

**Historic Property** St. John's Episcopal Church  
**Inventory Report for** 900 Southwest 9th Avenue Olympia, Thurston, 98512

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**LOCATION SECTION**

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**Historic Name:** St. John's Episcopal Church **Field Site No.:** 736  
**Common Name:** First Baptist Church (#34-742) **OAHP No.:**  
**Property Address:** 900 Southwest 9th Avenue Olympia, Thurston, 98512  
**Comments:** OLYMPIAOLYWOMEN

**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:** 507760 **Northing:** 5209460

**Tax No./Parcel No.** **Plat/Block/Lot**  
78502900100 Sylvester L1-L3 Blk 24

**Supplemental Map(s)** **Acreage**  
City of Olympia Planning Department .52

**IDENTIFICATION SECTION**

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**Field Recorder:** Shanna Stevenson **Date Recorded:** 10/17/1985 **Survey Name:** OLYMPIA

**Owner's Name:** First Baptist Church **Owner Address:** PO Box 533 **City/State/Zip:** Olympia, WA 98507

**Classification:** Building **Resource Status** **Comments**

**Within a District?** Yes **Survey/Inventory**

**Contributing?** Local Register

**National Register Nomination:** 0

**Local District:**

**National Register District/Thematic Nomination Name:** 690

**DESCRIPTION SECTION**

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**Historic Use:** Religion - Religious Facility

**Current Use:** Religion - Religious Facility

**Plan:** Rectangle **No. of Stories:** 2

**Structural System:** Balloon Frame

**Changes to plan:** Extensive

**Changes to original cladding:** Intact

**Changes to windows:** Intact

**Changes to interior:** Unknown

**Changes to other:**

**Other (specify):**

**Cladding** Vertical - Board-and-Batten

Wood - Drop Siding

Vertical - Boards

**Style** Queen Anne - Stick

**Roof Material** Wood - Shingle

**Foundation** Concrete - Poured

**Form/Type**

**Roof Type** Gable

Unknown

**NARRATIVE SECTION**

Study Unit

Other

Date Of Construction: 1891

Religion

Women's History

Architect: CN Daniels

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**

Originally built as the Episcopal Church in 1891, the downtown church is one of the oldest in the area. The first incorporated parish of the Episcopal Church in the state, St. John's Church of Olympia commenced services in 1854 in the Legislative meeting site and the school house, with area missionaries. The first regularly appointed missionary was Rev. D. Ellis Willes who came in 1860, when he preached in the Masonic Hall. The parish was incorporated in 1864 by a Territorial Legislative act. The group purchased a lot on the west side of Seventh and Main and converted the carpenter shop there into a church, which was consecrated in 1865. A permanent minister served the church. St. John's Episcopal Church ladies gave a fair in December 1863 to raise funds for a church building. The women's "Sewing Society" of the church was supplemented by the "Busy Bees" group among the girls of the parish and "The Dime Reading Society". The women's groups paid for re-fitting of a stained glass window for the new church as well as carpet and pew cushions. The large rose window which is still in the church was the gift of a group of women from the church. Women were also among the early organists at the church. St. John's Episcopal Church ladies gave a fair in December 1863 to raise funds for a church building. Through fund raising efforts especially by the ladies of the parish, a rectory was built in 1878 adjoining this site. In 1880 a large stained glass window in the church was secured by Mrs. Fred Lawson and Mrs. Elisha Ferry while visiting in Philadelphia for the Centennial. Crafted in England for St. John's in Philadelphia, the window did not fit and was sent on to Olympia. The plans for the new church were drawn by C. N. Daniels, a Tacoma architect. The basement was completed and used for services and work on the church was delayed until \$500 gift from Governor Ferry spurred the completion. Only the best materials were used in the building which cost \$10,361. The bell and stained glass window were brought from the old church. Other furnishings were contributed by churches in other parts of the country. The large rose window nine feet in diameter was the gift of a women's group. The window was made in England and cost \$500. The Episcopalian parish moved to a new church in the early 1950's and the Baptist congregation has added a substantial wing to the church on the north, but it still retains much of its original design. Listed on the Olympia Heritage Register

**Description of Physical Appearance**

This is a rectangular wood frame structure, built in the Stick style and resting on a newer concrete basement and foundation. Its tall gable roof is covered with wood shingles and broken by false gables along the south facade. At the rear of the south facade is a lower gable. At the northwest corner is a bell tower with its first story topped by a hip roof, above which is an open arcade (holding the bell) with a tall pyramidal roof capped by a finial. The walls have a low board and batten wainscot, topped by a band of drop siding set off by horizontal banding. The front gable is clad with board and batten siding, with a panel of scalloped trim around its base; the scalloping continues along the south facade. The gable is ornamented by a projecting screen of vertical boards with ornamental cut-outs, and elaborate stickwork forming a cross. The facade is graced by a large rose window, and a flanking entry door and double-arched window are topped by gabled hoods with stickwork ornament. The south gable has elaborate stickwork, and the window below also has an ornamental hood. At the northwest front corner is an elongated gable-roofed addition of recent vintage, partially clad with stone veneer; the addition holds the main entry doors. At the southeast corner is a gable-roofed addition clad with concrete aggregate panels. At the northwest corner is an unsympathetic two-story modern addition with a flat roof.

**Major Bibliographic References**

Jessett, Rev. Thomas Edwin, "St. John's Church of Olympia (1853-1941)" 1941.

**PHOTOS**



**View of**   SW corner (shown): NW corner  
**taken**    10/17/1985  
**Photography Neg. No. (Roll No./Frame No.):**  
              27-23A,24A  
**Comments:**