

Historic Property Security Building
Inventory Report for 203 East 4th Avenue Olympia, Thurston, 98501

LOCATION SECTION

Historic Name: Security Building **Field Site No.:** 713
Common Name: (#34-683) **OAHP No.:**
Property Address: 203 East 4th Avenue Olympia, Thurston, 98501
Comments: OLYMPIA

County **Township/Range/EW** **Section** **1/4 Sec** **1/4 1/4 Sec** **Quadrangle**
█ T18R02W 14 SW TUMWATER

UTM Reference
Zone: 10 **Spatial Type:** Point **Acquisition Code:** TopoZone.com
Sequence: 0 **Easting:** 507710 **Northing:** 5209920

Tax No./Parcel No. 78502400100 **Plat/Block/Lot**
 Blk 24 of Sylvester Plat of Oly. Lots 1 & 2

Supplemental Map(s) **Acreage**
City of Olympia Planning Department .17

IDENTIFICATION SECTION

Field Recorder: Shanna Stevenson **Date Recorded:** 10/16/1985 **Survey Name:** OLYMPIA

Owner's Name: Security Building Ltd Ptnshp **Owner Address:** 2339 Perkins Lane W **City/State/Zip:** Seattle, WA 98199

Classification: Building **Resource Status** Survey/Inventory **Comments**
Within a District? Yes

Contributing?

National Register Nomination: DOWNTOWN OLYMPIA MRA

Local District:

National Register District/Thematic Nomination Name: OLYMPIA DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

DESCRIPTION SECTION

Historic Use: Commerce/Trade - Professional
Current Use: Commerce/Trade - Professional

Plan: Rectangle **No. of Stories:** 5

Structural System: Brick

Changes to plan: Intact **Changes to interior:** Slight
Changes to original cladding: Intact **Changes to other:**
Changes to windows: Intact **Other (specify):**

Cladding Shingle - Concrete/Asbestos **Foundation** Concrete - Poured
 Terra Cotta
 Stone

Style Commercial - Chicago School **Form/Type**
Roof Material Asphalt / Compostion - Rolled **Roof Type** Unknown

NARRATIVE SECTION

Study Unit

Other

Date Of Construction: 1926

Architecture/Landscape Architecture

Architect: A.H. Albertson

Commerce

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 premier office building of downtown Olympia, the Security Building was built in 1926 in a design by A. H. Albertson of Seattle. Built in the Sullivanesque style, the structure is located in an area of Olympia that was once tidelands, filled during the major fill of Olympia in 1911. Standing on approximately 300, 60 foot long pilings, the structure survived the 1949 earthquake well. Faced in polychrome terra cotta, the structure has a number of ornate motifs, including rosettes and pineapples typical of the Sullivanesque mode. Extraordinary material used in the building include Mother-of-Pearl granite columns at the entry, found only at one quarry in British Columbia; Sacra Porta pink marble, imported from Italy at the door fronts; as well as mahogany woodwork throughout. The interior foyer features Napoleon Gray marble from France and Belgian Black from Belgium. Ornate plasterwork on the foyer ceiling repeats the motifs from the exterior. The building was developed by E. M. Chandler, noted local civil engineer and boasted only the most prestigious of tenants. For many years the elevator in the building was attended. The architect, A. H. Albertson, designed many prestigious buildings in Seattle including the White-Henry-Stewart Building, the Northern Life Tower, the Cornish School and a number of churches. Albertson, a native of New Jersey, was a graduate of the Columbia University School of Architecture in 1895. He came to Seattle in 1907. The structure was named for the Security Bank once located on the ground floor level.

Description of Physical Appearance

The Security Building is a rectangular, five-story structure built in the Sullivanesque style of brick masonry, with ornate terra cotta cladding on the front (north) and west facades. Its flat roof is topped by a small mechanical penthouse with a pyramidal roof, and bordered by a terra cotta cornice with floral motifs, and gryphons with outstretched wings at the corners. The upper stories are lit by rows of large double-hung sash with one-over-one lights, recessed in vertical bands separated by wide piers. Each vertical band (except for those at the corners) is topped by a projecting scalloped hood. A continuous granite kickplate runs along the base of the front and west facades. The ground floor storefronts are framed by pilasters of rusticated terra cotta with ornate capitals, which are topped by a continuous entablature band ornamented with stylized flower motifs. The storefronts have plate glass in mahogany frames, mahogany doors with glass panes, retractable fabric awnings, and transom windows with decorative mullions. The main entry doors with their tall transoms are located in a deep recess offset on the front facade, flanked by round granite columns and rusticated terra cotta pilasters and topped by a projecting portion of the entablature band. The central entry doors on the west facade are in a deep recess with a slightly less ornate surround, lacking columns but flanked by paired pilasters. The south wall, facing on the alley, and the east wall are of painted brick. The ornate ground floor lobby features granite walls and floor, and a coffered plaster ceiling with brass light fixtures. Both the interior and exterior remain largely unaltered from the original and are maintained in good condition.

Major Bibliographic References

Allen, Arthur, "Who's Who in Washington" 1927.
Brazier, Dorothy Brant, "Retired Architect Helps 'Builders'" Seattle Times, 1962. (In Architects File, Washington Room, Washington State Library.)

PHOTOS

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View of NW corner
taken 10/16/1985
Photography Neg. No. (Roll No./Frame No.):
 25-29A
Comments:

