

075 100 1001-0013
EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received **DEC 20** 1982
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic J.J., Donovan, House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1201 Garden Street _____ not for publication

city, town Bellingham _____ vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Washington code 53 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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>n/a</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Daniel J. Hovorka

street & number 1201 Garden Street

city, town Bellingham _____ vicinity of _____ state Washington

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Whatcom County Courthouse

street & number Grand Street

city, town Bellingham _____ state Washington

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 Dr.

city, town Bellingham _____ state WA.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The J.J. Donovan House is a two and one half story residential structure built on a steeply sloping site. The single detached building is in a Stick style with Tudor details and elements from several other Victorian era architectural influences. Though the basic floorplan is rectangular, a gable covered entryway and stairs on the front street level combine with a multi gabled roofline to make the residence seem more complex than it is. When constructed in 1890, the Donovan House was in a plain Stick style with very little decoration or detail. But with new owners and a different taste in architecture the home was meticulously restyled and detailed out in its present appearance about 1908. No structural changes were made by the owner and architect when they added Tudoresque features such as half timbering and mortar surfacing on the exterior.

The street address entry level of the house and the floor above both have approximately 2,500 square feet of living area, while the level below is divided into a 1,500 square foot apartment and a utility/furnace area of about 1,000 square feet. The interior room configuration has been maintained throughout the structure with the exception of an added wall dividing the huge living room on the street level. Woodwork and trim have been kept and matched on the new partition.

The foundation and lower level of the Donovan House is Chuckanut sandstone with red brick above. The brick material is repeated in the two central chimneys and a highly corbeled and decorated chimney on the southwest wall. In addition a stepped red brick fence encloses the back yard. Across the northwest wall on the lower level, there is an entryway and double hung sash window to the west, a central portico structure with three windows beneath, and an entry and window toward the north. A fire escape climbs to a top floor window along side the central gable. The three remaining elevations on the lower level are below grade with irregularly spaced windows and a below grade doorway on the southeast wall. The main level has the street entry on the southeast wall at the south end and a kitchen entry on the northeast wing. A set of French doors open out onto the rear balcony and large double hung sash windows grouped in twos and single are irregularly placed across the northwest and southwest walls. A stairway landing is set out from the front under a separate gabled roof, and leading to the upper floor. The top floor houses seven bedrooms and three baths under a series of repeated gables and dormers. On the exterior there is extensive decorative half timbering around the entire upper level as well as the painted mortar stucco surface which covers the outside walls on all levels.

The complicated roofline of the residence is a side set high gable with a stepped wing to the northeast and cross gables and dormers on the front and rear. Across the towering rear elevation there is a center gable flanked by a dormer to the west and two cross gables to the north, all repeating the same roof pitch. The roof is composition shingle with wide bargeboards facing the gables and drainspouts along the edge.

The carriage house for the Donovan home sits on the ally behind the main structure, and has been converted into a residence. The gabled roofline with a shed addition and stable doors on the structure have been maintained and its exterior appearance is tied into the larger house with the same blue paint color. The main house fills the southeast half of two 50x100 foot lots while the carriage house is built on the lower northwest section on a third adjoining lot. The site measures 150x100 feet overall, and is a prominent corner lot in the city.

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1890/1900

Builder/Architect Edward Fischer/ J.J. Donovan

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The J.J. Donovan House was constructed in 1890 as a two and one half story private residence on one of the most prominent building sites in the city of Whatcom(now Bellingham). Though this spacious home was initially built by Edward Fischer, it was elegantly finished in fine detail by the industrialist John Joseph Donovan. During the almost forty years as the home of the Donovans, this structure became one of the region's best known residences, due to its illustrious owner and towering hilltop location.

During the late 1880's boom on Bellingham Bay, Edward Fischer, land agent for the Bellingham Bay and British Columbia Railroad, purchased three 50x100 foot lots on the north slope of Sehome Hill. The lots were platted by Henry Roeder and they overlooked the central business districts of Sehome and Whatcom, which consolidated into New Whatcom in 1890. That same year Fischer began construction on a massive residence of more than 7,000 square feet inside and a looming gabled Stick style outside.

By 1899 Fischer's financial situation had changed and indications are that he never completed much of the interior detail on his home before selling it in 1900 to the railroad's new executive engineer, J.J. Donovan. It was Donovan who essentially finished the mansion, adding and incorporating a wide variety of opulent and personal features, including carved woodwork, art glass, and carefully chosen furnishings. He also had the exterior restyled from a dark ambiguous Stick style into a well proportioned and more finished looking style which the architect described as "Tudor Revival".

J.J. Donovan was established, by the time of his death in 1936, as one of the Pacific Northwest's most prominent lumbermen as indicated by his listing in Who's Who for several decades. But his career spanned several other enterprises which involved him in the development of the American West. Donovan was born in New Hampshire and educated as a civil engineer at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. As head of his class, he was hired right out of school in 1882 by the Northern Pacific Railway Company and sent to Montana as a surveyor working in advance of the western terminus of the line's new transcontinental railroad. Less than a year later Donovan was an assistant construction engineer, and was among the dignitaries which included Henry Villard and Ulysses Grant, at the driving of the gold spike at Independence Creek near Helena, Montana, in 1883. Though the completion of the Northern Pacific brought the northwest its first transcontinental line, the Puget Sound region still had to freight through Portland. This situation pushed for a railway through the Cascades, and J.J. Donovan was promoted again to engineer of track and bridges for the Cascade Division of the Northern Pacific. In this position, he worked on the network of switchbacks, trestles and tunnels which penetrated the Cascade Mountains through Stampede Pass and provided Puget Sound with the first direct route to the east in 1887.

During his work with the Northern Pacific, Donovan impressed a railroad contractor named Nelson Bennett. Bennett was pushing a new rail line north from Seattle to Bellingham Bay and he was looking for an engineer to put in charge of the survey and construction for his infant Fairhaven and Southern Railway. In December, 1888 Donovan took the job and in only a few years he directed not only the railroad but became chief of the

9. Major Bibliographical References

Clark, Donald H. Eighteen Men and a Horse. 1969. Whatcom Museum of History and Art. Bellingham, WA
 Edson, Lelah. The Fourth Corner. 1951. Whatcom Museum. Bellingham, WA.
 Roth, Lottie. History of Whatcom County. 1926. Pioneer Publishing, Seattle

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre
 Quadrangle name Bellingham, South. WA.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	0	5	3	8	5	8	0	5	3	9	9	1	7	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G

Zone		Easting				Northing							

B

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Three 50 x 100 lots, 150 feet by 100 feet total. Lots 9,10,11. Block 78. Town of New Whatcom Plat.

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 Chronicles and Design date June 9, 1982
 street & number 2600 Sunset Drive telephone 671-3525
 city or town Bellingham state Washington

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 Paul E. Thom date Dec. 10, 1982

For NPS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
Delores Byers Entered in the date 1/27/83
 Keeper of the National Register National Register
 Attest: date
 Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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Fairhaven Land Company and a principal in the Skagit Coal and Transportation Company. These endeavors greatly expanded Donovan's experience and his reputation, to the degree that over the following decade he played a role in almost every transportation development in the region. After building the line from Bellingham Bay to Blaine to connect with the Canadian Railway from Vancouver, Donovan introduced the international dignitaries at the completion ceremony near the boundary in 1891. The Great Northern eventually acquired that stretch of road built by Donovan but they were blocked by J.J. in buying the Bellingham Bay and Eastern Railroad, which he also constructed to reach the Blue Canyon Coal Mines. Donovan is credited with establishing a competitive situation on Bellingham Bay by orchestrating the purchases of small lines in the area (most of which he built) by three major interests, Great Northern, Northern Pacific, and St. Paul, in order to allow Bellingham to compete with Seattle and Tacoma.

Donovan held several political offices in his early years, serving on the State Board of Road Commissioners and other local positions, but by 1906 his professional interests began to turn. Railroad technology was improving the lumber industry and his expertise became valuable in developing the Lake Whatcom Logging Company, an enterprise he formed with Peter Larson and Julius Bloedel in 1898. Donovan was vice president of the company until reorganization in 1913 as the Bloedel-Donovan Lumber Mills, and thereafter he directed the company's camps and railways as vice president and principal until his death. At the time of his death, and long after, the Bloedel-Donovan Lumber Mills operated and owned timber assets in Clallam, King, Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom Counties and marketed lumber through offices in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Minneapolis.

The J.J. Donovan House was purchased by the State of Washington for student housing in 1946 and has been a multiple resident building since then, though no structural changes have violated its original character or integrity.