



NHL Executive Summary



Name of Property:	Fort Worden
City, State:	Port Townsend, Washington
Period of Significance:	1898–1945
NHL Criteria:	1, 4
NHL Theme:	IV. Shaping the Political Landscape 3. military institutions and activities
Previous Recognition:	1974 National Register of Historic Places; 1976 National Historic Landmark; HABS WA-153; HAER WA-23
National Historic Context:	Coastal Defenses of the United States, 1885–1945

NHL Significance:

- Fort Worden is significant under NHL Criterion 1 for its association with the establishment and development of the national coastal defense system put into place at the end of the nineteenth century and expanded during the World War II era. As the headquarters of the coast (later harbor) defenses of Puget Sound, Fort Worden functioned as an essential component of the national coastal fortification system developed in response to the recommendations of the Endicott Board in its 1886 report to Congress.
- Fort Worden continued to play a significant role in seacoast defense through World War II, serving as the focal point of cooperation with allied Canadian defenses that closed the Strait of Juan de Fuca to possible assault by Japanese naval forces. No other coastal fortification in the United States shared its responsibilities for defense with another nation.



- Under Criterion 4, Fort Worden is nationally significant because it outstandingly illustrates key features of the design of coastal fortifications and installations from the late nineteenth century through World War II that are not well represented at other sites. Together, the Endicott-era fortifications and garrison and the World War II fortifications represent a unique and nationally significant collection of buildings and structures related to coastal defense.

Integrity:

- Fort Worden retains a high level of historic integrity and is one of the most intact examples of the national coast defense system put into place beginning at the end of the nineteenth century. It retains all the gun and mortar batteries essential to its function as well as examples of searchlight, fire control, and communication facilities.
- The construction materials and workmanship used in the post buildings and in the fortifications are mostly intact and unaltered. The garrison buildings remain in use, and all recent work has been carried out according to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings*. The concrete fortifications retain most of their steel and iron elements, with some deterioration as a result of exposure to the marine environment. The materials, carpentry, and concrete finishes accurately reflect the period in which Fort Worden was established and developed.
- Fort Worden remains unmistakably an Endicott-period military post that expanded during World War II. The design of the garrison buildings, the arrangement of barracks and officers' quarters around the central parade ground, and the fortifications themselves are key features that easily recall the period in which they were constructed and visibly reinforce the impression that the fort had a valuable role in national defense.

Owner of Property:

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (less the cemetery), United States Veterans Administration (cemetery)

Acreeage of Property: 503.14

Origins of Nomination:

The original 1976 NHL nomination was prepared by the American Association of State and Local History under contract with the National Park Service. The present revision was initiated by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

High. Fort Worden as an historic place is broadly supported by the public and enjoys a wide and varied use.

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

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of March 29, 2024):

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

Advisory Board Recommendation: