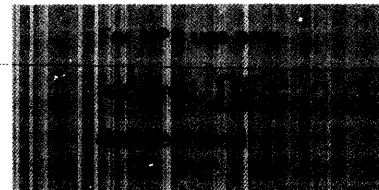


1982
1982

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



1982

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 Eldridge Homesite and Mansion

and/or common Nesika Illihe

2. Location

street & number 2915 Eldridge Avenue ~~_____~~ not for publication

city, town Bellingham _____ vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~

state Washington code 053 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 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 type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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
	n/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Hugh Eldridge Carr and Dorothy May Carr Trust

street & number 2915 Eldridge Avenue

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 Whatcom County Preservation Planning Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Whatcom County Parks, 2600 Sunset Drive

city, town Bellingham _____ state Washington 98225

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Architect F. Stanley Piper distinguished himself through an ability to work comfortably in a wide variety of traditional architectural styles, as demonstrated in his Chicago style Bellingham National Bank Building and his Great Northern Passenger Station (National Register, 1975) in modified Mission style. Both his professional diversity and his capacity to enchant clients with new ideas emerged in his 1926 design for the Eldridge Mansion. To fully appreciate the design and structure today, one must understand that Piper's task was to create a stylish new estate centerpiece on the site where a lineage of ancestral mansions had stood. On the site there had "always been one of the most impressive mansions in the state," and it was his responsibility to replace a landmark. The result of his effort, in 1927, was the present Eldridge Mansion in a scaled down and simplified Chateausque Style.

The Eldridge Mansion is a very large detached residential structure with an irregular floorplan of approximately 4,400 square feet. The main, two story section of the house is augmented with a 180 degree bay window on the west wall, a single story octagonal tower on the northwest corner, and a dominant two story round tower centered on the front or east elevation. Extending from the south wall, a one and one-half story wing reaches at a 45 degree angle toward the southeast. The building, along with a detached garage facing north, is oriented around a circular paved driveway on the east, and the home looks out over Eldridge Bluff toward Bellingham Bay and the islands to the west.

The high hip roof of the main section is repeated at three different levels as the wings fall off on either side, but the main feature of the roofline is the conical bell-cast tower roof in front. Three tall chimney stacks extend up from the roof, the largest from a bedroom fireplace in the south wing. There are three gable dormers across the front main section and one other just onto the wing, all facing east. Along the west elevation there are four dormers on the main section and two additional looking over the bay from the wing.

Opening up the west elevation wall are a tile floored terrace and a five sided bay window measuring fifteen feet across and reaching directly from the living room. The other rooms on the first floor include a kitchen pantry and breakfast nook against the north wall, a dining room and hall under the main section roof with the living room, a library under its own slightly lower roof on the south, and finally a bedroom and bath in the south wing. Under the main roof on the second floor, which is reached by a spiral staircase in the tower, are two bedrooms, a bath, and hallway. Over the library is a study, and above the first floor bedroom in the wing is another bedroom which was added during the 1940's with the work being done by the original architect, Piper.

The windows throughout the house are double hung sash either six over six or eight over eight. Considering the architectural style, there is an uncharacteristic absence of decoration; however, the functional downspouts have been incorporated into the design as an accent. In addition, there is bracketing under the tower eaves, a leaded glass window in the tower, and some beautiful masonry in the corbeled chimneys. Though the structure is of frame construction, the exterior walls are a gray stucco-like material and the roof tiles are a bit deeper tone of the same color, giving an overall feeling of old masonry.

The grass covered grounds around the mansion are either edged with tall hedges or fall off onto a bluff as on the west and south. The setting is very much like a country manor, and a remarkably appropriate overall effect is present even though the mansion is within an urban area and adjacent to an historic district made up entirely of northwest Victorian style homes (Eldridge Avenue Historic District, National Register, 1979).

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 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 1926 **Builder/Architect** F. Stanley Piper

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Eldridge Homesite has been the ancestral home to the Eldridge family since early Pacific Northwest pioneer and patriarch Edward Eldridge and wife Teresa staked a donation land claim to the property in 1853. Since then, the site has seen three mansions built on the grounds, each in turn becoming significant landmarks. The existing Chateausque style home, built in 1926-27, graces the remaining grounds of an estate which once covered 320 acres, and rambled over much of the northern section of the present city of Bellingham.

Edward Eldridge arrived with the traditional first party of settlers, and made his home on the shores of Bellingham Bay in May 1853. His wife, Teresa Lapin Eldridge, was the region's first white woman resident, and his infant daughter, Isabella, the first white child. During his career, Eldridge held most local political offices, including the area's first U.S. Customs inspector. He was a member of the territorial legislature and Speaker of the House during the 1866-67 session, and in 1878 was a delegate to the territorial constitutional convention at Walla Walla, where one observer wrote "he was the Jeffersonian of the body on Parliamentary tactics and in all things the Nestor of the convention." In 1889 he was a member of the state constitutional convention in Olympia, one of only two men to serve as delegates at both conventions. Throughout his political career, Eldridge was an outspoken advocate of women's rights, a stand which has brought him considerable national attention among scholars. In the Western Historical Quarterly (January 1972, III:1), for example, Dr. T.A. Larson remarks in a paper on Pioneer Women in the West "Edward Eldridge seems to have been unique when he argued in the Washington legislature in 1873 that the imminent disappearance of the frontier made woman suffrage imperative."

The massive estate of Edward Eldridge overlooking Bellingham Bay was graced with a palatial Queen Anne style mansion which was constructed in 1890 and burned during a forest fire in 1894, two years after Edward's death. For three decades, the family lived in a smaller home on the estate. Then, in 1926, Hugh, Edward's only son, began work on another impressive mansion for the homesite. For the project, he selected the services of F. Stanley Piper, the region's most innovative and capable architect. Together the men planned a residential design that was uncommon in the Puget Sound area, a style which Piper called "French Chateau." Hugh, who also held several county political offices, envisioned a practical, palatial, yet classical home for the site and in 1927, the present structure was completed. Because of his close association to the Lummi Tribe and the property's proximity to the reservation, the estate was given the Chinook name Nesika Illihe, meaning our land.

Hugh and his family lived in the home until his death in 1939. Family member May Carr occupied the estate until 1941 when it was rented to Seattle shipbuilder Archie Talbot, who used it as a clubhouse and meeting place for his associates in the war effort. After the war, the estate was again taken by the Eldridge heirs. Since 1945, Hugh Eldridge Carr and his family have lived in the residence. With the exception of a bedroom addition upstairs in the south wing by architect Piper, the house is unchanged.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Federal Writer's Project, Told by the Pioneers, 1938, U.S. Government Printing Office
Hunt, H., Washington West of the Cascades, 1961, Seattle, Washington
Larson, T.A., Doels, Vassals, and Drudges: Pioneer Women in the West, 1972, Jan. Western Historical Quarterly
numerous other sources

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Ferndale

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	0	5	3	5	8	4	0	5	4	0	1	0	0	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 1 and 2, Eldridge Donation Claim Plat, approximately 360 feet by 280 feet; frontage on Eldridge Avenue approximately 375 feet.

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

state	n/a	code	county	code

state	n/a	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Sullivan, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization Whatcom County Parks date April 15, 1982

street & number 2600 Sunset Drive telephone 206/671-3525

city or town Bellingham state Washington 98225

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Jacob E. Thon

date Dec. 10, 1982

Judith McCulland
Keeper of the National Register

date 1-23-83

Attest:
Chief of Registration

date

GRS 011 21240011
EXP. 10/31/84

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 2

F. Stanley Piper was Bellingham's foremost architect for almost thirty years between 1909 and 1937. He brought a scholarly understanding of classic architecture to northwest Washington at the time the region was breaking away from Victorian styles, and as a result, his work reflects a wide variety of influences. In his remaining buildings, both commercial and residential, two design strengths stand out: classic styling and meticulous detail.

Piper was born in Yorkshire, England, in 1883 and attended private school in Plymouth before graduating from the Architecture School at Blundell's College, Devonshire. He began his professional career with the firm King and Lister, A.R.I.B.A., prominent Plymouth architects. In 1907, Piper took a position with a Seattle firm and made the long voyage to Washington State. Two years later, he established his own company in Bellingham, a rapidly growing city at the time. He found an immediate market for his skill in designing large projects, both public and private. The Columbia School, a primary structure in the Eldridge Avenue Historic District (National Register, 1979), is the most important surviving structure from this period of his career.

Although Piper concentrated on large scale projects, he designed many large residences before the First World War; notable were the homes of Frank Deming, A. MacRae Smith (130 S. Forest), and Daniel Campbell (201 N. Forest), all in Bellingham. His commercial works during the same period include the Bellingham National Bank Building (Holly and Cornwall), the Grand and Egyptian Theatres (both demolished), Bellingham Hardware (213 Holly), St. Lukes Hospital, and St. Paul's Cathedral (Eldridge Avenue Historic District). Outside of Bellingham, Piper was awarded several public projects in Seattle and Everett and the Northwest region with the Anacortes Public Library considered by him to be the most successful.

The 1920's were perhaps the most innovative years for Piper, and it was during this decade that he produced his most enduring works. His Bellingham Great Northern Passenger Station, designed with a Mission motif, was finished in 1927 and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. In 1929 he built Bellingham's first airport for United Airlines in a modern Art Deco style as well as the Bellingham Country Club. His two most memorable Tudor style structures still stand in excellent form: the Bellingham Herald Building (1926) and the Fine Arts Building (1923). And, of course, in 1926 Piper finished the plans for the Eldridge Mansion in a Chateausque theme.

Piper was an international yachtsman and a lifelong distinguished fellow in the Devon and Exeter Architectural Society, an association within the Royal Institute of British Architects. He was also a member of the American Institute of Architects. His firm passed on to Galen Bentley and continues today.