

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Washington
COUNTY: Pierce
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE NOV 5 1974

2110
 W 523 51-7
 H/B
 E 500 660

1. NAME

COMMON:
St. Peter's Episcopal Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Starr ~~Street~~ between ~~No.~~ 29th and ~~No.~~ 30th ~~streets~~

CITY OR TOWN:
Tacoma

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
#6 - Honorable Floyd V. Hicks

STATE: Washington CODE: 53 COUNTY: Pierce CODE: 053

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
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 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:
Episcopal Diocese of Olympia

STREET AND NUMBER:
1551 - 10th Avenue East

CITY OR TOWN:
Seattle

STATE:
Washington

CODE:
53

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Pierce County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
County-City Building, 930 Tacoma Avenue South

CITY OR TOWN:
Tacoma

STATE:
Washington

CODE:
53

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
None

DATE OF SURVEY:
Federal State County Local

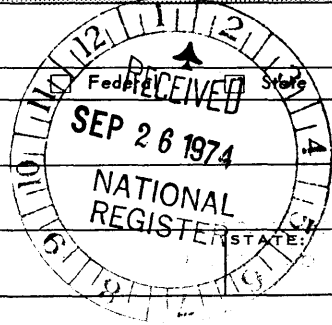
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:



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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" 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

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, built in August of 1873, was a simple church fitting for its role as the only church in the small town of Tacoma. However, its role was important; its message was strongly felt and delivered simply without great embellishments.

The church's board and batten walls were entirely white with very little ornamentation. A gabled roof of cedar shakes was added in September, 1873, when the original roof was found to leak. A cross was located on the ridge of the roof at the front of the church. On the front facade above the door there was a window in the gothic tradition with intersecting tracery and additional muntins. The door was one panel with a single wooden leaf. In 1898, a small stained glass window with a gothic arch was added to the rear of the church above the altar. Three casement windows are placed on the west wall and another on the east wall. Also on the east side of the church is a small extension which serves as the vestry. It is a small shed roofed structure and is apparently an addition although the walls are of the same board and batten as is the older church body. It is not known when this addition was built, but the present lay reader of the church, who has written a short history of St. Peter's, believes it was built around the First World War.

On the roof was a small wooden catwalk leading to the bell tower at the east side of the church. The bell tower was a large fir tree, which had been topped and a 965 pound bell placed on the 48 feet high shaft. The tree was considered to be 300 years old when cut and so was called the oldest bell tower in the United States. A cross was located on the apex of the wooden conical roof which housed the bell.

The interior is of board and batten construction and is painted white. There are 16 pews, eight on each side. The altar, just as the church, is simple -- a table with a gold cross and two candlesticks. Two wooden railings sit on either side of the altar and there is a long bench located on the east wall. The bench sits in front of a curtain which covers the entry to the vestry. The vestry is small and contains a desk, used by the clergymen to write their sermons, and chair. A pot-belly stove, situated near the middle pews on the west side of the church, was originally used for heating. The lighting was accomplished by a cluster of kerosene lamps hung from the ceiling. The church organ is on the west side, across from the vestry. The intricately carved organ is the only exception to the basic simplicity of the structure.

In the 1890's, ivy grew along the rafters and beams in the interior of the church, a result of the abundant foliage on the completely covered bell tower. Today, the ivy grows exclusively outside but little else has changed. A closed porch with gabled roof has been added to the front facade; the exact date of construction is not known but it is

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(Continuation Sheet)

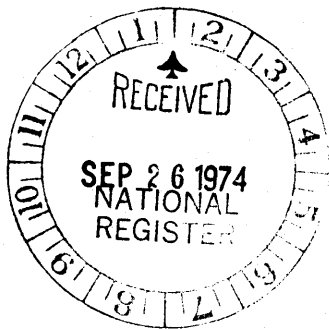
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#7 - Description
St. Peter's Episcopal Church

pictured in an 1898 photo. Since that time the porch steps have been replaced with a short ramp. The porch houses the former exterior gothic window. Electrified lamps have replaced the kerosene lamps, which are in storage, and a central heating system has been installed, although the pot belly stove is still in its original location, the fifth in a series of replicas. The chimney, which was located originally inside the church, now runs outside. In October, 1934, the bell tower blew down, and a new truck 40 feet high and set in a concrete foundation, was erected to support the bell. A cross remains at the apex of the conical, shake roofed bell housing, although it is not the original latin cross but one of celtic design. The catwalk leading to the tower was never rebuilt, and the small cross which sat on top of the church is gone, but all the furnishings, with the exception of the pot belly stove and the electric lights, are original. On the walls have been hung momentos of the past: pictures, letters, and imprints. In 1950, a campaign to rejuvenate the church resulted in new fir siding and a fresh paint job.

Although there have been some additions as well as some restoration, the feeling and the spirit of the little church which gave strength and comfort to the early settlers of all Christian denominations is still very much alive. One may enter the church, notice the uneven tilt of the walls (caused by speedy construction and green timber) and feel the simple humility, strength and forthrightness of St. Peter.



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1873

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <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 type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The week after the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad was officially fixed at Tacoma, Reverend Benjamin Morris, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Missionary Jurisdiction of the Oregon and Washington Territory, decided that this mill town would soon grow into a busy city and would need a place of worship for its growing population. Reverend Morris obtained lots from E. S. Smith and John E. Starr on Starr Street. He then asked Reverend C. R. Bonnell to be the head clergyman of the new church. Bonnell came and became Tacoma's first resident clergyman. The money to build the church was donated by Bonnell's brother-in-law in Philadelphia. Having the lot and money as well as the lumber donated by the Tacoma Mill Company, the church was built after Bonnell's plan and in his own way. In August of 1873, the first religious services were held in Tacoma's first church. A Sunday school was organized on the same day under the same auspices, and in the same place.

There had been no debt incurred in the building of the chapel, but in the erection of Bonnell's personal dwelling, a debt of \$160 was created, which weighed heavily on the congregation in 1874. However, the women of the church got together and made plans for a festival which cleared \$100. It was this type of response that the new church received, even when it was learned that the railway terminus was to be fixed not at this location but two miles away in what would later be New Tacoma.

On January 5, 1874, the church received thirty-four books from Philadelphia, twenty-nine for the Sunday school and five for the parochial library. For a time, these books were the entire church library. At the annual Convocation of the Missionary Jurisdiction of Oregon and Washington Territory held in Portland, August 28-31, 1872, St. Peter's Episcopal Church was admitted as a member of the Convocation.

On October 11, a bell weighing 965 pounds, a gift from the children of St. Peter's Church of Philadelphia, was presented to the new church. It was placed upon the high stump of a tree some 300 years old and, therefore, was reputed to be the oldest bell tower in America.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hunt, Herbert. Tacoma: Its History and Its Builders, Vol. I, Chicago, S. J. Clarke, 1916.
 Interview with Lay Reader John Kiliher
 Prosch, Thomas W. McCarver and Tacoma, Lowman and Hartford, Seattle, 1906.
 St. Peter's Church Register, 1873-1888.
Tacoma News Tribune, June 27, 1951.

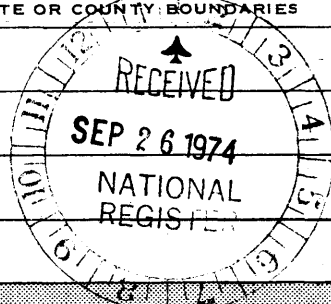
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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
NW	° ' "	° ' "		47°	16'	28"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		122°	27'	45"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Ms. Kathleen Norris, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION: Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation DATE: July 15, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:
Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

CITY OR TOWN: Olympia STATE: Washington CODE: 53

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 Charles H. Odegaard
 Charles H. Odegaard

Title Director - Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

Date Sept. 10, 1974

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

AK Montrose
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 11/5/74

ATTEST:
Wm. M. Steyer
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 11.5.74

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#8 - Significance
St. Peter's Episcopal Church

St. Peter's Episcopal Church was not only the first church in Tacoma and the Episcopal Mother Church, it was also the first site for worship services organized by Baptist, Congregationalists, Disciples of Christ, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Roman Catholics. Thus, people of all denominations met there and the church became the center of religious, social, and community activity in early Tacoma.

