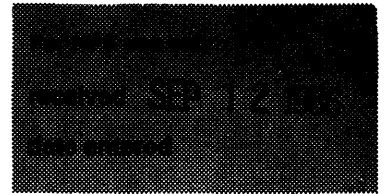


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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



Continuation sheet

Item number 2

Page 1

ASTOR, JOHN JACOB, HOTEL
1401 Commercial Street
Astoria
Clatsop County
Oregon

Control number: 79002046

Listing date: 11-26-79

The purpose of this continuation sheet is to verify that the correct and commonly used address of the above-named property is: 1401 Commercial Street.

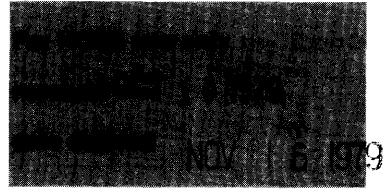
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: September 5, 1986

**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 Astor, John Jacob Hotel

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 342 14th Street not for publication

city, town Astoria vicinity of congressional district First

state Oregon code 41 county Clatsop code 007

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Bert S. Mitchell and Associates

street & number 11978 NE Glisan

city, town Portland vicinity of state Oregon 97220

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clatsop County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Astoria state Oregon 97103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Astoria Historical Landmarks Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 federal state county local

City of Astoria Department/
depository for survey records Planning and Community Development

city, town Astoria state Oregon 97103

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John Jacob Astor Hotel (1922-1924) is situated at the southeast corner of 14th and Commercial Streets in downtown Astoria. L-shaped in plan, the eight-story reinforced concrete building presents its major frontage on 14th Street, where it extends the full length of the block between Commercial and Duane Streets. Each of three street facades is organized into wide bays with tripartite openings in the upper stories and which are separated, vertically, by strip pilasters on piers rising without interruption from ground story to terminate in fanciful coronet-like configurations above the parapet wall--a motif in keeping with the essentially Gothic decorative program applied to the exterior. Retail shops and coffee shop surrounding the central lobby space were initially enclosed by plate glass, and have been revised over the years with attendant alteration of ground story fronts. Openings at the mezzanine level, containing kitchen and dining area/ball-room facilities, are casement windows grouped in three's under "Tudor," or 4-center pointed arches. A fluted frieze with shield motifs trims the mezzanine exterior. Double-hung window sash are used from third through seventh stories, with slender pilasters separating each opening, and are plainly finished on intermediate stories, but are capped by decoration at 7th and 8th levels. Openings in the corner bays of the seventh story are round-arched and gathered under 5-centered, or "basket" arches embellished with elaborate cartouches in cast stone. At this level also, escutcheons are used as decoration on the face of each pier, and the spandrels of 8th story windows are finished with the recurring fluting-and-shields motif. Eighth story openings are fitted with casement windows. The parapet wall, above, is finished with fluted panels in which framing members are surmounted by diamond-shaped finials. There are three bays on either side of a central bay on the 14th Street facade; six and a half bays on Commercial Street; two and a half bays on Duane Street, and the decorative program is carried as a return onto the outside end bay of the east face exposed to view from Duane Street.

The decorative program of the lobby space, which reaches a height of two stories at the core, is classical, with liberal use of colossal columns of the Corinthian Order, engaged columns and pilasters--all decorated with cast plaster ornament and hand-painted. The lobby was illuminated by warmly colored light filtered from skylights through stained glass ceilings. An elegant wrought-iron chandelier with parchment shades over electric candles hung high above the lobby, which was encircled by a wide brass-railed mezzanine lined with bridge tables covered with formal cloths. The chandelier is still on the premises. The lobby contained a huge fireplace, also. The dining and ball room on the mezzanine level is trimmed with cast plaster mouldings in fruit garland motifs. All of the built-in features are intact or are, for the most part, in restorable condition. Following is the breakdown of interior functions and spaces:

Basement: Primarily used for heating plant, mechanical and storage.

Main Floor: Retail shops and restaurant were arranged around the lobby which opens to the mezzanine (second floor). It is believed the original building contained a restaurant, later a second restaurant and lounge, the "Fur Trader" was added inside the "L."

Third to Eighth Floors: Guest rooms.

The Hotel Astor was not occupied since it was shut down by the Building Official of Astoria in 1968. There is structural damage in roof and upper floors due to leakage from roof drains.

Structural modifications on the inside will be necessary to meet code. The exterior concrete work, however, appears to be in good condition. Following are some of the rehabilitation work items proposed by the present owners:

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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1. The exterior of the building will be restored to its original condition with no changes to the structure. It appears to have been plaster over concrete with a gray concrete color.
2. Fire escapes will be removed--only in agreement with the Fire protection departments, state and local.
3. The only possible addition if required by the Fire Marshal will be an elevator and or smoke tower stair way on the east wing, which is now simply a flat concrete wall with no decoration.
4. Provided approval is given by Fire Marshall and other building departments involved, a square mezzanine opening will be made in the center of the main lobby in order to "open" the basement area for retail as well as maintenance purposes. This will be done in with the same decor as existing lobby and mezzanine.
5. Entire lobby and shop areas will be restored to original as near as can be determined.
6. Entire mezzanine including ball room will be restored to original.
7. Upper stories will be developed as offices or condominiums, or a combination of both, as determined by market feasibility study now in progress.
8. Roof-top garden may, if feasible, be developed on roof.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1922-1924 **Builder/Architect** J. E. Tourtelotte and Frank Hummel, Portland, architects; C. T. Diamond, resident architect; Thomas Muir, general contractor

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The eight-story John Jacob Astor Hotel is a prominent landmark in Astoria and was, in its hey-day, the hub of social and civic activity in the historic sea port at the mouth of the Columbia River. The reinforced concrete building is believed to be, even today, the tallest commercial structure on the Oregon Coast. Its construction was inspired by increased tourist traffic, and, as was typical of major hotel projects in the early automobile age, it was financed by capital investors assisted by public subscription and bond issue. The plans were drawn by the Portland firm of Tourtelotte and Hummel, which later was responsible for the Lithia Springs (Mark Anthony) Hotel (1925) in Ashland, the Redwoods Hotel (1926) in Grants Pass, and the Hotel Baker in Baker--each an Oregon hotel either entered into, or proposed for nomination to the National Register. Each of the vintage Tourtelotte and Hummel hotels was held to be forward-looking in its day--a reinforced concrete skyscraper within some eclectic period ornamentation of cast concrete. Indicative of the importance attached to this, the earliest of the firm's major hotel projects in Oregon, was the fact that the Astoria Chamber of Commerce spear-headed the drive for formation of hotel corporation which initiated the project 1921-1922. The Chamber of Commerce made its headquarters in ground story offices upon the hotel's completion in 1924. The hotel was the meeting place of all the community groups, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions and others, and it was also the transfer station for those who traveled by train or boat to Astoria and embarked from there by train or carriage to the coastal resort areas of Gearhart and Seaside to the south, and it was host to many conventions from business and trade unions. The basement was bustling with salesmen who used the rooms to display their samples and wares.

In the later months of 1921 a movement was initiated among the local business men to build a new hotel due to the limited accommodations that were available. The lumbering and fishing industries were in full bloom and the local businessmen recognized the need to develop the tourist industry.

This movement was crystalized when the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce met in December of 1921, appointed a committee to devise ways to accomplish the feat. This committee was headed by W.P. O'Brien, then Vice-President of the Chamber, who later became President of the Hotel Corporation. In less than two months the Columbia Hotel Corporation was formed with O'Brien, Tyler, Staples, Hoefler, Nelson, Smith and Danz as the Incorporators. The first capitalization was for \$200,000, which was then increased to \$300,000. More than 100 of the local business and professional men subscribed, and within four weeks \$250,000 had been subscribed.

Work on the foundation was started in 1922 and was well under way to erect a five story building. Then came the disastrous fire in December of 1922 which laid waste to the entire business area of Astoria. Momentarily, this demoralized the project; however, the conflagration created an even more pressing need for housing and gave the city an opportunity to undertake certain improvements, including a street widening program. This required adjustments in the foundation, and the specifications were overhauled to create an enlarged "fireproof" building eight stories in height. The expansion plans created

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References Astoria, Oregon, Washington

A

1	0	4	3	6	1	6	5	5	1	1	5	1	8	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

Lots 4,5, and 6, Block 135, of the Town (now City) of Astoria as laid out and recorded by John M. Shively and later established by decree of the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Clatsop County, in the City of Astoria, County of Clatsop and State of Oregon.

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 George T. Murphy

organization Bert S. Mitchell & Associates date May 5, 1979

street & number 11978 NE Glisan telephone (503) 256-2336

city or town Portland state Oregon 97220

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 David Stalbot

title State Historic Preservation Officer date September 24, 1979

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>John Carol O'Shull</u>	date <u>11-16-79</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest: <u>Kristin O'Connell</u>	date <u>11/16/79</u>
Chief of Registration	

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need for additional funds, and, accordingly, a bond issue was voted to solve the financing matters.

The final contracts were let November 2, 1922, and the winning bidder was Thomas Muir. Plans were drawn by the Portland firm of Tourtellotte and Hummel. Resident architect was C.T. Diamond.

During the sale of the bonds, and while construction was well underway, it became necessary on a number of occasions for the Directors to personally make short term loans of \$25,000 or more. In addition, the disastrous after-effects of the fire left a number of the original subscribers unable to fulfill their commitments to the project. In December of 1922, the bond holders sold their interests to Austin Osborn and the hotel was then leased to Bert R. Westbrook, a well known Oregon hotel man.

On January 1, 1924 the hotel was opened on a limited basis, and the formal dedication event--a Washington's Birthday banquet--was set for February 24, 1924. The opening was a grandious affair, starting with a luncheon sponsored by the Astoria Chamber of Commerce in the grand ballroom, followed with dancing in the afternoon, and concluding with the formal banquet and ball in the evening. That a first-class modern hotel should rear its head eight stories above the ruins of the fire-gutted city was a memorable event in the history of Astoria. The citizens were full of excitement and hope. It stood higher than any other building in Oregon outside of Portland. The lobby was brightened with palms, great floral peices, heavy leather upholstered furnishings, oriental carpets and all the trappings of the fashionable hostelryes of the period.

According to the Astoria Budget, in addition to the many local citizens in attendance, a delegation of over sixty members of the Portland Chamber of Commerce arrived in Astoria by train for the occasion. Among the Portland guests who spoke and participated with Mayor George L. Baker and other recognizable "Old Portland and Old Oregon" names such as Sam Kozer, Secretary of State, C.C. Chapman of the Oregon Voter, W.O. Roberts of the Northern Pacific Railroad, Paul McKay of the Spokane Portland & Seattle Railroad, Julius L. Meier (later to become Governor of Oregon), and Good Roads Advocate John P. Yeon. The names go on, many of which are recognizable by businesses still in operation today, such as W.P. Fuller (Paint Manufacturers) and others. Out-of-town guests were transported to the opening by a special fleet of automobiles shuttling between hotel and railroad station.

The heart beat of the Hotel Astor skipped and nearly stopped with the advent of the great Depression; then during World War II it revived, but with a certain notariety, as it was temporarily held to be some what of a den of iniquity. Recurring attempts to restore its grandeur and elegance failed mainly for two reasons. First, a new shorter highway route directly from Portland to Seaside was created, and Astoria was by-passed by many travelers to the coast resorts. Second, the rail passenger service was stopped to Astoria. Ownership commenced to turn over rapidly after the early 1930s.

The building reached the depth of its fortune in 1968, when the property was condemned for fire safety and all the residents were moved out. It was unoccupied for ten years. On two occasions the city placed a special tax measure on the ballot before the citizens of Astoria to raise \$100,000 to raze the building. Both times the measure went down to

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defeat. In July of 1978 the property was foreclosed upon for back taxes by Clatsop County and was sold at public auction January 11, 1979. The saga of the building continued as the highest bidder was given until January 31st to produce the amount of his bid. When the bidder failed to show up on the appointed date, bids were re-opened, and the present owners submitted the successful bid. The Hotel Astor is such a prominent building in the community that, almost without exception, when anything has happened to the property it is "front page" news.

The hotel is named for the principal investor in the New York-based Pacific Fur Company which established Astoria as the first permanent Euro-American settlement in the Oregon country in 1811.

Born in East Thompson, Connecticut in 1869, John Everett Tourtellotte left home in 1886 to work in various parts of the country and learn from many contractors. After gathering experience in Chicago, Kansas City, Albuquerque, and Pueblo, Colorado, he settled in Boise, Idaho in 1890 and opened an office there two years later.

Until 1912, his firm was called J.E. Tourtellotte and Company. In 1903 he had begun working with a partner, Charles F. Hummel (1857-1939). They worked together for many years and in 1912, after finishing the Idaho State Capitol in Boise, the firm's name was changed to Tourtellotte and Hummel. During the years in Boise, many buildings were designed throughout Idaho. Among them were the Idaho State Capitol, the administration building at the University of Idaho at Moscow, St. John's Cathedral, Boise, the Boise Hotel and others.

In 1922, J.E. Tourtellotte opened an office in Portland with Frank K. Hummel, a son of Charles Hummel. Mr. Frank K. Hummel worked in that office until it closed about 1934. Hummel returned to Boise and worked in the Boise office until his death in 1961. Tourtellotte remained active in the Portland office until 1930, when he retired, and lived in Portland until his death in 1939. During the Portland years the firm designed the North Bend Hotel; the Lithia Springs Hotel in Ashland; the Redwoods Hotel, Grants Pass; the Baker Hotel; St. Joseph's Hospital in La Grande; and the Douglas County Courthouse in Roseburg. At the time of his death, Tourtellotte was completing the Linn County Courthouse in Albany.

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- "Hotel Astoria Dedicated Today," Astoria Evening Budget (February 22, 1924), 1. Sub-title: "Movement to Build a New Hotel was Initiated in Later Months of 1921." Architects' perspective rendering.
- "Astor Hotel Renovation May be in Offing," The Daily Astorian (February 19, 1975), 1.
- Thompson, John, "Hotel Charm May Return," The Daily Astorian (June 25, 1975).
- _____, "Grandeur from a Bygone Era," The Daily Astorian (May 20, 1976).
- "John Jacob Astor Hotel, What It Was, What It Is, What IT Could Be," Astor Post (October 29, 1976), 6-7.
- "Astor Hotel, A Relic of Elegance Past," The Columbia Press (July 13, 1978), 10.
- "County Sells J.J. Astor Hotel for \$86,000," The Daily Astorian (January 12, 1979), 1.
- "Hotel Sale Clouded by Bidder's Background," The Daily Astorian (January 23, 1979), 1.
- "Hotel Sold for \$40,000," The Daily Astorian (February 1, 1979), 1.
- "Hotel Owner Meets Planners," The Daily Astorian (February 7, 1979), 3.