

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

1. Name

historic Mottman Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 101-105 N. Capitol Way not for publication

city, town Olympia vicinity of congressional district 3rd Don Bonker

state Washington code 053 county Thurston code 067

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | n/a <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name Robert Blume and Robert Timm

street & number P.O. Box 3487

city, town Lacey vicinity of state Washington 98503

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Thurston County Courthouse Complex Bg. 1

street & number 2000 Lakeridge Dr. S.W.

city, town Olympia state Washington 98503

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

city, town 111 West 21st Ave. Olympia state Washington 98504

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved, date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Mottman Building is located on the Northwest Corner of Capitol Way and 4th Avenue. The building abuts all property lines. One story buildings are adjacent to the West and North.

The original building, built in 1888 was rectangular, 2 stories and 50' x 100'. In 1911 a 20' x 70' extension to the West and a third story was added. Additional modifications occurred in repairing the building following the 1949 earthquake. The building structure consists of a stone foundation, brick exterior bearing walls, iron and wood interior columns and a wood frame coal tar roof. The East elevation (Capitol Way) original iron cornice with its large brackets and recessed rectangular panels between was relocated to the top of the third floor.

The 150 linear feet multi-pane 6' high first floor transom window band rests atop a retractable awning which separates the transom from the picture window band along the East and South elevations. Following the 1949 earthquake, the wood trusses behind the first floor transom on the East elevation and the far West bay on the South elevations were added. Following this earthquake, the transom and show windows were removed on the 20' addition. One small operable window was added. The service door remained. The recessed customer entrances are located near the North wall on the East elevation, facing the Southeast corner at a 45 degree angle, and approximately 70 feet from the Southeast corner on the South elevation. As with the original structure, the brick exterior of the 1911 addition was covered with cement plaster on the East and South elevations.

The East elevation second floor window band is composed of 7 equally spaced rectangular windows with the bottom third operable. Prior to the 1949 earthquake, these windows were split double hung with a curved head. The third floor has rectangular split double hung windows in a band aligned above those on the second floor.

The South elevation second floor window band has a rectangular multi-pane fixed window and a split double hung window with a curved head equally spaced within the 20' addition. Prior to the 1949 earthquake, three double hung windows with curved heads were located here. Going from West to East, the next window is wider and higher than the rest, has a curved head and is broken into four panes of glass. Before the 1911 addition, this window was located above the delivery door. The remainder of the windows are equally spaced. The first 12 are split double hung with curved heads. The last two are rectangular with the bottom third double hung. As with the second floor windows on the East elevation, prior to the 1949 earthquake, these originally were split double hung with curved heads. The third floor window band has rectangular windows of equal height and the widths are equal to those below. All windows are split double hung with the exception of two windows to the far West which are fixed multi-pane and the third window from the West corner which is broken into four panes. Prior to the 1949 earthquake, two rectangular double hung windows were located to the far West in lieu of the one.

The West elevation was rebuilt following the 1949 earthquake. There are no openings.

The North elevation second floor window band has 8 windows broken into 4 panes. The bottom half are operable and center pivoted. The windows have shutters. All but the Easternmost window have curved heads. Prior to the 1949 earthquake, this rectangular opening also had a curved head. The third floor window band has 8 four-pane windows with curved heads aligned above those on the second floor. The bottom half are operable and center pivoted.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

APR 16 1982

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

Description

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1 of 1

The 20' x 70' 1911 addition extends 20' beyond the major North elevation plane. The East elevation of this section has three four-pane and one narrow three-pane windows with curved heads on the second and third floor. The bottom half are operable and center pivoted. There are no openings on the North wall of the extension.

All three interior floors are fir. The floors are connected by gradual ramps and an elevator. The first floor contains a 6' wide mezzanine along the North wall. The walls contain display cases, the back side of the display windows, fir trim and plaster. There is a plaster ceiling. The East end of the second floor is divided into three rooms with multi-panel doors both sliding and hinged. The remainder of the floor is one large room. The walls are plaster with fir trim. The ceiling is plaster. The third floor is one large room. The walls are plaster with fir trim. The ceiling is plaster. The 20' 1911 addition contains the ramp system, the elevator, an office, a toilet room and a small closet on all three floors. The boiler is located in a half basement in the Northwest corner of the building. The roof contains the elevator penthouse.

The building is heated by hot water. The 1911 system had ceiling mounted radiators. The existing system had floor mounted radiators. Before 1911, small coal stoves were used. When the addition was built, electric lights were installed.

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

Specific dates 1888/1911

Builder/Architect 1888 Samual Williams/Nathan Kaufman

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Mottman Building was Southwestern Washington's oldest, largest and finest dry goods store. The building was the place of business and stands as a tribute to a locally prominent merchant, real estate promoter and public official instrumental in the development of Olympia.

While Washington State was still a territory, this building was Southwest Washington's largest dry goods house. The original proprietors were Toklas and Kaufman. The senior partner, F. Toklas, was the father of Alice B. Toklas made famous by the poet Gertrude Stein. In 1891, the building was the only store in Olympia selling carpet and draperies. In 1896, the next proprietor, George A. Mottman relocated the Mottman Mercantile Co. in the building.

George A. Mottman followed the path of several of his contemporaries in the Southwest Washington Mercantile business. He was born in Germany, migrated to New York City, traveled to San Francisco and in 1884 moved to Olympia. He arrived on the old stern wheeler George W. Elder and immediately went to work for Toklas and Kaufman. He was next employed by I. Harris and after a short time had opened his own store. As the store grew and prospered, Mr. Mottman continually demonstrated his commitment to Olympia through his community activities. He was four times mayor of Olympia and he started the city water system. He invested heavily in real estate and was a leader in oil exploration in this vicinity. Mr. Mottman was one of four men who founded St. Martin's College in Lacey.

He succeeded by using tried and true methods. However, he was constantly progressive. He was the first to stock toys in Olympia and to give penny change. Mr. Mottman regarded hard work without frills as the key to success.

All traffic between Portland and Seattle along with all local traffic to the Port of Olympia passed the Mottman Building. As a result of Mr. Mottman's need to expand and the already ideal location of his existing building, he expanded to the West and added the third floor in 1911. At this time, the first elevator in Olympia was installed. Floor to floor ramps for carts and prams were installed in lieu of stairs. To the owner's knowledge, these were the only ramps available for customer use in any store in the United States. The door knobs were lowered to accommodate George Mottman's small stature. The store was equipped with wire baskets on a wire and pulley system which traveled overhead between the sales tables and the cashier's desk on the mezzanine carrying money and receipts. Tourists visited Mottman's in large numbers. The store had been known over the country and served in its own way as an advertisement for Olympia. Though Mottman's remained open until 1967 with little change, in 1952 merchandisers spoke of Mottman's as the only store of its kind left in the United States.

The Mottman Building stands as a tribute to George A. Mottman, a prominent merchant, real estate promoter and public official instrumental in the development of Olympia.

9. Major Bibliographical References

South-Western Washington (Olympia, Washington: Pacific Publishing Co., 1890) p. 80
 Mere Mention Column, Washington Standard May 31, 1888, July 27, 1888, September 7, 1888
 Nathan G. Kaufman, Olympia Tribune Souvenir Edition May 1891
 Mottman Adds, Olympia Chronicle May 27, 1911, July 1, 1911, October 23, 1911
 Misc. Articles, The Daily Olympian June 13, 1951, Feb 20, 1952, Sept 15, 1967 July 21, 1977
 Dec. 14, 1977

10. Geographical Data UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Tumwater

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The Southerly 10 feet of Lot 6 and all of Lot 7 in Block 4 of Sylvest Plat of Olympia as recorded in Volume 1 of Plats, page 14. Excepting therefrom the Southerly 10 feet of the Easterly 100 feet of said lot 6 and the Northerly 10 feet of the Easterly 100 ft of said Lot 7.

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 Richard F. Brown - staff

organization CDC Architects, Engineers and Planners date 1/14/82

street & number #1 South Sound Center telephone 459-8744

city or town Lacey state Washington 98503

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

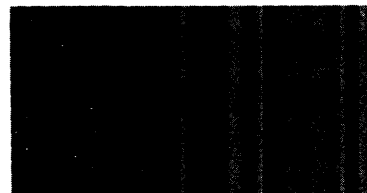
State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| For HCRS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register. | |
| <i>for Linda M. Clelland</i> | date <u>6/16/83</u> |
| Keeper of the National Register | |
| Attest: | date |
| Chief of Registration | |

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

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Certification of the State Historic Preservation Officer per 36 CFR 60.6(p)

Mottman Building, Thurston County, Washington

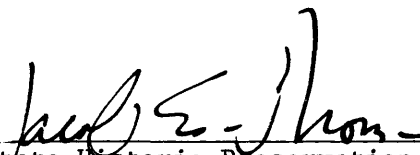
I hereby certify the following:

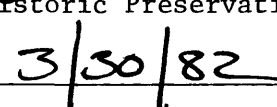
- (1) All procedural requirements have been met;
- (2) The nomination form is adequately documented;
- (3) The nomination form is technically and professionally correct and sufficient.

At its meeting on February 26, 1982, the state review board found that the Mottman Building should be recommended to the National Register of Historic Places; a copy of the minutes of that meeting is enclosed. In reviewing the board's action, I do not concur, and believe that the Mottman Building does not satisfy the criteria of the National Register.

The significance of the Mottman Building as described in the nomination lies in its special relationship with George Mottman; the structure "stands as a tribute" to Mottman, who was a successful merchant, real estate promoter, and Olympia public official. No other claims of significance are made. In this instance, it appears appropriate to evaluate the property within the context of criterion B, properties that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. Based on information in the nomination, Mottman was active in the community both politically and commercially, but that alone does not seem sufficient to justify placement on the National Register. Many individuals in Olympia and in other communities in the state have enjoyed a prosperous business life and have taken a hand in town politics; I do not believe those activities unbuttressed by more substantial contributions constitute the definition of "lives of persons significant in our past" as used in the criteria.

I also believe that the integrity of the Mottman Building has been compromised. The many window alterations has significantly altered the nature of the structure's fenestration.



State Historic Preservation Officer


Date



MOTTMAN BUILDING; TWINSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON
1949

MOTTMAN BUILDING: THURSDAY COUNTY, WASHINGTON
ORIGINAL (1888) OLYMPIC BLOCK / THOMAS & KAUFMAN BLDG.
PRIOR TO 1911 MOTTMAN EXPANSION.



1. Importance of Mottman Building to Olympia in its regional role as a dry goods store:

Portions of two newspaper articles best address the point:

Daily Olympian - Feb. 20, 1952

Mottman's Old, But Progressive, Helps Advertise Olympia.

As the state capital and one of Washington's oldest cities, Olympia is blessed with probably more traditions than any community in this area, and one of the most enduring and colorful of its traditions is the Mottman Mercantile Company, better known as just Mottman's.

Tourists visit Mottman's in large numbers, as the store has become known over the country and serves in its own way as an advertisement for Olympia. It is probably a still bigger treat for former Olympia residents. Returning to their home town after years away, they naturally find Olympia considerably changed and may suffer some nostalgic disappointment. But on visiting Mottman's they discover that they can relive their former years as the store, with the exception of the merchandise, is practically the same.

Daily Olympian - Sept. 15, 1967

Store With The Style of High Button Shoes Closes Its Doors.

The wrench of a final parting with the past was experienced by Olympians this Friday as the door of the Mottman Mercantile Company closed against the public for the last time.

Olympia without its Mottman's will take a bit of getting used to . . .

"Faithfully serving the public since 1895" is the tagline on many of the old store's advertisements. But the line most often used by the public in reference to the downtown shop has been, "Have you tried Mottman's? You're sure to find it there."

Shoppers across the state have visited Mottman's, on trips to Olympia, . . . customers who had come to town by buggy or boat spent hours being outfitted from bonnet to boot. This was their annual shopping trip. They would not see Mottman's again until next year.

Past its hub location in downtown Olympia, street cars rattled and clanged, and stopped to disgorge passengers at Mottman's corner.

Mottman's is a figure of the past which has retained its identity through years of change, dispensing the merchandise of the times with an air of folksy informality consistent with an almost forgotten era.

The old dry goods store that has faithfully served the public since 1895 will close its doors. But it will be a little longer before Olympians learn to check their habit of saying "Have you tried Mottman's . . .?"

2. Contextual information explaining Mottman's role in Olympia's early twentieth century development was significant.

George A. Mottman is a lesson in American opportunity and enterprise. Like many of his contemporaries in the Olympia mercantile business, Mr. Mottman was born in Germany, migrated to New York, journeyed to San Francisco and finally to Olympia.

Mr. Mottman first worked in Olympia for Toklas and Kaufman Mercantile store which was located in what is now the Mottman Building. He was later employed by another Mercantile store before venturing into the real estate business for himself. In 1895, he embarked on what would be the mainstay of his life, the Mottman Mercantile Store.

As the store grew and prospered, Mr. Mottman continually demonstrated his faith in Olympia through his community activities. He underwrote the proposal to buy Priest Point Park for Olympia. He was a stockholder and director of the Olympia National Bank. He financed the Olympia Knitting Mill. In 1915 Mr. Mottman started oil exploration in Western Washington. Before his death in 1951, he had sunk over a million dollars in this venture. During one of the regional skirmishes for possession of the state capital, Mr. Mottman chaired a successful committee for a full economic boycott of Tacoma.

The outspoken George Mottman was never a member of the establishment. The town's political destinies were formed in the Elks Club or the back room of the Smokehouse rather than the polling booth. He soon coined the term "Smokehouse Gang" to denounce the local bigwigs who gathered there to plot strategy. The term became a household word in Olympia for many years.

In 1913, he ran and was elected mayor on the citizens' ticket. Mottman, a civic gadfly for progress linked with economy provided continuing copy for the local reporters. If they failed to take advantage of it, he purchased large display advertisements to make his views known. When the three papers opposed his

position on municipal ownership of the water system, he printed at his own expense a lengthy circular which he distributed all over town. The measure passed demonstrating you could fight the fourth estate. From 1873 when the mayors office was created until 1953, no person held the position longer.

? Is this referring to his term as mayor?

By donating 40 acres to the cause, Mr. Mottman was one of four men whose efforts led to the founding of St. Martin's College at Lacey, known as Woodland at that time. Among his other accomplishments in the real estate field was the development and sub-division of the section west of Capitol Way, between Fourteenth and Eighteenth Avenues, in Olympia. At one point he had the most extensive real estate holdings in Thurston County. The Mottman Mercantile Company was the base from which all other ventures were launched.

Every day was a working day and he was up at five o'clock in the morning and on the job by seven, remaining at the store until closing time or after. He had a desk but no office - or, expressed another way, he had an unusually large office, because Mr. Mottman often said the entire store was his office.

In 1921, he was nearly prophetic when he stated, "Three generations from now, we will have to confine the sane people to asylums to protect them from the majority of insane motorists."

3. Another property which more appropriately conveys the association with Mottman.

From 1900 until his death in 1951, the Mottman Building was not only his office but the center from which George Mottman ventured into other fields. Two other properties bear his name. The Mottman Road, less than two miles long in west Olympia and the Mottman Industrial Park developed after his death.

In 1906, he built the Mottman Mansion, one of Olympia's show places. The building was razed in 1966, leaving the Mottman Building as the remaining tribute to one of Olympia's helmsmen.

4. Period of Significance.

1911 - 1951 when George Mottman died.

5. Impact of post-earthquake alterations, particularly the 2nd floor window band on the east elevation, on the integrity of the building.

The integrity of the building is as a vernacular mercantile store. The changes in the building after the earthquake were made under the direction of George Mottman and had no effect on the massing or general character of the building. The changes constitute detail revisions and not major visual alterations. Post earthquake signage revisions had a far greater visual impact on the structure than the east elevation 2nd window head profile modification.

6. Define "more substantial contributions" making a persons life significant in local history in commerce and politics.

A more substantial contribution must stand out as a significant contribution in shaping the events of the time. With the Mottman Mercantile Company as his base, George Mottman firmly established his store in the center of town, cleaned up municipal government, led the way for municipal ownership of the water system, and through real estate transactions shaped development of the area.

ROGUES, BUFFOONS & STATESMEN, Gordon Newell

Seattle: Hangman Press 1975

Daily Olympian June 15, 1951

Sunday Olympian February 6, 1877

A HISTORY OF THE PUGET SOUND COUNTRY, William Farrand Prosser, N.Y., Chicago

The Lewis Publishing Co. 1903

Daily Olympian Feb. 20, 1952

Daily Olympian Sept. 15, 1967