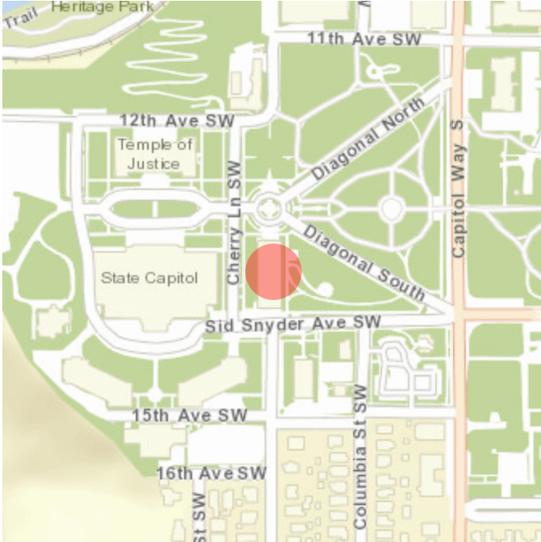


Location



Address: 302 Sid Snyder Ave SW, Olympia, WA 98501
Tax No/Parcel No: 09850005000
Plat/Block/Lot: SYLVESTER DC
Geographic Areas: Thurston County, OLYMPIA Quadrangle, T18R02W47

Information

Number of stories: 4

Construction Dates:

Construction Type	Year	Circa
Built Date	1921	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Use:

Category	Subcategory
Government	Government - Government Office
Government	Government - Government Office

Historic Context:

Category
Politics/Government/Law
Architecture



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Insurance Building

Property ID: 675424

Architect/Engineer:

Category	Name or Company
Builder	Pratt and Watson
Architect	Wilder and White

Districts

District Name	Contributing
Washington State Capitol Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Thematics:

Local Registers and Districts

Name	Date Listed	Notes
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Project History

Project Number, Organization, Project Name	Resource Inventory	SHPO Determination	SHPO Determined By, Determined Date
2015-10-00257, , Capitol Campus Survey	4/14/2014	Not Determined	
2018-10-07658, DAHP, Capitol Campus Exterior Preservation Projects - Capitol Court, Cherberg, and Insurance Buildings			

Photos



Southwest corner



Interior corridor view



East facade



Register nomination form



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Insurance Building

Property ID: 675424

Inventory Details - 4/14/2014

Common name: Insurance Building
Date recorded: 4/14/2014
Field Recorder: Susan Johnson, Artifacts Consulting, Inc.
Field Site number:
SHPO Determination

Detail Information

Characteristics:

Category	Item
Foundation	Concrete - Poured
Cladding	Stone - Ashlar/Cut
Roof Material	Metal - Standing Seam
Structural System	Masonry - Brick
Roof Type	Gable
Plan	Rectangle

Styles:

Period	Style Details
Mid-Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals	Neoclassical

Surveyor Opinion

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: Yes

Property is located in a potential historic district (National and/or local): Yes

Property potentially contributes to a historic district (National and/or local): Yes

Significance narrative: Begun in 1920 and completed in 1921, construction of the Insurance Building proceeded concurrently with finish work on the Temple of Justice and the closely related design development of the Legislative Building by Wilder and White. Referred to during the schematic design phase as the "Office Building," and later during the design development phase as "Office Building 'A,'" this building did not formally receive its title as the "Insurance Building" until construction was well underway. The exterior form displays the simple rooflines, pedimented porticos and linteled window and door openings characteristic of the Neoclassical Revival style. The buff-colored Wilkeson sandstone cladding and Index granite base integrate the building within the core Capitol group. Interior public spaces finished in Alaskan Tokeen marble and ornamental plaster convey the formal stature associated with state government. Architects Wilder and White designed the Insurance Building. The Seattle-based architecture partnership of Bebb and Gould provided on-site superintendent services as construction of the building progressed. Concurrently with the Insurance Building project, Bebb and Gould also oversaw for Wilder and White the final interior and exterior work on the Temple of Justice (built in 1911, with interior and exterior finishing

completed in 1919) and the construction of the Power Plant (1920). Richard D. Kimball of New York served as consulting engineer for the Insurance Building and Pratt and Watson served as the general contractors.

On September 16, 1919, the Washington State Capitol Commission continued initial discussions from their previous meeting regarding the construction of a new Legislative Building on the West Capitol Campus. During this September 16th meeting, Wilder informed the commission that completing construction of a new legislative building to an extent sufficient to permit occupancy during the next session of the legislature would not be feasible; given the complexity of such a monumental building, the design and associated revisions alone could exceed several years. Wilder recommended the commission begin instead with the construction of an office building for which design, construction and occupancy could be achieved within a few years, relieving space constraints at the Old Capitol Building (1892) in downtown Olympia. ?

The commission voted unanimously to temporarily suspend design of the Legislative Building and instead focus on preparation of initial plans for one of the office buildings, later named the Insurance Building, within the master plan. Wilder confirmed that his firm could have the tentative plans ready for the commission's consideration at their September 30th meeting. He anticipated the cost of an office building would not exceed \$600,000. ?At the September meeting, Wilder and White's tentative plans and report for the Insurance Building addressed changes to the design relative to proposed sketches in their 1912 Capitol group master plan. The plans and report detailed the overall functional layout and finishes the architects had envisioned for the building. The existing Temple of Justice served as a baseline for scale, proportions, detailing, and materials. During this meeting, Bebb and Gould were also formally introduced as the desired local associated architects. They were to assume similar responsibilities for the Insurance Building as they had as associated architects for the interior and exterior finishing work then in progress on the Temple of Justice.

Departures from Wilder and White's original master plan were minimal. Wilder and White wanted the Insurance Building to blend with the surrounding structures, particularly the Temple of Justice and the future Legislative Building. To that end, the architects restrained the building's height to only three stories so that it would not visually overpower the Temple of Justice. Square pilasters were substituted for engaged columns along the Insurance Building's side facades to maintain a consistent level of detailing with the Temple of Justice. The architects substituted freestanding porticos on the Insurance Building's north and south ends for previously conceived enclosed colonnades, as an attempt to better unify the campus. They counted the porticos as important design elements to magnify this visual cohesion. Window opening depths were utilized to help achieve the desired monumental character.

Interior spatial arrangement centered on the goal of being flexible, to allow for future changes in tenant needs. To this end, Wilder and White placed the public spaces (stairs, elevator, corridors, and lobbies) at the building's core with offices wrapping the perimeter on each floor. Wilder and White viewed the single elevator as sufficient for the number of floors and tenants in the building. Exterior doorway placement, which at this stage included side entrances, was organized both to reduce the use of stairs as well as to facilitate circulation with other proposed Capitol group buildings. Wilder and White envisioned an open court above the fourth floor, with natural lighting from the numerous rooftop skylights.

Preparation of the final plans and associated specifications for the Insurance Building proceeded quickly. Wilder and White submitted completed sets for review, and the commission unanimously approved these on December 30, during their last meeting of 1919. Regional newspapers advertised the call for bids, including The News Tribune of Tacoma, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, The Spokesman Review of Spokane, and

Olympia's Morning Olympian.

The final plans contained some modifications from the sketch plans of September. Dated December 15, 1919, the final drawings were titled "Office Building A" as the state had not yet decided which department would be assigned to the building. Wilder and White emphasized that campus design cohesion should drive design, material, and finish choices. Relative to the September sketch plans, Wilder and White reduced the overall projection of the south portico, removed proposed side entrances, and reduced the number of side facade window bays from 19 to 16. The overall intention was to maintain the scale of the building in relation to the Temple of Justice. Building length and column heights were slightly increased. The building's overall volume went from an initial approximate 60,000 to 98,000 cubic feet.

Just four weeks later, the commission received and opened bids during its meeting on January 29, 1920. All exceeded the estimate of constructing the building for less than \$600,000. The schedule called for the building to be partially occupied by January 1, 1921, and construction completed by September 30, 1921. The commission interviewed two applicants, Pratt and Watson (then working on the interior and exterior finishes of the Temple of Justice) and the Puget Sound Bridge and Dredging Company, voting in favor of Pratt and Watson and awarding them the contract for \$823,000 and total completion in 20 months. The following week at the February 3 meeting, the commission awarded the grading contract, totaling \$38,358, to Harrison Brothers and Company of Tacoma. Construction commenced soon after, and finish work on the building interior was underway by summer.

Through the course of constructing the Insurance Building, the following contractors supplied their goods and services:

- The Walker Cut Stone Company supplied the Wilkeson sandstone for the building.
- Simon Ventilighter Company, Inc. of New York furnished the vane shades for the skylights and windows.
- Bergh-Griggs Company of Tacoma installed the heating, ventilation and plumbing systems.
- B. Gehri and Company of Tacoma supplied and installed the roofing.
- The NePage McKenney Company of Seattle installed the electrical fire alarms.
- Tacoma and Roche Harbor Lime Company of Roche Harbor furnished lime for the building.
- L. Akins, Inc. (formerly Building Directories, Bulletin and Sign Company, Inc.) of New York furnished the bronze frame directory boards.
- The Talcott Brothers of Olympia supplied the clocks.
- Dahlstrom Metallic Door Company furnished the interior metal doors.
- Edward F. Caldwell and Company of New York was chosen for the Class A Fixtures. H.E. Gleason Company of Seattle (successors to Cascade Gas and Electric Fixture Company) was the only bidder for and received the Class B Fixtures contract.

Temporary occupancy began on January 7, 1921, with the Insurance Commission moving into the first floor space. The Insurance Commission briefly shared the first floor with the Labor Commission and the Reclamation Board before those agencies moved to their permanent quarters as the upper floors were completed. On March 24, 1921, the passing of House Bill No. 11 (known as the Governor's Administrative Code) meant Governor Hart's office was moving into the second floor of the Insurance Building, throwing the interior work on the building into overdrive. According to revised floor plans prepared by the architects (dated March 18, 1921), completed spaces on the second floor had to be revised and partitions removed and added according to the new intended tenant. The decision to locate the governor's office in the second floor substantially impacted the perimeter office spaces, particularly in the north end. Wilder and White's revisions placed the governor's office in the northeast corner office and a board room in the

opposite northwest corner. This left the middle portion of the north end for his assistant secretary and a reception area. In order to reach the reception area, Wilder and White extended the north end of the corridor and continued the marble flooring into the reception area. In addition, the commission urged the exterior stonework be completed as soon as possible, placing added pressure on the Walker Cut Stone Company and carvers to deliver and work the stone.

In April 1921, the contractor received formal approval to proceed with carving the lettering at each end of the building, marking the final name transition from Office Building A to the Insurance Building, which corresponded to the building's primary resident agency, the Washington State Insurance Commission. The December 15, 1919, drawings included the lettering; however, the title block and all correspondence referred to the building as Office Building A until the lettering was formally approved. On August 17, 1921, the Washington State Capitol Commission formally accepted the Insurance Building as complete. Total cost amounted to \$1,083,498—well beyond the initial construction cost expectation of less than \$600,000; construction-related costs amounted to \$1,032,035; and furnishings totaled \$51,463.

Tenancy within the Insurance Building was profoundly affected by the nearly full realization of Wilder and White's Capitol group master plan through completion of the Legislative Building (1928), the Cherberg Building (1937), the O'Brien Building (1940), and the Newhouse Building (1934). As each new building opened for occupancy, the number of different state agencies housed within the Insurance Building decreased, leaving the building to its two primary, long-term tenants, the Washington State Insurance Commission and the Tax Commission.

Physical description:

The Insurance Building, located at the northeast corner of 14th Avenue Southwest and Cherry Lane Southwest, defines the eastern edge of Wilder and White's Capitol group. Situated immediately east of the Legislative Building and as the second building designed for the Capitol by Wilder and White, the Insurance Building's construction solidified the arrangement and ultimate group placement. Character defining spaces and features:

- Massing
- Gable roof form and pediments
- North and south porticos
- Wilkeson sandstone elements
- Index granite elements
- Alaskan Tokeen marble interior elements
- Bronze light standards, railings, shields (north portico), window frames, sash and hardware
- Bronze doors, frames, thresholds and hardware
- Form, dimensions, and color of light standard globes (existing globes are contemporary)
- Overall fenestration
- Vestibules and all associated original materials
- Main corridors on first through third floors
- Clock (relocated to current second floor location)

The Insurance Building features a narrow, rectangular footprint oriented north-south. The four-story building with a below-grade partial basement occupies a sloped site. Due to the topography, the first story sits partially below grade at the building's south end. Two-story projecting porticos define the north and south building ends and feature Wilkeson sandstone columns turned from solid stone. The columns rest upon a sandstone ashlar panel clad base with a full width pediment rising above each portico. The building stands on a reinforced concrete perimeter foundation carried on spread footings. Concrete footings carry piers arrayed beneath the building's first floor slab and are aligned with columns carrying the upper floors. Additional perimeter foundation

sections project beneath the porticos, exterior stairs and landings. Inner foundation walls provide additional support around the elevator pit and serve as a separation between the north basement and south, unexcavated section. Perimeter foundation walls consist of three foot thick reinforced concrete. A tile foundation drain wraps around the perimeter of the building at the foundation.

Walls consist of a load-bearing brick structure with stone cladding. Index granite clads the lower base with broad expanses of relatively unadorned Wilkeson sandstone on the upper facades. Two-story pilasters continue along either side of the building's length. All stone joints feature beaded mortar profiles.

The porticos fulfill a defining stylistic role for the building. Each is proportioned and detailed to harmonize with the materials, scale, and rhythms of the Temple of Justice. Porticos consist of a lower base, colonnaded middle section, and pedimented crown. The base at each portico serves as the point of access for first floor spaces. The middle section of the south portico contains an entrance to the second floor. Double doors at the second floor's north end lead to the middle section of the north portico. Access doors on either end of the fourth floor provide entry to the unfinished attic space behind the pediment at each portico.

Flooring within the north portico consists of Wilkeson sandstone flagging laid lengthwise east-west over two beds of reinforced concrete. The south portico features six foot wide granite pavers, with smaller sandstone flagging laid east-west at either end. The more durable granite corresponds to high-use areas. In 1949, painted, board-formed, and reinforced concrete soffits replaced the original sandstone soffit panels. Each portico originally featured seven ceiling mounted light fixtures, since removed. Painted cast bronze railings ornament the second story level of the porticos, with shields at the north end. Two added vents in the soffit of the north end service the mechanical spaces in the unfinished attic above.

A gable roof caps the building. Roof framing consists of a reinforced concrete slab carried on the perimeter walls and internal reinforced concrete columns. Original roofing consisted of standing-seam copper roofing. Standing-seam metal roofing over insulation comprises the existing roofing system. A low sandstone parapet crowns the gable roofline. Historically, the parapet was a balustrade with turned stone balusters; the balustrade was replaced in 1949 with the current parapet. Broad rooftop aluminum frame replacement skylights penetrate the side slopes of the roof, in the same locations as the original skylights. Round reinforced concrete frame roof dormers are set behind the parapet below the skylights. Select skylights have been covered over on the exterior and interior.

Windows penetrate the exterior walls in regular, rhythmic intervals. Bronze windows, tall and rectangular in form and framed by columns and engaged pilasters, provide day lighting for interior spaces. Contemporary glazing and applied UV film and contemporary interior window coverings provide shade to interior spaces.

The Insurance Building has three public entrances, all accessing the interior public north-south corridors via a set of inner and outer vestibules. Two are located in the south portico and the third is in the north. Both the north and south elevations exhibit broad flights of granite steps flanked by low granite-clad cheek walls and ornate bronze light standards, each with four translucent white globes. Bronze handrails have been added to many of the entrance stairs. There are also two restricted service entrances from the south end outer vestibule, under the south portico. Balcony doors open from the north end of the second floor onto the north portico, but these are not commonly used and the portico is not accessible from the ground.

The first-story north entrance is located in the base of the north portico. Three openings between stone piers lead from the landing to the outer vestibule, which is centered under the north portico. The outer vestibule features an Index granite base around the

perimeter beneath the sandstone walls. The landing and outer vestibule flooring consists of added poured-in-place reinforced concrete, scored into sections with an exposed aggregate finish. The outer vestibule features three original ceiling-mounted fixtures. A pair of original inward-swinging bronze grille doors, centered in the south wall of the outer vestibule, connects to the inner vestibule. An added ADA ramp reaches the landing along this end of the building.

The first story south entrance provides public, secondary access to the interior. Located beneath the south portico, this entrance has two access routes, via open doorways flanking the exterior stairway to the second floor. These doorways connect to either end of an outer vestibule that runs nearly the full length of the south facade beneath the stairs. The outer vestibule is similar to the north version, with the same wall materials and same centered bronze doors leading to the inner vestibule. The south facade's outer vestibule has Wilkeson sandstone flooring, which slopes downward from either end towards the middle of the space. West of this main doorway, two single, metal panel service doors open to service spaces in the floor's southwest corner.

The second-story south entrance is located atop a direct flight of granite stairs. Double bronze grille entrance doors are similar to those found at the first-story entrances. A bronze grille also fronts the transom over this doorway.

The north balcony on the second story provides ceremonial and maintenance access to the north portico. This north entrance consists of a pair of bronze, inward-swinging doors. Essentially, these are closer in form and function to the building's windows but are designed to work like doors, latching at the top and bottom. These lead from the back of the current office area to the portico. The upper glazed panels are retrofitted with insulated glass.

Interior

The second floor serves as the principal floor, defining the level of finishes, materials, and entry for public spaces throughout the building. The corridors and elevator lobbies on the first through third floors, along with the fourth floor corridor, serve as the primary public circulation routes within each floor and to the floors above and below. The first floor corridor and elevator lobby sequence is the longest; the third floor sequence is the shortest. The finished spaces immediately opposite the elevator—distinguished from the corridor by a slightly greater width and ceiling height—constitute the elevator lobbies. The elevator ascends off the east side of the elevator lobbies on each floor. Originally the central stairway occupied the space opposite the elevator before being replaced with two smaller stairs added at either end of the corridors on the southeast and northwest sides. A telephone and vending area currently occupy the former central stairway space at the first floor.

The first through third floor corridors and elevator lobbies retain significant original features but the fourth floor corridor has been extensively altered. Contemporary marble additions extend the third floor corridor at either end. Contemporary, ceiling-mounted electric fixtures provide artificial lighting to the corridors and elevator lobbies on all floors. Added pairs of doors at either end of the corridors separate the respective inner entrance vestibules. Multiple added double- and single-leaf doorways exit to hallways servicing offices on either side of the corridors.

The public restrooms on each floor are located on either side of the elevator. While the public restrooms retain marble wainscot and flooring, they feature contemporary doors, stall partitions, fixtures, and lighting.

The perimeter spaces on the first through fourth floors house private offices, work, and storage rooms. The second floor's north reception area functions as a semi-public space for greeting and directing visitors. Offices feature contemporary finishes.

The partial basement space provides utilitarian service space for building operations. The south end of the basement remains unexcavated. The north end terminates on the south

side of the elevator pit. Load-bearing foundation walls enclose the elevator pit. Stairs lead off the northwest corner to a tunnel leading to the powerhouse. A second access location cut through the east side foundation opens to an electrical vault. The floor, wall and ceiling finishes are concrete throughout the space. Minimal modifications to the basement have left a moderate level of original fabric.

The inner vestibules at the north and south ends of the building feature Alaskan Tokeen light marble flooring with a darker marble base and light marble walls. Marble floor slabs in the inner vestibules run east–west, perpendicular to the north–south arrangement in the corridors. Bronze doorstops are mounted to the floor behind the doors separating the inner and outer vestibules. All of the inner vestibules have painted plaster ceilings and contemporary double doors.

Alterations

Alterations to the Insurance Building have primarily impacted interior spaces, with only moderate exterior changes. The building’s fundamental exterior form and materials remain intact; however, alterations changed window glazing and limited stone panels, rebuilt and modified the balustrade, and painted exterior bronze elements. Exterior handrails and ramps were installed on the southwest and northwest corners of the building for ADA access.

The cumulative impact of changes to the Insurance Building’s interior spaces has been a loss of authenticity in perimeter office spaces and public lavatories. Public corridor and elevator lobby spaces retain authenticity, although with a moderate degree of invasive alteration. Removal of the central stairway and installation of the north and south stairways altered circulation patterns and aesthetics within the main corridors and elevator lobbies on the first, second and third floors.

The following summary of modifications is presented in chronological order. These physical modifications represent a chronology of the building’s evolution. Alterations:

- 1949: Roof balustrade, pediments, and sections of architrave and frieze rebuilt as part of seismic upgrades. Roof balusters replaced with solid sandstone panels.
- 1957: ADA ramp added
- 1957–1967: Multiple remodels of office spaces, including addition of partitions
- 1961: Service doors at first story south entrance replaced with a solid panel door. A rooftop mechanical unit installed.
- 1967: Lighting fixtures upgraded in perimeter spaces
- 1969: Ventilation system and partitions modified. Select interior doors replaced.
- 1971–1979: Multiple remodel projects throughout building. New partitions in perimeter spaces. All existing hollow clay tile partitions, marble sills, and perimeter wall and ceiling finishes removed in perimeter spaces. Shear walls and two new stairwells added. A reinforced concrete wall added along the perimeter wall. New fixtures, partitions, finishes, window sills and doors provided. Doors to the corridors relocated. Many floor finishes redone. Inner vestibule doors at first and second story south entrances replaced with steel frames and composite wood sash doors, with a second inner set of double-leaf doors added. Hardware altered on bronze doors. Inner vestibule light fixtures replaced. Bronze handrails and ADA ramp added. Roof scuppers added at four corners. Insulated glazing installed. Drop ceiling and window treatments added. Skylights replaced.
- 1980–1990: Bronze light standards and railings spray-painted
- 1987–1988: Minor interior remodeling, including new partitions
- 2000: Fire suppression system upgraded
- 2002: Plaster repaired, office space(s) remodeled, and card access readers added

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The Washington State Archives provided the majority of information pertaining to the design, construction, and subsequent occupancy of the Capitol campus buildings. The Archives maintains a notable collection of original drawings.



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: Insurance Building

Property ID: 675424

The Washington State Department of Enterprises Services, Facilities Division, also maintains an impressive record of drawings, including specifications, in their Records Center.

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Resource Name: Insurance Building

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