

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
JAN 20 1976
RECEIVED
MAY 28 1976
DATE ENTERED

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

Ballinger (Hon. Richard A.) House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1733 - 39th Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Seattle

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#7 - Honorable Brock Adams

VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington

CODE

53

COUNTY

King

CODE

033

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Joseph C. Frisino

STREET & NUMBER

1733 - 39th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Seattle

VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington 98122

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

King County Administration Building

STREET & NUMBER

Fourth and James

CITY, TOWN

Seattle

STATE

Washington 98104

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1969

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington 98504

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

The Richard A. Ballinger House, a two-and-a-half story clapboard structure in Seattle's Madrona district bordering Lake Washington, was constructed in the Colonial Revival Style in 1902-1903 for former state senator and industrialist F. C. Harper. Within three years the house was acquired by one of Harper's associates, Richard A. Ballinger, a distinguished lawyer and Seattle mayor who rose to national prominence as a member of William Howard Taft's cabinet 1909-1910. Shortly after Ballinger's death in 1922, the house was vacated by Ballinger's widow. The property has changed hands only twice since the Ballingers' occupancy, having been acquired by the present owners in 1960. The house has received a high level of maintenance over the years, and external alterations have been minimal. In recent years the current owner has carried out certain repairs, including re-surfacing the roof and repairing the porch steps and balcony. Stabilization of one of the brick chimney stacks on the south side of the house, which was pulled out of alignment by seismic activity, has been identified by the owner as a necessary future project requiring professional assistance.

The Ballinger House is located in the W $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 34, T.25N., R.4E. of the Willamette Meridian. It occupies Lot 14 of Block 3 of the Observatory Addition to the Plat of Seattle. A long corner lot with its major frontage on East Howell Street, the property measures approximately 60 by 127 feet. The house is oriented toward the east, its facade parallel to 39th Avenue. The graded site slopes downward to the east in the general direction of a commanding view of Lake Washington and the Cascade Mountain Range. Twentieth Century architectural styles in the fashionable residential district surrounding the house are mixed. Access to the front entrance is gained by a flight of concrete steps at the northeast corner of the lot and a shrub-lined sidewalk which leads diagonally to the front porch. Plantings are more or less informal. The perimeter of the yard is lined with mature evergreens and a series of five birch trees spaced along the East Howell Street curbing. Around the base of the house are a large holly tree and an assortment of flowering shrubs.

The two-and-a-half story house is rectangular in plan, measuring 31 by 43 feet. It has a hipped roof with end gables, dormers and broadly overhanging eaves supported by outriggers. The house rests on a concrete foundation and basement with brick-faced exterior base wall. Above the base, exterior walls are clad with cedar clapboards. The whole of the wood surface is painted white.

Although its treatment is eclectic rather than academic, the house bears the unmistakable stamp of the Colonial Revival in such classical features as balustrades, "Doric" porch columns and entablature of the dramatically enlarged frontal dormer. On the other hand, the wrap-around veranda and additional horizontal elements of pent and overhanging eaves, and the massive second story polygonal bay are reminiscent of the Queen Anne Style from which the Neo-Colonial mode evolved after 1890 under the influence of McKim, Mead and White and other leading East Coast architects.

Window openings are of bay windows proportions. Some are fitted with double-hung sash with two broad panes. Those lighting formal spaces have fixed transom lights in which glazing is leaded in a curvilinear pattern of repeating upright and inverted pointed arches. All openings have ogee molded frames. Ground story windows not sheltered by the veranda are protected by a pent eave.

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A ten-foot-wide single story veranda extends across the north elevation and wraps around the facade, or east face, far enough to shelter the central entry. The shed roof of the porch overhangs its supporting beam, which is carried in turn by regularly spaced, and somewhat squat, tapered round columns patterned after the Doric order of classical antiquity. Each column base rests on a wood-capped brick pedestal extending from porch railing height to grade level. A balustrade lines the porch deck between each of these high projecting pedestals. In the intervening years since the house was constructed, a multi-paned screen of glass was inserted across the south end of the veranda from porch post to plane of the facade. A section of the veranda wrapping around the northeast corner was enclosed with larger panes of glass to create a solarium. The majority of the veranda on the north elevation, however, remains unenclosed, and it shelters a side entrance to the living room.

At the second story level, directly above the front entry, is a five-sided projecting bay with overhanging eaves. Deck space on the porch roof at the base of the polygonal bay is defined by a balustrade with clapboarded end sections. The crown of the bay forms a small balcony with a baluster-supported handrail conforming to the bay's polygonal plan. Access to the balcony is gained from an over-sized dormer which is the most distinctive feature of the facade. The dormer has a flat roof except for a central vault which takes the shape of a basket arch, or three-centered arch. The dormer is faced with an elongated double-leaf glass door with arched head and shorter side lights in a composition not unlike a Palladian window. Its sturdy clapboarded side walls terminate in classical entablatures. The total effect of the dormer is nearly Baroque in spirit, vaguely reminiscent of certain tower-base forms employing segmental and semi-circular arches common to the work of Sir Christopher Wren, Sir John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor during the reigns of Queen Anne and George I.

Sizable brick chimneys on either end wall of the house extend slightly above the ridge of the roof. On the south side of the house there are two identical broad flues with corbelled necking and beveled coping. The north chimney stack is tapered and has a flared cap. The original cedar shingle roof has been overlaid with asphalt shingles on several occasions. Metal gutters and downspouts collect rain from all the eaves of the house.

The ground story interior is formally organized, with longitudinal dining room and living room spaces on either side of a wide central stair hall. Hardwood floors, plaster walls and fir trim in these areas are intact. Trim includes baseboards, lunette motifs in over-door friezes, and Neo-Colonial mantelpieces on living room and dining room fireplaces. The kitchen has been renovated to meet contemporary needs, and bed and bathroom suites upstairs also have been somewhat remodeled.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

1902-1903

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Richard A. Ballinger House is significant to the city of Seattle as a well-preserved example of turn-of-the-century Colonial Revival architecture and the property most commonly associated with Richard A. Ballinger, eminent attorney, Seattle mayor and Secretary of the Interior under William Howard Taft 1909-1910. The house has the further distinction of having been visited by President Taft, who informally greeted Ballinger's neighbors from the veranda during his stay in the city in 1909. The house was built 1902-1903 for Frederick Crane Harper, a former state senator and founder of Harper Brick and Tile Company and Harper Barge and Lighterage Company. In 1906 Harper departed for Port Townsend to take the position of Collector of Customs, and the house was acquired by Ballinger. During the 15 years he occupied the house, Ballinger practiced law, participated in civic affairs and held two appointive offices at the national level. The Ballinger House is currently well maintained as a private residence, and it defines an important intersection within the Madrona residential district overlooking Lake Washington.

Frederick Crane Harper (1855-1936), a native of New Brunswick, Canada, emigrated to Port Townsend, Washington Territory, in 1887. He pursued a career in real estate during the town's boom period, became a naturalized citizen of the United States, and in 1892 moved to eastern Puget Sound, where he operated a mercantile business and was elected to the state senate for a four-year term. In 1900 he built a brick yard at Terra Vaughn on the Kitsap Peninsula across the Sound from Seattle harbor. In 1902 the Kitsap County community was renamed in honor of Harper, who had been instrumental in securing a post office for that location. During the same year Harper prepared to build a home in Seattle's fashionable Madrona district. The building permit was issued in 1902. It is not known who designed and constructed the house, but it is assumed that the source of bricks for its substantial chimneys and the base wall was the Harper Brick and Tile Company, of which Harper was first president and manager. A business connection between Harper and Richard A. Ballinger dates from 1906-1907, at least, at which time Ballinger was vice-president of the brick manufacturing company. The two may have become acquainted initially in Port Townsend and through Republican circles, but in any event, when the time came for Harper to vacate his house on 39th Avenue, it was Ballinger who acquired the property. Harper was active in companies which operated the Hotel Stevens and opened the Seattle Hotel. He also was an organizer of Harper Barge and Lighterage Company and continued his interest in that company until his retirement. Harper occupied his up-to-date Seattle home only three years, for in 1906 he was appointed Collector of Customs and returned to Port Townsend to discharge his duties during two consecutive terms, continuing in office there until his successor was appointed in 1915. In 1916 Harper served as chairman of the Republican state committee. He retired from business activities in 1918.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bagley, Clarence B. History of Seattle from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time, Vol. 2 (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916), pp. 835-836. Biographical note on Frederick Crane Harper.

Bagley, Clarence B. History of Seattle. . ., Vol. 3 (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1916) pp. 619-621. Note on Hon. Richard A. Ballinger.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	1	0	553-940	3	5	3	9	6	2	5	2	7	3	8	6	0														
	ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING				B	ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING												
C																	D													

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Elisabeth Walton Potter, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

DATE

December 1975

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 1128

TELEPHONE

(206) 753-4116

CITY OR TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington 98504

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

Arthur M. Shalick

TITLE State Conservator

DATE January 15, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/28/76

DATE

5-25-76

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Richard Achilles Ballinger (1858-1922), a native of Boonesboro, Boone County, Iowa, was the son of Richard Henry Ballinger, an officer in the Third Illinois Cavalry during the Civil War and who, in his student days, had read the law in the Springfield office of Abraham Lincoln. The younger Ballinger studied at the State University at Lawrence, Kansas, attended Washburn College at Topeka, and completed his education at Williams College in Massachusetts, from which he was graduated in 1884. Ballinger began his study of law in the office of S. Corning Judd in Chicago. Following his admission to the bar at Springfield, Illinois and his marriage to Julia A. Bradley of Lee Massachusetts in 1886, Ballinger opened an office in Kankakee and was soon appointed city attorney. He held a similar position in Decatur, Alabama before he and his wife and father removed to Port Townsend, Washington in 1889 at the height of the inland port's boom. In Port Townsend the younger Ballinger formed a law partnership with John N. Scott, a brother-in-law of President Benjamin Harrison. In 1894 Ballinger was elected Judge of the Superior Court of Jefferson County and served on the bench four years. It was during these early years in Washington that he made significant contributions to legal literature of the state. In 1890 he produced "Community Property", an authoritative treatise on the property rights of married couples. He also collaborated with Arthur Remington on codification of the state laws. Ballinger and Remington's Annotated Codes and Statutes was brought out in 1897.

Ballinger moved to Seattle in 1897 and organized the law firm of Ballinger, Ronald and Battle with which Ballinger was associated throughout the remainder of his career. The firm later was styled Ballinger, Ronald, Battle and Tremont, and still later was titled Ballinger, Battle, Hulbert and Shorts. From 1904 to 1906 Ballinger served as Mayor of Seattle. Having been elected on the Republican ticket at the age of 46, he proved a popular reform mayor and an able administrator. Ballinger was active in the Chamber of Commerce, was a member of the Rainier Club, and served as vice-president of the Alask-Yukon-Pacific Exposition which was opened in 1909. In association with others, Ballinger organized the Concrete Pipe Company, a successful business venture which he headed as first president. As has been mentioned, he was also for a time vice-president of Harper Brick and Tile Company. By 1907 the Ballingers had moved from their address on University Street to the house built by F. C. Harper in the Madrona district. Ballinger's rise in public life on the national scene dated from this time.

On the recommendation of Secretary of the Interior James R. Garfield, who had been Ballinger's classmate at Williams College, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed the Seattle attorney as Commissioner of the General Land Office in March, 1907. Ballinger spent little more than a year in the position before resigning to continue his private law practice. Nevertheless, because of his legal background he was able to effect several valuable reforms in land office methods and was warmly praised by President Roosevelt upon his departure. That which was considered his most important recommendation concerned the manner of acquiring coal lands from the

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United States. He declared that simply separating the right to mine from the title to the soil above the coal deposits would prevent the fraudulent acquisition of coal lands. Ironically, it was an improper application for Alaska coal lands filed while Ballinger was Land Commissioner which ultimately proved the undoing of his public career.

Ballinger was a delegate to the 1908 Republican convention which nominated William Howard Taft for the presidency. He was a member of the subcommittee of the Committee on Resolutions which reported the party platform, and he took an active part in the ensuing campaign as the western member of a campaign advisory committee. In 1909 he was chosen by President Taft for the cabinet post of Secretary of the Interior. During a visit to Seattle in this year, Taft visited the Ballinger House, but it is not known that he lodged there.

Tragically, Ballinger, who came to be characterized "an American Dreyfus", was for many years condemned by public opinion as a consequence of a political scandal of such proportion it was thought to have contributed to Taft's failure to gain re-election in 1912. A victim of the political ambitions of U. S. Forest Service figure Gifford Pinchot and a conspiring Land Office subordinate named Louis Glavis, Ballinger was unjustly accused of misconduct in his handling of certain private claims to Alaska coal lands dating from his term as Commissioner of the General Land Office. Ballinger had suspended approval of the faulty application of Clarence Cunningham while Land Commissioner. Months later, returned to private practice in Seattle, he did legal work on behalf of the claimant. Still later, as Secretary of the Interior, Ballinger assigned all matters concerning the unresolved claims to a deputy in recognition that there might be, at this point, a conflict of interest. During a Congressional investigation which Ballinger himself requested, the forces led by Pinchot were advised by Louis D. Brandeis, later Justice of the Supreme Court. The administration was represented by Attorney General George W. Wickersham. Although wholly supported by President Taft throughout and exonerated by the joint investigating committee, Ballinger resigned his Interior post in broken health in 1911 and returned to Seattle where he eventually resumed his distinguished legal career. He died at his home in 1922. The joint Congressional investigating committee had reported: "Neither any fact proved, nor all the facts together exhibit Mr. Ballinger as being anything but a competent and honorable gentleman, honestly and faithfully performing the duties of his high office. . ." Tacoma publisher Franklin K. Lane was Ballinger's successor in the Office of Secretary under the Democratic administration of Woodrow Wilson. On the occasion of Ballinger's demise, he gave tribute to his predecessor, indicating that he "had established a highly efficient organization based entirely on the principles of efficiency and good public service." But it was a major article in the widely-circulated Saturday Evening Post of May 25, 1940 which did more than any other public statement to vindicate the former Secretary's record

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in the minds of those outside the Department of the Interior and the Puget Sound area who had little idea of Ballinger's true character, his exceptional integrity and administrative abilities. It was written by yet another successor Secretary of the Interior, Harold L. Ickes, who had originally sided with Pinchot and belatedly came to realize that he had misjudged both of the central figures in the scandal.

Lake Ballinger, across the King-Snohomish County boundary line north of Seattle, is named for Ballinger's father, Richard Henry Ballinger, who owned 600 acres along the lakeshore and operated a ranch and sawmill on his early-established holdings.

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Glover, Darrell. "Seattle Family Occupies House in Which Taft Slept", Seattle Post-Intelligencer (May 17, 1970), pp. 27-28.

Hanford, Cornelius Holgate, ed. Seattle and Environs 1852-1924, Vol. 2 (Chicago and Seattle: Pioneer Historical Publishing Co., 1924), pp. 56-60. Note on Ballinger.

"Ballinger's Family Happy and Surprised", Seattle Post-Intelligencer (May 25, 1940).

"Ballinger Vindicated: Secretary Ickes Praises Predecessor in Office", Seattle Post-Intelligencer (May 23, 1940).

"Death Claims F. C. Harper, 81", Seattle Times (September 18, 1936). Obituary.

"Nation Pays Tribute", Seattle Times (June 7, 1922). Obituary article, Richard A. Ballinger.

Sketches of Washingtonians. . . (Seattle: Wellington C. Wolfe and Co., 1907), pp. 106-107. Biographical note on Ballinger.

Interview, June 4, 1975: Joseph C. Frisino, current property owner.