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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUN 5 1987

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Alderton School
other names/site number n.a.

2. Location

street & number 9512 Orting Hwy. E. not for publication
city, town Alderton vicinity
state Washington code 053 county Pierce code 053 zip code 98371

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Rural Public School Buildings in Washington State
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] OSHPD 5-20-87
Signature of certifying official Date
State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

[Signature] National Register 7-15-87
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education: school - gymnasium

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Commerce/Trade: business

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: hipped roof vernacular

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation school & gym: brick

walls school & gym: brick

roof school & gym: asbestos shingle

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Alderton School is a two story brick structure located in the Puyallup Valley in central Pierce County, Washington, in a community of the same name. Located at a cross-roads near the community founder's home and an older store, the school is surrounded by farmland. Adjacent to the schoolhouse is the brick gymnasium. Both structures were built in 1915 (replacing an older wood frame building at the site) and retain good integrity.

The school building is constructed of Clay City brick (a local product), is two stories in height, and is rectangular in shape with a front bay which contains the interior stairs. A rear two-story addition houses the furnace. The truncated hip roof is slightly irregular, caused by a southeast corner cross bay. The roof is covered with composition shingles and has exposed rafter tails. A chimney with a metal hood is placed on the rear slope. The front (east) and rear (west) wings have flat roofs with the front featuring a small, concrete stepped parapet. Below the parapet is a school sign board.

Wood frame windows on the second story northeast corner of the building are grouped in four pairs of eight-over-four double-hung sash. On the south, five pairs repeat the same pattern. Second story windows on the south corner of the east wall and north end of the building are fixed, six pane lights. On the first floor, on the north corner of the east wall and north end of the building, are pairs of eight pane casements. True arched six pane fixed windows on the northeast front and south end are covered with heavy plastic. In the stairwell, three stepped rectangular windows join a concrete course just below the school sign. These are covered with heavy plastic, but are six, eight, and ten pane fixed windows. There are two six pane fixed windows on the upper north end of the stairwell.

The main, single-story enclosed entry is adjacent to the stairwell and constructed of brick. The gable roof has exposed rafter tails and is supported by two wood posts. The wood panel door is a more recent alteration.

The building is presently used as a residence and business, but generally the interior partitions remain unchanged. Two large classrooms are on the second floor with a hallway and restrooms at the rear. The first floor contained the library, another classroom, and a small cafeteria. Due to a past fire, the original stairway was replaced.

The gymnasium, located to the rear (west) of the main school building, is constructed of unpainted Clay City brick and is rectangular in shape with corner brick pilasters. It has a gable hip roof with wood shingles and exposed rafter tails. The front elevation has a gable wall dormer with three true arched openings covered with heavy plastic. Along both sides of this building are four concrete capped brick pilasters with wood frame nine-over-nine double-hung windows placed inbetween. Some individual lights are filled with plywood or broken. The center, slightly recessed entry is flanked by groups of three six pane fixed windows covered with heavy plastic. At the entry, the original paneled wooden doors are framed by rectangular sidelights and transom. The distinctive interior feature is a raised wooden track.

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The school grounds have been completely eliminated because the present owner uses it as a parking lot. This is shielded, in part, by a new (1985) wood fence along the east and south of the property. While both buildings are structurally sound, there is evidence of deterioration in some of the windows and the roof. The only major alterations to either building are the windows covered over with heavy plastic or wood (although the original can be seen underneath), the main entry door, the rebuilt stairs in the main building, and the paint color. The present owner, when interviewed, expressed a hope to completely rehabilitate both buildings and at least stabilize the potential deterioration caused by the fire.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Education

Period of Significance
1915 - 1936

Significant Dates
n/a

Cultural Affiliation
n/a

Significant Person
n/a

Architect/Builder
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Alderton School is significant for its association with public education in rural Pierce County. Built in 1915, the two story brick schoolhouse and brick gymnasium reflect the second period of rural school development in the county, when population growth and curricular expansion led to the construction of more substantial school buildings. Today, the well preserved buildings are among the few extant properties associated with the development of Alderton as a major community in the Puyallup Valley, and one of only two rural school buildings remaining in Central Pierce County.

Historical Background: Like other counties in the Puget Sound region, Pierce County was settled in the mid and late 19th century by Americans from more eastern states and by European immigrants attracted by the area's vast forests, rich mineral deposits, fertile farmland, and saltwater harbors. Given these physical features, it is not surprising that the economy was dominated by extractive industries--principally logging but also mining, fishing, and farming. Even in the 1930s, when other industries (notably manufacturing) had developed in urban areas, the county's rural economy was fueled by the products of its forests, fields, and the Sound.

This economic base led to the creation of widely scattered rural communities (usually unincorporated) close to natural resources but often inaccessible to urban areas except by difficult water or overland transportation. While Tacoma had a diversified economy based on heavy industry, trade, and transportation, the sparsely settled rural areas were independent and isolated communities characterized by a single economic mainstay.

Without exception, each of these small rural communities established a school district shortly after the first settlers arrived. As elsewhere in the state, the creation of a district and the construction of school buildings signalled the formation of a community and reflected a belief in both the importance of universal education and the permanence of the community itself. The school buildings were often the first and sometimes the only public structures in the area, and thus served as social and cultural centers as well as centers of education. The typical schoolhouse served all school age children in the area and often doubled as a meeting place for their parents. Between 1853, when Washington became a territory, and the 1940s, when rural school consolidation resulted in the construction of larger schools serving several communities, the small community schoolhouses were the primary public structures on the Pierce County rural landscape and today they often are the only surviving evidence of the once thriving rural communities that dotted the county.

Pierce County's rural schoolhouse construction reflected three general periods of development. Shortly after initial settlement, a one-room log or frame schoolhouse was

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bonney, William Pierce, History of Pierce County, Chicago, 1927.
Auditor's Annual Exhibit, Pierce County, Washington, Tacoma Bell Press, 1910.
Historical material provided by Lori Price, 8625 Woodland Avenue, Puyallup, Washington.
W.P.A. Writers Project Papers, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, Washington.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Pierce County Dept. of Planning & Development, Tacoma, Washington

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property less than one

UTM References

A 1 0 | 5 5 8 4 6 0 | 5 2 2 4 1 3 0
Zone Easting Northing

B _____ | _____ | _____
Zone Easting Northing

C _____ | _____ | _____

D _____ | _____ | _____

Quadrangle name: Sumner
Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Alderton School is located on the northwest corner of Pioneer Way and 96th Street East, south of Sumner, in Section 36, Township 20 North, Range 4 East, W.M., legally described as the eastern two-thirds of Parcel No. 04-20-36-4-026.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the eastern two-thirds of the parcel that has been historically associated with the property. It excludes the western (rear) portion of the parcel where newer housing is located.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Caroline Gallacci, Preservation Planner</u>	(Edited by L. Garfield, OAHP)
organization	<u>Pierce County Planning Division</u>	date <u>December 20, 1986</u>
street & number	<u>2401 South 35th Street</u>	telephone <u>206/591-7172</u>
city or town	<u>Tacoma</u>	state <u>WA</u> zip code <u>98409</u>

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constructed on land usually donated by an early homesteader. As the community grew, two or four room frame schoolhouses were constructed, indicating increased community stability, the growth of the school age population, and the expansion of the school curriculum. Schools built between statehood (1889) and World War I often reflect this second period of growth and expansion. A third phase of growth is reflected in buildings constructed after World War I, when many frame buildings were replaced by larger brick structures and ancillary structures--including gymnasiums and play shelters--were constructed adjacent to the schoolhouse. This period, which lasted through the 1930s, included structures built by the federal Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression. This third period ended by 1940 when the last WPA projects were constructed and the move toward full-scale rural school consolidation was well underway.

The significance of the Elhi, Alderton, and McMillin areas, which originally shared the same school district, originates in their proximity to the Naches Trail which passed through the Central Puyallup Valley and crossed the river in this vicinity. The Naches Trail, later called the Fort Walla Walla-Fort Steilacoom Military Road, was the first major surface route into the Puget Sound region. Settlement began in the 1850's. Hop growing was an early agricultural pursuit and the Northern Pacific Railroad spur from Tacoma to the Wilkeson coal fields, completed in 1877, provided the transportation needed to further develop the area. Agriculture has been the primary economic activity since the early years of settlement.

Alderton was founded and named by Orson Annis. He arrived with his family in 1869 and cleared land first for hops and then for fruit trees. When the Northern Pacific Railroad laid its line through the valley in 1877, Annis believed that his homestead could become a nucleus for a town. Because it was thick with alders, which provided the wood for the trains, Annis called it Alderton. He became the town's first storekeeper, postmaster, and ticket agent. In addition, he was instrumental in starting the first school in Alderton, and served on the school board.

The first school to serve the Alderton community was the Elhi School of District No. 6. District No. 6 was established by 1865 and located on the east side of the Puyallup River northeast of Alderton, meaning that children from Alderton had to cross the river to attend school. In 1871, District No. 11 was formed at Alderton. Elhi continued as a separate district with District No. 11 serving both Alderton and McMillin, a community located to the south. Mr. Z.A. Stone donated an acre of land and a vertical log school house was constructed. This building was moved to the site of the present Alderton School in 1888, and was used until 1915 as a one-room school. That year, it was converted into a teacher's cottage and the present building was constructed to the east of the log building. The teacher's cottage was demolished in the early 1970's. The Alderton School continued in use until 1961.

At its peak of development, Alderton had a surrounding farm population, a sawmill, store, railroad warehouse, livery stable, and hotel, in addition to the school. This substantial building was constructed at the time when Alderton surpassed Sumner, located to the north, as a thriving community. Now, all that remains from those years of activity are the school and the Annis House located on the southeast corner of the same intersection. This rural school building is one of two remaining in the Central Puyallup Valley considered a potential National Register property. It is the only remaining major public building representative of Alderton's early historical development. Elhi, the third rural community located in this area of the Puyallup Valley, ceased to exist as a community by 1910.

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Methodology: The project of surveying and documenting Pierce County's public schools was carried out by James Widrig, architect on the Pierce County Landmarks Commission, and Caroline Gallacci, Preservation Planner for that County. The school buildings being nominated were drawn from a list of 84 school buildings and sites included in the Tacoma/Pierce County Cultural Resource Surveys. This project followed Federal survey guidelines for historic properties with the results on file in the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Every property was physically evaluated to determine its historic integrity. In addition, traditional research methods were used to place each property in local, as well as the Rural Public School Buildings in Washington State historic contexts.