

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Aston Inn 097-098-1006

and or common Ratner Residence

2. Location

street & number 6620 North Michigan Road N/A not for publication

city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Marion code 097

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Gary A. and Barbara W. Ratner

street & number 127 Elizabeth Street, N.E.

city, town Atlanta N/A vicinity of state Georgia 30307

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Recorder's Office

street & number City-County Building, 200 E. Washington Street

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Aston Inn is a two-story brick house built in the early Greek Revival style. The structure is rectangular in plan and there is an early one-story addition on the western end of the building. The main (east) facade has the typical three bays, but the south elevation has a two-story gallery, which is somewhat unusual for Indiana.

The low foundation and plain water table, which is on the east facade only, are constructed of stone. The walls are constructed of brick laid in the common bond pattern. The first level of the east facade contains three bays: an entrance in the southernmost bay and two window openings. The parallel door and single-light transom are surrounded by plain molding. At the entrance is a one-bay portico supported by two free-standing pillars and two square pilasters. The flat roof of the portico is trimmed with an entablature decorated with dentils. The windows on the first level are tall, six-over-six, double-hung sash trimmed with plain sandstone lintels and sills.

The second level of the main facade has French doors opening onto the portico roof. The window openings are aligned with the windows of the first level. These windows are also six-over-six, double-hung sash, but are shorter than those of the first level. They are also trimmed with sandstone lintels and sills.

The south elevation (Photo 2) contains the two-story gallery which provides outside circulation to the two rear rooms on the second floor, although they are also connected indoors. On each level of the gallery are two square pillars, and on the second level is a balustrade. Oblong transoms are above the four doors of this elevation, and the entrances and window openings are segmentally arched.

The first level of the north elevation (Photo 3) contains an entrance flanked by a single window opening on each side. The western window is a six-over-six, double-hung sash, and the eastern window is a six-over-one sash. The windows are trimmed with segmental arches and plain sills. The entrance has a paneled door and a storm door, and is topped with a transom light. A stoop with two steps is at this entrance. The second level of this elevation appears to have two window openings; however, ivy covers most of this level.

The gable roof was originally covered with wood shingles, but these have been replaced with asphalt shingles. The very early lightning rods with copper ground wire have been retained. A plain wooden frieze trims the roof, and there are several Italianate brackets on the gable ends. An interior chimney is at each of the three gable ends.

On the western end of the main structure is a one-story brick addition which served as the summer kitchen. (Photos 2, 4.) On the south Elevation of this early addition is an entrance and a full-length porch. Two one-over-one, double-hung windows and an exterior chimney are on the west elevation. The roof is a bellcast gable, supported by the four square posts of the porch. The gable end is trimmed with a plain frieze. A later addition extends from the north side of this addition.

An entry hall, living room, and a great room are in the first level of the main portion of the structure, with a kitchen and storage room being in the rear additions. The entry hall contains a grand stairway with a winding return at the top. The stairway retains its original turned balusters, railing and newel. Half of the entry space is occupied by a bathroom which was added in the 1950s, but this room will be removed during renovation.

The living room (Photo 5) contains a fireplace at the northern wall, visible through the doorway in Photo 6. The great room is of unusual proportion, 14' x 32', and has a closed fireplace at the west end. There is evidence on one of the walls of a former stair which ascended to the rear room of the second floor.

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
<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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

1852

Builder Architect Built by owner, George W. Aston

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Aston Inn is one of few early Greek Revival style residences in the Indianapolis area. The house is noteworthy for both its architectural features and for its important relationship to travel and commerce along the Michigan Road.

The house is unusual for Indiana in featuring a large, double-decked porch or gallery running along the largest exterior dimension of the house and intended to function as a circulation element in the absence of any interior hallway. This use of exterior elements for circulation between parts of the interior is common in two areas of the United States, the lower Mississippi area, particularly New Orleans, and the coastal cities of the Carolinas. The Michigan Road, on which the Aston Inn sits, is the oldest road linking Lake Michigan and the Ohio River. From Madison, Indiana, where the road meets the Ohio, principal travel routes proceed in two directions: river travel ultimately reaches New Orleans, while the principal highway originating directly across the river from Madison terminates at the Atlantic in Wilmington, North Carolina. Whether deliberately so or otherwise, therefore, the design of the Aston Inn resonates powerfully with the history of the road on which it sits.

The house was built by George W. Aston (1812-1889). In 1852, having recently added the property to his substantial inventory of lots and farms in the Augusta area, Aston began construction of the house, according to Aston family oral history, from bricks made on the property. Sitting immediately adjacent to the Michigan Road and roughly ten miles from Indianapolis, the house came to be used as a stagecoach stop, and as a stopping point for those moving livestock to the capital. In the very year Aston built the house, the first Indiana State Fair was held in Indianapolis at a site on the Michigan Road; some northern Indiana visitors to that first fair, and certainly those to later fairs, may well have stopped at George Aston's residence.

The significance of the Aston Inn to travelers was, however, short-lived. The middle to late part of the decade saw the opening of several railroads north of Indianapolis, including a line running but a few miles to the west of the Michigan Road. The depot in nearby New Augusta, for example, was built in 1860. It is thought that the house's function as an inn ceased fairly early; George Aston's son, Melvin, born in 1875, did not recall the building's use as an inn in his own lifetime. The house continued as a family residence until Melvin Aston's death in 1957. The house was owned by the Walker family for about 20 years, until it was purchased by the present owner in 1979.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Indiana Architectural Foundation, Indianapolis Architecture. 1975.
 Pike Township Historical Society, Century Old Houses in Pike Township. 1976. (Available from the Society, c/o Purdy, 7124 Purdy Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268.
 Interviews with Alice Harvey, granddaughter of G. Aston, March 8, 11 and 12, 1985.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.75 acre
 Quadrangle name Carmel

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>16</u>	<u>568860</u>	<u>4414260</u>	B	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
E	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	F	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
G	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	H	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see continuation sheet

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Gary A. Ratner, Attorney; Terry L. Bradbury, Architect		
organization	Not Applicable	date	June 28, 1985
street & number	127 Elizabeth Street, N.E.	telephone	404/525-7007
	335 N. East Street		317/634-3366
city or town	Atlanta	state	Georgia 30307
	Indianapolis		Indiana 46204

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 Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date 11-15-85

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation sheet

Aston Inn

Item number 10

Page 2

PARCEL I

A part of the South Half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 32, Township 17 North, Range 3 East, more particularly described as follows, to-wit:

Beginning at a point in the center Line of the Michigan Road, as now located and established, said point being 468.22 feet measured in a southeasterly direction from the point of intersection of the center line of said Road with the North line of said Half Quarter Section; thence in a southeasterly direction upon the center line of said Road 141 feet to a point; thence in a Southwesterly direction making an angle of 90 degrees to the right with the center line of said Road 381.70 feet to a point; thence in a Northwesterly direction and parallel with the center line of the Michigan Road, as now located and established, 141 feet to a point; thence in a Northeasterly direction 381.70 feet to the place of beginning. Subject, however, to all legal highways or right-of-ways.

PARCEL II

A part of the South Half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 32, Township 17 North, Range 3 East, more particularly described as follows, to-wit:

Beginning at a point in the center line of the Michigan Road, as now located and established, said point being 468.22 feet measured in a southeasterly direction from the point of intersection of the center line of said Road, with the North line of said Half Quarter Section; thence in a Northwesterly direction upon the center line of said Road 90 feet to a point; thence in a southwesterly direction making an angle of 90 degrees to the left with the center line of said Road 250 feet to a point; thence in a southeasterly direction and parallel with center line of said Road, 90 feet to a point, which point is a point on said adjacent property line; thence in a northeasterly direction and along said adjacent property line 250 feet to the Place of Beginning. Subject, however, to all legal Highways and rights-of-way.

