

NARRATIVE SECTION

Study Unit	Other	Date Of Construction: <u>1919</u>
<u>Architecture/Landscape Architecture</u>		Architect: <u>H.L.Stevens</u>
<u>Commerce</u>		Builder:
		Engineer:

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: No
Property is located in a historic district (National and/or local): No
Property potentially contributes to a historic district (National and/or local):

Statement of Significance The Hotel Olympian was the most successful in a long line of hotels built largely through the civic efforts of Olympia and to insure that visiting legislators found commodious accommodations in Olympia. Marked by Georgian Revival detailing, the well-preserved hotel is at the heart of downtown Olympia and intimately tied to the history of its capitalhood. The promise of a first class hotel had been given by the people of Olympia as a condition of the continued construction of the capitol buildings in Olympia in 1916. After the intervening war, when the hotel was still not built, the city fathers had challenged the people of Olympia and especially the Chamber of Commerce to spearhead the funding for the hotel upon which they felt the continued capitalhood of Olympia depended. Money was raised through community efforts of large and small contributions for the construction. Designed by the H. L. Stevens Company of Chicago in a simplified Georgian Revival style, the hotel officially opened its doors July 16, 1920 to a standing only crowd of 400 in the dining room. Here Governor Louis Hart spoke favorably of the structure and "could say to the next legislature, "We have kept the faith, now go ahead with the construction of the finest executive building in the country. "H. L. Stevens was described as "a specialist in hotel construction" and designed the Churchill Apartments in 1922 in Chicago which were very similar to the Hotel Olympian. The hotel was built at a cost of \$300, 000 through bond selling and other fund raising efforts of the City of Olympia. The hotel boasted 155 rooms, half of which contained bathrooms, as well as meeting and dining rooms. While the Capitol was located across the street, it is said more business was transacted in this building than in the Capitol Building. Inaugural balls were held here as well as many other official and non-official state functions. In 1975 the Hotel Olympian was made into a low-rent senior citizen housing facility with the ground floor hosting a restaurant and small shops. In 1980 the mezzanine ballroom was restored and is used for dance classes and social events.

Description of Physical Appearance The Hotel Olympian faces southward toward Sylvester Park and abuts the sidewalk. The Hotel is catacorner from the Old Capitol Building with which it is closely associated and is one of the few multi-storied historic downtown structures. The Hotel Olympian is an imposing brick structure of five stories with a mezzanine level, built in simplified Georgian Revival style on a poured concrete foundation. The front (south) and east facades are topped by a prominent dentillated metal cornice with a wide frieze. The upper stories are lit by rows of double-hung sash with six-over-six and six-over-one lights, with brick lintels and terra cotta sills; the second-story windows also have terra cotta keystones. Below the second floor is a continuous terra cotta belt course, delineating the upper-story guest rooms from the public and commercial spaces of the ground floor and mezzanine. Centered on the front facade and covered by a fabric awning, the recessed lobby doors are flanked by bands of casements in recessed, paneled surrounds. To the left of the facade are three tall multi-paned windows with arched transoms, recessed in terra cotta surrounds, fronted by balustrades. To the right of the facade are tree plate glass windows; their multi-paned transoms are painted over, and two of them are topped by tall terra cotta panels with projecting head moldings and scrolled edges. The plate glass windows and multiple entry doors on the east facade also have a tall terra cotta panel over every other opening. The central entry doors lead to the upper story apartments; they are sheltered by a fabric awning. The lobby, which is surrounded by stores, offices and a restaurant, retains the original marble stairway tot he mezzanine and the grand ballrooms. The mezzanine balcony is surrounded by columns and an ornate balustrade. Although the interior has been altered, the building retains most of its exterior features and is maintained in excellent condition. A balustrade topping the structure has been removed.

Major Bibliographic References Newell, Gordon, Rogues, Buffoons and Statesmen, Seattle, Superior Publishing, 1975.
"Olympia," Lee Printing Co., 1926.
Barrett, Eldon, "Rooms for Improvement: What the Legislature Needs is a Good Old Downtown Hotel," The Olympian, Sunday, January 2, 1983.
"City's '400' Numerically in Attendance and Magnificent Dining Room is scene of Praise and Rejoicing--Ample Capitol Money Says Hart." Morning Olympian, July 16, 1920.

PHOTOS



View of SE corner
taken 10/16/1985
Photography Neg. No. (Roll No./Frame No.):
26-36A
Comments: