



## NARRATIVE SECTION

### Study Unit

Architecture/Landscape Architecture

Education

### Other

Women's History

Date Of Construction: 1924

Architect: Joseph Wohleb

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 Washington School is the most ornate of Joseph Wohleb's mission style school buildings built in Olympia during the 1920's. The building was on land purchased from several early settlers whose homes were located on the site. The Old Washington School was used as an elementary, middle and high school before being taken over by district administration in 1970. A \$135,000 bond issue proposal for a new school and \$35,000 to buy property was passed in 1923. The original 1890's vintage Washington school was at the present site of the Armory. Like many Olympia Schools, women teachers predominated here for many years. The school was renamed "Esther Knox Building" to honor longtime Olympia school board member Esther Knox.

### Description of Physical Appearance

The Washington School is a massive, rectangular stucco structure with Spanish Colonial ornamentation, three stories tall on the west facade and two stories on the east. A two-story auditorium wing extends to the west. The flat roof is bordered by a molded cornice topped by a tiled parapet. The stuccoed walls form a plinth at the basement level, above which they are ornamented with tall incised arches and narrow engaged pilasters, some topped by tiled hoods. The classrooms on the upper stores are lit by tall, multi-paned double and triple-hung windows grouped in banks of five. Above the north entrance is of similar design but slightly less ornate. The auditorium wing is lit by tall, multi-paned arched windows of marbled glass. Below the windows are plaques with swags, shields and torches in relief. The west wall has central entry doors topped by a metal canopy and flanked by tall arched windows. A later gymnasium built in the Art Moderne style adjoins the building to the south. A moderne flat-roofed canopy spans the west facade of the main wing at basement level. The interior has been remodeled to house the office of the Olympia School District. Despite its alterations, the building retains most of its original architectural features and is maintained in good condition.

### Major Bibliographic References

Knox, Esther, A Diary of the Olympia School District, 1952-1976. Olympia School District, 1976.

## PHOTOS



View of NW corner (shown) east facade

taken 9/13/1985

Photography Neg. No. (Roll No./Frame No.):

17-26A, 27A

Comments: