

**Historic Property** The Old Olympian Building  
**Inventory Report for** 116 North Capitol Way Olympia, Thurston, 98501

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**LOCATION SECTION**

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**Historic Name:** The Old Olympian Building **Field Site No.:** 824  
**Common Name:** (#34-660) **OAHP No.:**  
**Property Address:** 116 North Capitol Way Olympia, Thurston, 98501  
**Comments:** OLYMPIA

**County** **Township/Range/EW** **Section** **1/4 Sec** **1/4 1/4 Sec** **Quadrangle**  
**[REDACTED]** T18R02W 14 SW TUMWATER

**UTM Reference**

**Zone:** 10 **Spatial Type:** Point **Acquisition Code:** TopoZone.com  
**Sequence:** 0 **Easting:** 507600 **Northing:** 5210020

**Tax No./Parcel No.** **Plat/Block/Lot**  
78501300101 Sylvester L1 & 2 Blk 13

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

**IDENTIFICATION SECTION**

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

**Owner's Name:** Thomas Thompson **Owner Address:** 116 Capitol Way N **City/State/Zip:** Olympia, WA 98501

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

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

**Contributing?** Yes State Register

**National Register Nomination:** 0

**Local District:**

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

**DESCRIPTION SECTION**

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**Historic Use:** Commerce/Trade - Business

**Current Use:** Commerce/Trade - Business

**Plan:** Rectangle **No. of Stories:** 1 1/2

**Structural System:** Concrete - Block

**Changes to plan:** Intact

**Changes to interior:** Moderate

**Changes to original cladding:** Intact

**Changes to other:**

**Changes to windows:** Slight

**Other (specify):**

**Cladding** Concrete

**Foundation** Concrete - Poured

Stucco

**Style** Spanish - Mission

**Form/Type**

**Roof Material** Asphalt / Composition - Rolled

**Roof Type** Gable

Tile

Unknown

## NARRATIVE SECTION

**Study Unit**

**Other**

Architecture/Landscape Architecture

Communications

**Date Of Construction:** 1930

**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**

Built at the end of the major construction periods of downtown in 1930, the Old Olympian illustrates Wohleb's signature Mission Revival features adapted to a newspaper publishing plant. This building replaced an earlier newspaper office and is one in a long line of colorful publishing enterprises in Olympia. Olympia as the seat of territorial and state government has had a long and varied history of newspaper publishing. The first newspaper published north of the Columbia River and primary voice for the creation of Washington Territory began publication at Olympia in 1852. The existence of a newspaper in Olympia was one of the deciding factors for the location of the territorial capital there in 1855. During the 1860's, numbers of publications sprung up representing distinctive political philosophies. During the bid of Olympia to retain its title as capital with the declaration of statehood in 1889, both morning and evening additions were published of the Washington Standard which operated from 1860 to 1921. By 1927, the two remaining dailies combined to form The Daily Olympian, now The Olympian, which operated from this building for over 40 years. The paper as the only daily in the state capital served as an important link in the dissemination of state legislative and governmental news. The publishing plant moved from this site in the early 1970's. The paper was purchased in 1972 by the Gannett Publishing Company who continues to publish the Olympian.

**Description of Physical Appearance**

Fronting on Capitol Way facing west near the original Olympia Village site, the Old Olympian is a large, one-story stucco structure built in the Mission Revival style. Its roof is bordered by gabled sections parallel to the front (west) and north facades, covered with Spanish tile. The stucco walls have a band of blue glazed tile at the base which is continued in the storefront kickplates; upper walls are ornamented with tile plaques and the gables have round louvered vents. The front facade has a long row of storefront bays containing plate glass display windows and entry doors (some of which are late replacements), topped by a flat metal canopy hung from chains. Above the canopy are arched, multi-paned transoms. The main entry doors, beneath the offset front gable, have a slightly taller arched transom. The arches above the southernmost four bays (fronting a later addition) have rectangular louvered vents. The storefront bays on the north wall have plate glass windows and entry doors topped by rectangular transoms with decorative mullions; they are separated by engaged pilasters, and the bays at either end are topped by recessed stucco arches. Replacement of some windows on the north and front facades are the only changes to the exterior of the building. The interior has been extensively altered to accommodate several businesses and offices.

**Major Bibliographic References**

Rathbun, J.C., History of Thurston County, Washington, Olympia, 1895.  
MacDonald, Sally, "Three state pioneers are named to journalism hall," Seattle Times, January 2, 1983, p. A21.  
Newell, Gordon, "Olympia News History Long, Complicated," Olympia News, July 12-18, 1978.

## PHOTOS



**View of** North facade, NW corner (shown)  
**taken** 10/16/1985

**Photography Neg. No. (Roll No./Frame No.):**  
25-6A, 27A-18A

**Comments:**