

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name JOHN J. HARVEY, fireboat

other name/site number _____

2. Location

street & town Pier 63, North River not for publication

city or town New York vicinity

state New York code NY county New York code 061 zip code 10011

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National	_____	_____

Register.
 other, (explain:) _____

JOHN J. HARVEY, fireboat, Pier 63, New York
Name of Property

New York Co., New York
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- public-local
 private
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property

(check only one box)

- district
 building(s)
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
01	00	structures
_____	_____	objects
01	00	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

00 _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION / water-related
GOVERNMENT / fireboat

Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE / museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: fireboat

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____
walls _____
roof _____
other steel _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

JOHN J. HARVEY, fireboat, Pier 63, New York
Name of Property

New York Co., New York
County and State

8. Description

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

MARITIME HISTORY

Period of Significance

1931-1957

Significant Dates

1931

1956-1957

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Gielow, Henry J., naval architect

Todd Shipbuilding and Drydock Corp., Brooklyn, NY, builder.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

 recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

NYS Div. for Hist. Preservation, Waterford, NY

JOHN J. HARVEY, fireboat, Pier 63, New York
Name of Property

New York Co., New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 18
Zone Easting Northing

2
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

4
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Al Trojanowicz, fire dispatcher; historian, ed. by Mark Peckham, NYS Div. for Hist. Preservation

organization c/o John J. Harvey, LTD date November 1999

street & number 100 West 72nd St. telephone 212-874-4771

city or town New York state NY zip code 10023

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and **white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title John J. Harvey, LTD

street & number 100 West 72nd St. telephone 212-874-4771

city or town New York state NY zip code

Description:

The *John J. Harvey* is a large fireboat currently afloat at Pier 63, North River, at the west end of 23rd Street in Manhattan. Built in 1931 according to plans by Henry J. Gielow, Inc., naval architects and built at the Todd Shipbuilding and Dry-dock Corporation in Brooklyn, NY, the steel boat measures 130' length overall, with a beam of 28' and a draft of 9', and 268 gross tons. Present freeboard amidships is 7'4". In form, *John J. Harvey's* fast, steamboat-like steel hull has a very traditional plumb bow, an elliptical counter stern and graceful sheer lines. Her narrow deckhouse is surmounted by an absolutely vertical pilothouse, behind which is a boat deck with one large and two smaller stacks. The deckhouse contains two companionways (fore and aft) to below-decks, and three companionways, (two exterior) to the pilothouse and boat deck. There are eight deck pipes, or monitors, one at the bow, two above the pilot house, two on a platform level with and aft of the boat deck, and three on an aft tower level with the top of the pilot house. The largest deck pipes have a capacity of 3,000 gallons per minute, and together the eight deck pipes can discharge 18,000 gallons per minute, an amount equal to two dozen land fire engines.

The hull is a transversely framed, riveted steel structure. There are 73 frames numbered from aft to forward. Frame spacing is 21" on centers reduced to 15" on centers forward of frame 60. Heavy web frames are introduced every 5th or 6th frame in way of the engine room. A full length bar keel is provided and heavy engine girders run fore and aft. At frames 9, 49, and 70, complete watertight bulkheads extend from the top to the bottom of the hull with the bulkhead at frame 49 fitted with a watertight door. Watertight flats, aft of frame 9 and forward of frame 49, are further subdivided. No double bottom is fitted. Nickel steel shell plating is arranged in seven strakes and is generally 3/8" thick. Plating at the large sea intakes is increased to 5/8". Above the main deck, bulwark plating is 1/4". Shell plating rivets are mostly 3/4" diameter. The main deck is supported by angle deck beams riveted to the hull frames through brackets. The deckhouse is constructed with 1/4" plate riveted to angle frames.

John J. Harvey is powered by five Fairbanks-Morse diesel engines, each 8 cylinder Opposed Piston, Model 38F5¼ rated at 600 horse power, installed in 1957 in place of her original five gasoline engines. The four outboard engines each have LeCourtenay centrifugal fire pumps rated at 4000 gallons per minute at 150 pounds per square inch, drawing water through their own sea chests. Although her total rated capacity is 16,000 gallons per minute, she significantly exceeds this, over 18,000 gallons per minute having been recorded. Cross connections in the fire-main allow them to be set up in series to deliver a total of 8000 g.p.m. at 300 pounds per square inch. Each of these four engines has a generator at the opposite end; the fifth engine, amidships, has two generators. An original copper pipe model conceptualizing the ship's original and unaltered pumping apparatus is displayed in the engine room.

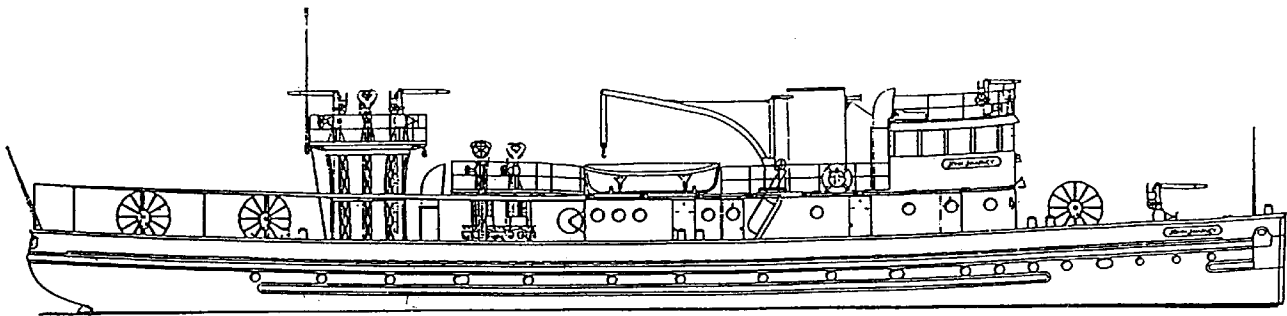
Propulsion is provided by two electric motors powering twin screws, each of three blades with a diameter of 6' and a pitch of 4'4". A switchboard allows engineers to divide power from any combination of generators to the propulsion motors which develop 1065 h.p. at 425 revolutions per minute. The main engines are air started, air compressors operate either from shore power or from two 2-71 auxiliary diesel-generators in the forward starboard corner of the engine room. Steering is by a single rudder, with a Sperry electric-powered cable quadrant control, with instantaneous throw-over to manual steering. A massive switchboard aft controls exciter and generator current while a smaller switchboard amidships distributes auxiliary and domestic power.

The *John J. Harvey* is engine-room operated. Port and Starboard telegraphs are mounted above the Engineer at his station, where he answers and responds to the orders sent by the Pilot, and controls propulsion. His panel allows monitoring and control of engines and pumps. Gauges and meters allow instant observation of all the boat's systems. A

third telegraph relays instructions from the pilothouse to start or stop fire pumps, as well as indicating the desired pressure. The pilothouse retains a large-diameter wheel and a telegraph on a pedestal.

Crew accommodations are located in the forepeak, accompanied by a small galley. Fuel tanks are located below the waterline in the bow and stern. Bronze name plates with raised relief letters are located in the bows, the pilothouse sides, and on the fantail.

The *John J. Harvey* retains her original configuration with the exception of the two smaller stacks, added in 1957 when the original gasoline engines were replaced with safer diesel units. At the same time, the deckhouse was extended aft about three feet. She retains one of her three original hose reels.



John J. Harvey in profile.

Statement of Significance:

The *John J. Harvey*, built in 1931 and updated in 1957, is significant under Criterion C as a highly intact and representative example of the large fireboat-type used in major American harbors after 1930. She is historically significant under Criterion A for her distinguished role in protecting New York Harbor during the harbor's halcyon years as the nation's greatest port. The 1931-1957 period of significance includes *Harvey's* service during World War II when the port served as a high traffic staging area for convoys supplying troops, munitions and petroleum to Europe. Remaining in service through 1994, the fireboat remains fully operational and retains a high degree of integrity from her first three decades of service.

In the 1920's the New York Fire Department's fleet of ten steam fireboats was aging. The oldest boats were built in the 1800's and all were required to have steam up at all times for immediate service, so the toll on their plants was even greater than actual age implied.

Fire Departments have always been bound by tradition, and reluctant to change. Though diesels were being accepted in many other applications, New York City was wary to invest in them yet. The Department was progressive enough to realize that steam, due to its high maintenance and fuel costs, was on the way out; so the new fireboat was planned with gasoline engines. Today, this may seem highly unusual; but in that period a number of large gasoline-powered fireboats were built.

In 1928 a contract was awarded to Henry J. Gielow, Inc., naval architects, to draw up preliminary plans and specifications. 1929 saw the Gielow plans accepted by the New York City Fire Department and the City began the process of writing a contract and soliciting bids for construction. On 11 February 1930, the North German Lloyd liner *Muenchen* exploded at North River Pier 42, killing John J. Harvey, the Pilot of fireboat *Thomas Willett*, which was along side. It was later announced that the boat under construction in Brooklyn would be named for him.

In December 1930, Gielow reported that the contract for construction had been awarded to Todd Shipbuilding and Dry-dock Corporation. Work started in March 1931 at Todd's Tebo Yacht Basin Plant on the Gowanus Bay at the foot of 23rd Street, Brooklyn. Work proceeded quickly, and the launching was on 6 October 1931 with the boat 99% complete. She was christened by Commissioner Dorman's daughter Anne with a bottle described by the press as containing "an unknown liquid," (prohibition had yet to be repealed). Once afloat, the *Harvey* and her consort, the fifty-year old fireboat *Zophar Mills*, entertained the public with impressive pumping displays.

The ship was finished at a total cost of \$594,000, and acceptance trials were scheduled for 17 December 1931. Although her design called for a speed of 18 knots and a pumping capacity of 16,000 gallons per minute, she exceeded both. Pumping at well over 18,000 gallons per minute, while underway at half speed; her deck pipe streams reached a height of over 250 feet, spraying the roadway of the new George Washington Bridge. She was accepted and at 6 p.m. that evening went in service as Engine 57, the fireboat station at Battery Park, Manhattan, displacing the *Mitchel* as flagship of the fleet. *John J. Harvey* was assigned Official Number 231225.

One of the reasons for selection of internal combustion was that steamboats didn't have much propulsion power while pumping. *Harvey* was outfitted with 5 Sterling Viking II 8 cylinder gasoline engines rated at 565 h.p. at 1150 r.p.m.. The engines drove corresponding DC generators rated at 340 kW, with the aft three also equipped with 29 kW generators for auxiliaries and excitation. The four outboard engines were equipped to drive the fire pumps connected at the opposite end of the engine from the generator.

Though there had been prior experiments, including wireless transmissions in 1913, fireboat radio did not come into regular use until 1937. On October 5, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and Commissioner McElligott officiated at ceremonies at Battery Park inaugurating two-way voice radio between the nine commissioned fireboats and the Manhattan Dispatcher's Office. This was the first use of Fire Department radio, and the *Harvey* was the star of the show.

On 16 November 1938, the new fireboat *Fire Fighter* was placed in service at Engine 57. The *Harvey* and most of her crew were subsequently assigned to Engine 86, Pier 53, Bloomfield Street, North River. Pier 53 was the southernmost of the "Chelsea Piers" and was occupied by Cunard. The *Harvey* was to serve longer at this one location than any other New York boat, and that site is only a few blocks from her present retirement berth at Pier 63. Both are part of the new Hudson River Park, and *John J. Harvey* forms an important historical reminder of the area's original uses.

John J. Harvey's life includes dependable service at many major waterfront fires and disasters. One of her first calls was the May 1932 five alarm fire that destroyed Cunard's Pier 54. On 9 February, 1942, the *Harvey* was called to a major fire aboard the former French liner *Normandie*, one of the largest and most beautiful passenger ships of her day. The ship had been seized by the United States and was undergoing a conversion as a troop carrier when she burned in a spectacular fire and capsized at her dock. She could not be salvaged and was ultimately scrapped. Ironically, the *Harvey* had been on hand with a water display in 1935 when the *Normandie* first arrived in New York. The *Harvey*

participated in other displays, welcoming prominent ships including the *America* and the *United States* upon their arrival in New York. She was the only fireboat that could match their speed to and from the piers.

Early in the Second World War, the *Harvey* patrolled the harbor 24 hours a day. She was called to service during the 1943 burning and scuttling of the munitions ship *El Estero*, where her entire crew received the highest awards for valor. She also served during the fiery 1958 collision of the gasoline tanker *Empress Bay* and freighter *Nebraska*, and the disastrous 1966 collision of the tankers *Alva Cape* and *Texaco Massachusetts*. She has seen service at dozens of major pier fires, including many on the New Jersey waterfront where the New York City Fire Department has jurisdiction. More recently she worked hard at the *Morania 440*, a gasoline barge that went on the rocks in Hell Gate in 1989, causing a spill of 100,000 gallons of gasoline; and the 1990 explosion and fire of the *Cibro Savannah* in Arthur Kill.

Fears concerning explosive gasoline vapors aboard the *Harvey* eventually led to the replacement of the original gasoline engines with safer diesel units. The conversion was included in Fire Commissioner Cavanagh's 1956 budget. Plans for the installation of five Fairbanks-Morse diesels were drawn-up by Henry Gielow, the ship's original designer, and the work was let to RTC Shipbuilding of Camden, New Jersey. The refitting, which also included a small addition to the deckhouse and new funnels, was completed in 1957, and improved the ship's speed and pumping capacity. The new engines were placed in the same configuration as the previous gasoline engines, and consequently, the original electrical system and pumping apparatus remained unaltered. Remaining fully operational, the *Harvey's* engine room retains a high degree of integrity from this period and is significant in illustrating the marine engineering systems of both 1931 and 1957.

In 1959, New York City's fireboats were redesignated as marine companies. The *Harvey*, Engine 86, became Marine Company 2. All fireboats, including the *John J. Harvey*, were repainted with red topsides that year.

By the late 1970's *Harvey's* aging original electrical plant was being plagued with grounds, seriously impairing the boat's reliability. She was taken out of service while a decision was made about her future. A survey was ordered to see if investment in an electrical rebuild was justified. Results were encouraging. She was found to be structurally sound, and plans were made to proceed. A \$561,000 contract was awarded to G. Marine & Diesel of Brooklyn to completely rewind the original generators and motors, and replace all cable and controls. She returned to service in 1981.

The Port of New York has changed radically since the 1960s. Most shipping is handled through the container ports in Newark Bay; hazardous materials are no longer carried by most ships, and those ships generally do not call at New York. Most of the traditionally-built piers and their fire-prone creosote-soaked pilings, have been demolished or have collapsed. Along with this disappearing tradition has gone the need for large fireboats. The City of New York maintains the 1938 *Fire Fighter* (designated a National Historic Landmark) at Staten Island, and the *John D. McKean*, built in 1954 in Camden NJ, on station at *John J. Harvey's* old pier. New fireboats are much smaller, and are designed to deal with small pleasure craft rather than the great ocean liners and freighters of another day. The *John J. Harvey* was retired from active service in 1994, and auctioned to her current owners in February 1999. She has been restored to working condition, and full restoration, "Bristol Fashion," is planned over the next two years.

One reason *John J. Harvey* has served so long was the quality and materials that went into her construction. Equally important to why she's outlasted any New York fireboat before her, outlived others after her, and remained in such good condition is the pride, care, and hard work her crews have so loyally and generously given over these six decades.

Perhaps most importantly, *John J. Harvey* represented a new technology - marking the transition from steam power successfully. The oldest of two historic fireboats afloat in New York City, the *Harvey* is in fact our first modern fireboat; the prototype from which successive generations of large fireboats evolved. As such, *John J. Harvey* represents one of the most significant fireboats of the twentieth century.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Cannon, D.J. "Fireboats" The Encyclopedia of New York City. 1995 ed.

Trojanowicz, Al. "John J. Harvey, Sixty Years of Outstanding Service." Steamboat Bill, Winter, 1991: 285-291.

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Inventory of Large Preserved Historic Vessels. Washington : 1990. 134.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The *John J. Harvey* is currently berthed at North River Pier 63 at Manhattan's West Side. The nominated property includes only the fireboat.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property consists exclusively of the fireboat. There are no shore-side structures associated with the fireboat's history and significance at this location.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.