

**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 Cox-Williams House

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 280 ^{1st.} South First Street N/A not for publication

city, town St. Helens N/A vicinity of congressional district First

state Oregon code 41 county Columbia code 009

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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A 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 checked="" 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 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Israel

street & number 280 South First Street

city, town St. Helens N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97051

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Columbia County Courthouse

street & number First Street

city, town St. Helens state Oregon 97051

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date 1912 (to adjoining lot)

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Recognized as the largest and most elaborate example of late Victorian residential architecture in the downtown core of St. Helens, the Cox-Williams House is a two-story, wood frame house in the Italianate Style with hipped roof. The main block measures 26 feet by 32 feet and has a 14 foot by 20 foot single-story rear kitchen wing. The house was placed on a full basement when it was relocated from a neighboring lot about 1912. A six foot wide verandah wraps around the west front, south, and east sides. A portion at the SE corner was enclosed in 1932. The house is centered on a 78 x 100-foot lot facing west onto First Street in the downtown commercial center of St. Helens, Oregon, the county seat of Columbia County. Courthouse Square is located opposite the north end of the block on which the Cox-Williams House is situated.

Framing is 2x4 stud balloon type with 2x12 and 2x10 joists and 2x4 second floor ceiling and roof rafters. Studs and joists are at 16 inch centers and top ceiling and roof framing at 24 inch centers.

Siding is horizontal 1x8 channel drop pattern shiplap and 1x6 corner trim.

Exterior trim consists of wood lattice panels under the verandah, 5 inch square turned porch columns, scroll-sawn balustrade panels and capital brackets, and bracketed eaves around the verandah. Verandah decking and soffit is 1x4 tongue and groove. The roof eaves are boxed with paneled soffits on scrolled brackets. Windows are framed simply with a narrow molded cornice head.

Roofs have wood shingles on spaced sheathing, now overroofed with composition shingles. Slope is approximately 1:5. The small center flat roof section appears to have had a low railing or roof cresting originally. Except for a few sections of hung eaves troughs on rear, there are no gutters or downspouts and no sign of there having been built-in gutters in the eaves.

All windows are double-hung with one-over-one lights and have functioning wood shutters, except the later dining room window bay and a few windows wherein shutters have been removed and stored.

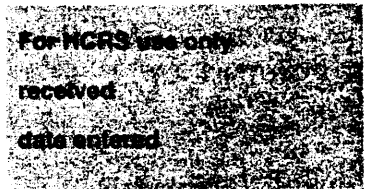
The front porch steps and stair railings are replacements of original material dating from the resiting of 1912.

The yard is encompassed by a chain link fence at the front, and rear and north and south property lines abut walls of commercial buildings. There are no significant landscape features remaining except for the mature tree in front, some shrubs, and the remains of a concrete and stone fish pond in NE corner of the property. In addition to the front entrance gate, there is a vehicle gate to the south which allows access to the carriage space under the verandah and in the basement.

The interior of the house retains the qualities of the historic period with a few minor changes, most of which were carried out during the resiting of 1912. The alterations include modernization of the kitchen, enlargement of a doorway from the parlor to the dining room, redecoration of the SE bedroom for office space, and remodeling of the second floor NE bedroom as a kitchen for an upstairs apartment suite. The original paneled doors, hardware, door and window casings, baseboards, and other interior finish are intact except for overpainting of original varnish finish in

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 1

some rooms. The balustraded stairway, in oak, is the principal architectural feature of the interior. Also noteworthy are the stained glass door and top lights. Walls and ceilings are wood lath and plaster, painted or wallpapered. The parlor ceiling has a center cast plaster rosette from which a 1910s style luminaire hangs.

First floor rooms are: entry stairhall, NW corner; parlor, SW corner; dining room, with bay window and china cabinet additions, NE corner; bedroom/office, SE corner. Behind the dining room at the NE corner of the house is the kitchen wing. Basement steps are found at the SE corner angle of the house. A small bath was installed in a closet at back of kitchen which is believed to have originally served as a gun room.

The second floor has four rooms at each corner and the stairway and hall in the center of the northside. There are two large main bedrooms on south side with closets between. The NE bedroom was converted to a rental unit kitchen in 1933. A small NW bedroom had been converted to main bathroom in 1922. The bathroom has painted plaster walls and inlaid linoleum tile pattern flooring.

There are no habitable areas in attics.

The basement is a full above-grade story with concrete slab and low curb foundation walls. It is a single space under the main house except for a fruit room in the SE corner. There are carriage entrance doors in the south end of front side. An outside door with porch is in NW corner and a small lavatory in adjacent closet. The furnace is in SE corner. The basement under the kitchen wing has a furred up wood floor (rotted) and is equipped with laundry trays and cabinets. A second basement entrance in the SE corner also has stairs leading to the main floor. The screened area under the verandah provides storage for yard care.

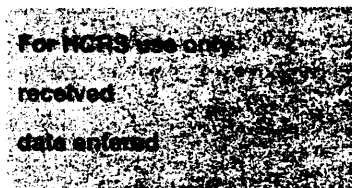
Originally, two chimneys served for venting the heating stoves and kitchen and laundry stoves. One was located in the kitchen-dining room wall and the other in the parlor-bedroom-office wall at the center of the south side. Only the kitchen dining room chimney remains in use for furnace venting. The old wood lift beside the kitchen chimney is abandoned with most elements intact, except closeted in. The present furnace is the one installed soon after the move in 1912. The furnace was converted to oil burner in 1923. It is the war air gravity type with only the single floor grill in dining room for heat outlet and return air. Other rooms are heated by reheat grills in the walls and ceilings/floors from the dining room. There are now electric baseboard heat units in second floor rooms to supplement the furnace. Mineral wool thermal insulation has been installed in second floor ceiling framing in the attic.

Electric wiring and service is a combination of old knob and tube type and newer additions. There is a separate service for the second floor rental unit. The original service panel high on wall in second floor hall is abandoned. There are few remaining original luminaires.

Of plumbing, only that of the kitchen, laundry, and NW corner second floor bathroom appears to date from the resiting of 1912 or shortly thereafter. There was no indoor plumbing before 1912, according to Mrs. Williams. A chase for the waste stack

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

was furred in the NW corner of the entrance hall, behind the front door, and a corresponding vent pipe is furred out on the outside corner. Plumbing in other areas was scabbed in. Plumbing connections remain for the old gravity hot water boiler and kitchen and laundry stove heating coils.

Alterations to the house have occurred at three principal times: 1) when the house was moved from Lots 1 and 2 to Lot 3 in 1912; 2) when the back porch and verandah sleeping porch were enclosed and related minor alterations necessary for the care of the invalid Annie Cox were carried out in 1932; and 3) when the second floor rental unit was developed in 1933.

Major changes to the house appear to coincide with the resiting of 1912 and the concurrent modernization of the house, which included addition of a bathroom, new basement (originally, there had been a cold cellar with a trap door entrance under the main stairway), and the addition of the dining room polygonal bay window and built-in cabinet, and the widening of the doorway to the parlor.

In 1932, Mrs. Annie Cox deeded the house and property to her granddaughter, Mrs. Alice Williams. The alterations of 1932 and 1933 are a result of the illness and death in 1933 of Mrs. Cox.

According to Mrs. Williams, the house had been painted white with dark green shutters. She had it painted light gray with darker gray trim. It is now a medium gray with white trim.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates c. 1890

Builder/Architect Arthur George, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The two story, wood frame and shiplap-clad Cox-Williams House on South First Street near the Columbia River in St. Helens was built by Arthur George for Richard and Annie Muckle Cox about 1890. With its hipped roof with bracketed eaves, its verandah with turned posts and scroll-sawn brackets, and its elongated window openings fitted with double-hung sash, it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Italianate Style. Indeed, the house is the largest and most elaborate example of late Victorian residential architecture remaining on the water grade level of the historic river port and Columbia County seat. The house was moved a short distance from its original site about 1912 and raised on a basement story. It meets criteria of the National Register notwithstanding this fact because the relocation to an adjoining lot occurred within the Coxes' original holding of four lots on Block 11 of the town plat and involved no change of setting. Minor alterations were carried out at the time of resiting in 1912 and again in the 1930s, when upstairs rooms became an apartment suite. The building's stylistic and structural character are nonetheless intact. The house possesses its essential integrity of location and integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. It is located a block south of the Courthouse Square and combines with other nearby landmarks to make an historic enclave at the town core. The Cox-Williams House is significant also for its association with leading figures in early St. Helens industry. Richard Cox, for whom the house was built, was an accountant for the Muckle Lumber Company and Judge of Columbia County, a position equivalent to County Commissioner. His wife, Annie Muckle Cox, was the daughter of James Muckle, co-founder of the Muckle Lumber Company. Cox occupied his house from the time of its construction until his death in 1914. Annie Cox lived on in the house to her demise in 1933. The house subsequently was occupied by the Coxes' granddaughter, Alice Louise Cox Williams, who had been born in the house in 1897. In 1980 Mrs. Williams left the house and the property passed from family ownership. She had been secretary to Hamlin F. McCormick, head of the St. Helens Lumber Company, successor to the pioneer Muckle family concern after the Muckle plant was destroyed in the St. Helens Fire of 1904.

Alice Louise Cox Clear Williams is the granddaughter of Annie Muckle Cox (c. 1840-1933), who was the daughter of James Muckle. Muckle was one of two brothers who began the Muckle Lumber Company in St. Helens and were active in the development of St. Helens after 1875. Annie's husband was Richard Cox (____-1914), accountant for Muckle Lumber Company and Judge of Columbia County. Alice Louise was born in the upstairs bedroom of the Cox House in 1897 and continued to live there until she sold the house in 1980. Mrs. Williams continues to live in St. Helens not far from the old house.

From about 1878 to 1901, the Coxes assembled Lots 1 through 4 of Block 11, St. Helens, from the Muckles, William Meeker, and Hannah Tyszkiewicz, according to the county records. The house is understood to have been built by the Coxes in 1890 on Lots 1 and 2. In 1910, Lot 1 and the south 43-feet of Lot 2 were sold to

9. Major Bibliographical References

St. Helens Sentinel-Mist, Golden Jubilee Supplement, June, 1939.
 "Christ Episcopal Church," Manuscript, Collections of the Oregon Historical Society.
 Oregon Historical Society Scrapbooks, No. 47, p. 214; No. 85, p. 91.
 Columbia County History, Vols. II, IV, VI, and VIII, histories of Muckles and Coxes.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.18 (less than one)

Quadrangle name St. Helens, Oregon-Washington

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A

1	0	5	1	5	8	5	0	5	0	7	8	5	5	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 The Cox-Williams House occupies the northerly fourteen feet of Lot 2, all of Lot 3 and the southerly seven feet of Lot 4, Block 11, City of St. Helens, Columbia County, Oregon. The property is otherwise described as Tax Lot 1300.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Alfred M. Staehli, Architect AIA

organization N/A

date 1 February 1982

street & number 317 SE 62nd Avenue

telephone (503) 235-3515

city or town Portland

state Oregon 97215

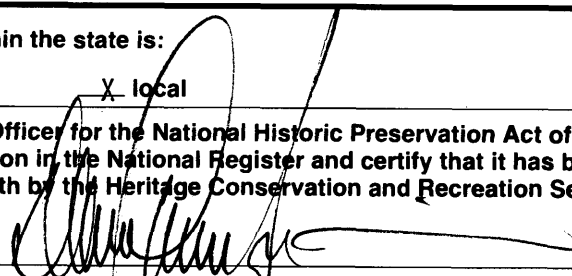
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date September 24, 1982

For NCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

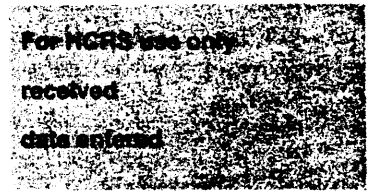
 date 11/1/82

Director of the National Register

State of Registration

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

1

Hamlin F. McCormick, who then sold the property to William H. Hewitt for his commercial building now on the site. The Cox House was moved onto the adjoining lot about 1912, according to Mrs. Williams, and raised on a new basement story. The alterations and additions date from after the move. Before the house was moved, the Coxes' stable and barn had occupied the lots between the house and Episcopal Church which stood on the north corner of the block.

During her professional career, Mrs. Williams was secretary to H.F. McCormick. The McCormicks bought the Muckle Lumber Company site in St. Helens after the plant burned in the Great Fire of 1904, and they founded the St. Helens Lumber Company in 1909, as well as McCormick Steamship Company. H.F. McCormick's noteworthy Bungalow Style house occupies the corner lot on First and Cowlitz at cater corners from the Cox-Williams House.

The Williamses were in the grocery business (Williams Cash Grocery) in St. Helens from about 1922 to about 1970.

The Cox-Williams House combines with other nearby landmarks in the downtown core to make an historic enclave, the heart of which is the stone masonry Columbia County Courthouse. Other elements of the enclave are the Courthouse Square, or green, Christ Episcopal Church (1897), and the Hewitt Building with St. Helens Cafe. The Columbia County Courthouse, Courthouse Square, Masonic Hall, hotels, Blue Rose Ballroom Building, theater, and other blocks of commercial buildings of the 1910s, 1920s and earlier constitute a potentially Register-eligible historic district.

The Robert Israels, current owners of the Cox-Williams House, acquired the property from Donald L. Kalberer, who held the house for a brief period after purchasing it from Mrs. Williams. The Israels are rehabilitating the Blue Rose Ballroom Building across the street and contemplate a continuing historic preservation interest in St. Helens. Much of the information in this section is taken from the transcript of the interview of Mrs. Williams by Mrs. Israel in December 1981 in preparation for this nomination. Detailed biographical information on the Muckle and Cox families, particularly Annie Muckle and Richard Cox, is found in the genealogical index of the Oregon Historical Society.