

NARRATIVE SECTION

Study Unit

Other

Date Of Construction: 1912

Politics/Government/Law

Architect:

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

This bronze plaque marks the site of the first legislative meeting site in Washington, later known as the Gold Bar Restaurant. Originally a part of Oregon Territory, the Washington Territory was created March 2, 1853 by President Millard Fillmore, just as he was leaving office. His successor President Franklin Pierce appointed Isaac Stevens to be the first Territorial Governor or Washington who arrived in Olympia in November, 1853. Stevens first set about setting up a territorial government and called an election of a legislative assembly. The day after his arrival Stevens announced that the first legislature was to meet in February, 1854. Stevens selected Olympia as the legislative meeting site because the impetus for a separate territory had come from the area. Olympia was also the largest settlement on Puget Sound, boasted the only newspaper in the Territory and the Puget Sound customs house. Upon hearing of the call for the legislature, thus making Olympia the temporary capital, Edmund Sylvester, who had founded and platted the town, added a second story to his building at the site. The building was the location of John Goldsbury Parker Jr. and Henry V. Colter express office and general store, originally only one story. Sylvester added a second story to the 28' x 64' structure and added an outside stairway to the upper floor. Here the 27 members of the first legislative body of Washington met to formulate the initial government of the Territory. The legislature moved to the Masonic Temple for the following session in 1855 when Olympia was named the permanent Territorial Capital. The building was later known as the Gold Bar Restaurant and fell into disrepair. Razed in 1911, the site was marked in 1912 by the Washington State Historical Society. Wood from the building was used to build two models of the structure which served as the first Capitol Building. One is on display at the State Capitol Museum and the other at the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Description of Physical Appearance

The inscription reads. "On this lot stood the building where Gov. Isaac I. Stevens, the first Territorial Governor convened the first Territorial Legislature of Washington February 28th 1854. Marked by the Washington State Historical Society and Friends on the 59th anniversary of Governor Stevens Arrival in Olympia. November 25th 1912.

Major Bibliographic References

Nicandri, David and Valley, Derek, Olympia Wins: Washington's Capital Controversies, State Capitol Museum, 1980.
Stevenson, Shanna, Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater: A Pictorial History. Donning 1985.

PHOTOS



View of general

taken 10/16/1985

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

25-25A

Comments: