase of equipment and attire (Photo 13-14); administrative spaces; and a second-floor lounge for events (Photos 20-21). The lobby, grill/lounge area, corridor to locker rooms, and pro shop retain most original finishes. The locker rooms and upstairs lounge were upgraded in 2020 with new finishes. The upstairs lounge retains the original vaulted ceiling form.

3. Pool (1973) – Contributing Object (Photos 10, 23; Figure 7)

The in-ground concrete swimming pool (1973) is rectangular in shape with a triangular jut at the southwestern end. It is bordered by textured concrete pavers and a coved concrete border.

4. Pool equipment shed (1973) – Contributing Structure (Photos 8, 23; Figure 5)

The pool equipment shed (1973) is located southwest of the pool. It is a small one-story rectangular building with a flat-top pyramidal roof matching the clubhouse. Exterior walls are clad in vertical painted-wood veneer wall paneling with painted-brick corner columns. The brick was originally reddish-white in color to match the clubhouse and was painted in recent years with the current cream color.

5. <u>Tennis court storage shed (1973)</u> – Contributing Structure (Photos 4, 24)

The tennis court storage shed (1973) is located at the eastern end of the paved walkway between the north and east courts. It is a small one-story rectangular building with a hip roof and painted CMU exterior walls.

6. Parking lot (1973) – Contributing Site (Photo 8; Figure 5)

The L-shaped parking lot (1973) is located on the southern end of the site. It extends the full length of the block along Laurel Street and extends northward at the corner of Laurel Street and Jefferson Avenue to provide parking adjacent to the pool area. The lot is paved in concrete.

7. Fencing (1973/c2000) – Contributing Object (Photos 1-11, 23-24; Figures 4-7)

Fencing is an important element of the site because it provides privacy and prevents balls from entering the street. The majority of fencing around courts is approximately 10-foot chain link as it was historically. Painted-cedar fencing is used in some street-facing locations, including at courts and around the parking lot.

The pool area is delineated by a stuccoed-brick wall and painted wood fencing for privacy. The brick wall was originally exposed and featured an open pattern for partial visibility.

Non-contributing resources

1. <u>Splash pad/play area (2015)</u> – Non-contributing Site (Photo 10)

	New	Orleans	Lawn	Tennis	Club
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Orleans Parish, LA

Name of Property

County and State

A splash pad and play area with playground equipment were added on the western end of the site, adjacent to the pool, in 2015. As described in the clubhouse section above, a stuccoed-brick open-air pavilion was added at the western end of the clubhouse at this time to provide covered seating and separate the pool from the splash pad/play area.

2. <u>Small metal storage shed (c. 2000s)</u> – Non-contributing Structure (Photo 3)

A small metal-clad gable-roof storage shed (c. 2000s) is located in the southeastern corner of the site as part of the dumpster enclosure.

Assessment of Integrity

The NOLTC property retains all of the key historic features that define it as a tennis club, most notably all twelve of its clay courts. Minor changes to the site include the installation of a splash pad/play area on the western edge of the property and a small metal storage shed at the southeast corner, which are minimally visible from public rights of way. (Photos 3, 10) The pool area, pool and tennis sheds, parking lot, and fencing are all intact.

The clubhouse has undergone several changes over time, including two compatible additions (Photos 8-10, 18, 22; Figures 5-7), the construction of an attached one-story pavilion (Photo 10), the enclosure of one balcony and the partial enclosure of a second balcony (Photos 5-8, 10), painting of exterior brick, and updates to some interior finishes. (see also Figures 5-7) However, the majority of its character-defining features are intact: its location, L-shaped footprint, and relationship to the courts and pool area; the distinctive West Indies-style roof form; the spectator balconies overlooking the courts (the enclosed balconies are glazed so they remain functional for this purpose); support spaces such as the pro shop, grill/lounge area, and locker rooms; and the upstairs lounge for special events, which retains its vaulted ceiling and glazed walls that connect the lounge to the balconies and courts. (Figures 5-7; Photos 5-15, 20, 23)

Based on the above, the overall site retains a high degree of historic integrity. Location and setting are unchanged. In terms of design/materials/workmanship, the site is clearly recognizable as a tennis club and retains all of the contributing resources that it was originally designed to include: twelve courts, clubhouse, pool, parking lot, two storage buildings, and fencing. Replacement or alteration of some materials/finishes does not significantly impact integrity: cream-colored exterior painted brick at the club house and pool shed is similar in hue to the original (reddish-cream natural brick) and therefore does not dramatically alter the appearance, and the replacement of some interior finishes at the clubhouse is mitigated by the fact that the replaced finishes were generic, easy-to-clean materials rather than distinctive character-defining features. These aspects of integrity combine to create integrity of feeling/association, which remains unchanged since the club's 1973 opening.

			Orleans Parish, LA
Name of Pro	perty		County and State
8. S	tater	ment of Significance	
	: "x"	le National Register Criteria in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for Na	ational Register
Х	A.	. Property is associated with events that have made a significant cobroad patterns of our history.	ontribution to the
	В.	. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our	past.
	C.	. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose compindividual distinction.	n artistic values,
	D.	. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important history.	in prehistory or
		Considerations 'in all the boxes that apply.)	
	A.	. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes	
	В.	. 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 5	50 years

ew Orleans Lawn Tennis Club	Orleans Parish, LA
ame of Property	County and State
Areas of Significance	
(Enter categories from instructions.)	
Entertainment/Recreation	
<u> </u>	
Period of Significance	
1973-1975	
Significant Dates	
<u> </u>	
Cignificant Dougon	
Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)	
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)	
	
Cultural Affiliation	
Architect/Builder	
Lucotti, Eduardo (Waldemar S. Nelson and Company)	

New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club	Orleans Parish, LA
Name of Property	County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club (NOLTC) at 5353 Laurel Street is historically significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for its association with a boom in the popularity of tennis that occurred in New Orleans and nationwide in the late 1960s and 1970s. Beginning in 1968, tennis transitioned into its "open era" and experienced an all-time high in popularity. NOLTC, which was founded in New Orleans in 1876 and had occupied the same facility since 1897, was compelled in 1971 to begin building a new larger, more modern club facility to accommodate its growing membership, which topped 500 for the first time in the club's history. As a private tennis club with the sole mission of promoting and advancing tennis in New Orleans, NOLTC is the only property of its kind in New Orleans to convey this period of history at the local level. The period of significance begins in 1973, the completion date of the new facility, and ends in 1975, the fifty-year cut-off.

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

Early History of Tennis in New Orleans and Establishment of the New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club (NOLTC)

While the game has ancient roots, modern-day tennis originated in Wales in 1873, when Major Walter Copton Wingfield created his own version on his lawn for party guests. The following year, when Wingfield was posted to India, he continued to refine and test it among the British community there, then filed a patent in February 1874. Although Wingfield originally named his game "sphairistick" after a similar Greek game, "tennis" became the official name shortly thereafter. Tennis proved instantly popular, and the Wimbledon Cricket Club in London adopted it for their lawns as a substitute for croquet.

Tennis, and the establishment of tennis clubs, soon arrived in the United States. The New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club, founded in December 1876, is widely recognized as the first tennis club established in the United States; the second, the Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, was created four months later, and the two clubs continue a friendly rivalry with an annual "oldest clubs" tournament. In 1881, the United States Lawn Tennis Association (USLTA) was founded as the sport's ruling body to standardize the game's rules, attire, and equipment.

It is unknown exactly how tennis arrived in New Orleans, but the prevailing theory is that a few British men imported it with them as the latest sporting trend not long after Wingfield had

² Gaspar J. "Buddy" Stall, *The New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club: 125th Anniversary, 1876-2001* (Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Company Publishers, 2002), 10-15.

³ Howard Jacobs, "Tennis Club Quarters To Be the Last Word," *Times-Picayune*, June 5, 1973; and Somers, 211.

	New	Orleans	Lawn	Tennis	Club
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Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

patented it. These same men participated in the first games of what would become the NOLTC.⁴ In December 1876, NOLTC's twenty founding male players created the club with the purpose of "the advancement and encouragement of the game of lawn tennis." The club's earliest games were played on a series of rented grassy lot throughout the Garden District neighborhood.

In the mid-1880s, NOLTC was joined by existing local sports and social clubs such as the New Orleans Bicycle Club and the Elks Club, which recognized the game's appeal and marked out courts on their lawns to replace croquet. In 1890, NOLTC inaugurated its first annual intraclub tournament and soon expanded into tournaments with outside players, while local universities such as Tulane University added tennis as a collegiate sport. In 1897, with 150 members, NOLTC moved to its first purchased property: a vacant half-block at the corner of S. Saratoga and Marengo streets in Uptown, where it built ten grass courts plus a large wood-frame clubhouse with men's and ladies' locker rooms, a kitchen and bar, and a gallery for watching games and enjoying afternoon tea (in the British tradition).

Tennis had become an established American pastime by the first decade of the twentieth century and a beloved sport in the New Orleans recreational scene. Local newspapers regularly covered local and national events and published a variety of other articles on the subject, from a history of tennis ball makers in ancient France to the health benefits of the game for young ladies. In 1908, the *Daily Picayune* reported that "hundreds of tennis tournaments this year have been made necessary on account of the rapidly growing and increasing popularity of the sport" and goes on to list those associated with the Southern Lawn Tennis Association, which had been established in 1904.⁷

Tennis courts were constructed in the city's two major public parks, Audubon and City Parks, in c. 1902 and c. 1900, respectively, but were accessible only to members of certain clubs until the late 1910s, when the mayor's office committed funds to build and maintain municipal courts. In 1915, the New Orleans Country Club (5024 Pontchartrain Boulevard) opened on an 86-acre site on the city's suburban outskirts. Although its main focus was as an exclusive social club and premier golf course, it became a popular place to play tennis among the city's elite.

The 1920s saw the sport's first professional tennis players at the national level. These players were paid to compete against each other on a touring circuit, while tournaments, including those at NOLTC, were open only to amateur players. In 1937, New Orleans' *Times-Picayune* recognized the distinguished history of the NOLTC as the "oldest tennis club in the United States," beating out the "two oldest clubs of the effete East," the aforementioned Longwood Cricket Club and the Seabright Lawn Tennis and Cricket Club of Seabright, New Jersey

⁴ Somers, 211.

⁵ Stall, 43.

⁶ Somers, 211.

⁷ "Tennis. Many Tennis Tournaments This Year," *Daily Picayune*, May 30, 1908; and "Orleanians Lose Out in South Atlantic Tournament in Atlanta," *Daily Picayune*, August 10, 1904.

⁸ "Public Golf Links and Tennis Courts Result from Times-Picayune Efforts," *Times-Picayune*, July 17, 1915; and "Tennis on Boom at Audubon Park," *Times-Picayune*, September 24, 1919.

⁹ "Formal Opening of Country Club on Next Friday," *Times-Picayune*, May 2, 1915.

New Orleans Lav	wn rennis	
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Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

(1887). ¹⁰ The article goes on to recognize the many accomplishments of club members, stating that "during its long life, the NOLTC has been a prominent factor in competitive tennis in the South. Four of its members have been crowned Southern champions....The club completed a 'grand slam' in the Southern tennis championships of 1926, winning all nine titles in the tournament which was held at the New Orleans Country Club." ¹¹

In the post-World War II period NOLTC's membership increased to an all-time high of 170 members in 1947. The club hosted numerous major tournaments in the 1940s and 1950s, which were reported on in the *Times-Picayune*'s weekly tennis column that ran from 1944 through the 1970s. ¹³

NOLTC and the Tennis Boom of the 1960s and 1970s

The year 1968 marked the start of the "open era" in tennis that persists today: for the first time in the sport's history, the four "Grand Slam" events (Wimbledon, the French Championships/French Open, the US Championships/US Open, and the Australian Championships/Australian Open) expanded eligibility to allow not just amateurs but also professional players. Along with the history-making wins of amateur tennis player Arthur Ashe, the first Black man to win the US Open (1968), and televised tennis events reaching more fans than ever, 1968 sparked a major tennis boom that lasted through the 1970s. One local newspaper article reported that the number of Americans playing tennis increased from 10 million to 30 million in a single decade (1965-1975). ¹⁴

The national tennis boom manifested in New Orleans in several ways. In the early 1970s, local papers reported on the phenomenon with headlines such "Tennis, Everyone?" According to a 1973 article, "Success Spoiling Tennis?," it was difficult to find an open court:

Tennis, now more than ever, is enjoying great success....just try to get a court at City Park during what might be called prime time. It's tough....I can remember when business was so slow one might just walk out onto the unattended courts and play ball. But now, like our streets and highways, tennis courts are jammed to near-capacity....The sport has become so popular that politicians arise by dawn's early light so they can get in a match before going to city hall; girls forget house chores and spend the day with racquet in hand; housewives are late with supper because a marathon match with her girlfriend who also will miss chow... ¹⁶

Local purveyors of tennis equipment and clothing experienced exponential sales increases. A 1975 *Times-Picayune* article, "Shop Openings Highlight Decade of Growth," reported on several

¹⁰ "Tennis Club Here, Organized in 1876, Is Oldest in U.S.," *Times-Picayune*, January 25, 1937.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Wolfe, 145.

¹³ The first column, entitled "Over the Net," ran from 1944 until 1972. Its successor "On the Baseline," ran through the rest of the 1970s.

¹⁴ "Tennis, Everyone?" *Times-Picayune*, November 26, 1975.

¹⁵ "Tennis, Everyone?" *Times-Picayune*, November 26, 1975.

¹⁶ Bob Roesler, "Success Spoiling Tennis?" *Times-Picayune*, July 3, 1973.

	New	Orleans	Lawn	Tennis	Club
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Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

new shop openings as well as the increasing profits of established retailers. ¹⁷ One shop owner told the paper that "[t]ennis business has doubled, tripled, and quadrupled in the last 10 years." A representative of local department store chain Maison Blanche stated that "tennis is booming and the No. 1 seller in our six stores. It was just another sport but no longer."

NOLTC, described in a 1973 tennis column as "one of the most famous New Orleans institutions," played a central role in the local tennis scene during this period. 18 By the late 1960s the club had reached its largest-ever membership (more than 350), and its old S. Saratoga Street quarters, which had already been remodeled twice (in 1924 and 1962), were cramped. ¹⁹ So, in 1971, the club signed a long-term lease on a 2.8-acre property in Uptown at Jefferson Avenue and Laurel Street to build twelve clay courts, a modern two-story clubhouse, a swimming pool, and a large parking lot. The new facility, designed by club member and architect Eduardo Lucotti of local architecture/engineering firm Waldemar S. Nelson and Company, was completed in November 1973.

In its coverage of the grand opening, the *Times-Picayune* published a multi-page article about the history of the club and its new site, stating that the move was "made even more significant by the current tennis boom here in New Orleans...The current boom has not only upped the membership of the NOLTC to such an extent that the club sought a larger facility, but has also resulted in shortage of public tennis courts, balls, rackets and other equipment."²⁰ The new location provided the highest number of courts in the club's history, a pool for the enjoyment of members and their families, and a modern clubhouse that nevertheless "adher[ed] to the traditionalists' affection for a veranda overlooking the courts."²¹ In 1973-74, the new facility hosted NOLTC's highest-ever membership of more than 500 members. ²² (Figures 4-7)

NOLTC sold its S. Saratoga Street property to the City of New Orleans for use as a public tennis facility operated by the New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD); NORD had operated a tennis program since 1947 using the municipal courts at Audubon and City Parks. A newspaper feature on recent NORD activity throughout the city wrote that tennis had "recently become extremely popular with all age groups throughout the city. To keep up with the demand for more municipal courts, the City...purchased the privately owned New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club facilities."²³ The facility, which is still in operation as the Atkinson-Stern Center, opened to the public in 1974.

In 1970, City Park had New Orleans's largest public tennis facility with 38 tennis courts. Six new courts were added in 1973-74 to meet the ever-increasing demand. According to a 1973

¹⁷ John Moore, "Shop Openings Highlight Decade of Growth," *Times-Picayune*, August 10, 1975.

¹⁸ John Moore, "On the Baseline," *Times-Picayune*, November 18, 1973.

¹⁹ Pierre DeGruy, "97-Year Love Story," *Times-Picayune*, November 4, 1973.

²¹ Lily Jackson, "New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club: Courting the Sporting Life for Over 100 Years," Southern Tennis (Fall 1985): 40.

²² Mike Kearney, email correspondence with author, August 30, 2024; and New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club Board of Governors, "New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club: Proposal for Renovation of NOLTC Facilities," April 27, 1971. New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club Records, Louisiana Research Collection, Tulane University Special Collections.

²³ "Recreation...Beautification, Cultural Resources," *Times-Picayune*, July 11, 1973.

New Orleans Lav	wn rennis	
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Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

article, "[t]he sport...has increased 500 percent at City Park alone...The new courts...will relieve the crush, but by just a fraction." ²⁴ The tennis center building, recently completed in 1969, was also enlarged at this time. ²⁵ Courts continued to be added through the 1970s; according to the *Times-Picayune*, "[d]uring the tennis boom of the 1970s City Park was the largest public tennis facility in the nation with 54 courts." ²⁶

Other facilities operating during the tennis boom period included 10 public tennis courts at Audubon Park; 12 courts at the New Orleans Country Club; as well as several public playgrounds throughout the city, which offered one or two courts each.²⁷

Criterion A - Recreation/Entertainment

NOLTC is historically significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Recreation/Entertainment for its association with the tennis boom of the late 1960s and 1970s, when the popularity of the sport exponentially increased throughout the city and NOLTC was compelled to build a new larger, more modern facility to accommodate its growing membership. As a private organization founded solely as a tennis club with the mission of promoting and advancing tennis in New Orleans, there is no direct comparable property that similarly conveys this history at the local level. And while NOLTC had been the city's leading tennis organization since its founding in 1876, the completion of its new facility in 1973 further cemented this role at a time when tennis was at peak popularity.

The two other properties most directly associated with the boom – City Park and the Atkinson-Stern Center – differ from the subject property in fundamental ways.

City Park, which majorly expanded its tennis offerings in the 1970s, differs from NOLTC as a historic resource because it is a public facility that is part of a much larger multi-use site. In addition to tennis, the park offered (and still offers) a golf course, an amusement park, an art museum, walking and bike paths, canoeing and fishing, playgrounds, soccer fields, botanical garden, and two sports stadiums, among other amenities. The tennis complex was renovated in 2011 and the park now has 26 rather than 54 courts.

Atkinson-Stern Center, the former home of NOLTC, became a municipally operated tennis facility in 1974. It remains in operation but was substantially altered in a 1988 renovation. At that time, the courts were reconfigured from ten to eight, the exterior and interior of the clubhouse were remodeled, a large one-story concrete administrative building and an upper-level steel viewing platform structure connecting it to the clubhouse were constructed, the pool was demolished, and a covered detached bleacher structure was constructed west of the courts. ²⁸ Today, it marginally reflects its appearance from the 1970s boom period.

²⁴ Bob Roesler, "Success Spoiling Tennis?" *Times-Picayune*, July 3, 1973.

²⁵ "City's Parks, Parkways Have Controversial 1972," *Times-Picayune*, January 28, 1973; and "Annual Report, City of New Orleans, 1968-1969," *Times-Picayune*, May 4, 1969.

²⁶ "City Park receives honors," *Times-Picayune*, August 10, 2004.

²⁷ Howard Jacobs, "'Tennis Anyone' Now 'Tennis Everyone," *Times-Picayune*, October 7, 1975.

²⁸ Ronette King, "Tennis center is serving public after renovation," *Times-Picayune*, July 28, 1988.

ew Orleans Lawn Tennis Club
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Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

Properties with a less direct connection to the tennis boom include Audubon Park and the New Orleans Country Club. The 10 Audubon Park courts of the 1970s were relocated to their present location in the late 1980s.²⁹ The New Orleans Country Club remodeled its courts c. 2003 to expand parking, reducing the total number from 12 to 10 and relocating one court. Furthermore, unlike NOLTC, the New Orleans Country Club prioritized its role as an exclusive social club and premier golf course rather than a tennis club.

Conclusion

The New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club at 5353 Laurel Street in New Orleans embodies an important moment in the history of local recreation/entertainment. Founded in 1876, NOLTC had occupied the same club facility since 1897, remodeling the site twice to meet the club's changing needs. When tennis entered its "open era" in 1968, the sport's popularity skyrocketed both locally and nationally, and NOLTC was compelled to relocate to larger, more modern headquarters. The new club facility, completed in 1973, uniquely conveys the tennis mania that occurred in New Orleans in the 1970s as the only purpose-built tennis club in the city. Other resources associated with this history have lost integrity or differ in their historic use. Therefore, NOLTC is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level.

²⁹ "New courts almost ready at Audubon," *Times-Picayune*, July 15, 1987.

New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

Name of Property

FIGURE 1. NOLTC's second location at Jackson Avenue and Prytania Street, mid-1880s. (Source: Gaspar J. "Buddy" Stall, *The New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club*, p. 22)



New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club

Orleans Parish, LA County and State

Name of Property

FIGURE 2. NOLTC members on the steps of the new clubhouse on S. Saratoga Street, c. 1900. (Source: New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club Records, Louisiana Research Collection, Tulane University Special Collections)



New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club
Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA County and State

FIGURE 3. S. Saratoga Street courts and clubhouse after the 1924 renovation and transition from grass to clay courts, 1950. (Source: New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club Records, Louisiana Research Collection, Tulane University Special Collections)



New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

FIGURE 4. The new NOLTC site showing the courts and clubhouse, 1973 (Source: *Times-Picayune*/eBay)



New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club

Orleans Parish, LA County and State

Name of Property

FIGURE 5. The new NOLTC site showing the clubhouse and pool area from the parking lot (not yet paved), 1973. (Source: *Times-Picayune*/eBay)



New (Orleans	Lawn	Tennis	Club

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

FIGURE 6. The new NOLTC site showing the courts and clubhouse, 1973. (Source: *Times-Picayune*/eBay)



New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

FIGURE 7. The new NOLTC site showing the pool and clubhouse, 1973. (Source: *Times-Picayune*/eBay)



New	Orleans	Lawn	Tennis	Club	

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB Control No. 1024-0018 New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club Orleans Parish, LA Name of Property County and State Somers, Dale A. The Rise of Sports in New Orleans, 1850-1900. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972. The Times-Picayune "Tennis Club Here, Organized in 1876, Is Oldest in U.S." Times-Picayune, January 25, 1937. "Tennis, Everyone?" Times-Picayune, November 26, 1975. "Tennis. Many Tennis Tournaments This Year." Daily Picayune, May 30, 1908. "Tennis on Boom at Audubon Park." Times-Picayune, September 24, 1919. Wolfe, Richard P. The New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club: Oldest in the Americas. New Orleans: New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club, 2011. **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: State Historic Preservation Office ____ Other State agency Federal agency

Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

Local government

____ University
Other

New Orleans Lawn Tennis Clu	ıb		Orleans Parish, LA	
Name of Property			County and State	
10. Geographical Data				
Acreage of Property _	2.8_acres_			
Use either the UTM syst	tem or latitude/	longitude coordinates		
Latitude/Longitude Co Datum if other than WG		<u> </u>		
(enter coordinates to 6 d 1. Latitude: 29.919459°		Longitude: -90.115284°		
2. Latitude: 29.919271°		Longitude: -90.114061°		
3. Latitude: 29.918508°		Longitude: -90.114196°		
4. Latitude: 29.918539°		Longitude: -90.115494°		
Or UTM References Datum (indicated on US	GS map):	002		
NAD 1927 or		983		
1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:		
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:		
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:		
4. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:		

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.) The property is bounded by Jefferson Avenue to the west, Laurel Street to the south, Leontine Street to the east, and the Poydras Home property to the north. See map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.) The boundaries match the footprint historically associated with the New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club since 1972.

		Orleans Parish, LA
		County and State
nsultant, LL	.C	
state:	LA	zip code: <u>70121</u>
		nsultant, LLC state: LA

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club

City or Vicinity: New Orleans

County: Orleans State: LA

Photographer: Gabrielle Begue

Date Photographed: June-August 2024

New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club

Name of Property

Orleans Parish, LA

County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 24. North tennis courts, camera facing NE
- 2 of 24. North tennis courts, camera facing NW
- 3 of 24. East tennis courts, camera facing E
- 4 of 24. Path between north and east courts, camera facing E
- 5 of 24. North tennis courts and north elevation of clubhouse, camera facing SE
- 6 of 24. North tennis courts and north/east elevations of clubhouse, camera facing SW
- 7 of 24. East tennis courts and east elevation of clubhouse, camera facing W
- 8 of 24. Parking lot, clubhouse, and pool shed, camera facing NE
- 9 of 24. South elevation of clubhouse from parking lot, camera facing N
- 10 of 24. Pool area and south elevation of clubhouse, camera facing N
- 11 of 24. North balcony of clubhouse, camera facing W
- 12 of 24. Clubhouse lobby stair, camera facing NW
- 13 of 24. Grill/dine-in lounge area and pro shop, camera facing N
- 14 of 24. Dine-in lounge area, pro shop, and corridor to locker rooms, camera facing W
- 15 of 24. Grill pass-through, camera facing W
- 16 of 24. Ladies' locker room, camera facing E
- 17 of 24. Men's locker room, camera facing W
- 18 of 24. Enclosed poolside seating area in clubhouse, camera facing SW
- 19 of 24. Trophy case in clubhouse lobby, camera facing SE
- 20 of 24. Clubhouse lounge, camera facing NE
- 21 of 24. Clubhouse lounge/multi-purpose room, camera facing W

New Orleans Lawn Tennis Club	Orleans Parish, LA
Name of Property	County and State

- 22 of 24. Clubhouse gym, camera facing SW
- 23 of 24. Pool area, clubhouse, and pool shed looking towards parking lot, camera facing SW
- 24 of 24. Tennis storage shed, camera facing E

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 - 60-100 hours Tier 2 - 120 hours Tier 3 - 230 hours Tier 4 - 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

NEW ORLEANS LAWN TENNIS CLUB

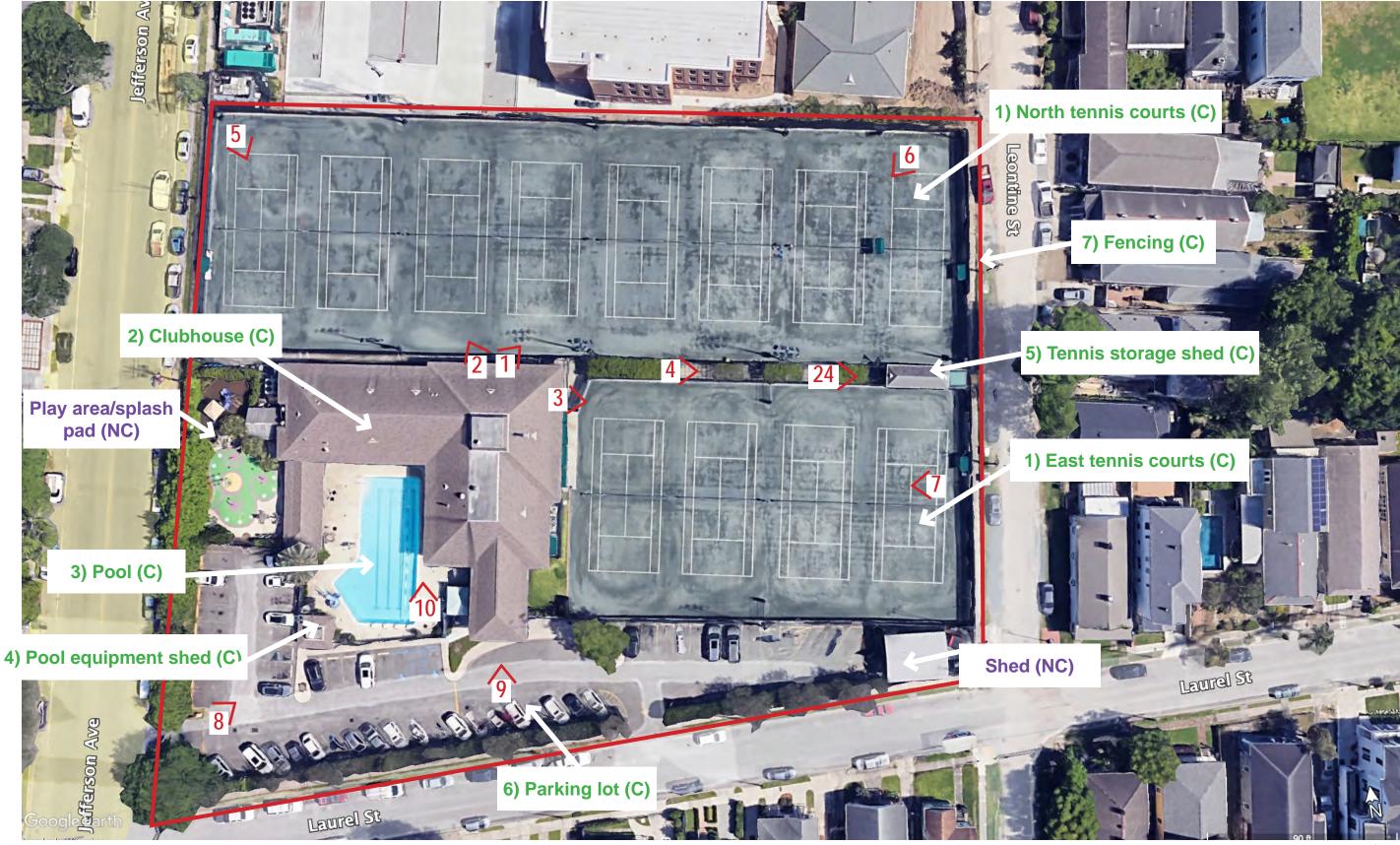
5353 Laurel Street New Orleans, LA 70115

National Register Nomination March 2025









Proposed National Register boundary

C = Contributing

