

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New York
COUNTY: Kings
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Quarters A

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Commander's Quarters; Matthew C. Perry House; Quarters A

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
U.S. Naval Facility

CITY OR TOWN:  
Brooklyn

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

STATE:  
New York 11251

CODE

COUNTY:  
Kings

CODE

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Adm. Harry L. Horty, Jr., vice-chairman, U.S. Delegation  
U.N. Military Staff Committee

STREET AND NUMBER:  
799 U.N. Plaza

CITY OR TOWN:  
New York

STATE:  
New York

CODE

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Kings County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Brooklyn

STATE:  
New York

CODE

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
New York City Landmark Preservation Commission Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1965  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
305 Broadway

CITY OR TOWN:  
New York City

STATE:  
New York

CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Commander's House, Quarters A, was constructed on a hill overlooking the New York Navy Yard in 1805-1806. The house, reputedly designed by Charles Bulfinch in association with John McComb, Jr., has served as a residence for the ranking officer ever since.

Originally the house consisted of a cellar, basement, parlor floor and two upper sleeping floors. The first back parlor, now the dining room, has an unusual oval shape, reportedly one of only three designed by Bulfinch.

In 1860, a section, the present butler's pantry, was added to the rear of the main hallway. An addition of two stories and a sleeping porch was built on the north side of the house in 1904. The Works Progress Administration constructed a conservatory on the south side in 1936.

The original house is framed in hand hewn oak. The floor beams extend 32 feet from wall to wall and beams are joined by a mortise and tenon with an oak pin. Some original floor boards still intact are ten inches wide and two inches thick. A three inch floor covers the original, and today there are parquet floors throughout the building, on top of this.

The lath for the plastered walls and ceilings are hand split and vary greatly in size and shape. All the nails are handmade of wrought iron. The plaster is lime mortar, made by burning oyster and other shells.

The first porch on the basement level is still intact, including the stone porch columns and the red sandstone flooring. The basement walls are heavy rubble masonry, while the rest of the house is constructed of timber. The outside shingles are split cedar and the roof was originally cedar shingled, but is now tin. In 1811 a fire destroyed much of the roof and siding.

Elegant leaded glass fan and side lights frame the main entrance, and there are leaded glass lights in the main hall and fan lights on the sliding-door in the parlor also. The chandeliers in the parlor and dining room are beaten bronze and have been altered several times to suit lighting methods. The wood trim throughout the house is hand carved mahogany, but today covered with many layers of paint.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission of New York City, in October 1965, found that among its important qualities, "the Commandant's House is a distinguished country house of the Federal Style of architecture and that it remains in an exceptional state of preservation with notable details of the Federal Period in New York City."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Landmarks Preservation Commission, October 14, 1965, Calendar No. 2, LP-0002. (Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1841-1843

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>architecture</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |   |   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As one of the chief diplomatic achievements of the 19th century, the opening of Japan will long make the name of Matthew C. Perry memorable. His expedition marked a departure in Occidental policy respecting Japan, in American policy respecting the Orient, Japanese policy respecting the Orient, and Japanese policy respecting the Western World. Perry was an imperialist bent upon extending widely in the Pacific the commercial and naval interests of America. He has been called the first American official, "to view not merely the commercial but also the political problems of Asia and the Pacific as a unity."<sup>1</sup> Perry's treaty was "a momentous event in the history of Japan, and ultimately in that of the modern world and the United States." It meant "the opening of a new epoch in the history of Asia, the force of which was not to be realized fully until the next century."<sup>2</sup>

Captain Matthew C. Perry moved into Quarters A of the New York Naval Yard in 1841 and, as commander of all U.S. naval vessels in New York Harbor, he acquired the title of "Commodore." The Commander's Quarters, "a distinguished country house of the Federal style" retains many of its original features. It was built in 1806 and has been the residence of the commanding officer ever since.

Perry spent the decade 1833-1843 on shore duty at the New York Navy Yard. In January 1833 he applied for and obtained command of the recruiting station in New York. From 1841-43 he served as the Commander of the Naval Yard. During these ten years Perry accomplished things for the Navy and the country along four general lines; steam navigation, ordnance, improved lighthouse service, and the education of naval officers and enlisted men.<sup>3</sup>

1. Tyler Dennett, Americans in Eastern Asia, 1922, quoted in Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. X, p. 489.
2. Samuel Flagg Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States, (New York, 1936), p. 357.
3. Samuel Eliot Morison, "Old Bruin" Commodore Matthew C. Perry, (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1967), p. 126.

(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Samuel Flagg Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States,  
 (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1936).  
 Tyler Dennett, Americans in Eastern Asia, 1922.  
 Samuel Eliot Morison, "Old Bruin" Commodore Matthew C. Perry,  
 (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1967).  
 New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, Calendar No. 2,  
 October 14, 1965 (LP-0002).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		40 42 09	73 58 52	
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **3 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Benjamin Levy, Senior Historian, and Blanche Higgins, Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION: Division of Historic and Architectural Surveys, National Park Service DATE: 11-13-73

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1100 L Street NW

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE:  

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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*(Continuation Sheet)*

STATE		New York	
COUNTY		Kings	
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*(Number all entries)*

(1) Continuation Sheet

7. Description: Quarters A; Matthew C. Perry House

In addition to the house, the property includes the carriage house and stables and grounds to the entrance gate on Evans Street and to the surrounding screening walls. Quarters A is owned by the Navy, privately occupied, and not open to the public.

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(Continuation Sheet)

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8. Significance: (1) Quarters A; Matthew C. Perry House  
Biography

Born in 1794 in Newport, Rhode Island, Matthew C. Perry was educated in his native town and entered the Navy in 1809 as a midshipman. He fought in the War of 1812 and was wounded in the fight with the Belvidera. Perry spent the next decade of his life sailing the west coast of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Mediterranean, much of the time in pursuit of pirates. In 1826 he was promoted to master commandant. In 1830 he conveyed American envoy, John Randolph of Roanoke, to St. Petersburg, Russia where he declined the Czar's invitation that he join the royal naval service. He then joined the Mediterranean squadron. Commanding the Brandywine he participated in the naval demonstration at Naples compelling the payment of spoliation claims.

The next decade in Perry's career was particularly significant. In 1833 he was appointed second officer of the New York Navy Yard taking up permanent residence in New York City. There he actively moved to improve naval education. His 1824 plan for a naval apprentice system was adopted by Congress in 1837. He organized the United States Naval Lyceum to promote the diffusion of knowledge among naval officers. He was an advisor to the Secretary of the Navy on the scientific work of the U.S. Exploring Expedition, of which he was offered the command. In 1845 he assisted in the preparation of the first course of instruction for the Naval Academy at Annapolis.

Perry was more interested in naval materiel than any other officer. An early advocate of steamships, he is sometimes called the father of the steam navy. He commanded the Fulton, one of the pioneer naval steamships, and organized the first corps of naval engineers. In 1837 he prepared an influential report on lighthouses and two years later conducted the first American naval school of gun practice. In 1841 he became commandant of the New York Navy Yard from where he could easily advise as technical expert on steamships and naval inventions.

In 1843 he commanded the African Squadron in suppression of the slave trade. During the Mexican War he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Gulf Squadron and led the expeditions against Frontera, Tabasco, and Laguna. He shared the operation against Vera Cruz with General Winfield Scott. His squadron is believed to have been the largest under American colors up to that time.

In 1852, while stationed in New York, he was selected to undertake one of the most important diplomatic missions ever entrusted to an American naval officer--negotiating an open door to Japan. An imperialist before his time, Perry was a master at cajolery well dosed with threat. Entering Yedo Bay in 1853 with a well-armed fleet, he planned to impress the

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*(Continuation Sheet)*

STATE New York	
COUNTY Kings	
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*(Number all entries)*

8. Significance: (2) Quarters A; Matthew C. Perry House

Japanese by magnifying his mission, surrounding himself in mystery and insisting upon speaking only to the highest officials. His bombast and steadfastness did the trick. He signed a treaty at Yokohama which marked the opening of Japan. Returning exhausted to New York City in 1855, he spent his last years in lesser pursuits. He died in 1858.