



Name of Property: William Howard Taft Home (updated documentation and name change)

City, State: Cincinnati, Ohio

Period of Significance: 1857-1891

NHL Criteria: 2

NHL Theme: IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
2. governmental institutions

Previous Recognition: 1964 National Historic Landmark
1976 National Register of Historic Places

National Historic Context: *The Presidents of the United States: Historic Places Commemorating the Chief Executives of the United States* (1976)
Presidential Sites: An Inventory of Historic Buildings, Sites, and Memorials Associated with Former Presidents of the United States (Special Study)

NHL Significance:

- The William Howard Taft home was the birthplace and residence of William Howard Taft during the years when Taft received his formative education and introduction to politics, law, and public service, which also provided the basis for the personal qualities that enabled him to become head of two of the three branches of the United States



government, a feat that has never been duplicated. The house is the only remaining property associated with William Howard Taft. He spent the majority of his first twenty-five years calling this residence home.

- The home is significant in the area of law for its association with William Howard Taft, an accomplished lawyer and constitutional law educator who served in numerous important positions throughout his career, including chief justice of the United States Supreme Court.
- The home is also significant in the area of politics/government for its association with William Howard Taft, who served as solicitor general of the United States (1891), the first civil governor of the Philippine Islands (1901-1904), secretary of war under President Theodore Roosevelt (1904-1908), and as 27th president of the United States (1909 to 1913).
- William Howard Taft is the only individual to have served as both president and chief justice of the Supreme Court.
- When the property was first designated an NHL, Taft's son Charles Taft, requested that the name also honor his grandfather by calling it the "Alphonso Taft Home, Birthplace of William Howard Taft." Because the property is nationally significant principally for its association with William H. Taft, the name change identifies the property as such.

Integrity:

- The house experienced a major fire in 1877 completely destroying the roof and gutting the second floor, but the chimneys survived. The upper floor and roof were reconstructed immediately following the fire, but the design was altered by raising the height of the second floor rooms and exterior windows. The new roof featured a galvanized metal cornice and paired brackets in the Italianate style.
- The entrance portico was replaced with a porch that extended across the façade. This colonial revival style feature was added around 1900.
- The exterior of the house was restored in 1964 by the National Park Service to its 1867 appearance based on a historic photograph and other documentation. The only change from the 1857 footprint of the home is the two-story octagonal bay measuring approximately 6' x 22', located along the south exterior wall of the rear wing added in 1877.
- The interior has been rehabilitated for public use and has diminished integrity resulting from the alteration of rooms for museum display and interpretation, storage, and office use. Integrity of setting is slightly diminished by the loss of neighboring residential properties and the addition of the Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Detention Center to the southeast of the house.

Owner of Property: National Park Service

Acreage of Property: The Taft Home is located within a 0.51-acre parcel that represents the core of the 1.82-acre parcel owned by the Taft family at the time of William Howard Taft's birth.

Origins of Nomination: The National Park Service Midwest Regional Office hired a

professional consulting firm to complete an updated National Historic Landmark nomination.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- This updated documentation will strengthen the existing NHL designation and more fully recognize the significance of William Howard Taft as president and chief justice of the United States Supreme Court.
- This nomination recognizes the significant role of this residence in Taft's political education and the development of his political ethos.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of):

Advisory Board Recommendation: