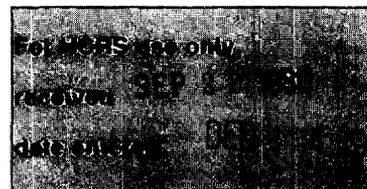


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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

historic Alfred L. Black House
and/or common Wahl House

2. Location

street & number 158 South Forest St. not for publication
city, town Bellingham vicinity of _____ congressional district 2nd - Swift
state Washington code 53 county Whatcom code 073

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Ralph Walno
street & number 158 South Forest Street
city, town Bellingham vicinity of _____ state Washington 98225

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Whatcom County Courthouse
street & number Grand Street
city, town Bellingham state Washington 98225

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wash. State Cultural Resource Survey:
Whatcom County has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1979 federal state county local
depository for survey records Preservation Office, Roeder Home 2600 Sunset
city, town Bellingham state Washington 98225

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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 Alfred L. Black house is a massive two and one-half story residential building designed in the Queen Anne style, but incorporating elements of Richardsonian Romanesque. The structure is single detached, built on three city lots sloping steeply down from the street on which its address is listed. This has allowed the designer to open up the lower floors to the view to the west. The house is basically rectangular with a wing extending from the northwest wall, a porch and three story turret from the southwest wall, and a bay window from the east wall. The entry is masonry Chuckanut sandstone as is the entire first floor. Above that is horizontal clapboard painted a light green. The roof is composition shingle with small dormers facing east and west and a large cross gable on the east rising above a two story bay window. The turret's eight sided conical roof is on the southwest corner.

The first floor of the house contains a library, dining room with parquet floor, kitchen, reception hall and a living room which reaches into the round turret room. The fir woodwork is spectacular, lining the walls and winding up the wide staircase. Leaded art glass windows are used on two interior walls on the ground floor and on the exterior walls east, north and west. The fireplace in the library is beneath a plaster relief frieze. The second floor houses seven of the ten bedrooms and the top floor has two, as well as a trunk room and a large billiard room. The windows in the house that are not leaded glass are either plate or double hung sash. The basement now houses a boiler, laundry rooms, an institutional size kitchen, and entry way to the ballroom. The large ballroom has a raised platform stage, a sandstone fireplace (recently uncovered), two chandeliers, and an oak floor. It is reached by a flight of stairs from above and is enclosed by lead crystal windows and paneled fir walls.

The house has three chimneys, one for each fireplace and one from the kitchen in the northwest corner. There is a smaller back stairway in addition to the main one and the house has an entrance on each side, all on the first floor except the west, which enters the basement. The wide porch wraps around half of the west side on the first floor and meets the main entrance in the middle of the south wall. The turret, porch and majority of window area on the bay side demonstrate the home's orientation to the water view and leave the street side of the building rather ordinary looking. Only the massive looking castle-like entry with its masonry battlements give away the building's size and quality from the street. Looking from the bay however, the house dominates this part of the hill.

The only changes to the exterior of the building have been paint colors and the application of a composition shingle roof. The interior changes include minor work on the plumbing fixtures on the second and third floors, and the remodeling of the ballroom for use as a chapel. This work has already been completed except for some molding which has not yet been replaced. Because the house has been lived in almost continually since it was built very little neglect is apparent.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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 1903

Builder/Architect Alfred Lee

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In October of 1903, after a long campaign for the union of towns on Bellingham Bay, the city of Bellingham was created from the consolidation of the two towns, Fairhaven and Whatcom. In those days by far the best known advocate of consolidation was the mayor of Fairhaven Alfred L. Black. Before the end of that year Black began work on two major projects. One was to become mayor of the newly created city of Bellingham and the other was to build a mansion equal to his soon-to-be office. It was no accident that the mansion was to be built on the old boundary line between the two towns. On December 12, 1903, in a special election, Alfred Black became Bellingham's first mayor. His symbolic home was finished that year as well.

The Black House was designed by Alfred Lee, a local architect responsible for many impressive buildings in the area, among them the Roeder home and the present Whatcom Museum (both listed on the National Register). Besides being one of the largest residential structures in the county, the Black House has seen almost no change structurally or cosmetically. Making good use of the locally ubiquitous Chuckanut sandstone, the two and one-half story building is deceptively large. Although its street address is on Forest Street the house is oriented the other way, toward Bellingham Bay.

In addition to the three full floors and a basement, including ten bedrooms, the building has a large ballroom extending as a wing from the west side. A three story octagonal turret offers a sweeping view of the bay from the southwest corner of the structure and the builders used a striking pattern of leaded art glass in several windows in both interior and exterior walls.

In March 1917 the house was sold to a local merchant, Joseph B. Wahl. At that time Wahl was one of the wealthiest men in the city, owning several businesses including Wahl's Department store. The house became known as the Wahl House in the years following.

Just below the house was the site of the old St. Joseph's Hospital, so in 1957 when the Wahl's sold the house it was natural that the Sisters of St. Joseph purchase it for use as a convent. The only real changes ever made to the house were carried out during the years the Sisters owned it, and they were minor. They added some extra bathroom fixtures and partitions, finished a complete kitchen in the basement and converted the ballroom into a chapel, closing the fireplace off and removing some of the decorative elements. The crystal chandeliers in the ballroom however, were left in place.

In 1963 the house was sold again when the hospital was moved to a new location across town. Dr. John Mumma became the new owner. Recently the house has been purchased and sold. It is currently on the market.

