No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

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: Fort Astoria

AND/OR COMMON:

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Corner of 15th and Exchange Streets — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: Astoria — VICINITY OF — CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 1st

STATE: Oregon — CODE: 41 — COUNTY: Clatsop — CODE: 007

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	__OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	X UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	X PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENC
X SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: City of Astoria

STREET & NUMBER: City Hall, 1095 Duane Street

CITY, TOWN: Astoria — VICINITY OF — STATE: Oregon

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Clatsop County Court House, County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER: P. O. Box 178

CITY, TOWN: Astoria — STATE: Oregon

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE:

DATE: — __FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

CITY, TOWN: — STATE:

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The site of original Fort Astoria is located a short distance south of the Columbia River. Most of the fort site has been built over by the modern city of Astoria, but a small plot of clear ground has been preserved and kept free of modern structures. Originally, the log buildings of Fort Astoria consisted of apartments for the proprietors and clerks, with a capacious dining hall for both, extensive warehouses for the trading goods and furs, a trading shop, smith's forge and etc. The complex was surrounded by a stockade fifteen feet high. A gallery ran around the stockades in which loop-holes were pierced sufficiently large for muskets. Two strong bastions built of logs commanded the four sides of the square; each bastion had two stories in which a number of chosen men slept every night. A six pound cannon was placed in the lower story and they were both well provided with small arms.

Today the site is maintained by the city as a park and features a reconstructed blockhouse and explanatory historical sign. The blockhouse, constructed in 1956, is of Wolmanized fir with cedar shake roof; the two rows of pickets extending to the concrete wall are also of Wolmanized fir posts. The backdrop, depicting other buildings comprising the original Fort Astoria, is painted on a concrete wall which forms the north boundary of the historic site lot. A large wooden slab sign outlines the floor plan of the original Fort Astoria and later Fort George.

The site is near the center of the business district, but as the site is so small many travellers by car unwittingly pass it.

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/HUMANITARIA
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	X COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1811-1813 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Astoria is one of the most significant sites of the American Fur Trade, symbo ing John Jacob Astor's great bid to break the British monopoly of the northwest tr It commemorates the powerful commercial and political influences exerted by the fu trade interests. It also represents an important American claim to the Oregon Cou even though the effort made in 1811-1813 failed.

Astor was born in Germany but came to the United States in 1784 and immediately entered the fur trade. He exhibited an amazingly keen grasp of the industry and soon extended his operation into the area of the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valle By 1800, Astor had become the leading fur merchant in the United States and also an important ship owner.

Astor was considerably irked by the knowledge that powerful British interests expecially the Northwest Company, had a virtual monopoly over the fur trade, not only beyond the border of the United States but within her boundaries as well. Astor, having conceived the idea of his own fur monopoly, received a charter from the New York legislature to organize the American Fur Company. On June 23, 1810, Astor formed the Pacific Fur Company as a subsidiary of the American Fur Company for the expressed purpose of operating in the Oregon Country. He proposed to establish a line of interior trading posts along the Missouri and Columbia Rivers which would create a more direct line of communication between the source of suppl and the trading company. At the mouth of the Columbia, Astor planned to establish his chief trading house to be supplied from New York.

The Astor expedition crossed the Columbia River bar on March 22, 1811. A party of men landed and constructed of Fort Astoria began on April 12, 1811. This post was located on the south bank of the Columbia, only a few miles from the site of the Lewis and Clark former fort, Fort Clasop.

Initially the plan of Astor succeeded. In 1811-1812 trapping parties scattered through the Columbia basin and took many furs. The Northwest Company was forced to increase the number of its posts to meet the American challenge. For a time it seemed that the Astorians might get the upper hand, but in 1813 Astor's supply ship failed to arrive with trading goods and the War of 1812 also intervened to decisively end the career of Fort Astoria.

(Continued)

Faced with the certainty of capture by British naval forces, the Pacific Fur Compar sold Fort Astoria and their other fur posts to the Northwest Company on October 16, 1813, thus ending Astor's dream of empire on the Pacific Coast. In November, the British occupied Fort Astoria and renamed it Fort George. Fort George was the principal western depot of the British fur companies from 1813 to 1825. However, in 1829, the Hudson Bay Company reoccupied Fort George and continued to hold the post until American occupation of the Oregon Country in 1846. But even by 1841 Fort George had greatly decayed.

During the entire period of the Oregon boundary dispute, one of the principal arguments which the American government advanced to prove its claim to Oregon was the establishment of the American fur trading post at Fort Astoria in 1811. On June 21, 1850, the United States Army occupied the Fort George site as a military reservation.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History of the Northwest Coast - H. H. Bancroft
American Fur Trade of the Far West - Hiram Chittenden
Empire of the Columbia - Dorothy Johansen
John Jacob Astor - Kenneth Porter

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	10	436240	5111505 0	B			
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Fort Astoria fronts on Exchange Street. Beginning at intersection of Exchange Street and 15th Street, proceed 100' west along the northe curb of Exchange Street to a point, thence north 62.5' to the brick wall which forms northern boundary, thence east along the brick wall 100' to the west curb of 15th Street, thence south 62.5' along the western curb of 15th Street to the point of orig

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
Cecil N. McKithan, Historian

ORGANIZATION
Historic Sites Survey Division, NPS

DATE
8/15/77

STREET & NUMBER
1100 "L" Street, NW.

TELEPHONE
(202) 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN
Washington,

STATE
D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

Landmark Designated: Nov. 5, 1961 date

Boundary Certified: SEPT. 27, 1977 date

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 2/17/84

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)