

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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

For NPS use only

received MAY 6 1987
date entered JUN 17 1987

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

1. Name

historic n/a
Historic Resources of Downtown Olympia
and/or common (Partial Inventory: Historic and Architectural Properties)

2. Location

street & number Downtown Olympia: bounded by Olympia, Water, 9th,
& Cherry Sts. (see individual inventory forms) not for publication

city, town Olympia vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county Thurston code 067

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
Multiple	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
Resources	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" 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 See individual inventory forms

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Thurston County Courthouse

street & number 2000 Lakeridge Drive S.W.

city, town Olympia state Washington 98502

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See continuation sheet has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved

See individual inventory forms
for specific details.

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Introduction to Resource Area: Designated territorial capital in 1855 and state capital in 1889, the city of Olympia has served for more than a century as the chief trade center of the south Puget Sound region and administrative center of Washington. In 1850, four years after the first American settlers arrived in the area, Edmund Sylvester platted the city in a gridiron plan and reserved land in today's downtown for a public square, schools, a Masonic Hall and Capital Grounds. From the mid-19th century until the Great Depression, the downtown area served as a commercial and governmental hub. It was a focal point for the businessmen and politicians who guided the capital's growth, and the location for the structures--stores, banks, offices, fraternal halls, and government buildings--most closely associated with their activities. Although many downtown buildings from the period have been destroyed or disfigured, several pivotal structures, dating from about 1889 (when Washington entered the Union) until 1930 (after the Capitol moved to a new campus south of downtown), still reflect the evolution of Washington's capital city and are included in this nomination.

Geographical Setting and Urban Morphology: Olympia originally was a peninsula surrounded on the north, east, and west by Puget Sound and bordered on the south by dense forests. The shore was lined with mud flats at low tide; extreme high tides flooded land further south. When Sylvester, a native of Maine, platted the city, he imposed a grid plan on this topography and envisioned a characteristically American town with a public square at the center.

Despite Sylvester's plat, the earliest buildings constructed in the downtown (the first custom house on Puget Sound, a hotel, and several wooden stores) were oriented toward the waterfront rather than the town square. Olympia Avenue (originally Second Street) was the northern limit of the downtown. During the Indian Wars of the mid-1850's, a stockade was built at the southern perimeter of development (today's 4th Avenue) and construction was effectively curtailed at that point. But, as forest lands were cleared, downtown moved south. By the 1870s, today's Sylvester Park--the original town square envisioned by Sylvester--was becoming the center of the city.

By 1879, Sylvester's plat was well developed, with wharfs on the north, bridges on the east and west linking the village center with outlying areas, and a clearly defined downtown district of commercial structures. Ten years later, on the eve of statehood, the capital city boasted a series of Victorian blocks, street car lines, and other amenities of a small town commercial center. The downtown grew even larger in the years immediately after statehood (despite a national depression in 1893). During the last years of the century, the monumental Romanesque Revival Style County Courthouse was constructed overlooking the town square; by 1901, the structure had become the state capitol.

By the early 20th century, many older frame commercial structures in the downtown were replaced by brick structures, reflecting the continued prosperity of the area, the creation of a deep water port in Budd Inlet, and the booming business at Olympia shipyards during World War I. In the teens and twenties, large new office buildings, hotels, and banks were constructed and the city acquired the character that it has today.

But the coming of the Great Depression signalled a long term decline for the downtown. The effects of the national economic downturn were compounded in downtown Olympia when the State Capitol was moved southward to a new campus outside the commercial district. During the 1930s, the city annexed adjacent areas, effectively directing growth elsewhere.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 6 Page 2

Olympia Cultural Resource Survey, 1985-86

Depositories:

Thurston Regional Planning Council
2000 Lakeridge Drive S.W.
Olympia, WA 98502

Washington State Department of Community Development
Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
111 West 21st Avenue, KL-11
Olympia, WA 98504-5411

National Register Properties in Downtown Olympia Multiple Resource Area:

Old Capitol Building
600 Block Washington Street

Olympia Public Library (Carnegie's)
South Franklin and East 7th

Mottman Building
101-105 North Capitol Way

Thurston County Courthouse
Capitol Way

U.S. Post Office
801 Capitol Way

State Register Properties in Downtown Olympia Multiple Resource Area:

Old City Hall
West State and North Capitol

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

As Olympia was recovering from the construction hiatus of the Depression and war years, a devastating earthquake in 1949 damaged and led to the destruction of many historic resources in the downtown. Therefore, the resources in this nomination date mostly from the early 20th century and represent those structures which escaped serious damage in 1949.

Nominated Buildings: The buildings included in the MRA nomination were built from the 1890s to 1930. Building types include commercial structures, fraternal halls, entertainment and professional facilities, a hotel, and an industrial plant. Other properties in downtown Olympia associated with local, state, and federal government—including the historic city hall and firehouse (State Register of Historic Places), the Olympia Public Library (NRHP), the Thurston County Courthouse and State Capitol (NRHP), and the United States Post Office (NRHP) have already been designated.

Characteristically, nominated buildings are located on the principal streets of the plat—Capital Way (originally Main Street), 4th, 5th, and Legion Way. Many of the structures—including governmental buildings, fraternal halls, and the hotel—are free standing and nearly all have prominent corner locations. Typically, the structures are built close to the street (except for the courthouse and library) and dominate the streetscape. The buildings generally have rectangular plans and rise two stories (although the Hotel Olympian and the Security Building rise a full five stories above the street). Sidewalk canopies extend from the top of the first story to protect patrons from the city's rainy weather.

In almost all cases (again with the exception of the monumental civic structures) the ground floor of the building is reserved for commercial uses with large plate glass display windows and transoms while the upper stories contain offices and residential space. Although some storefront windows and transoms have been replaced, most bay configurations are original. Piers (often expressed on the exterior) rise above the storefront to the cornice and divide the facades into a series of bays. Typically, nominated buildings are crowned with a cornice or parapet.

With one exception, buildings included in the MRA nomination are constructed of brick and timber or steel framing. The only wood frame and wood clad structure, representing the earliest phase of the city's growth, is the Jefferson Apartments, a late Italianate row house constructed on the downtown periphery. Many buildings are faced in brick often made in Chehalis (the Hotel Olympian and the Elks Hall, for example). Others, reflecting the preference of California-trained architect Joseph Wohleb for the Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival Styles, are faced in stucco with decorative terra cotta tiles and red tile roofs (for example, the Jeffers Studio Building and the Daily Olympian Building). The most monumental structures, including the Thurston County Courthouse and the Capital National Bank, are built of Wilkeson sandstone or Index granite, while still others (including the Olympia National Bank and the Security Building) are faced in glazed terra cotta. The Olympia Knitting Mill plant, reflecting industrial design of the era, is the only building in the nomination constructed of concrete.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 3

The buildings in the nomination include a variety of building styles popular in the late 19th and early 20th century, often designed in the various classically inspired designs of the period. The oldest building in the nomination, the Jefferson Apartments, reflects a late Italianate Style row house with projecting bay windows, bracketed cornice, and exterior stick work. Buildings from the early 20th century, including the Barnes Building and the Mottman Building (NRHP), combine a straightforward use of brick piers with a restrained cornice and parapet. Buildings from the teens and twenties reflect more literal examples of Neoclassicism. The Olympia National Bank, for example, is a classic temple with a colonnade of fluted Corinthian pilasters and a full entablature with cornice, dentilated frieze and pedimented entry. Somewhat later, the Capital National Bank is a restrained example of Neoclassicism, constructed of Wilkeson sandstone, streamlined pilasters and a plain frieze. The United States Post Office is a Beaux-Arts Design. The Hotel Olympian is the only Georgian Revival Style building in downtown Olympia.

A persistent counterpoint to buildings in the Neoclassical idiom are the low scale structures that reflect the Mission Revival or Spanish Colonial Revival modes. Designed by Joseph Wohleb, the buildings are characterized by stucco surfaces, tile insets, round arched windows, or shaped parapets. Buildings in the style include the Jeffers Studio, the Donald Building, the "Olympian" Newspaper Building, and the office of the Olympia Knitting Mill. Among the most unusual is the Elks Club Building, which combines a straightforward brick design with decorative elements reflective of the Craftsman movement of the era. Perhaps the most notable downtown structure from the period is the Security Building, a Chicago Commercial Style structure faced in terra cotta.

Integrity: Despite two earthquakes (one in 1949, which severely damaged a number of historic structures in the city, and one in 1965), the nominated structures withstood the quakes in good shape. Two of the structures have lost balustrades atop their cornices as a result of the quakes. Otherwise, the major alteration has been in the replacement of original window frames with metal replacements. Some storefront windows have been altered and transom windows covered. But most storefront bays are in their original configurations. In some cases, historic canopies have been removed, while in others new awnings have been added. In Sylvester Park, a new gazebo was erected in 1976 at the same location as the historic structure from 1916. In general, however, the properties maintain their historic features, materials, and design.

Methodology: During 1985-1986, the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation conducted a survey of historic resources in the City of Olympia. Although the survey did not identify a historic district in the downtown area (because of a loss of integrity and the presence of nonhistoric structures), the survey identified 55 properties of historic or architectural interest. In 1986, the Olympia Heritage Commission prepared a National Register nomination of those properties which met National Register or State Register criteria and represented themes in the development of Olympia as the capital city. For the purposes of the nomination, downtown Olympia has been identified as that portion of the historic city center bounded by Olympia Avenue on the north, Water Street on the west, 9th Avenue on the south, and Cherry Avenue on the east.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

Total Count of Contributing and noncontributing resources:

Contributing Resources: 9 Buildings

American Legion Hall (1)
Donald Building (1)
Elks Club Building (1)
Hotel Olympian (1)
Jeffers Studio (1)
Jefferson Apartments (1)
(aka Allen House Hotel)
Olympia Knitting Mill (1)
Olympia National Bank (1)
Security Building (1)

1 Site

Sylvester Park (including park site, landscaping elements, and
park furniture, commemorative benches, etc.)

1 Object

Statue of John Rogers (in Sylvester Park)

Noncontributing Resources:

0 Buildings
1 Structure (nonhistoric bandstand in Sylvester Park)

See individual inventory forms for further detail.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			See inventory forms for specific areas.	
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	
				entertainment	

Specific dates period of significance: 1889–1930
Builder/Architect See individual inventory forms.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The buildings and site included in the multiple resource nomination are the most historically and architecturally significant properties in downtown Olympia, closely associated with the city's role as the commercial center of the south Puget Sound region and the capital city of Washington State. Located in the original plat of the city, and constructed in the years between statehood (1889) and the Great Depression, the properties reflect the commercial, political, and social heritage of the capital city during that expansive era. In addition, the properties illustrate a range of popular architectural styles, including significant examples of Victorian Italianate, Neoclassical, Mission Revival, and Chicago Commercial Design.

Historical Background and Significance: The peninsula now known as Olympia was originally known as "Cheetwoot"—meaning bear—to the Nisqually Indians who lived in the area prior to the arrival of white settlers. Budd Inlet was a favorite shellfish gathering site for many Puget Sound tribes including the Nisqually, Duwamish, and Squaxin. Evidence suggests that the inlet was a meeting place for the Native Americans, and both east and west of the inlet near Olympia were potlatch sites, the famous Northwest Indian custom in which tribes shared their wealth with neighboring groups.

The first European contact with the area was in 1792 when Englishman Peter Puget, and other members of the Vancouver party, visited the site. The Hudson's Bay Company made a permanent settlement in 1831 at Nisqually north of Olympia. Ten years later, under the command of American Lt. Charles Wilkes, Thomas Budd and Henry Eld explored the inlets which now bear their names and mapped the Olympia region.

The first permanent American settlement in the area came in 1845 when Michael T. Simmons and his party settled at New Market, now Tumwater. In 1846—the year the United States and Great Britain established the Canadian boundary at the 49th parallel—a second group of settlers arrived in the area including Levi Lathrop Smith who claimed the beach at Cheetwoot and named the environs Smithfield.

Smith and his partner, fellow New Englander Edmund Sylvester, jointly owned the area which is now Olympia. But Smith died in 1848 while en route to the Oregon Provisional Legislature, and Sylvester, under the laws of the Oregon Territory, inherited the townsite.

Sylvester, who had been lured to the gold fields of California in 1849, returned to Olympia in 1850, officially platted the town, and named the village after the majestic Olympic Mountains which provided a panoramic backdrop for the site. Sylvester's original plat was a typical gridiron plan with land reserved for schools, a hall, a 12 acre capital grounds, and—in the center of the plat—a town square known later as Sylvester Park.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property See individual inventory forms.

Quadrangle name Tumwater

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References See individual inventory forms.

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual inventory forms.

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 Shanna B. Stevenson, Historian

Edited by Leonard Garfield
Archaeology & Hist. Pres.

organization Olympia Heritage Commission

date September 1986

street & number 2000 Lakeridge Drive S.W.

telephone (206) 786-5480

city or town Olympia

state Washington 98502

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is: See individual inventory forms.

 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 State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4-28-87

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**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

Surrounded by water on three sides and hemmed in by dense forest on the south, Olympia was oriented to the waterfront in the early years. The difficulty of overland transport and the importance of maritime trade made this orientation a necessity and the first settlers and businesses huddled along the waterfront.

In 1851, the first customs house on Puget Sound was established at the tip of the peninsula. The earliest hotels—including one owned by Sylvester—were located at the site, too. In 1853, the first territorial governor, Isaac Stevens, arrived at the site and designated Olympia provisional capital. The following year, the first territorial legislature convened in the village; in 1855, Olympia was named permanent capital city of the territory.

Despite the new status, the town remained small in area. Following the shoreline, Olympia Avenue (originally 2nd Street) was the northern limit of downtown. During the Indian "wars" of 1855-56, townspeople built a stockade from water to water along 4th street which marked the southern limits of development. But as trouble subsided and the forests south of downtown were cleared, the city slowly developed southward and the area around Sylvester Park emerged as the hub of development, surrounded by churches, homes, and schools. Increasingly, the waterfront became a tenderloin district and respectable businesses, disassociating themselves from the area, relocated further south.

In the 1860s and 1870s, the city slowly changed. A bird's eye view of the city, published in 1879, revealed that the downtown area around 4th and 5th Streets and Legion and Capital Way was well developed, and houses reached southward to the site of the present capital grounds. To the north of the city, wharfs had been built along the waterfront and wooden bridges extended to both the east and west sides.

The presence of the territorial capital helped shape the growth of the downtown. Olympia continually had to fight to retain its status as capital city. Several communities, including Vancouver, North Yakima, and Tacoma, tried through legislative and other means to wrest state government away. In response, Olympia citizens were obliged to make improvements and provide perquisites for visiting legislators including improved transportation, lodging, and eating establishments.

By 1889, with statehood imminent, Olympia had instituted several civic improvements including a streetcar line, street lights, and a water system. During the same period, as the local economy prospered with the growth of the lumber industry, a number of brick business blocks replaced the original frame structures in the commercial district.

The most significant building constructed during the period was the Thurston County Courthouse, a massive Romanesque Revival structure located in the center of downtown. Across from the courthouse, Sylvester Park was landscaped with a Victorian gazebo, fish pond, and clamshell covered walkways. In 1901, the state purchased the Courthouse for use as a capitol building and the city donated the park to the state for public celebrations and the entertainment of visiting dignitaries. Throughout the period, the park remained the heart of downtown and an important focal point for the community. The presence of state government in the center of downtown reinforced the strong relationship between the state and city and stimulated further development downtown.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

The first major dredging of the channel of Budd Inlet got underway in 1893-94, with spoils deposited on the western edge of downtown. Further dredging and filling operations took place between 1909 and 1911, adding about 29 blocks to the northern section of downtown, filling the slough between downtown and the east side (then known as Swantown) and creating a deep water port for the city.

With physical expansion and continued economic prosperity, many businesses built newer, larger quarters downtown. In 1914, for example, the Barnes family constructed the large brick block on Fourth Avenue, with retail space on the ground floor and a fraternal hall above. Joseph Jeffers replaced his frame photographic shop with a new brick and stucco building in 1913 which served as the studio from which he produced a remarkably extensive visual archive of Olympia history. Olympia National Bank stockholders, including some of the city's most prominent businessmen, advanced funds for a distinguished Neoclassical bank building in 1914. At the same time, the United States Post Office, an imposing Beaux-Arts structure, was built on Capitol Way. Other public structures from the period include the Carnegie Library (National Register) and the City Hall (State Register).

After World War I, Olympia was flush with an influx of funds and people from Fort Lewis and from expanded shipbuilding at the port. Reflecting the prosperity, the Elks Club, a long time institution in the city, constructed a new building in 1919 and the new newly organized American Legion constructed a hall at the same time. Legislators, many of whom belonged to the Elks or Legion at home, took advantage of the social opportunities offered by these facilities located just two blocks from the capitol. In 1919 and 1920, the Hotel Olympian was constructed, rising five stories and providing the city with a first-class hotel, complete with spacious lobby and grand ballroom. Constructed with money raised through a local fund raising campaign, the hotel was the first major hostelry in the city since a grand wooden structure burned in 1904. Located across from Sylvester Park and the capitol building, the hotel became an important meeting place for legislators and the scene of the city's most important social functions.

The 1920s were a boom time for downtown. In addition to the business of government, plywood and paper mills and the busy port added an air of burgeoning economic activity to the city center. A number of new buildings reflected the growth. In 1922, the new Capitol National Bank Building was constructed along Main Street, replacing an earlier structure across the street. The bank, associated with financier and mayor C.J. Lord, played a important role in financing the growth of the city and was the official repository of state funds. The Capitol Theater and Office Building was constructed in 1924. The Beaux-Arts Style theater was built by a longtime theater family in the city and originally provided a showcase for the last era of live vaudeville performances. Across the street from the theater, the Donald Building, built in 1924, was a Mission Revival Style block of retail and office space in the center of the city. But the most significant commercial structure of the decade was the soaring Security Building, the city's only Chicago Commercial Style tall building, rising five stories from a classical base, with soaring piers, and glazed terra cotta and marble cladding. The building housed a bank on its ground level and was for years the tallest building in the city and the address of Olympia's leading doctors, lawyers, dentists, and professionals.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

The good times continued through the 1920s. In 1929, the Olympia Knitting Mills, busy producing knitted swim wear which was marketed nationally, was expanding and optimistically constructed a new office building at its downtown complex. In 1930, the "Olympian," the city's primary newspaper, completed construction of a new office and printing plant which would serve as its offices until the 1970s.

By the late 1920s, however, the city's growth came to an abrupt end. The city was engulfed in the same depression that swept the nation, and in 1930, the city began a series of annexations which effectively encouraged growth outside the traditional downtown core. Another blow to the downtown came in 1929, when the state capitol moved to the newly constructed capitol campus grounds south of downtown. By the 1930s, county government had followed the same trend and located a new courthouse, designed by Joseph Wohleb, across from the new capitol grounds on Capitol way.

Through the 1930s and 40s, growth was at a virtual standstill in the downtown area. In 1949, numerous historic buildings were damaged and some destroyed in the earthquake of that year. The properties included in the nomination suffered minimal or no damage and retained their historic features. Some new structures were erected during the 1940s and 1950s but the major period of Olympia's downtown growth was completed by 1930.

Architectural Background and Significance: Properties included in the nomination are among the most significant examples of late 19th and early 20th century architecture in the region. Fueled by economic growth and the presence of the state capitol in the years from 1889 until 1930, a number of important commercial and civic structures, many designed by architects in the fashionable styles of the era, replaced the less substantial frame buildings of the original village and reflected the city's transformation into a regional center.

The most imposing downtown buildings are two government structures already listed in the National Register. The Thurston County Courthouse designed by W.T. Ritchie is the finest example of Romanesque Revival architecture in the county and an outstanding example of the use of native sandstone. The federal post office, designed by James Knox Taylor, is a majestic Beaux-Arts Design with a Corinthian colonnade. Two of the city's banks are outstanding examples of the Neoclassical idiom of the early 20th century. Both buildings are free standing structures, designed by local architect Joseph Wohleb, which clearly employ a bank-as-temple motif. Clad in terra cotta, the Olympia National Bank features a full entablature, fluted pilasters, and a pedimented entry. Built a decade later, and in a far more restrained manner, Capitol National Bank is a severe sandstone building with flat pilasters and a plain frieze. The Hotel Olympian is a five story brick structure designed by Chicago architect H.L. Stevens in a vaguely Georgian Revival mode, unique in downtown Olympia.

Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival buildings designed by Wohleb provide an interesting counterpoint to the bold Neoclassicism of the banks and other structures. Typically low scale, with largely unornamented stucco facades, the Mission Revival buildings are distinguished by shaped parapets, arched windows, tile roofs, and decorative tiles. Mission Revival buildings designed by Wohleb include the Jeffers Studio, his first

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 5

building in the city, as well as the Donald Building and the Olympia Knitting Mill office. The last building designed by Wohleb in the nomination, the Olympian Newspaper Building, is one "of the most insistently stylish of all his buildings," according to Dawn Maddox, Wohleb's biographer. "Although built like a fort, its exterior spoke a lighthearted Spanish of arcaded walls, red roof tiles, and glazed ceramic trim." Although modest, the buildings create an urbane ambience and romantic flavor that contrasts with the Neoclassicism of the day. Perhaps the finest of the downtown commercial buildings, the six story Security Building designed by A.H. Albertson of Seattle, reflects the Chicago Commercial Style. The multistory office building, clad in terra cotta, is composed of vertical piers which soar above the classical base. The tall office building is the perfect metaphor of the city's lofty ambitions in the first quarter of the 20th century.

The Jefferson Apartments are believed to be the only Italianate Style row houses in the city and the only frame, wood clad structure in the nomination.

Architects: Perhaps the single most important influence on the character of downtown Olympia in the early 20th century was the presence of Joseph Wohleb, a remarkably prolific architect who for many years had a virtual monopoly on local design and whose designs ranged from Mission to Moderne. Born in Waterbury, Massachusetts, in 1887, Wohleb moved with his family to the San Francisco area in 1890. After working as a boat's carpenter and boat builder in San Francisco, Wohleb came to Olympia in 1911 and established himself as an architect although there is no strong evidence to suggest that he was formally trained in the field.

Wohleb's first commission in the city was the Jeffers Studio (1913) and he quickly went on to design hundreds of houses, commercial structures, industrial plants, schools, government installations, and breweries in Western Washington. During his first years in practice, Wohleb received three commissions that, according to Maddox, cemented his professional standing: Cloverfields, the 1915 Dutch Colonial estate of General Hazard Stevens, son of the territory's first governor; Olympia's Neoclassical William Winlock Miller High School, 1917 (in association with Tacoma's Heath and Gove); and the Elks Club, constructed downtown in 1919. Collectively, these commissions showed the range of his design abilities and the variety of his clients. In later years, he was retained as architect for the Olympia school district and he designed a number of buildings for the state in Olympia and throughout Washington. Several of the architect's Olympia buildings are already listed in the National Register including the Thurston County Courthouse of 1930, the McCleary Mansion, the C.J. Lord Mansion, the Olympia Public Library, and several structures in the Capitol Campus Historic District.

Although city directories indicate that one architect was practicing in the city the year Wohleb arrived, the next year Wohleb was the only architect and, based on city directories, for 47 years Wohleb had a virtually monopoly on the practice in the city. Of the three architects who set up practices in the city during that period, none lasted more than a few years. Wohleb's success was attributable to his ability to master the complexities of organizing a building project and his understanding of the technical aspects of construction. While his buildings were noted for solid construction, Wohleb lacked a developed independent sense of design, according to Maddox. But to his Olympia clients,

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

Wohleb's virtues as a builder clearly outweighed his faults as a designer. He remained in business until he died at age 70 in 1958.

Other architects represented in the downtown nomination include A.H. Albertson of Seattle, who designed the Chicago Style Security Building two years before his landmark Northern Life Tower (1928) in Seattle (NRHP). A leading architect in Seattle in the early 20th century, Albertson was a native of New Jersey and graduated from Columbia University in 1895. Albertson came to Washington in 1907.

The H.L. Stevens Company of Chicago, architects of the Hotel Olympian, was considered a "specialist in hotel construction" according to a newspaper article at the time of construction. The firm also designed the Churchill Apartments in Chicago in 1922, in a Georgian Style reminiscent of the Olympian. Little is known of their work in Chicago.

State Register of Historic Places: Four buildings in the multiple resource area are nominated only to the Washington State Register of Historic Places, a list of properties of historic and architectural importance that do not meet all the criteria of the National Register. In each case, the buildings in the nomination listed only in the State Register have suffered a loss of historic integrity which diminishes their ability to fully convey the characteristics and associations of the historic period. The buildings listed only in the State Register are the Barnes Building, the Capital National Bank Building, the Capitol Theater, and the Daily Olympian Building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Blakenship, Mrs. George, comp. and ed., Early History of Thurston County, Washington, Olympia, 1914.

Fultz, Hollis B., Elkdom in Olympia--A History, Warren's Quickprint, Olympia, 1966.

Maddox, Dawn, "Joseph Wohleb: Resident Architect of the State's Capital," Landmarks Vol. IV, No. 4.

Morning Olympian, March 15, 1916.

Newell, Gordon, Rogues, Buffoons and Statesmen, Superior Publishing Company, Seattle, 1975.

Pioneer Title Company Records.

"Olympia," Lee Printing Company, Olympia, 1926.

Rathbun, J.C., History of Thurston County, Washington, Olympia, 1895, Facsimile Reprint, Shorey Books, 1972.

Stevenson, Shanna, Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater: A Pictorial History, Donning, Norfolk, Virginia, 1985.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

5/6/87

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Downtown Olympia MRA
State Thurston County, WASHINGTON

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- Cover Substantive Review for Keeper William B. Bushong 6/17/87
Determined Eligible
1. Donald Building Substantive Review for Keeper William B. Bushong 6/17/87
Determined Eligible
DOE/OWNER OBJECTION
2. Elks Building Substantive Review for Keeper William B. Bushong 6/17/87
Determined Eligible
DOE/OWNER OBJECTION
3. Hotel Olympian Substantive Review for Keeper William B. Bushong 6/17/87
Determined Eligible
DOE/OWNER OBJECTION
4. Olympia Knitting Mills Substantive Review for Keeper William B. Bushong 6/17/87
Determined Eligible
DOE/OWNER OBJECTION
5. Security Building Substantive Review for Keeper William B. Bushong 6/17/87
Determined Eligible
DOE/OWNER OBJECTION
6. Allen House Hotel entered in the for Keeper Sharon Byers 6/17/87
National Register Attest
7. American Legion Hall entered in the for Keeper Sharon Byers 6/17/87
National Register Attest
8. Jeffers Studio entered in the for Keeper Sharon Byers 6/17/87
National Register Attest
9. Olympia National Bank Substantive Review for Keeper William B. Bushong 6/17/87
Determined Eligible
Attest
10. Town Square Substantive Review for Keeper William B. Bushong 6/17/87
Determined Eligible
Attest

3/25/88

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Elks Building

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper Melvin Byers 4/21/88
Attest Owner objection withdrawn