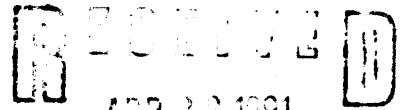


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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the Instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Olympic Club  
other names/site number Langley Mercantile and General Merchandise Store; Dog House Tavern

### 2. Location

street & number 230 1st St.  not for publication  
city, town Langley  vicinity  
state Washington code WA county Island code 029 zip code 98260

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	— buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	—	— sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	—	— structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	—	— objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Robert E. [Signature] 3/28/91  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

[Signature] 5/28/91

[Signature] for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: specialty storeRecreation: auditorium, sports facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: restaurant

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Other: Early 20th Century Vernacular Commercial  
(boom town)foundation woodwalls wood: weatherboardroof composition

other

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Olympic Club is a three story wood frame commercial building located on the main street of the Whidbey Island town of Langley. Built in 1908, the building remains the dominant feature of the small commercial district, and is characterized by a false front parapet that rises above its lower frame neighbors. The two story facade of the building faces south toward commercial structures on the opposite side of First Street, while the rear of the lot slopes to the Puget Sound waterfront, creating a full story below the street level.

The Olympic Club is a free standing structure built on a rectangular plan. The facade measures 30 feet along First Street and the building extends 90 feet toward the shoreline. The building rests on a wood post and pier and concrete foundation, with the lower level occupying the rear 12½ feet of the floor plan.

The exterior walls of the Olympic Club are faced in horizontal drop siding trimmed with cornerboards. The false front parapet rises several feet above the shallow gabled roof, and is crowned with a projecting boxed cornice. The eaves of the roof overhang the side elevations and feature exposed rafters tails. The second story facade is lighted by paired double hung one-over-one wood sash windows, framed with entablature hoods and sills. Single one-over-one sash windows, with hoods, are placed along the side walls on both the first and second stories. A small fixed-pane window in the rear of the first floor (west side) and three first floor picture windows on the rear elevation were added in the 1950s to provide a waterfront view for patrons.

The street level facade is composed of two large storefront bays flanking a recessed central entry. Each bay is composed of paired four-light fixed plate glass display windows above kickplates. The side windows of the bays are angled toward the recessed entry. The entry features a double door with glazed panels. The storefront is sheltered by a wood canopy, with shingled roofing, added to replace the original fabric awning that shaded the storefronts. The second story hall is accessed by stairs adjacent to the building on the west. The stairs rise to an open porch that shelters the second story doorway.

The interior of the Olympic Club has been modified over the years. The original basement which served as the club's gymnasium, was removed after it was heavily damaged by tide action. Today, only the historic dressing rooms survive. The interior of the street level was originally a large front room and a smaller room in the rear. The interior partition was removed, but the original tongue and groove wainscoting and walls, wood floors, and 13 foot ceiling heights remain. The upper level was originally an auditorium and still contains the original raised stage.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce  
Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1908-1933

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Melsen, Albert (builder)

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Constructed in 1908 at the behest of a Seattle promoter and financed by a group of local businessmen, the Olympic Club served as the leading commercial and entertainment venue in the small Whidbey Island town of Langley through the early 20th century. Although built to house sporting events, the simple frame structure soon served as the town's general store, high school gymnasium, meeting hall and theater, post office, and an informal community center. It was the largest commercial structure in town, with a false front parapet that rose above neighboring buildings. Today, the Olympic Club retains much of its exterior integrity, including parapet, drop siding, wood frame windows, as well as the original interior hall. No other structure in the community is so closely associated with the commercial history and character of Langley in the early 20th century.

Historical Background: When the Olympic Club was built in 1908, Langley was a small unincorporated waterfront village on the southern end of Whidbey Island. The community consisted of a few frame shops on First Street where south island farmers, Indians, and an occasional visitor arriving by steamer from Seattle would shop and trade. The commercial center included a small hotel, general store, and jitney service, all operated by Ed Howard in the first decade of the 20th century.

The town lacked a hall, and community events were sometimes held on the beach. For example, in 1908 several boxing matches were staged in tents near the Langley dock. These events proved popular, attracting local crowds as well as Seattle fans arriving on chartered boats. That year, a Seattle promoter convinced merchant Howard, attorney Hugh McLeod, and contractor Albert Melsen to construct a club house to hold the fights, which the promoter promised to buy upon completion.

Melsen constructed the building in the summer of 1908, and the hall was completed on September 1. Plans were made to open the new facility at a gala Labor Day celebration, complete with boxing matches. Tickets to fights and memberships in the club were sold in advance, and steamers brought patrons from Seattle. One eyewitness estimated the holiday crowds at 1,000 people, including folks from Seattle, Everett, and Whidbey Island who enjoyed a variety of events in the new building and on the beach. But despite the crowd, the main attraction--a boxing match--never took place. Instead, the promoter left town with the receipts, including money that was to have chartered the return boat trip. As a result, hundreds were stranded on the island until boats arrived the next morning.

With the building complete but without a buyer, Hugh McLeod took up quarters there until 1909, when Howard (whose store burned that year) relocated his grocery and mercantile business to the new

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structure. Howard operated the store until 1912, when he turned it over to his son-in-law Walter Hunziker, who re-named the business the Langley Mercantile and General Merchandise Store. Hunziker's business was the largest mercantile establishment in the village. The general store carried a wide selection of dry and bulk goods as well as fresh food, selling to area farmers, Tulalip Indians, and loggers.

But the Olympic Club building held an even larger role in local life. It served as the post office. In the basement, the building featured a gymnasium (known as the "apple box") where boxing and wrestling matches were held, and which was used for many years as the high school gymnasium. The top floor of the structure featured an auditorium with stage, where the local men's club and temperance society met, local theatrical and musical productions were staged, and school graduation ceremonies and community dances held. The auditorium was also the town's movie theater from 1922 to 1937, prior to construction of the Clyde Theater.

In the 1930s, the building underwent fundamental changes. The gymnasium, which had deteriorated from tidal damage, was ripped out, and the Langley Mercantile was closed in the Depression. For a short while Howard operated it a confectionery. But in 1933, following his death, his widow Vella Howard converted the retail space to a tavern known as the Dog House. The tavern has remained in business since that time, and in 1983 a restaurant was added. Although the gymnasium was removed (except for dressing rooms) and new windows were opened in the rear in the 1950s, the building retains much of its original character. It has continued to serve as a local entertainment spot, with performers ranging from jazz artist Art Foxall (in the 1950s) to rock performers like County Joe McDonald (in more recent years). In 1989, the building was recognized as a historically significant site by the Puget Power centennial program.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Cherry, Lorna, *Langley, the Village by the Sea*, South Whidbey Historical Society: Langley, 1986, pp. 72-76.

See continuation sheet

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
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A 1 0 5 4 4 1 3 0 5 3 2 0 8 3 0  
 Zone Easting Northing

C  
 Zone Easting Northing

B  
 Zone Easting Northing

D  
 Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 1, Block 13, Plat of Langley, except that portion thereof lying northerly of the following described line: Beginning at the southwest corner of said Block 13; thence north along the west line of said block, 134 feet to the true point of beginning of said line; thence southeasterly 276 feet, more or less, to a point where said line intersects the northerly extension of the west line of the east 60 feet of the west 180 feet of Reserve "A" of said Plat, said intersection being 82 feet north of the south line of said Block 13 and Reserve "A".

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Olympic Club.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/title Peter & Wendy Jacobs, edited by L. Garfield  
 organization owners  
 street & number 2539 E. Lakeside  
 city or town Langley

date December 1990  
 telephone (206) 321-9996  
 state Washington zip code 98269