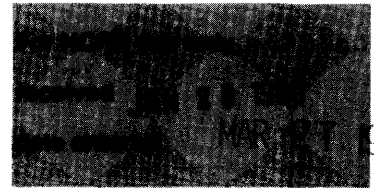


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name** Knapp-Astor House

historic Montgomery House

and/or common Knapp-Astor House (preferred)

**2. Location**

street & number 930 East Knapp Street and 1301 North Astor Street  not for publication

city, town Milwaukee  vicinity of congressional district Fifth

state Wisconsin code 55 county Milwaukee code 079

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name Henry S. Reuss

street & number 1301 North Astor Street

city, town Milwaukee  vicinity of state Wisconsin 53202

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Milwaukee County Courthouse

street & number 901 North Ninth Street

city, town Milwaukee  vicinity of state Wisconsin 53233

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1976  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison  vicinity of state Wisconsin 53706

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Knapp-Astor House is a stately duplex with Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, and Georgian elements. The site is located at the corner of Knapp and Astor Streets in a residential-commercial neighborhood in the center of Milwaukee, in close proximity to the First Unitarian Church (1891) and the Abbot Row townhouses (1891), other works of the architects, Ferry & Clas. Developed in the 1880s and 1890s, the area also includes St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1882-90; NRHP 1974) and several townhouses of the 1880s. Efforts are under way to rehabilitate parts of the locale that have been neglected.

Unusually delicate as a Victorian-era building in the proportion of details, the Knapp-Astor House is a fusion of two two-story-plus-attic-story urban residences. The exterior facing is predominantly painted, with some use of asbestos shingles, and wood trim, and has a recently-installed asbestos shingle roof. Rusticated cut limestone covers the brick foundation; basement windows are rectangular, protected by iron grills.

At first appearing to present a symmetrical facade to Knapp Street and an asymmetrical one to Astor, the dual residences are actually contiguous, separate symmetrical exterior units. The Knapp Street facade is a three-part composition with trabeated entrance recessed within the center of the design. A steep gabled dormer filled by two full-size double-hung windows marks the center of the lower slope of the gambrel roof; a smaller, single-windowed, gabled dormer is set to each side. The center of the second story is marked by a pair of double-hung windows; bowed bay windows enclosed by thin, wood pilasters and supported by carved wood modillions grace each side. A denticulated frieze underlines the thin cornice above the second story. On the first story, a pair of double-hung windows to each side of the entry is topped by a wood entablature similar to that in the center. The upper sash of all double-hung windows is multi-paned. The entrance itself is enclosed by an elliptical arch marked by a center ancon. Ionic pilasters flanking the single door visually support the entablature and elliptical fanlight. Short wood apsidal pedestals are built into the corners of the stoop under the sidelights. Wrought iron railings frame the short flight of semicircular stairs.

The long, Astor Street facade actually is composed of parts of the two residences, the side elevation of the Knapp Street house, and the front elevation on Astor Street. The units are differentiated by a brick's-width set-back of the Astor residence. A single, wide denticulated frieze underlies the roofline of both parts, and lines the slopes of two prominent gables in the highest attic story. The broad, gambrel-shaped gable to the south contains a large, glazed Palladian window; a smaller Palladian window with wood-panel side wings fills the smaller gable in the center of the Astor Street house to the north. Symmetrically-disposed double and triple double-hung windows light the stories below. Glazed gable dormers similar to those on the southern facade balance the ends of the projecting gable and shallow overhang on the northern residence. Single double-hung windows (on the second story) and paired ones below maintain the ends of the three-part facade. Asbestos shingles added in 1950 cover the overhang and gable in the center. Wood modillions support a three-sided bay projecting from the overhang; smaller modillions visually support the ends of the overhang. The Astor Street entrance is slightly displaced to the left to accommodate a paneled frontispiece and lozenge sidelight to the right. The round-arched opening of the recessed entry echoes the Palladian arch two stories above. Ionic pilasters and an ancon decorate the archway. A short flight of steps gives access to the stoop. Although less formal than the Knapp-Street entrance, the quality of this paneled entry and the picturesque overhang give the facade a quiet understated elegance.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Knapp-Astor House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

CONTINUATION SHEET

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7. Description (continued)

Only three of the building's four brick chimneys are visible from the street. One, with a simple corbelled head pierces the upper slope of the north side of the gambrel roof. A pair of long, thin chimneys are placed into the western slope of the long Astor Street gable. The fourth can be seen only from the rear of the building, above a shed dormer in the western end of the north slope of the gambrel. The only addition to the building, a one-story, stucco lean-to (1923) on the Astor-Street kitchen, is visible at the rear. Simple, segmental arches cover the windows on the hidden facades.

Much of the interior fabric of the houses is intact. Paneled wainscoting lines the stairway, the elliptical arch in the center entry and hall, and the walls of the parlor and dining room to either side. Corkscrew-turned balustrades enclose open stairwells in both residences. Ten fireplaces of varying designs, most with elaborately-carved wood mantels and tile hearths, are distributed in living and sleeping spaces throughout the houses. Bay windows on the second floor are treated as alcoves or window seats. Egg-and-dart-trimmed coved mouldings suggest the original elegance of the first-story rooms. Although most rooms are modest in size, the generosity of windows creates a quality of spaciousness.

During the time that the houses were used as a rehabilitation home for elderly women (1968-79), walls separating the residences were opened-up. The ground story of the Astor Street house has recently been modernized to serve as an apartment. Future plans of the owner call for minor alterations of the remaining portions of the building to meet codes for office use. Despite minor accomplished and planned modifications, the distinction of the interior spaces is strong.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1891<sup>1</sup>

Builder/Architect Ferry & Clas<sup>2</sup>

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Notable as an unconventional work of the prominent Milwaukee firm of Ferry & Clas, the Knapp-Astor House is also significant as an early example of Colonial Revival architecture, and as a variant of townhouse design. The house has some added historical interest as the Milwaukee home of turn-of-the-century entrepreneur and civic leader Frank Warren Montgomery.

The overall symmetry and restraint of design, and the inclusion of classical and colonial elements, characterize the Knapp-Astor House as an early example of the Colonial Revival style sharing many of the elements of the concurrent Queen Anne. Predictably elegant, the design is nonetheless uncommon as a work of architects Ferry & Clas, one of the leading firms of the late-nineteenth century credited with a number of National Register buildings in Milwaukee and elsewhere in Wisconsin.

Active from 1890–1913, the partnership of George B. Ferry (1857–1918) and Alfred C. Clas (1859–1942) produced a number of acclaimed works, most formal, high-style stone or brick buildings. Ferry, who was born and educated in Springfield, Massachusetts, studied at MIT before settling in Milwaukee. Clas, a native of Sauk City, Wisconsin, was a messenger boy in the state senate, an apprentice to a Milwaukee architect, and worked in an architect's office in California before returning to Milwaukee to work as a draftsman. After the partnership was dissolved at Ferry's death, Clas went on to design most of Milwaukee's city and county parks. The firm favored grand Neo-Classical designs for its large civic buildings, and variations on the English-type Queen Anne Style for its large residences. The versatile firm also executed designs with Richardsonian Romanesque elements, and in the manner of English "country-church Gothic" designs. The First Unitarian Church (1891), near the Knapp-Astor House, is a fine example of the latter type and is listed in the National Register. The Milwaukee Public Library (1893–97), the State Historical Society (1900) in Madison, and the Captain Frederick Pabst Residence (1907) are perhaps the best-known and most imposing of Ferry & Clas works in the National Register. Another of Ferry & Clas's residential works in Milwaukee, the Francis M. Barrington Residence of 1898, was also designed as a double house. Although unconventional, too, as an urban townhouse in the expansiveness of its plan, the later Barrington House is a Queen Anne, buff-brick and limestone work more characteristic of the firm. Finally, as an early example of the Colonial Revival, the Knapp-Astor House testifies to the progressiveness of its architects, just as does the Milwaukee Public Library, designed concurrently with the Chicago World Columbian Exposition, its progenitor.

<sup>1</sup>Building Inspector's Records, City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

<sup>2</sup>Architecture Archives, Milwaukee Public Library.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Architecture Archives, Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

# 10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 0.2

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Milwaukee, Wis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A	1 6	4 2 6 7 1 0	4 7 6 6 2 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Township 7 N, Range 22 E, Section 21, City of Milwaukee; the East 42.50 ft. of the South 1/2 of 1/4 Block 29 in the East 1/2 of the S.W. 1/4.

### 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 Henry S. Reuss, Member of Congress

organization U.S. House of Representatives

date October, 1979

street & number 2413 Rayburn House Office Building

telephone (202) 225-3571

city or town Washington,

state D. C. 20515

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Richard Merrin*

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

date 1/24/80

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*W. Ray Luce*  
for Keeper of the National Register

date 3/27/80

Attest: *Kristin O'Connell*

date 3/14/80

Chief of Registration

(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Knapp-Astor House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

See

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER below PAGE 1

8. Significance (continued)

Frank W. Montgomery (1850-1932) moved to Milwaukee from his native New York State in 1854. Starting his working career as a bookkeeper, Montgomery quickly accumulated money through land speculation in Colorado. In 1881 he became a member of the Milwaukee Chamber of Commerce, and began to invest in manufacturing.<sup>3</sup> From 1881-91 he was a principal stockholder in the Badger Knitting Company,<sup>4</sup> during which time he commissioned Ferry & Clas to design the Knapp-Astor House. Montgomery lived in the house only four years before moving to New York, where he made investments in utility companies there and in New Jersey. As the reorganizer of the Milwaukee Gas Light Company, Montgomery substantially increased his wealth. In 1905 Montgomery returned to Wisconsin to assume ownership of the Madison Traction Company, which he renamed Madison Railways. He retained control of the line until his death in 1932. Montgomery was also an avid sportsman, member of the Wisconsin National Guard, and a life member of the State historical Society of Wisconsin.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> F. W. Montgomery, Genealogical History of the Family of Montgomery, private printing, 1926, pp. 74-5; Milwaukee Sentinel, March 10, 1881.

<sup>4</sup> Milwaukee Sentinel, September 4, 1883, January 2, 1886.

<sup>5</sup> Montgomery, pp. 75-6; Wisconsin State Journal, September 28, 1932. (The latter source notes that both the mayor of Madison and the Chief Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court acted as pallbearers at Montgomery's funeral.)

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Diane H. Filipowicz, Architectural Historian, Historic Preservation Division  
State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
816 State Street  
Madison

December, 1979  
608/262-2970  
Wisconsin 53706