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# MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY OLYMPIA: A CONTEXT STATEMENT ON LOCAL HISTORY AND MODERN ARCHITECTURE, 1945-1975

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# NOTE TO READER

Dear Reader,

It may be of some surprise that buildings designed and constructed during one's lifetime could be of historic significance. This context statement is intended to provide information useful in illuminating and preserving the historic resources of the recent past. The mid-twentieth century was a dynamic period for Olympia, bringing substantial changes to Olympia's population and to its natural and built environment.

By acknowledging the importance of the recent past, we challenge the notion that the built environment can be frozen at any point in time. Just as Olympia can never remain exactly as it was at a single point in history, the work of preservation is never done. We must continually be aware of the passage of time and respond to Olympia's evolving history and changes to the community.

This document provides an opportunity for the City of Olympia to reflect on its recent historic resources as it moves towards a bright future. We should be asking ourselves fundamental questions about the recent past: What are the stories that future generations must understand from the post-World War II era? What resources can and should be preserved? Are there opportunities to reuse buildings as we strive towards sustainability, finding ways to meet today's needs while saving resources from our past?

This context statement is the culmination of the effort of the members of the Heritage Commission, the Modern Architecture Committee of the Heritage Commission (Lois Fenske, Brian Sopke, Dwayne Harkness, Spencer Daniels, Heidi Williams, Diane Wiatr, and myself), former and present staff of the Commission, and other volunteers. Special thanks to Shanna Stevenson for her in-depth research and completing the initial drafts of this statement. Thanks to the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation for assistance and advice, especially the groundbreaking work and assistance of the State Architectural Historian Michael Houser. Thanks to those who agreed to be interviewed to provide more information about their contributions to local history during this period. Thanks to Lanny Weaver and others at the Southwest Regional Archives of the State of Washington and the reference librarians of the Washington State Library. Finally, thanks to everyone who has taken part in shaping Olympia's fascinating history.

Jennifer Minner, Chair (February 2006 – February 2008)  
City of Olympia Heritage Commission

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# HOW TO USE THIS CONTEXT STATEMENT

This context statement is intended to inform historic preservation and planning in the City of Olympia. It is also meant as a resource for anyone who is interested in learning about Olympia's history during the post-World War II period. The context statement describes broad patterns of historical information including themes, events, and individuals. It also provides the background by which a specific occurrence, building, or site is understood, and its meaning within history is established. The context statement is an evolving document, which allows for amendment as more information becomes available. The three elements used to develop a historic context are theme, time and place.

## **Theme**

This is a geographically based study of the City of Olympia within its current boundaries with the sub-themes, such as Transportation, Communication, Government, Residential Development, Commercial Development, Industry and Manufacturing, Education, and Religion and Funerary among others.

## **Time**

The time period is from 1945 to 1975. Earlier context studies for Olympia include *Residential Architecture in Olympia*, *Women's History in Olympia*, and *Historic Resources of Olympia MPD*. This study provides for supplementary information about Olympia history bringing it to within 30 years before the present time. This will allow the document to be usable for several years to come in historic preservation efforts such as evaluating historic properties as they become 50 years old.

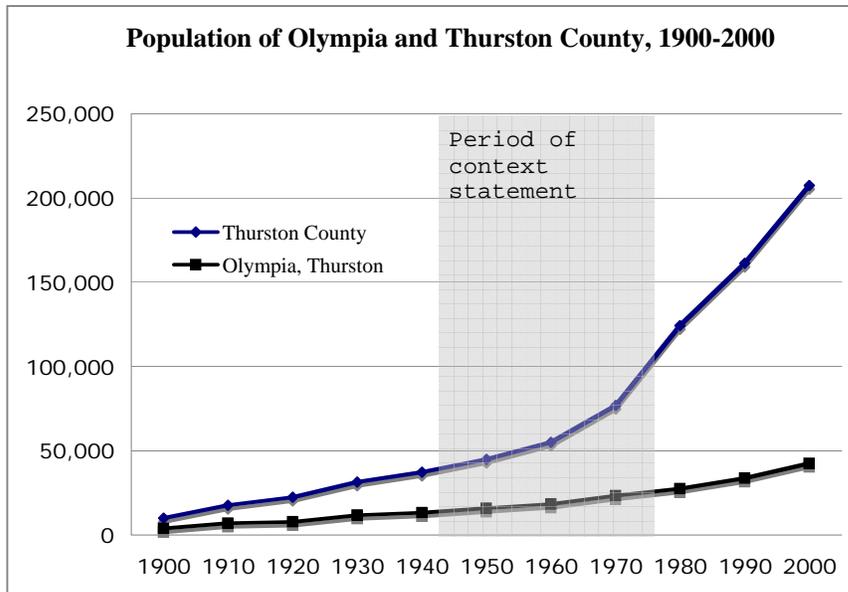
## **Place**

Place is the geographical boundaries of the context statement. While the city limits and geographic features of Olympia have changed through time, the boundaries used in this context statement are the 2007 city limits of Olympia.

The context statement is organized by theme and then towards the end of the statement is information about the identification of common building forms and architectural styles during the modern period. Architectural styles are referenced throughout the document, and this section provides more detail about the features of each style and their origin.

# SOCIAL CHANGE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

After World War II, Olympia’s population continued to grow through births, immigration, and annexation. Between 1940 and 1970, Olympia's population increased from 13,254 to 23,296.<sup>i</sup> The chart below shows the population of Olympia and Thurston County for each decade from 1900 to 2000. The chart shows a steady increase in Olympia’s population during the modern era.



Source of data: State of Washington Office of Financial

In Thurston County, the reasons for population growth shifted over time. From 1950 to 1960, almost 70% of the population growth in Thurston County could be attributed to natural increase (births) and just over 30% is attributed to the migration of people into the county. Between 1960 and 1970, nearly 70% of the county’s population increase could be attributed to migration.<sup>ii</sup>

Population growth was to bring greater cultural diversity; however, even by 1970, over 98.5% of Thurston County’s population was White.<sup>iii</sup> The table below shows a simplified version of U.S. Census Bureau data, while the tables in Appendix A show more detailed information. These more detailed tables are interesting, not only for understanding changes to the racial composition of Olympia’s population, but also for the shifting categories used to describe population demographics.

*City of Olympia Racial Composition (1940-1980)*

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
Percent White*	99.5%	99.8%	99.2%	98.5%	93.4%
Percent Minority**	0.5%	.02%	0.8%	1.5%	6.6%

\*Includes Native and Foreign-born

\*\* All other racial categories

Since the mid-century modern period, the population of Olympia, and that of Thurston County as a whole, has become more diverse. Although the minority population in Olympia was relatively small during the modern era, cultural diversity is an important part of Olympia's history.

### **World War II and Japanese Internment**

In 1942, the City of Olympia was included as a portion of "Military Area #1," a portion of the West Coast affected by Executive Order 9066, which authorized military commanders to exclude any person from any area. "Enemy aliens" and all Japanese, regardless of citizenship, were subject to removal from the area. Individuals and families were forced from their homes. Many were temporarily housed at the Puyallup Fairgrounds, where they lived in animal stalls and were guarded by military personnel. In September of 1945, the Japanese surrendered, and the camp residents were released, often with no money, jobs or homes. After their release and relocation, many Japanese Olympians worked in the oyster trade. The Oyster House at Percival Landing was originally an oyster-opening warehouse that employed many Japanese workers.

### **The Loss of Olympia's Chinatown**

Prior to the modern period, Olympia was home to many Chinese immigrants. Due to restrictions on immigration, the Chinese population decreased significantly. Olympia's Chinatown buildings were razed in 1943. Chinese business owners continued to do business in the Olympia downtown area. Suey Kay Locke emigrated around 1900, and brought his wife, Lam Shee, and their first two children to Olympia in 1915. Lam Shee Kay, with the help of their children, opened Kay's Cafe on Capitol Way in 1941, which continued operation through 1976.

### **Native Americans and Fishing Rights**

In the 1960s, both at the Capitol grounds and at Capitol Lake in Olympia, the case for Indian fishing rights was advocated through demonstrations and sit-ins by tribal members from the Medicine Creek Treaty Tribes and those opposed to fishing rights. Billy Frank and his sister, Maisell Bridges, both Nisqually tribal members, were joined by celebrities such as Marlon Brando and Dick Gregory in solidarity. The federal Boldt Decision in 1974 reinstated Indian fishing rights for Medicine Creek and other Treaty Tribes.

### **John Gayton and the Olympia Brewing Company**

John Gayton was recruited in 1958 to be the first African American to work for Olympia Brewing Company as a Company Representative. According to an article about him: "Not only a first for the industry in the Northwest, but for any major corporation in the Northwest. He went on to become the West Coast representative and coordinator of the African-American market, as such responsible for helping Olympia's first advertising, media, promotional, sales, and community outreach programs directed at the African-American market." - Quote from John C. Gayton, from History Link.org article "Gayton, John Cyrus (1931-2005), African American Leader."

### **The Fight for Equal Rights**

In late February 1969, a rumor swirled around the Capitol Campus regarding the impending invasion of armed Black Panthers from Seattle. A bill authorizing the police to arrest “persons intimidating others with a weapon” was immediately approved by the House and Senate, and was awaiting the signature of Lt. Governor John A. Cherberg in the absence of Governor Dan Evans. The bill was not signed before state troopers with riot helmets and nightsticks met a group of African American men on the Capitol campus. David Mills, president of the Black United Front, and four others walked unarmed and peacefully into the office of the chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee to arrange to meet with members to discuss jobs, housing, welfare and schools.<sup>iv</sup> Mills later stated that the incident demonstrated “how rapidly the legislators can pass laws when they want to” and declared the meeting of historical significance – the first time that the Senate gave an audience to African American people.<sup>v</sup>

### **In-migration of Southeast Asians**

During and after the Vietnam-American War, primarily Vietnamese, but also Cambodians and Laotians, fled Southeast Asia seeking a new life in America. The Vietnam War ended April 30, 1975. In the following decade, 100,000 Southeast Asians per year came to the United States.<sup>vi</sup> The post-Vietnam War period also brought in-migration of Southeast Asians to Olympia. By 1980, there were 358 Vietnamese in Olympia, which was a large increase over the previous decade.<sup>vii</sup>

### **Women’s Participation In Leadership and the Workforce**

Although many take for granted the participation of women in the workplace and in leadership positions, women’s participation in these areas was low at the beginning of the modern period. Although women had been recruited to fill job vacancies during World War II, most women left their jobs and returned to homemaking after the war ended. For those who were working, women’s rights in the workplace were not protected and they were discriminated against in hiring.

It seemed that much of society viewed women’s place as in the home. That was to change over the course of the modern period. Yet, even with a growing acceptance of women in the workplace, there was still discrimination. In a survey of female graduates in business during the period of 1954-1959 many women were treated shabbily and were generally underemployed.<sup>viii</sup> Survey respondents reported being hired for secretarial positions, even when they had business expertise and advanced degrees.<sup>ix</sup> In those days, newspapers listed jobs under the headings “Men’s Jobs” and “Women’s Jobs.”

Despite these difficult conditions, some women were able to gain leadership positions. Amanda Smith was elected the first woman mayor of Olympia in 1953. She served from 1953 to 1960. The growth of women’s organizations during this period also fueled more opportunities for women in leadership in the community (see the Recreation and Society section).

In 1961, President Kennedy established the President's Commission on the Status of Women, Executive Order 10980. Former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt headed the commission. It successfully pushed for the passage of the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the first federal law requiring equal compensation for men and women in federal jobs. The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, which prohibited sex discrimination in employment.

By 1975, *Time Magazine* chose as 'Man' of the Year, "American Women." While the practice of discrimination had not died out, it was clear that women were an important part of the workforce by the end of the period.

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<sup>i</sup> State of Washington Office of Financial Management. Note: the population figures differs slightly depending on the source. The U.S. Census Bureau figure for the Olympia population in 1970 is 23,111.

<sup>ii</sup> Thurston Regional Planning Council, Regional Profile 2006, Page II-17.

<sup>iii</sup> Thurston Regional Planning Council. Regional Profile 2006.

<sup>iv</sup> Mike Layton. "Not Since The Earthquake Was The Capitol So Shook" in the *Dailly Olympian*, Febuary 28, 1969. Don D. Wright. "Black United Front 'Made History' In Olympia" in *Seattle Times*, March 9, 1969.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vi</sup> Takami, David. A. "Southeast Asian Americans" HistoryLink.org Essay 894: [http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file\\_id=894](http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file_id=894).

<sup>vii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau.

<sup>viii</sup> Wallace, Lois J. 1960. "An Analysis of Opportunities for College Trained Women in Business." Seattle, WA: University of Washington.

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid.

# RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The end of World War II brought a housing boom to Olympia, as it did in many communities across the nation. More Americans were able to afford a single-family home with the help of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act (GI Bill) and Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgages. The construction of entirely new subdivisions added additional neighborhoods with a "modern" character distinct from that of older inner neighborhoods. Prominent garages and homes built farther from the downtown core reflected the dominance of the automobile as a primary mode of transportation. New curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs were built in many subdivisions. Modern apartments and condominiums sprung up around town, some of them towering over the community in bold designs, such as the Capitol Lake Towers, perched high on Mottman Hill and overlooking Capitol Lake. During the 1960s and 1970s, subdivisions of single-family homes were built around Olympia's urban fringe in architectural styles that included the Ranch, Split-level, Split-entry, Shed, Contemporary, and variations of the Pacific Northwest Style.

## **Post-war Growth in Housing**

The Serviceman's Readjustment Act, better known as the GI Bill, was signed into law in 1944. This law gave veterans returning from World War II unprecedented housing and education benefits, including grants for college tuition and guaranteed low interest mortgages. Mortgages through the Veterans' Administration and FHA allowed many people to buy single-family homes and this was a major factor in the post-war construction boom. The large amount of single-family housing built during this period would have a lasting impact on the character of Olympia. This growth in housing continued throughout the context period. From 1960 to 1970, 2,215 new housing units (multi-family, single-family, and manufactured homes) were created in Olympia. By 1980, 46% of the housing stock in Olympia had been built since 1970.<sup>x</sup>

The post-World War II period brought development of whole tracts of land by builders. The 1948 Amendments to the National Housing Act were a national catalyst, spurring large-scale corporate development of residential neighborhoods.<sup>xi</sup> The amendments increased available credit to builders and liberalized terms for FHA loans. Builders across the country incorporated mass production, standardization and pre-fabrication of building parts to produce developments on a larger scale.

The predominant architectural styles within many residential developments in Olympia and in many other communities across the nation were Ranch, Split-level, and Split-entry houses. In the book *The Ranch House*, Alan Hess describes standardization in the building industry and the references in popular culture (such as movies, TV shows, and *Sunset* magazine) that resulted in the spread of ranch homes as a prevalent housing style.<sup>xii</sup> While builders, without the aid of architects, built many ranch homes, some architects designed individual homes in the Contemporary Style, a "high style" variation on the Ranch Style.

A primary characteristic of residential subdivisions developed during this period is the distinctive street pattern. Many of the residential subdivisions during this time were developed in a street hierarchy system with curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs. This street system contrasts the grid, which had been the dominant street pattern in many cities. In 1936, the FHA published standards for residential neighborhoods encouraging curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs.<sup>xiii</sup> Developments had to adhere to these standards if they were to be insured by the Federal



Capitol Center Apartments, courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Housing Administration, and the standards became generally accepted practices. Curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs gave neighborhoods a distinctively residential flavor, providing prospective homeowners with a sense of security that neighborhoods would remain residential in character.

In addition to the development of single-family housing, multi-family apartments and condominiums were constructed during this period. Condominiums appeared later in the context period, including the Evergreen Square Condominiums, which were recorded with Thurston County in 1971 and the Capitol Lake Towers and Walden Condominiums, which were recorded in 1974.

During the late 1960s and 1970s, there were other federal policies that likely had an effect on residential development in Olympia. At a national level these policies addressed widespread practices of “redlining.” Redlining refers to the practice by banks and insurance companies of withholding loans and insurance based on the racial composition and socioeconomic status of neighborhoods. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 outlawed discrimination in sales, financing, and rental of housing based on race, religion, national origin, and sex. The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975 required financial institutions to disclose their lending practices in response to Congress’ finding that “some depository institutions have sometimes contributed to the decline of certain geographic areas by their failure pursuant to their chartering responsibilities to provide adequate home financing to qualified applicants on reasonable terms and conditions.”<sup>xiv</sup> The intent of the Act was to allow people to determine whether financial institutions were serving housing needs of communities and neighborhoods. The impacts in Olympia of redlining and Federal legislation enacted to prevent these practices is a potential area of future research, and beyond the scope of this document.

### **Residential Development by Neighborhood**

The following sections summarize the change in some of Olympia’s neighborhoods during this time.

### ***Southeast Olympia***

In Southeast Olympia, several houses were built during World War II using concrete block construction in a development undertaken by Frederick Schmidt. The houses featured concrete block construction erected on a concrete pad. The pad was placed on top of a subfloor of gravel and ash to deter drawing moisture. The concrete block was also extended to the interior of the houses, and some houses had interior concrete walls while others had frame construction. Concrete block came from the Greystone Concrete Company in Olympia. Frank Hallmeyer did the concrete work and B.B. Jensvold also assisted in the project. The houses were constructed of concrete due to the difficulty in procuring wood during the war. They were built with double wall construction with a two-inch airspace and ceiling insulation. About eight to ten houses of that design were built in the area of Eskridge Boulevard and Orange Street.

During the period, architects Joseph and Robert Wohleb designed homes in Southeast Olympia. Robert Wohleb designed many of these houses in Stratford Place, which was part of the southeast Olympia development created by F. W. Schmidt in the late 1930s and early 1940s. These houses utilized concrete building technology. Robert Wohleb also designed the Harvey Gorrell Residence in 1959 at 1901 Eastwood Drive SE in the Forest Hills Subdivision. The Trueman Schmidt House at 2932 Bates Street SE is a 1949 Wohleb and Wohleb architectural firm design. Joseph Wohleb also designed two houses in 1947 for William and Josephine Wisniewski in southeast Olympia in a platted area they developed on Boundary Street.<sup>xv</sup>

Later housing developments in the area include Forest Hills off Eskridge Boulevard, which was developed in 1955 by Virgil Adams. The Berschauer Construction Company built several houses there. Braemar Subdivision just off Henderson Boulevard near Olympia High School was developed by contractors Leo and Budd Dawley in 1963 and Holiday Hills off North Street was developed by Virgil Adams and Jim Dutton in 1962. Architects Steve Johnson and Stacey Bennett designed several houses in the Holiday Hills Subdivision. Russell Schaap developed Canterbury Subdivision off Cain Road in 1965-1971. Dan Buehler Construction built several houses in that subdivision.<sup>xvi</sup>

### ***Westside Development***

In the 1940s and 1950s the area south of Division on the West Side was developed for residences. Several annexations south of Division and east of Milroy Street were done in the 1940s and 1950s. The Norton Plat near Fourth Avenue was platted in 1945. Also on the West Side, the Yantis family platted an area near Raft Street in 1950 and West Bay Hills was developed in 1957. In another area of West Olympia, the large area of Ken Lake off Black Lake Boulevard was developed in the 1960s by Richard Swanson and Jim Whisler for residential units.

A large apartment/condominium building was constructed on the West Side as part of the Evergreen Park Planned Unit Development in 1972-1974. The Capitol Lake Towers were designed by Warren Cummings Heylman and Associates of Spokane and built by KOP Construction. The circular apartment tower features glass expanses for its residents who enjoy a territorial view from its location on Mottman Hill in West

Olympia. Several other apartment complexes were built as part of a Planned United Development in the area as well.

### ***South Capitol Development***

Although most of the South Capitol area was developed by 1945, Olympia Mayor Ernest Mallory built his home in this area in 1945 at 2602 Capitol Way S. The Capitol Terrace Apartments (later known as Maple Park Apartments) were also built in 1949 at 1517 Capitol Way S. in a distinctive International Style by architect Fred Rogers.

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<sup>x</sup> Thurston Regional Planning Council Profile.

<sup>xi</sup> National Park Service. National Register Bulletin. Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places.

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/suburbs/part2.htm>,  
September 3, 2007.

<sup>xii</sup> Hess, Alan. The Ranch House.

<sup>xiii</sup> National Park Service.

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/suburbs/part2.htm>,  
September 3, 2007.

<sup>xiv</sup> Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

<http://www.fdic.gov/regulations/laws/rules/6500-3030.html>, October 3, 2007

<sup>xv</sup> Wohleb Commissions.

<sup>xvi</sup> Thurston County Auditor Records, Information from Eldon Marshall.

# COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Modern period brought significant changes to Olympia's commercial businesses and the buildings that housed them. Commercial buildings built or remodeled during this period reflected modern architectural styles spurred by changing tastes, the use of new building materials, and evolving expectations for functionality. The look of downtown's streetscape changed substantially during this period.

Modern supermarkets, shopping centers, strip malls, drive-thru restaurants, and other businesses grew along main roads outside of downtown and its inner neighborhoods. These new commercial areas served residents of new subdivisions and visitors driving in from the new Interstate highway.

Commercial development during this period emphasized the needs of the automobile. New businesses were built with off-street parking spaces that were prominently displayed and easily accessed at the front of businesses. Drive-thru windows and drive-in restaurants offered additional conveniences. Some businesses, such as the downtown Olympia Safeway, were built with display windows that spanned the length of the front of the business. Signs for businesses also grew larger, adapting to the scale of the automobile, beckoning potential customers from the road.

## **Redevelopment and Change Among Olympia's Downtown Businesses**

In postwar Olympia, downtown was still the core area for Olympia's commerce. The downtown streetscape was changed substantially during the 1950s, both in response to the massive earthquake of 1949 and the post-World War II boom. Following the 1949 earthquake, some downtown buildings were razed in order to modernize and remove what were considered outdated buildings. Other buildings were refaced, completely eliminating their earlier appearance.

New buildings and remodels featured larger window displays, recessed entryways, and windowless upper areas that drew attention to large air-conditioned volumes (such as Miller's Department Store and Goldberg's Furniture Store, described below). These large windowless walls held sizeable signs advertising to traffic driving through downtown.

A replacement building for Goldberg's Furniture was built in 1950 at Fourth Avenue and Capitol Way. This building replaced an earthquake-damaged 19th century structure, the McKenny Building. The new building was designed in the International Style by Architects Bennett and Johnson and built by A. G. Holman. The building continues to house a furniture business – Ken Schoenfeld Furniture. (A description of

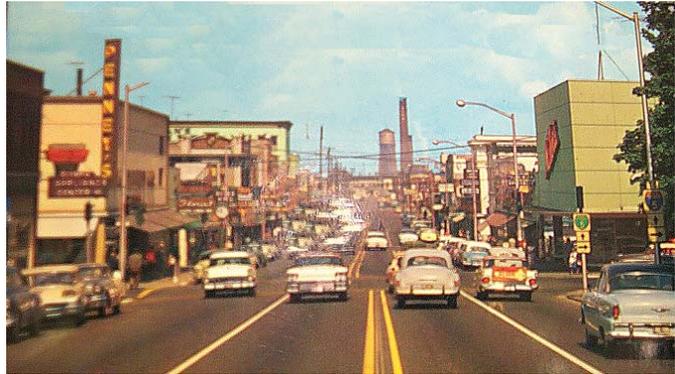


Picture of Miller's Department Store.  
Photo from the Southwest Regional  
Branch of the Washington State

the International Style and other styles is in the *Modern Architectural Styles and Building Forms* chapter.)

During the same time period, 1949-1950, the new Miller's Department Store was built, also in the International Style. This building was designed by the Joseph Wohleb firm and replaced the Stuart Block, which was a 19th century structure at Legion and Capitol Way.

Following Miller's Department Store later in the decade, a new Penney's store was built in 1958 across the street from Miller's. Joseph Wohleb designed the new store. Presently, there is a State of Washington office building at the former site of the Penney's store.



Downtown Olympia streetscape, circa 1956. Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

The Talcott family built other commercial buildings in the downtown area in the 1950s and 1960s. These buildings were built adjacent to the Talcott Apartments on Legion Way.

Downtown development in Olympia in the 1970s included the Bank of Olympia at Eighth and Capitol Way, the Evergreen Plaza Building at 711 Capitol Way S., and a new Olympian Newspaper building on East State Street, all built in 1972.

### **New Shopping Experiences: Shopping Centers, A Proposed Pedestrian Mall, Strip Malls, and Indoor Malls**

Nationally, as homeownership increased and people began to use credit for purchases, shopping centers appeared to serve a growing population, hungry for new appliances and other home accoutrements. Olympia was no exception to this trend and shopping centers of various types were built during this period.

Prior to the post-World War II boom, Olympia's first shopping center was built in 1938. The Wildwood Center was designed by Joseph Wohleb and built at Eskridge and Capitol Way. This building features a prominent curved display window on the north end of the building. Several additional display windows are located to the south.

In 1959, a city group proposed a "downtown mall" concept to be funded by a Local Improvement District (LID). The idea included constructing parking garages and closing off some downtown streets. While pedestrian malls were implemented in other cities during this time, such as the pedestrian mall developed in Eugene, Oregon, this effort failed in Olympia.

The West Side Shopping Center was developed in 1966 at 2030 Harrison Avenue NW and designed by Swedberg and Associates Architects. This “strip” type shopping center has a prominent parking lot in the front and multiple bays with large display windows for businesses. The origins of the West Side Center date back to the construction of the first building, which was Petersons’ Grocery Store and Hendricks’ Rexall Drug, both of which opened in 1962. The owner’s son, Larry Peterson, recalls the new business spaces being constructed on what had been a cow pasture.<sup>xvii</sup>

In 1966, the area's first large shopping mall, South Sound Center, was built in Lacey and in 1978, the Capital Mall on the West Side opened with The Bon Marche as its anchor store. These developments challenged the downtown commercial core. This followed a national trend towards indoor malls that housed major anchor department stores. These anchor stores, such as Sears and Penney’s, which had built new downtown stores in the 1950s and 1960s, moved from downtown to the new malls.<sup>xviii</sup> In addition to the closure of other department stores in downtown, the landmark department store, Mottman's Store, at Fourth and Capitol Way closed in 1967 after nearly a century in business in Olympia.

### **Supermarkets**

New concepts in marketing were used in designing modern supermarkets in Olympia. Brand new supermarkets featured large display windows, drive-in parking, and prominent roadside signs that appealed to customers in automobiles. Automatic doors added convenience to the shopping experience. There were changes to the internal operations of Olympia’s grocery stores. Some stores used conveyor belts to move products and others used vacuum tubes to make change for customers. Businesses experimented with discount stores practices, such as selling products in bulk and having customers mark prices on their own purchases.

Ralph Stormans started several prominent grocery stores that became fixtures in Olympia. His first grocery store was built in 1944 and was called Ralph’s Food Center. It was located downtown at 114 Legion Way SW. The second Ralph’s Food Center was built in 1952 next to the Olympia Yacht Club in a building that was purchased from the Brenner Oyster Company. The Brenner building was remodeled into a state-of-the-art grocery store. Conveyor belts were used to move products from into and out of a second floor storage area. According to the Stormans’ family website, this was a “highly efficient process for its time and allowed volume purchasing to get the lowest cost of product.”<sup>xix</sup>

This second Ralph’s Food Center, in the Brenner building, was torn down in 1963 and replaced with a new store. This store was to be named Mark-It Foods in 1973, after it was briefly called Ralph’s Thriftway. The name “Mark-It Foods” refers to the practice of having customers mark prices on products with a grease pencils. This practice was intended to reduce costs associated with marking prices on each product. There were further remodels and changes to the store in the 1980s and 1990s, and the store evolved from Mark-it Foods to Bayview Marketplace to Bayview Thriftway.<sup>xx</sup>

Ralph Stormans also opened another Ralph's at 1908 Fourth Avenue E. on November 29, 1956. This store is still extant on the east side of Olympia and has retained the same name. At its opening, this store featured on-site parking, large plate glass windows for displays, automatic opening doors, and a prominent roadside sign. The store was called state-of-the-art and "a mammoth food emporium" by the Daily Olympian.<sup>xxi</sup> It also featured a children's play area, clothing for sale, a covered area for picking up groceries, and two leased departments, Blue Ribbon Meats and Bailey Drugs.

Shortly after World War II, the Petersons started a grocery store in the Wildwood Center on Capitol Way, near Tumwater. They later moved to the west side of Olympia and opened Petersons' Grocery along with Hendricks' Rexall Drug, which was to develop into the West Side Shopping Center. The new grocery store competed with smaller grocery stores on the Westside, superseding them, only to be closed down a few decades later as they competed against larger chain grocery stores such as Costco, Top Foods, and Safeway.<sup>xxii</sup> The store was union from the day that it opened. It also featured a fresh bakery. The original Petersons' grocery store is now the site of Grocery Outlet.

A. J. and Roy Weiks opened one of the area's first supermarkets, Seamart Grocery, in the former Olympia Cannery buildings on North Capitol Way in 1959. The grocery store was the first to offer Sunday shopping. The buildings housed Seamart and then Yardbirds, a grocery and variety store, from the 1960s until Yardbirds closed in the 1990s. The buildings have since been razed. Part of the area has been redeveloped.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The downtown Safeway was also built in 1963 in a design by Hall Dykeman Architects, Charles B. Ogden supervised the project. The building located in back of a prominent parking lot and is described in the inventory as having a "classic arched glass center design."<sup>xxiv</sup> The downtown Safeway is vacant, as of date of this draft of the context statement, and is being considered as a potential site for a new City Hall.

### **Restaurants of Olympia: Drive-ins and Space Age Designs**

During the context era, the traditional soda shop was replaced by the hamburger drive-in. Loretta Eagan began Eagan's West In and Out (later Big Tom's) in 1949-1950. Eagan's appeared in several locations around Olympia. The West Side location still stands at 1420 Harrison Avenue NW.<sup>xxv</sup> Joseph Wohleb designed the downtown Dairy Queen for Dean Mohler. The building was built in 1949. It has subsequently been altered for business use. King's Drive in downtown Olympia on Fourth Avenue near the waterfront was also a very popular location for teenagers in the 1960s but has been razed.<sup>xxvi</sup>



Recent photo of Eagan's Drive In on the Westside. Photo by Erik Amos.

One of the signature fine restaurants of the era was the Jacaranda. The building started as sections of the model "Century



Photo of the Plywood Home of Living Light., which was to become the Jacaranda. Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

21 Plywood Home of Living Light," a model home that the Douglas Fir Plywood Association of Tacoma and Practical Builder Magazine co-sponsored at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair. Following the fair, the building was transported to Olympia via barge in 1963 and was divided into two sections. One of which was located at the

northwest end of the Port property and made into a restaurant called "the Jacaranda" as it was known from 1964 to 1971.

John Lade, Charles Wycoff and Hans Hansen reconstructed the building into the Jacaranda with Osborne and Associates as contractors. The piling permit was issued in September 1963 and finishing work was completed in early 1964. The building underwent remodeling in 1966 to enlarge the structure to the west and reconfigure the north side. The architects for that remodel were Stacey Bennett and Stephen D. Johnson. The building was remodeled again in 1972 and 1981. Over its life, it was variously known as the Jacaranda, Stefan's, the Ebb Tide, and Genoa's Restaurants. After suffering a fire, it was razed in 2005. The other portion of the Century 21 Plywood house was moved to the Capitol City Golf Course in the Lacey area for a clubhouse but later burned.<sup>xxvii</sup>

### Hotels and Motels

The history of Olympia is tied closely to the history of its hotels since visitors, particularly legislators, have tied the ability of Olympia to retain the title of Capital of Washington to having a good place to stay. Tourist hotels had been a hallmark of the Highway 99 corridor before the construction of the freeway in 1958 through Olympia. Extant tourist courts from that corridor include the Bailey Motor Inn, 3333 Martin Way E., which began with 15 units in 1946 and expanded to 32 units in 1953. The Lodoro Motel at 3434 Martin Way E. was built in 1939-40 in a design by Joseph Wohleb for C. E. Nyland and later expanded in 1945.<sup>xxviii</sup> The Golden Gavel Motor Hotel was built on Capitol Way in 1957-58 by Dawley Brothers and was recently re-named the Olympia Inn. Its "Golden Gavel," a large sculpture fronting Capitol Way at the motel, is synonymous with the gaveling of the legislature to order.

At the entry to downtown Olympia at the main I-5 freeway exit at Plum Street is the Carriage Inn, built in 1965, in a design by architects Bennett and Johnson. The adjacent restaurant of the same period features a sawtooth roof design and was also the work of Bennett and Johnson.

Several other new hotels and motels went up during the period in downtown. The Governor House at 621 Capitol Way S. replaced the former Mitchell and Governor

House Hotels. It was design by CDM Architects and built by KOP contractors in 1971-72. CDM Architects are an international firm with offices in Seattle and Bellevue, Washington. The hotel is a modern articulated concrete frame building with an eight-floor tower. The lower one story entry area fronts Capitol Way. There is a parking garage at the rear of the building.

The Aladdin Motor Inn, at 900 Capitol Way S. downtown was designed by Bennett, Johnson, Selenes and Smith Architects in 1972 for J. Neeley. It was remodeled in 1976. The structure replaced the historic Mottman Mansion at the site.<sup>xxix</sup> Another period hotel is the Greenwood Inn (now Red Lion) on Evergreen Park Drive, which was built in West Olympia as part of the development of that area in 1970 in a design by Richard Bouillon and Company of Seattle and built by contractor A. G. Homann.

### New Financial Institutions Built in Town

Numerous new financial institutions were constructed during this era. Many of these banks are fine examples of the various architectural styles of the time period, ranging from New Formalism, to Seattle World Fair-influenced designs, to Wrightian, to Brutalism.

The Seattle First National Bank, built in 1958-59, was a stock design adapted by Tacoma architects McClelland and Osterman and features a round gold seal of Seattle First National Bank



Advertisement showing Seattle First National Bank.

above the door. Just inside the main entry is a mosaic mural, which depicts the Legislative building in Olympia. The model Seattle First bank design was built in 1950 (566 Denny Way, Seattle) and was developed by Seattle Architect John Maloney. The Olympia bank has a New Formalism style, which is a style that reflects classical architectural styles and emphasizes monumentality.

Influenced by the 1961 Seattle World's Fair, the modernistic Capital Savings and Loan built in 1962 by Andy Johnson in a design by architects Sibold and Nesland features a futuristic feeling with its curving arched design. The building is no longer used as a bank.<sup>xxx</sup> See *Googie Architecture* on page 72 for a photo of this building.



Olympia's First National Bank (now Bank of America). The design is adapted from the Seattle First National Bank. Photo courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

The Bennett and Johnson architectural firm designed many financial institution buildings that located in Olympia in the 1960s and 1970s with the advent of branch banking and to serve the growing population. The Olympia Federal Savings building downtown was

built in two sections in 1967 and 1978 at Fifth and Capitol Way. Both sections were designed by Bennett and Johnson Architects and built by Andy Johnson, contractor. The building has distinctive carved artwork on the large entry doors by noted Pacific Northwest artist Walter Graham. See page 85 for a photo of the carved doors.

Bennett and Johnson Architects also designed two other downtown financial institutions during this period. The Washington State Employees Credit Union, which was built in 1967, and the Washington Mutual Savings, built in 1968. Washington Mutual Savings is located at 825 Capitol Way S. The Washington State Employees Credit Union is located at 502 Union Avenue SE. This building is noted in an historic property inventory report as “one of the few buildings from the 1960s that remains intact on both the exterior and the interior.” It was built in a Wrightian style, which is influenced by prominent architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Olympia Federal Savings built its first branch bank in West Olympia at 2420 Harrison Avenue NW in 1972. It was designed by Bennett, Johnson, Selenes and Smith Architects. Architect Johnson described it as a "pavilion in the park." The same firm designed the drive-through addition to the building in 1980.

Bennett, Johnson, Selenes and Smith Architects also designed a Modern-style bank building at Eighth and Capitol Way for the Thurston County Bank, later Bank of Olympia in 1972. Cascade Olympic Contractors constructed the building. Bennett, Johnson, Selenes and Smith also designed the Washington State Employees Credit Union at 412 Union Avenue SE in 1976.

Heritage Bank was built in 1972, at 221 Fifth SW, in a design by Robert Sarnoff. It replaced a one-story American Renaissance commercial structure. This building was built as Thurston County Federal Savings and Loan, the former name of the bank. Heritage Bank or its predecessors have been in business since 1927 in this area. Heritage Bank is headquartered in Olympia.

### **Office Buildings**

In addition to office space associated with financial institutions, new buildings were built to meet a growing commercial and office space demand in the city. Please note: additional information about office buildings is located in the Government section of this context statement.

One of the largest buildings in modern Olympia, the Capitol Center Building, at 410 Fifth Avenue SW, was built during the 1960s. Stacey Bennett and Robert Olson designed this nine-story office tower in 1966. The office tower was their largest project. The inventory description for this building cites the Capitol Center Building as the best example in Olympia of the Miesian style.<sup>xxxix</sup> This style was heavily influenced by the architectural designs of renowned architect Mies Van der Rohe.





The Evergreen Plaza Office Building. Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

A signature building, which replaced much smaller buildings on Capitol Way, is the Evergreen Plaza multi-story office building. The building, located at 711 Capitol Way S., is a modern articulated frame style building. It was built in 1971 in a design by architect Chester Lindley. This building was part of the extensive redevelopment of buildings in downtown, many of them along Capitol Way in the 1970s.

The IBM building at 410 11th Avenue SE was built in 1975 by Business Space Design.<sup>xxxii</sup> Commercial development in this area of Olympia was spurred by the major development of the new East Capitol Campus.

In the same area is the Association of Washington Industries Building located at 1414 Cherry St. SE. It was designed by Steve Johnson of Bennett, Johnson, Selenes and Smith Architects and built by Andy Johnson in 1967. Steve Johnson stated in a 2005 interview he thought it was one of his best buildings. It has subsequently been enlarged and the name changed to the Association of Washington Business.

### **Other Buildings**

The Olympia Steam Heating building at 113 Thurston Avenue (1948) originally housed the steamworks for a system of steam pipes, which served several downtown businesses. The steam was originally generated at the Washington Veneer Plant north of the site. Pipes went down alleyways and supplied area businesses with heat.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

### **Summary**

The post-World War II era to the 1970s brought substantial growth and change for Olympia's commercial businesses. New modern style department stores, furniture stores, supermarkets, office buildings and financial institutions were built in the downtown, adding to the plethora of architectural styles in Olympia. Off-street parking, larger signs, huge display windows, and drive-thru windows reflected an emphasis on accommodating customers in the automobile. New businesses also grew along main corridors outside of the downtown, and downtown businesses found themselves challenged by the significant commercial growth of shopping centers, new commercial areas, and malls in the suburbs and fringes of Olympia.

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<sup>xvii</sup> Interview with Larry Peterson. August 13, 2007.

<sup>xviii</sup> City of Olympia Building Department Records.

<sup>xix</sup> Bayview website. <http://www.bayviewthriftway.com/history/index.html>. September 18, 2007.

<sup>xx</sup> Bayview website. <http://www.bayviewthriftway.com/history/index.html>. September 18, 2007.

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- xxi Ralph's Thriftway website.  
<http://www.ralphsthriftway.com/history/index.html>. September 18, 2007.
- xxii Interview with Larry Peterson. August 13, 2007.
- xxiii Stevenson, Shanna, "Yard Birds Began as Cannery," The Olympian, March 4, 1999, pg. C1.
- xxiv City of Olympia Inventory.
- xxv Hansen, Christine, "Loretta Eagan--Olympia's grand matriarch of fast food," The South Sounder, March 1996, Pg. 1.
- xxvi City of Olympia Building Department Records, Wohleb Commission Records.
- xxvii Century 21 - The Seattle World's Fair, Part I" entry in History Link, an Online Encyclopedia of Seattle and King County History [www.historylink.org](http://www.historylink.org), July 2, 2001.
- xxviii Daily Olympian, Olympia Centennial Issue, May 1, 1950.
- xxix City of Olympia Building Department Records.
- xxx Information from City of Olympia Building Department Records and Inventory forms developed by Michael Houser.
- xxxi Historic Property Inventory Report for Capitol Center Building. Field Recorder Michael Houser, Date: 7/25/2002.
- xxxii Woodbridge, Sally B. and Roger Montgomery, A Guide to Architecture in Washington State. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980.
- xxxiii City of Olympia Building Department Records.

# INDUSTRY AND MANUFACTURING

At the start of the Modern Period, the lumber industry continued to be a primary employer in the area, along with the Olympia Brewery and industries that depended on the Brewery. But much had occurred to make the economic base almost unrecognizable by the end of the period. Times had changed.

## **The Lumber Industry**

Although much of the resource base in the area around Olympia had been exhausted by the end of World War II, Olympia emerged as a major service center for lumber communities west of Thurston County, with the Port of Olympia as a major transportation center. The lumber industry was prominent in two sections of the city, Budd Inlet, including the Port and Percival Landing areas, and the West Bay area.

### ***Budd Inlet***

Beginning in the 1920s a series of plywood mills located on the northern industrial fill area including Olympia Veneer, a cooperative organized in 1921. The plant continually enlarged and on August 26, 1946 was sold to St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber, another plywood producer. St. Paul and Tacoma built several new company buildings between 1947 and the 1960s, using the plywood they produced. The buildings were used as storage and also for peeling logs and drying machinery. A 140,000 square foot addition was added to the plant in 1948, built by Industrial Engineers and Contractors Incorporated of Tacoma.

A second large addition to the plant was constructed in 1956 to bring the mill up to a total of 240,000 square feet. During this period, in 1957, St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber had merged with St. Regis. By 1967, St. Regis had closed and in 1971 the property was purchased by the Port of Olympia. The 1948 and 1956 sections of the mill are still present, but the other parts of the veneer plant facing State Street near Jefferson have been razed. The Port currently rents the buildings.

Another veneer firm, Washington Veneer Company, started as a cooperative in 1924. It was located on the main Port fill, north of downtown. The business grew significantly, producing plywood products including waterproof plywood, which eventually became the industry standard for such projects as cement forms. Aircraft Plywood Corporation of Seattle purchased a controlling interest in Washington Veneer in 1929. In 1932, United States Plywood Corporation purchased Washington Veneer.

The firm was known from 1933 to July 1937 as Capitol Plywood Corporation and then reverted back to the name Washington Veneer. In 1939 Washington Veneer's controlling interest stock was sold from United States Plywood Corporation to the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company. Weyerhaeuser sold its interest in Washington Veneer Co. in 1947 to Georgia-Pacific, which liquidated the plant in 1969.

The Georgia-Pacific Plywood Office Building at 600 Capitol Way N. was completed in 1952. A. E. Hennessy of Naramore, Bain, Brady and Johanson was the primary architect and Wohleb and Wohleb were consulting architects. The two-story office building was built as executive offices for Georgia-Pacific's Hardwood veneer operations. The primary rectangular plan is broken by the outward projection of an entry lobby and showroom on the northwest corner of the building, making it L-shaped. The structure has a flat roof and there is horizontal banding between the banks of windows. The interior features types of plywood produced by Georgia-Pacific. Each office is lined with a different type of plywood, and some of the offices still bear the plaques naming them: knotty pine, red gum, beach, spruce, hemlock, redwood and three kinds of mahogany, Honduras, Philippine and African.



The property is significant as one of the early works of NBBJ and for its direct ties to the plywood industry in Olympia. The building was sold to the state in 1959 and was used as an office building for the then Department of Game (which became the Department of Fish and Wildlife). Some of their offices remain in the building. The rest of the plywood facility has been razed and the site is owned by the Port of Olympia.<sup>xxxiv</sup> The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in March 2007.



### **West Bay**

The most long-lived of the West Bay lumber businesses, Buchanan Lumber, at the northern end of West Bay Drive, operated from 1912 with few interruptions until 1963 manufacturing dimensional lumber. A marina is now located at the site.

Exterior and interior photos of the Georgia-Pacific Plywood building. Courtesy of Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

Olympia Harbor Lumber and Tumwater Lumber Mills moved to West Bay in the mid-1920s from Tumwater. Their mill burned in 1943 and was rebuilt as an electrical mill and operated until it closed in 1960. After the closure, Buchanan Lumber operated the mill one more year. The Port of Olympia purchased the property in 1963 for its West Bay Terminal. The buildings at the site were razed during that period.

A cooperative plywood company, Hardel Plywood, incorporated in 1953, succeeded an earlier venture at a northern West Bay site. It was created by members of the Smyth family and others in 1946. Hardel Plywood operated on West Bay producing plywood until a large fire in 1996 destroyed the mill. The firm then relocated to the Centralia area. Another industry, Solid Wood Plywood, located on West Bay in 1966 and operated until the mid-1990s.

Delson Lumber started in 1945 as a lumber mill business on West Bay and later specialized in finished lumber products. It shut down in 1980 and was operated for a

short time by other owners and finally liquidated in 1990. The site was re-developed for residential use in 2006.<sup>xxxv</sup>

### **The Brewing Industry**

In 1896 the Capitol Brewing Company was established in Olympia by German-born master brewer, Leopold Schmidt, and renamed the Olympia Brewing Company in 1902. In 1906, the first brick structure, now known as the Old Olympia Brewhouse, was built on the shores of the Deschutes River in the City of Olympia. The Brewery turned to producing fruit drinks in 1914 when Prohibition was enacted in the State of Washington. In the 1920's a paper mill took over the building. By 1933 prohibition had ended and the Olympia Brewing Company was back in the beer business, moving to their then-modern plant in Tumwater. For fifty years, all during the Modern Period, the "Brewery" was an important part of the economic community, with many generations of local families in the work force.

The Pedestrian Bridge at the brewery was designed by noted bridge engineer Harold Sargent and connected the main brewing facilities with the warehouse complex on the east side of Custer Way. The design took the 6<sup>th</sup> place award for the Lincoln Arc Welding Foundation in 1963. It was noted for its clean lines with exposed plate girders that resulted in an economically fabricated, easy to maintain, and attractive, structure. The west entry of the bridge boasts ornate cast stone pillars. The style is Modern – New Formalism.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

In 1983, Pabst Brewing Company purchased the "Brewery" in Tumwater and the operation of the plant and the number of people employed stayed about the same. But this situation was not to last very long. In 1999 the Miller Brewing Company purchased the plant from Pabst but after disagreements with LOTT Alliance<sup>1</sup>, and eventually also with the Department of Ecology, Miller was sold to South African Breweries in 2002. It was all down hill after that. The plant is vacant now and in foreclosure, with a vast production facility covering many acres in the middle of Tumwater now contributing nothing to the industrial base of that city and general community.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

All through the heyday of the Olympia Brewery, several other firms were directly dependent on its success. For example, Crown Cork and Seal, later renamed Continental Can Manufacturing, was the primary supplier of aluminum cans to the Olympia Brewing Company for many years. Their manufacturing facility, built in 1968 on Fones Road in Lacey, was designed by architects Peters and Flotree. Also located in the southeast area of Olympia near Pacific Avenue was another manufacturing firm, Georgia-Pacific Packaging. Built in 1961, this was the firm's first corrugated fiber packaging plant. The business was a major supplier of packaging to the Olympia Brewery when it was in operation.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lott Alliance was created through an Interlocal Agreement between the City of Olympia, City of Tumwater, City of Tumwater, and Thurston County for wastewater treatment facilities.

## **Other Industries and Manufacturers**

Many other small industries and manufacturers emerged and some remained into the Modern Period and beyond. An oil distribution company, Ordell Oil on West Bay, was succeeded by Richfield Oil Company at the same site. They had a tank farm for storage of petroleum products for many years.

Reliable Welding, located on West Bay during World War II, manufactured barges and tugs. The firm continued manufacturing there through the '50s and '60s, adding the production of tanks and other structural metal products. Reliable, a local company, sold out to a national firm, Brown-Minneapolis Tank-Northwest in the 1990's, which is still in operation manufacturing large tanks on the site, the lone remnant of the area's manufacturing past.<sup>xxxix</sup>

West Side Log Dump and Olympia Towing Company was started in 1927 by M. C. Willie. The firm had a fleet of tugboats and operated rafting pockets all along Budd Inlet. These logs supplied the numerous processing firms that were part of the city's manufacturing base in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The firm continues in business as part of Dunlap Towing on West Bay.

Zeigler's Welding and Hitch Shop, established in 1927, is still in operation as a supplier to many other allied manufacturing firms. It is housed in its original building near the Olympia waterfront at 322 Capitol Way N. The building is on the Olympia Historical Register.

## **Port of Olympia**

During World War II shipbuilding, an early South Sound industry, expanded on Port property. After the war in 1946, there was continued activity at the Port and environs. For example, the Reserve Mothball Fleet, former World War II vessels anchored off Gull Harbor near Olympia, was first brought for servicing at the Port docks with channel dredging done to accommodate the ships, with the last vessel leaving the area in 1972.<sup>xi</sup>

By the 1950s, Port facilities and cargo handling equipment had been upgraded and were able to handle the post-war continuation of wood products shipping activity. The Korean War brought heavy warehousing and shipping of military cargo bound for the conflict from the Port of Olympia and an exodus of some ships from the mothball fleet at Gull Harbor. The remaining ships became a storehouse for sixteen and a half million bushels of wheat awaiting trans-shipment from Eastern Washington beginning in 1953.

In 1957, 161 million board feet of lumber were shipped over Port docks and Olympia was second only to Coos Bay, Oregon in exporting West Coast lumber that year.<sup>xli</sup> Another major cargo handled by the Port in the 1950s was canned fruit from the Olympia Canning Company, which closed in 1959.

The Port expanded into the air transportation business in 1961 with the purchase of the Olympia Airport from the City of Olympia. The airport had been a pilot training site

during World War II and became a surplus site for aircraft after the war. The airport offered sporadic scheduled inter-city airline service throughout the Modern Period, with no permanent carrier and no current airline service. An Industrial Development District, now called the New Market Industrial Campus, was developed and encompasses 700 acres of the airport property.

By the mid-1960s the Port had filled its property in Olympia's West Bay area, purchased tidelands on the East Bay side of Budd Inlet peninsula and added acreage to the airport.

The year 1967 signaled the possible end of Olympia's lumber trade at the Port when three plywood mills located on the Port peninsula closed. By the end of the decade, however, total shipping volume consisting mainly of raw logs was almost 100% higher than any previous year. In 1970, raw logs totaled 98% of the Port's volume.

In the 1970s, marine terminal berths were deepened to keep pace with the trend toward larger, deep-draft ships. In the midst of these changes, the Port dedicated some of its growing East Bay waterfront property to a recreational boat marina, which was completed in the early 1980's. It has been expanded several times and is now called Swantown Marina.<sup>xliii</sup>

## Summary

The era of smokestacks and plywood mills north of downtown drew to a close when the Georgia-Pacific and St. Regis mills closed, victims of changing markets in the early 1960s. Other historically significant industries came and went, for example the Olympia Brewing Company. Smaller manufacturing and distribution industries have become more important in the Olympia area and the emphasis has shifted from large industry to medium and small size firms. There are boat builders, sail makers and other canvas workers, ornamental iron work manufacturers, coffee roasters, custom jewelry designers, sign makers, furniture manufacturers and distribution centers also presently contributing to the economy. Distribution centers in particular had begun to proliferate during the later Modern Period because of Olympia's unique location on I-5 halfway between Seattle and Portland. And the Port facility continued to hold an important place in the commercial activities of the city.

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<sup>xxxiv</sup> Cour, Robert M. *The Plywood Age*, Douglas Fir Plywood Association, Binford and Mort, Portland, OR, 1955. Devlin, C. E., *Twenty-five Years in Retrospect*, Washington Veneer history monograph, ca. April 16, 1946. Files of the American Plywood Association Archives on Washington Veneer and Olympia Veneer. "Building caught in tug-of-war," *Olympian*, May 21, 2006, by Adam Wilson. Historic Property Inventory Report developed by Michael Houser.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Stevenson, Shanna, *West Bay History*, for Sarah Smyth McIntosh and in TRPC files 2005.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Historic Property Inventory Report, developed by Michael Houser.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> *The Olympian*, January 11, 2003 and December 10, 2006.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> City of Olympia Building Records.

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xxxix "BMT's tank business booming," *The Olympian*, April 11, 2007. BMT Olympia web site. Folsom, Susan. *Small but reliable: the World War II contribution of Reliable Welding Works Company*, Olympia, WA. Senior Thesis, Olympia, WA, 1999.

x<sup>l</sup> Stevenson, Shanna. "Superior Shipping Service"; *A History of the Port of Olympia*. Olympia, WA; Port of Olympia, 1982. Gordon Newell, "Olympia Reserve Fleet Only a Memory," *Olympia News* 52, August 1, 1984.

x<sup>li</sup> *Ibid.*

x<sup>lii</sup> Stevenson, Shanna and Chuck Fowler. *The Port of Olympia: a 75 Year History*. Olympia, WA, 1997. Port of Olympia Website.

# AGRICULTURE AND RELATED INDUSTRIES

Agriculture developed slowly but steadily during the early years of Thurston County. Small farms sprang up and began producing bacon, milk, cheese, chickens and wheat. However, the quality of the soil was poor for growing crops and by the end of the nineteenth century many farmers had turned almost exclusively to dairy farming. Still the number of farms in Thurston County grew during the first half of the twentieth century as the county's population slowly grew reaching a peak of 2,876 farms in 1940. By this time the county's farming was becoming more diversified, with hay and berries also being grown. There were also egg dealers. This diversification continued into the Modern Period even as agriculture's role in the county economy dwindled.<sup>xliii</sup>

The population in Olympia, which had increased in the Modern Period in great part because of an influx of state employees and military families, caused the already modest farm sector to diminish as residential development pushed into the remaining fertile areas. Dairy and truck farming continued primarily in the south county interspersed with berry farms, but many agriculture-related activities increased and prospered during this period.<sup>xliv</sup>

## Farming

As mentioned above, dairy farming remained important in the region. One of the last farms within the present Olympia city limits was the Cloverfields Dairy Farm between Carlyon Avenue and North Street. The farm was sub-divided into housing parcels during the 1930s and '40s, with 40 acres purchased by the Olympia School District in 1949 for future school construction, including the present Olympia High School. (See Education, K-12 Section).<sup>xlv</sup>

Also in the dairy sector, Darigold, a dairy cooperative, established a new facility in the east part of downtown in 1960 to handle milk product distribution from the outlying farms. The Darigold building, at 706 Seventh Avenue E., was designed by Robert Wohleb and was razed in the 2000s. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century creameries that operated in downtown also closed during this period.

In response to requests from area farmers, the Port of Olympia built a cold storage facility in a Moderne style near the port docks in 1948. The building was designed by Joseph Wohleb and was razed in the 1990s to accommodate a larger warehouse facility for the Port.

The berry farmers, primarily located in the county, were especially active in the Modern Period and to the present. The residents of Olympia yearly have anticipated the opening of local stands around the city for strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and marionberries.



Darigold facility. Photo courtesy of Southwest Regional branch of the Washington State Archives. 28

## **Farmers Markets**

The possibility of an outlet for the selling of their general vegetable produce at a local farmers' market encouraged many Thurston County farmers to expand their production. Although it had existed in other locations, the modern Olympia Farmers Market era began in 1973 when the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) started the project to promote good nutrition for seniors and to help enhance RSVP activities. With the help of VISTA workers, who first set up the market on the shores of Capitol Lake, the project grew, doubling its size each year. In 1975, the market moved to Plum Street for eight years and then to a site at Capitol Way and Thurston Street. The Olympia Farmers Market moved to a purpose-built structure in 1996 at the north end of Capitol Way, near the historic Washington Veneer site. It has become a tourist destination site and continues to be profitable. In recent years, Lacey and Tumwater have also established farmers' markets.

## **Nurseries and Floral**

Briggs Nursery was founded by Orson Briggs in 1912 on 15 acres in Olympia near the intersection of Henderson Boulevard and the Yelm Highway. Orson's son, Bruce, eventually took over the business and developed the nursery's specialties, rhododendrons and micropropagation and became a nationwide wholesale nursery. The nursery has now passed on to the third generation owner, Gary Briggs.

By 2006, the nursery had transitioned to a 400-acre property in Porter, near Yelm, as the Olympia grew around the original nursery site. The original site on Boulevard Avenue has become Briggs Village, an urban development with more than 650 mixed housing units, office and retail space, a village square and an arboretum and park.<sup>xlvi</sup>

Barnes Seed and Floral opened in 1900 at its present site at 211 Fourth Avenue West. By 1919, its name had changed to Bolstere and Barnes and it is currently Barnes Floral.<sup>xlvii</sup>

## **Marine Farming**

Oysters, a primary resource of the South Sound, had several grower representative companies in Olympia in the 1939 Polk Directory, e.g., Olympia Oyster Co. at 320 Fourth Avenue, (the present Oyster House Restaurant), J. J. Brenner Oyster Co. at 502 Fourth Avenue, and Ward Capital Oyster Co., at 205 State Avenue W. By 1949 several companies were still in operation, e.g., J. J. Brenner, the Olympia Oyster Co. and some wholesalers.<sup>xlviii</sup> Most oyster grower businesses had moved out of Olympia by the end of the Modern Period.

## **Canneries**

The 1949 Polk Directory lists the Olympia Cannery at Columbia St. and A Avenue W. at the north end of downtown. Its primary products were fruits and berries, with the last crop processed in 1958, after which the cannery closed. By that time, competition from Eastern Washington cooperatives limited its profitability. The machinery was sold

to various firms including Nalley Foods in Tacoma. In 1959 the empty cannery buildings were opened as one of Olympia's first supermarkets – "Sea Mart Grocery."<sup>xlix</sup>

There had been fish canneries such as Olympia Packing Co. at 405 Water Street but no fish packing companies existed by the Modern Period.<sup>1</sup>

## Summary

By the end of the Modern Period the amount of land devoted to agriculture and related activities within the city had decreased but the residents of Olympia have continued their interest as consumers in buying locally grown products.

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xliii Thurston County-Thumbnail History, The State of Washington, Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

xliv Rainey, Thomas. A Short History of Industry and Manufacturing in Thurston County, Washington.

xlvi Lockman, Heather and Shanna Stevenson. 2000. *Building a Capital City, Olympia's Past Revealed through its Historic Architecture. A Sesquicentennial Project of the City of Olympia Heritage Commission.* Olympia Community Planning and Development Department, Advance Planning and Historic Preservation.

xlvii Gary Briggs and Dave Jarzynka: Briggs Nursery. Prepared for the Agriculture Oral History Project by the Museum of History and Industry with funding provided by the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and "Olympia nursery: fertile ground for urban village." Puget Sound Business Journal, Seattle, June 3, 2005, by Jeanne Lang Jones, staff writer. (Both available on the Internet.)

xlviii Polk Directory, Olympia, WA, 1949; and current Olympia Telephone Directory listing.

xlix Polk Directories, Olympia, WA, various years; and Olympia Oyster House internet site, [olympiaoysterhouse.com/history](http://olympiaoysterhouse.com/history).

1 Stevenson, Shanna, "Yard Birds began as Cannery," *The Olympian*, March 4, 1999, pg. C1.

<sup>1</sup> Polk Directory, Olympia, WA, 1949.

# TRANSPORTATION

Many advances in transportation occurred during the Modern Period. Although air travel became important, the automobile continued to be the dominant form of transportation, leading to the creation of the Highway Act and Interstate Freeway system. In the Olympia area, the dominance of the automobile changed the city so that by 1975, it was almost unrecognizable from the Olympia of 1945.

## **Roads and Bridges**

With the advent of the automobile era in the early 20th century, Olympia became a hub of two major roadways – the Pacific and Olympic State Highways. Washington State had established Primary State Highways starting in 1913. In 1919, Pacific Highway (99) through Olympia was established as the result of the first large-scale road-building program in the state. The Olympic Highway (Olympia-Port Angeles-Olympia, later State Highway 9) was also designated as a Primary Highway in 1919. These main state north-south and east-west main roads met in downtown Olympia at Fourth and Main (now Capitol Way). Travelers from the north could either turn south on Capitol Way on the Pacific Highway or continue east to Grays Harbor via the Olympia Highway taking the route across Budd Inlet.

During World War II, funds for roads and bridges were curtailed as materials were allocated to the war effort and only those roads considered for national defense were built.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 authorized the national interstate highway system to link metropolitan areas. This launched the “limited access” highway concept, which was codified by Washington State in 1951. In the 1950s a bond issue from the state funded the upgrade of the Pacific Highway into the four-lane limited access U.S. Highway 99 near Olympia.

Another change in these early years was the damming of the Deschutes River at Fourth Avenue in Olympia in 1948 to create Capitol Lake, which precluded navigation from Puget Sound up-river. Part of the Capitol Lake dam project was Deschutes Parkway, completed in 1953, which provided another route to Olympia from Tumwater along the west side of Capitol Lake.

Also in 1948 plans were underway to construct a new roadway to accommodate increasing automobile traffic and relieve the bottleneck in downtown Olympia at Fourth and Capitol Way. This new roadway was authorized by Washington legislative bonds in the late 1940's and completed with Federal Interstate highway funds when the interstate program was inaugurated in the 1950s.

## **The Freeway Era**

In 1956 the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways Act authorized the modern interstate system and more importantly appropriated federal funds. Road and

bridge building in Olympia became a many faceted engineering project that changed the city in multiple ways.

The decision for routing the new “freeway” was planned as early as 1951 and finalized in 1952 when the State Highway Department signed an agreement with the City of Olympia to construct the road on a bypass route. The road was to take off south of Olympia, then go through Percival Creek Canyon across Capitol Lake at the Northern Pacific tracks, then be submerged through an underground viaduct from the east slope of the Deschutes Waterway to Adams Street on 10th Avenue. (An alternative was to build an elevated roadway above 7th Avenue.) The road was then to connect to Martin Way at Lilly Road. This route was agreed upon by the then Highway Commission. A spur of the road was to take off to the west at the head of Percival Creek, towards Shelton and Aberdeen.

However by 1954 when cost estimates had been done, a new State Highway Commission balked at the approved route and alternatives were sought. The Tumwater Canyon with its bedrock foundation for the roadway was proposed as an alternative to the 10th Avenue route. The new route would virtually wipe out old Tumwater and cross the new Capitol Lake in a wide curve and cut under Capitol Way at 27th Avenue through Olympia and connect with Martin Way. Another route called the Dunham Bypass made a wide arc from south of Tumwater east through the then undeveloped area of the Olympia environs near Ward’s Lake and then northward connecting with Martin Way.

Olympia City Commission had signed what they thought was a binding agreement for the highway design in 1952. Olympia, however, was pressed with traffic problems through their downtown especially across the Fourth Avenue Bridge. Then Mayor Amanda Smith did not favor the 27th Street plan and delayed the signing of the agreement, although the other two Olympia City Commissioners had already signed. Mrs. Smith hammered out an agreement which stated that it was cost considerations that precluded the 10th Street viaduct route and that funds for construction of the Shelton-Aberdeen link to the freeway would be in the next highway budget. The accord with the Highway Department was finally signed on April 23, 1954.

Over the next four years the topography, future growth, and shape of Olympia and Tumwater would radically change. The building of the six and one-half mile stretch of roadway, beginning south of Tumwater and connecting with U. S. 99 near the old entrance to St. Martin’s College involved the construction of 25 bridges. This phase included the first triple level interchange in the state at Capitol Lake, when the Highway 9 road to Mud Bay through the West Side of Olympia was added at the request of the City of Olympia. The roadway not only plowed through Tumwater but required the demolition of several houses and a huge cut in the hillside overlooking Capitol Lake at 27th Avenue in Olympia as Capitol Way crossed over the freeway at that location. A small lake east of the right of way, Moss Lake, was partly filled. Huge amounts of fill dirt formed the ramps to the bridge over the Deschutes Waterway, which was bridged by mammoth concrete structures.

The \$12 million freeway project opened on December 1958 after four years of construction. Governor Albert D. Rosellini, the Washington Director of Highways, and Olympia Mayor Amanda Smith officiated at the formal opening ceremonies.<sup>ii</sup>

### **More Road and Bridge Changes**

The completion of the freeway in 1958 did not solve all the traffic problems. A second bridge over Budd Inlet on Fifth Avenue was completed in 1958. It was designed by Sargent Engineers and built by Troy T. Burnham. Funding came from a bond issue from Olympia of \$97,000 with \$136,480 from State funds.

In the 1950s the City connected Plum Street with freeway access and an enlarged LID was funded in the early 1960s to widen Plum and Union and landscape Plum Street as the welcoming entrance to the city. In 1963, construction of Henderson Boulevard through the old watershed provided a new southern connection with downtown. This new connection was necessitated by the I-5 off-ramp at Plum Street.

By 1972 the city completed a revamping of East Bay Drive with a new bridge to Priest Point Park. In 1974, urban arterial work was completed in the Black Lake, Lilly Road and Pacific Avenue areas of the city.<sup>lii</sup>

The freeway through Olympia was again expanded in the late 1980s when the 1950s-era freeway was widened and new ramps to Highway 101 and Interstate 5 northbound were constructed. Federal funds from the 1983 boost in the gas tax funded widening a section of I-5 at Olympia.

### **Automobile Related Changes**

With the change of the Old Highway 99 corridor away from downtown Olympia, many of the street corner gas stations disappeared. They had ranged in appearance from Mission Revival style to Curtain Wall construction designs.

Tourist courts had been a hallmark of the Highway 99 corridor before the construction of the freeway in 1958 through Olympia. Extant tourist courts from that corridor include the Bailey Motor Inn, 3333 Martin Way E., which began with 15 units in 1946 and expanded to 32 units in 1953. The Lodoro Motel at 3434 Martin Way E. was built in 1939-40 in a design by Joseph Wohleb for C. E. Nyland and later expanded in 1945.<sup>liii</sup> The Golden Gavel Motor Hotel was built on Capitol Way in 1957-58 by Dawley Brothers and was recently re-named the Olympia Inn.

Most of the auto showrooms in the city were built prior to the context statement era and continued in business downtown



Auto dealership. Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

until an extensive auto mall was built in West Olympia in 1985. Other auto-oriented structures from the period include Thorp Motors, built in 1945 on North Capitol Way and a Moderne downtown structure, Bernie's Garage, built in 1947 by Adolf Bernardt for an auto repair business. Dick Lewis built the modern signature A-frame Pontiac-Cadillac dealership on Plum Street near the new I-5 interchange in 1963-64.<sup>liv</sup>

## **Railroads**

Bypassed in 1873 by the Northern Pacific Railroad as its western terminus, Olympians built their own narrow gauge spur to Tenino, that connected to the mainline in 1878. In August 1891 the Northern Pacific began re-routing the mainline through Olympia. The rail line became important not only as a passenger route but also in the 1930s and 1940s when, according to one longtime railroad worker, as many as 39 trains a day were routed along the line carrying lumber products and canned goods from industries on the port fill.

The original Northern Pacific depot was located along what is now Capitol Lake and was a long wooden building. There was a coaling shed, freight platform and water tank in the complex.

The 1891 era depot was razed in January 1966 and the current depot was completed in 1967 at the same site. The depot was designed by A. C. Cayou, a staff architect with the Northern Pacific in Minnesota. The building served as a combined freight and passenger depot and is in the Transitional Colonial style.<sup>lv</sup> The building is currently vacant and owned by the State of Washington.<sup>lvi</sup>

The Union Pacific Railroad passenger depot was located at Fourth Avenue E. and Adams Street. In 1959 a runaway train, coming from south of Olympia, barreled into the depot, severely damaging the brick building. The train then crossed the street, demolishing parts of at least three buildings on the north side of Fourth. The damaged downtown buildings were eventually rebuilt. The depot was subsequently abandoned by Union Pacific and renovated as a commercial building.<sup>lvii</sup>

## **Bus Service**

Bus service between Olympia and neighboring cities has been operated from the North Coast Lines Depot (later the Greyhound Depot) since it was built in 1937. The depot was part of the service started September 10, 1937 via the new Highway 99 between Olympia and points north.<sup>lviii</sup> The name was changed to the North Coast Greyhound Lines in 1949 and in 1950 to the Greyhound Lines. Red Top Taxi, at 113 Fourth Avenue W., is a small brick building built in 1948 as the Trailways Bus Lines Depot and taxi center.

Within the city, a series of bus lines in Olympia had replaced the electric trolleys, which were discontinued in 1933. By 1970, Intercity Transit (IT) was created with bus service to Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater and most of Thurston County.

## **Air Travel**

Although there is an airport in Olympia, the city's residents travel to Sea-Tac International Airport for their major air travel needs.

The airport in Olympia was originally owned by the City of Olympia but was sold to the Port of Olympia in 1961. Since then, there have been many attempts to offer scheduled inter-city airline services but none have been successful. The airport is presently home to private planes and a small fleet of executive-type planes that are managed by the State Patrol and used for official State business.

## **Summary**

The City of Olympia was fundamentally transformed by the transportation changes that took place in the context period. In particular, the completion of the freeway in 1958 impacted almost every aspect of life here. Tumwater lost its city center and many neighborhoods were destroyed or disrupted, but it is impossible to think of how the citizenry of Olympia today could function if the freeway, road and bridge systems created during the Modern Period had not been constructed.

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<sup>li</sup> Stevenson, Shanna, "A Freeway Runs Through It," in Palmer, Gayle, ed., *The River Remembers*.

<sup>lii</sup> Information from Olympia Public Works Department.

<sup>liii</sup> *Daily Olympian*, Olympia Centennial Issue, May 1, 1950.

<sup>liv</sup> City of Olympia Building Department Records.

<sup>lv</sup> Historic Property Inventory Report, developed by Michael Houser.

<sup>lvi</sup> Watts Alice, "Taps for the NP Depot," *Sunday Olympian*, January 16, 1966, pg. 1, Olympia Building Department Records.

<sup>lvii</sup> "Helluva Way to Run a Railroad - The Great Train Wreck of '59 Killed One, Terrified Many," *The Olympian*, January 26, 1988, pg. 1, Section C.

<sup>lviii</sup> "New Bus Station Officially Open," *Olympia News*, April 8, 1937.

# COMMUNICATION

Many advances in communication occurred during the Modern Period. These changes affected the Olympia area just as transportation had. Although the earlier forms of communication, newspapers, telephone and radio, all up-dated their processes because of advances in technology during the period, the major impacts on communication that emerged were new on the scene, based solidly on technology, television and computers.

The technologies behind television and computers were being refined during the late 1930s. At the 1939 New York City World's Fair, television was showcased as "this futuristic wonder" of the world. Development of these two consumer technological wonders was postponed because of World War II although during the war the technology was used by government and the military.

By 1945, the Modern Period was off and running in all the areas of communication.

## **Newspapers**

The city's primary newspaper, *The Daily Olympian*, moved from a downtown location to the East Side in a new building at 111 Bethel Street N.E. Completed in 1972, the building was designed by the Austin Company of Renton. It was later renovated and enlarged in the 1990s. The paper was purchased by Gannett Publishers in 1971 when the name changed to *The Olympian*. The paper was later sold to Knight-Ridder newspapers in 2005 and then resold to the McClatchy Company.

During this time technology also affected how the company would be operated. The linotype process and operators were no longer used or needed. The daily production of the newspaper would now use state of the art technology.

Another local paper, *The Olympia News*, was published as a weekly by a number of publishers including Eddie Alexander and George Warren in downtown Olympia from 1924 to 1988.<sup>lix</sup>

## **Telephone**

Telephone service in Olympia started in 1889 under a franchise granted by the City of Olympia to the Sunset Telephone Company of San Francisco. By 1900 the telephone service supplier was listed as the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company. The firm built the Fleetwood Building for its operations in 1937. It was designed by Seattle architect Carl Gould. Additions were made to the building in 1948 and 1956. The Fleetwood Building (named for a local exchange) housed the business office, long distance operators and technical and switching facilities. The dial system was instituted for the Olympia area in this building. The Fleetwood Building was eventually renovated for transitional housing units in 1997. The current telephone company switching building on Washington Street dates from 1957. An auxiliary concrete building, no longer used for telephone purposes, at Eighth Avenue was built in 1967.<sup>lx</sup>

## **Radio Stations**

Station KGY was begun at St. Martin's College in Lacey by Benedictine monk Fr. Sebastian Ruth. After a few experimental efforts, the first program aired in September 1921, with regular programming starting the next year. On April 4, 1922 the station's license was received with the call letters "KGY." It was the 110<sup>th</sup> license to be issued in the United States.

The first home of the transmitter was at St. Martin's and remained at the college until 1932 when it was relocated to the Capital Park Building at 11<sup>th</sup> and Capitol Way. KGY moved to a waterfront location at 1240 Washington Street N.E. in 1960, where it remains today in a building designed by architect Stacey Bennett, who was associated with Robert Wohleb at the time.

The style of the building is Modern-Contemporary and the structure is Balloon Frame and was called an "ultra modern design" at the time it was built. It is a two story wooden structure set entirely on pilings located at the northern end of the port peninsula in Olympia. The building is clad with vertical siding.<sup>lxii</sup>

Several other commercial stations were given licenses during the period. Local radioman Don Whiteman started KITN Radio in the 1950s and operated from a studio at 610 Columbia Street downtown. Another station was KLDY, which was run completely by women. KAOS, licensed to The Evergreen State College, signed on January 1, 1973 and continues to the present time.<sup>lxiii</sup>

## **Television Stations**

During the 1930s, the British, Germans, Russians, French, Italians, Japanese and Americans were all conducting limited experiments and airing sporadic television broadcasts. Starting in 1946 the number of stations and new television sets began to increase and a boom followed. There were stations in New York City, Boston, Washington, D.C., Schenectady, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco by 1946.

Finally on November 25, 1948, television came to Seattle with KING TV's inaugural broadcast. This lone station was to provide television to the entire Puget Sound area, including Olympia, until 1953 when it was joined by KOMO TV. The KING tower in Seattle, and eventually several others, was on Queen Anne Hill and people used antennas called "Rabbit Ears" that sat on top of the television set. Most early sets were round screened and were small, 8 inches or less. Offerings, of course, were in black and white.

In 1949 in Olympia, reception was especially good on Johnson Point because an additional tower had been built on Vashon Island and the signal could travel across the water for better reception.

In these early days of television in Olympia, as in other parts of the country, very few people had television sets, and stores that sold televisions would always have a TV set on in their windows, quite often with a loud speaker. People would crowd around on

the sidewalk outside and watch the programs, among them The Texaco Star Theater with Milton Berle. It was a local happening, a social event.

Olympians were dependent on stations from Seattle and also Tacoma. Very few local Olympia events or news items were broadcast from these stations. Some of the stations after KING and KOMO in Seattle were KCTS, public station in 1953, KIRO in 1958 and KSTW in Tacoma.

This dependence on primarily Seattle-originated programming continued into the Post Modern Period, but some local programming has emerged. The “futuristic wonder” had definitely had an impact on Olympia.<sup>lix</sup>

## **Computers**

During the Modern Period, along with television, the computer age had arrived. Just as with television, much of the development of computer technology had taken place into the late 1930s. Although consumer development was postponed during World War II, the technology developed so far was essential to the Allied war effort.

From about 1955 on, computers began to be an important part of business in Olympia and also in the running of State government. The primary machine was the Main Frame. The desktop personal computer had not been developed yet. Private and public sector employees needed training in the use of computers, not only in learning electronic languages but also in acquiring keypunch skills.

One local source of this training was Olympia Vocational Technical Institute (OVTI), established in 1962. It was housed in the old Montgomery Ward Building on Fourth Avenue in downtown Olympia. Two of the original training programs were Electronic Data Processing and Key Punch Operation. They were popular programs and the graduates easily received jobs in the private sector and at the State agencies.

## **Summary**

The effect of technology on all forms of communication throughout the Modern Period had been unparalleled. It was a far different world in 1975 than it had been in 1945. Since 1975, the technological changes in communication have continued at an even faster pace. Technology has certainly impacted the lives of the residents of Olympia.

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<sup>lix</sup> Wyland, Scott, “Newspaper has colorful history,” Thurston County Sesquicentennial Edition, *The Olympian*. January 12, 2002, pg. 39.

<sup>lx</sup> Assessor’s Records; telephone interview with Jack Doyle; Olympia City Directories; Carl F. Gould: *A life in architecture and the arts*, by T. William Both and William H. Wilson, Seattle, 1995.

<sup>lxi</sup> Stevenson, Shanna, “60 Years of Radio”, 1982. KGY History Files “Work on New KGY Building Starts at Port Next Week,” *Olympia News*, January 28, 1960, pg. 1. “KGY New Home,” *Olympia News*, August 4, 1960.

<sup>lxii</sup> Web site-KAOS 89.3 FM, Olympia Community Radio.

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lxiii Pendleton, Nat. "The Dawn of Modern, Electronic Television," a paper presented at the March, 2001 meeting of the South Carolina Historical Association. (Available on Internet.) Baird, Iain. "Television in the World of Tomorrow," adapted from "Television in the World of Tomorrow," by Iain Baird, ECHOES Magazine, Winter, 1997. (Available on Internet.) Television Stations in Seattle, WA. Web site.

# GOVERNMENT

The presence of government operations in Olympia at all levels, federal, state, county and city, has always had a great impact on the city. Olympia has been the territorial and state capital of Washington from 1853. Its economic vitality has been tied to government employment and its identity is closely associated with its 'capitalhood.'

## **State Government**

Capitol Buildings were located in various locations in downtown Olympia before the present Capitol Group was built in 1911. Although most of the west campus buildings were completed by the 1920s, some additions were made during the 1940s and early 1950s. In the mid-1950s, many headquarters of state offices were leaving Olympia. A lawsuit, *Lemon ex rel. Langlie*, was initiated by local Olympia business people. The case, decided by the Washington Supreme Court in 1954, resulted in the return of the headquarters of state agencies to Olympia. That decision spurred the influx of population to Olympia with the growth of state government and redevelopment, particularly on what was to become the East Capitol Campus and other parts of Olympia.<sup>lxiv</sup>

Just before this case was decided, in 1953, a time capsule was buried on the West Campus in the flag plaza between the Legislative Building and the Temple of Justice to commemorate the Washington territorial centennial. A second capsule was buried in 1976 to commemorate the federal bi-centennial.<sup>lxv</sup>

Also in 1954, the Tivoli Fountain, a replica of its namesake in Copenhagen, Denmark, was donated as a gift from The Olympia-Tumwater Foundation and was placed on the West Campus. It was refurbished in 2006.

The State added several buildings during this time. An off-campus building used for state offices is the Union Avenue Office Building at 120 Union SE, built in 1954 in a Solid End Wall design. The General Administration Building was built in 1956 on the West Campus in a design by Tacoma architect A. Gordon Lumm. The building was the first major commission to be completed outside of the original Capitol Group plan developed by Wilder and White. It is one of the best examples in the state of the International Style which was born out of the Bauhaus movement from Germany. There is a distinctive mural in the front lobby by glass artist Jean Cory Beall.<sup>lxvi</sup>

In 1958 the state parking garage at Columbia Street and Union Avenue was built. It is one of the earliest known Brutalist buildings in the state and an early example nationally. The architect was Warren Brown and the engineering firm was Anderson and Anderson Engineering.<sup>lxvii</sup>

Another West Campus structure, the State Library, now called the Joel Pritchard Building, is a 1959-era Paul Thiry-designed modern building. Fronting the building is a fountain featuring bronze seagulls and salmon by Everett Du Pen. A bronze sundial in

front of the building by John W. Elliot features scenes from Washington history. Inside, the building features an abstract by Mark Tobey on the lower floor and a mosaic wall by James Fitzgerald.<sup>lxviii</sup>

In the 1960s the Capitol Campus began expanding east of the original campus along Capitol Way. When the Employment Security and Highways-Licenses Buildings were erected in 1962 on the East Campus, a number of local landmarks fell under the wrecking ball, including the Olympia High School and Maple Park Apartments. Also built nearby at this time was the Archives Building. They were designed by Harmon, Pray and Dietrich Architects. The Highways and Employment Security buildings were described as “classic contemporary.” The exteriors were constructed of manufactured stone. The Highways Building was remodeled in 1995 to incorporate an exterior stair tower. The Archives Building was built with a dual purpose as a bomb shelter and archive during the Cold War.<sup>lxix</sup>

Construction of state buildings continued on into the 1970s. The H-shaped Department of Transportation building was built in 1971 in a design by architects Young, Richardson and Carleton.

A state law passed in 1974 allowed one-half of 1% of the total cost of new buildings to be used for public art, and several pieces were produced for the East Campus under that provision. Fronting the Transportation Building is a giant burnished stainless steel slabwork installation by Lee Kelly. On the east side of the building is a large bronze work, “Shaman” by James Hansen. There is also a stonework sculpture entitled “Mysteries of Life” by James Washington near the building and a tubular metal artwork by Thomas Jay. Other public art on the East Campus includes “Woman Dancing” by Phillip Levine and a red cedar carving of a killer whale by Duane Pasco.<sup>lxx</sup>

Other state buildings from this period are the Plaza Garage built in 1974 and Office Building II, designed by Richardson and Associates of Seattle in 1975. Office Building II features some of the largest open office spaces in the state and utilized the concept of cubicles for offices.<sup>lxxi</sup>

What is known as the “East Campus” encompasses a significant collection of Olympia’s modern buildings. The original plaza design of the East Campus was by landscape architects Walker and McGough of Spokane with some landscaping by the Jongejan/Gerrard firm of Bellevue. The plaza won an American Landscape Architects Award in 1978. It features a fountain, “Water Garden,” by noted designer Lawrence Halprin.<sup>lxxii</sup>

### **County Government**

The 1930s era county court house on Capitol Way designed by Joseph Wohleb served the county until a new courthouse complex was built in 1977 on Lakeridge Drive on the Mottman Hill.<sup>lxxiii</sup>

## **City Government**

The city changed rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s with an increase of over 5000 in population during the decade. Everything in the city was affected, especially the infrastructure.

## **Infrastructure**

In the late 1940s the City changed its water source from the southeastern portion of the city to a remote location northeast of the city known as McAllister Springs. After the springs were acquired in 1947, an extensive pipe and reservoir system was constructed to bring the spring water into the city including a large water tank on McCormick Street and a pump station on the West Side. These sources were augmented by the acquisition of Allison Springs in the 1970s and the Elliot Street tank. This initiative to provide a new water source for the city with an ample 36 inch pipe brought enough water to provide water to the city for many years. This water planning was a pivotal event to ensure the growth of the city over the next century.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

The creation of Capitol Lake in 1951 was also a vital community infrastructure improvement. The area had been an estuary for the Deschutes River with the mouth subject to tidal action which created mud flats at low tide and created a 260-acre reservoir. The Deschutes River was dammed by an earthen dam. As part of the project an 80-foot concrete spillway and bridge along Fifth Avenue in Olympia were also built, blocking the tidal flow of Budd Inlet and creating the lake. As part of the construction of the Fifth Avenue dam, a small, rectangular, concrete control house was built which features incised elements. It straddles the dam itself.<sup>lxxv</sup>

## **City Planning**

A preliminary city plan was developed in 1946 by Charles W. Eliot for the Olympia City Planning Commission. A city Comprehensive Plan was developed in 1948, and another plan was completed in 1959-60. A civic group, "Committee for the 60's," had been formed in November 1960 by the City Commission to study a capital improvement program for the city including an auditorium, utilities and "Downtown Special Action Projects." As a result of the initiatives proposed by the Committee for the 60's, in September 1962 a ballot measure was presented to fund a new extension of Henderson Boulevard, a new city hall and a new park and swim facility at the northeast corner of Capitol Lake. Several of the projects, funded through general obligation bonds, were completed in the 1960s. The other top committee priorities - a new library and a performing arts center - were completed in the 1970s.

A "Committee for the 70s" was formed by the Olympia City Commission to initiate another round of civic projects. This group was less active than the "Committee for the 60's" but they did succeed in creating the first Medic I service in the city, using a federal matching grant.<sup>lxxvi</sup>

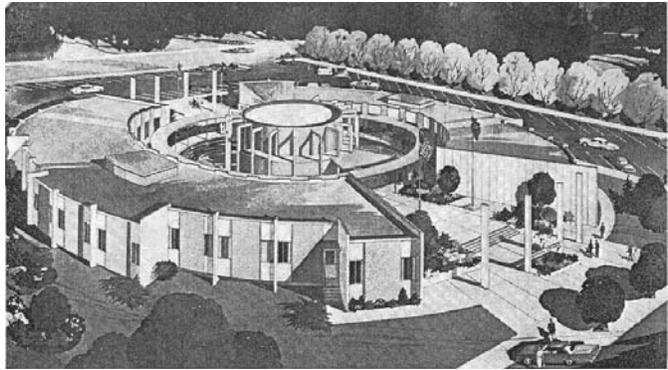
The city's economy was in a downturn in the 1960s as lumber processing moved elsewhere. The city commission was not anxious to intervene in economic areas but in

1975 the Central Olympia Revitalization Effort (CORE) was formed with an ambitious plan to create a downtown pedestrian mall with three large parking garages, and proposed to close Fifth Avenue between Capitol and Washington. The promise of downtown revitalization was carried on again with the RU/DAT (Rural/Urban Design Assistance Team) visit to the city in 1979. The goal of the RU/DAT visit was to identify opportunities for civic and economic revitalization.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

### **City Buildings**

Among other civic improvements, the city built a new fire substation in West Olympia in 1948. The station was designed by Joseph Wohleb with A.G. Homann as builder. It was named for a longtime firefighter in the city, George Talcott, who was a volunteer fire chief and an owner of Talcott Jewelers in downtown Olympia. The building became a West Side police station in 1993 after a new fire substation was built.<sup>lxxviii</sup>

As authorized by the bond issue of 1962, the city built a new city hall in 1966 on the outskirts of downtown at a cost of just under \$1 million. The Olympia City Hall is an exceptional example of period architecture. Upon completion, the building was highly touted nation-wide as a model of good design, architectural innovation, and



Graphic depicting the Olympia City Hall. Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

space planning. It was designed by Robert Wohleb and the builder was Andy Johnson.<sup>lxxix</sup>

A city maintenance center was constructed in 1977 on the site of the former water department buildings on Henderson Boulevard. This area is near the former water source for the city and is now Watershed Park.

### **Federal Government**

The federal government also had needs for offices and other structures in the city. The L-shaped office building at 120 Union Avenue was built in 1954. It housed state and federal offices as well as private firms, including Dawley Brothers Construction Company.

A curtain wall structure used as a Federal Office Building was constructed in 1959 at 1007 Washington N. and was built by Dawley Brothers. The building was used for FBI Headquarters and the Social Security Administration. It is the best example of curtain wall architecture in the city of Olympia.<sup>lxxx</sup>

A new downtown post office was built in 1963-64 in a design by William Olson of Issaquah and built by Cruver Coyne Construction Company. Bennett and Johnson

Architects designed an addition to the building in 1969 and it was remodeled again in 2000.

### Summary

During the Modern Period, with a great increase in population coupled with the movement of many state agencies back to Olympia, the government component of the city changed significantly. State government construction expanded tremendously and in the city of Olympia, the City Planning Commission was established, along with new buildings being built, such as a new city hall, public library, post office and county courthouse. Olympia had undergone tremendous change and was ready for the future.

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- lxvi Information from Michael Houser, DAHP, April, 2006. Historic Property Inventory Report, developed by Michael Houser.
- lxvii Historic Property Inventory Report, developed by Michael Houser.
- lxviii Ibid.
- lxix Ibid.
- lxx Stevenson, Shanna, "Capitol Campus: East and West." The Sunday Olympian Totem Tidings, May 25, 1980, pgs. 6-7.
- lxxi Information from Michael Houser, DAHP, April, 2006.
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[http://www.tclf.org/landslide/saved/watergarden/watergarden\\_saved.htm](http://www.tclf.org/landslide/saved/watergarden/watergarden_saved.htm)., Accessed January 1, 2008.
- lxxiii Stevenson, Shanna. Building a Capital City. Olympia, WA: Olympia Heritage Commission, 2000, pg. 70.
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- lxxvi "Committee for the '60s," n. d. n. p., Flyer on city initiatives.
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- lxxix Ibid.
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## EDUCATION – K THROUGH 12

In 1945, there were four elementary schools, one junior high or middle school, and one high school in the Olympia School District.<sup>lxxxix</sup> There were also several private schools operating in the area. Because of the increase in population during the Modern Period, the Olympia School District replaced many old schools and built several new structures. There were several changes taking place within the private school sector, also.

### **Public Schools in Olympia during the Modern Period**

The three levels of schools are elementary school, middle school (formerly called junior high school), and high school. The term middle school will be used even though the school had started as a junior high school.

Among those built in the late 1940s was Roosevelt Elementary School on the Eastside. It was designed by Naramore and Brady of Seattle and built by A. G. Homann in 1949. The McKinley Elementary School on Boulevard Road was also designed by Naramore and Brady and built in 1949 by Steensor Construction Company in consultation with Wohleb and Wohleb. Of these, Roosevelt School has since been replaced and McKinley School has been razed. Schools damaged by the 1949 earthquake included Garfield, Lincoln, McKinley Elementary Schools and the Olympia High School on Capitol Way.

A new field house was built at Stevens Field just south of the present Lincoln Elementary School on Washington Street in 1948. However, the baseball grandstand at the field burned down in 1949.

In that same year, to accommodate the population expansion in southeast Olympia, the school district purchased 40 acres of land from the former Cloverfields Dairy between Carlyon Avenue and North Street in May 1949. Later, in 1955, this area was annexed into the city. Also, during this period, in 1950, the Hayes School District in southeast Olympia on the Yelm Highway had consolidated with the Olympia District.

Other changes were coming. Additions to Garfield and Roosevelt Elementary Schools were made in 1951-1952 by the Westside Construction Company. In 1954, the old Roosevelt Elementary School was torn down and playsheds were built at McKinley, Roosevelt and Lincoln Elementary Schools. On the eastside, a new Madison Elementary School opened in September 1956. It was designed by Wohleb and Wohleb Architects. In 1956, the firm designed the remodel of Washington Middle School with A. G. Homann as the project contractor. Wohleb and Wohleb also designed the new Rogers Elementary School, located in northeast Olympia, in 1956. The builder was Cascade Olympic Contractors. On the westside, A. G. Homann built Jefferson Middle School in 1956 in a design also by Wohleb and Wohleb. At the old Washington Middle School, the Music Building and Girls' School gymnasium were built by Cascade Olympic contractors and dedicated April 8, 1958.

The first school-related construction at the Cloverfields farm site off North Street was in 1957 when a shop was built by Cascade Olympia for the proposed new Olympia High School in a design by architect Bob Olson. The new high school, still officially named after William Winlock Miller, was designed by Naramore, Bain, Brady and Johanson Architects of Seattle with Anderson Construction as the contractor. It opened in 1961. In 2001, the building was extensively renovated from its original appearance.

A new northwest area school, L. P. Brown Elementary School, designed by Bennett and Johnson Architects, opened in the mid-1960s and was enlarged in 1968. Another elementary school, Pioneer, also on the former Cloverfields farm site, was dedicated in November 1969. The building was designed by Steve Johnson of Bennett and Johnson Architects and featured an innovative open concept, patterned after California schools of the period. A large gym addition was added to the school in the 1990s.

Reeves Middle School, named for local Olympia educator Wilfred Reeves, was dedicated January 8, 1970 in northeast Olympia. It was designed by Naramore, Bain, Brady and Johanson Architects. Another new Washington Middle School in southeast Olympia off Cain Road opened in September 1969. It was razed in 2005 for a new structure.

The Stevens Field grandstand, rebuilt after the 1949 fire, burned again in 1967 and the school district decided to rebuild not only the grandstand but also a substantial new structure, Ingersoll Stadium, adjacent to Olympia High School in southeast Olympia. The concrete stadium was designed by Don Avery and was dedicated September 27, 1968.

The city's second high school, located on the Westside, was Capital High School off Conger Avenue, designed by Bennett, Johnson, Selenes and Smith Architects and opened in 1975.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

### **Private Schools in Olympia during the Modern Period**

Saint Michael School began in 1881 as Providence St. Amable, then Providence Academy and finally named Saint Michael School. The first building in 1881 was a shack on 9th Avenue in Olympia (between what is now Columbia Street and Capitol Way). It was to be a "temporary" school and convent. It was enlarged through the years into a three-story building, used until June 1951. The first floor survived the 1949 earthquake but the second and third floors were condemned for use.

Looking ahead, land had been purchased earlier in 1949 for a new school at 10th Avenue and Eastside Street and John Maloney, Seattle architect, had been contracted to design the building. The local contractor was A. J. Phillips. The new school opened in September 1951 and currently has over 250 students enrolled in grades K through 8.

The old building on 9th Avenue was razed and used as a parking lot for Saint Michael Church, which had adjoined the school. In 1966, the church also moved to Eastside Street.<sup>lxxxiii</sup>

The Evergreen Christian School was founded in 1974 and is located on Black Lake Boulevard S. E. in Olympia. The school presently has over 350 students enrolled in grades K through 8.<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

The Thurston County Off-Campus Secondary School was a private alternative high school started in about 1974 and closed in about 2000. In its most recent years, it was housed in the historic Hurley House on Fourth Avenue in Olympia.<sup>lxxxv</sup>

Since 1976, many additional private schools, both religious-oriented and non-sectarian, have been established and most have thrived in the city.

### **Summary**

By 1975, reflecting the increase in population in Olympia, the number of public schools had increased. There were six elementary schools, three middle schools (or junior highs) and two high schools by the end of the Modern Period.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> The two religious schools mentioned above were well established by the end of the Period. The architecture of the schools built during the Modern Period reflected the needs and style of the time.

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<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Polk Directory, Olympia, WA, 1946.

<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Knox, Esther. A Diary of the Olympia School District 1852-1976, and Stevenson, Shanna. Building a Capital City, A Sesquicentennial Project of the City of Olympia Heritage Commission. Olympia, WA., 2000, and the Calendar and Chronology of the Olympia School District.

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> St. Michael School History, web site; and Contris, Michael, Ed., St. Michael School, 100 Years, 1882-1982. St. Michael's, 1982.

<sup>lxxxix</sup> Thurston County Private Schools website.

<http://www.privateschoolreview.com> ; and Interview with Earl Pilgrim, Historian of the Evergreen Christian Community.

<sup>lxxxv</sup> Thurston County Private Schools website.

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Polk Directory, Olympia, WA, 1976.

# HIGHER EDUCATION

As in other areas in the country following World War II, enrollment in institutions of higher education soared as returning military took advantage of the G.I. Bill. Saint Martin's College, now Saint Martin's University, had existed in the Olympia area since 1895 and met some of this need. During the Modern Period, two other major institutions of higher education were to be established. The Olympia Vocational Technical Institute, later to become South Puget Sound Community College, was founded in 1962, and The Evergreen State College was founded in 1967, with the first cohort of students enrolled in 1971. These new institutions were to profoundly affect the educational opportunities available to people in this region, as well as changes in other aspects of life in the community.

## **Saint Martin's University - Lacey, Washington**

Although Saint Martin's opened its doors to high school-age students on September 11, 1895, it did not offer college-level courses until 1900 and then only to an all-male student body. It was not until 1940 that the school granted its first baccalaureate degree. Eventually undergraduate degrees in 22 disciplines would be offered. Saint Martin's became coeducational in 1965 and by the 1980s had added graduate programs in education, engineering and counseling psychology. Today,

graduate degrees in six areas of study are offered. In August 2005, the college became Saint Martin's University to reflect its broader mission.



Photo of Abbey Church. Courtesy of St. Martin's College.



Photo of Baran Hall. Courtesy of St. Martin's College.

The University, under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Order of St. Benedict, has a campus of 302 acres between Pacific Avenue and Martin Way in Lacey. During its long existence, the campus architecture has covered the gamut of styles, from the classic Old Main Building, the first wing of which was built in 1913, to the more recent additions in the Modern Period, among them, Baran Hall, a dormitory, built in 1957 and

designed by Paul Thiry, the Saint Martin's Pavilion, built in 1968 and originally named the Capital Pavilion, and the Abbey Church built in 1971 and designed by Bennett and Johnson.<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

## South Puget Sound Community College – Olympia, Washington

Although Olympia Vocational Technical Institute (OVTI) was officially established in 1962, its roots go back to at least 1957 when the Olympia School District started adult education in the Olympia area. From 1962 to 1969, OVTI continued to operate under the management of the Olympia School District. In 1969, the school joined Centralia College in Community College District 12, and the next year moved to the present Mottman Road campus. In 1976 the name was changed to Olympia Technical Community College to better reflect the college's



Photo of the Olympia Vocational Technical Institute in 1964. Courtesy of the Southwest Regional Branch of the Washington State Archives.

membership in the community college system. The college became a comprehensive community college in 1984 and was renamed South Puget Sound Community College. In 1988, the college split from District 12 and became a separate district, District 24.

In 1970, on the Mottman Road campus, all offices and classrooms were housed in used portable buildings. It was not until late 1975 that the first of many permanent buildings was built on the campus.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> The first building, now called the College Center, was finished in early 1976, and was designed by Bennett, Johnson, Selenes and Smith. The style is unique in that the building was designed to reflect the industrial/technical education mission of the college at the time.<sup>lxxxix</sup>



Portable buildings. Photo from SPSCC

With the completion of the building, the college changed dramatically. The structure was the focal point of the college, with the first floor housing the President's and Deans' offices, the Board Room and other administrative offices.

On the second floor were registration, the counseling center, the library and the cafeteria. There is an open area in the center of the structure, two stories high with a balcony all around. All heating and power ducts and other mechanical systems are in open view so that the interior looks much like a factory. From the second floor you can view the various technical programs in operation through windows looking down on the two-story technical areas, e.g., the welding program. Even those technical programs that only had one-story had large windows so that the students in the program could be viewed, e.g., carpentry. It was not designed as a usual college building, although there were also regular classrooms and faculty offices.

The large outdoor sculpture by the building as well as the indoor sculpture were commissioned at this time, using one-half of 1% of the total construction costs of the building, as authorized by the Washington State Arts commission. The artist of the outdoor sculpture was Ted Jonsson. The sculpture is named “Terradigm,” from Terrahedron for vocational exactness, and Paradigm for a model or example. It weighs about 9,000 pounds and was rolled by the Seattle Boiler Company. Each section of the piece appears round but is actually elliptical. Originally it was designed to be made of stainless steel, but due to lack of funding it was instead constructed with 3/8-inch corten, which is intended to rust. In 150 years the sculpture will “mature” into a blackish color.



Photo from the SPSCC

The interior sculpture, a fiber hanging named “Vocology II” is at the entrance of the building and represents all the technical programs in the college in 1976. The artist was Gloria Crouse. There are horse shoeing nails, glass tubing from medical assisting, tooth models from dental assisting, spark plugs and distributor caps from automotive, typewriter spools from secretarial, film canisters from the library, planter boxes from horticulture and vacuum tubes from electronics.

### **The Evergreen State College – Thurston County, Washington**

The Evergreen State College was authorized by the Washington State Legislature in 1967 and opened in the fall of 1971 on a site north of Olympia on Cooper Point. The college was founded as a regional institution to provide unique interdisciplinary education opportunities for undergraduates. Graduate programs were added in the 1980s including Masters degrees in Environmental Studies, Public Administration and Teaching.



The college has been consistently acknowledged as one of the leading baccalaureate colleges in the nation by various organizations and publications. Because of its national reputation, Evergreen draws students from across the country. Many of these graduates stay and live in the area and add their culture to the Olympia tapestry. The founding of the college has had significant impacts on the cultural life of the city, as well as its intellectual, business and political climate.<sup>xc</sup>

The Daniel J. Evans Library, built in 1971, was designed by the architectural firm of Durham, Anderson and Freed and is in the Articulated Frame Style. The large clock tower in the front of the building off Red Square is the most prominent landmark on the campus.

Photo of Evergreen in the early 1970s.  
Photos courtesy of the Evergreen Archives

The first Lecture Hall was built in 1972, designed by the architectural firm of Harris, Reed and Litzenberger. The builder was C. E. and C., Inc. The hall received the 1972 honor award for excellence in the use of concrete by the Washington Aggregates and Concrete Association. Both the Library and the Lecture Hall are of poured concrete, as are the buildings built after them on the campus, and according to one source, exemplify some of the best examples of modern campus planning and Brutalist architecture of the period.<sup>xci</sup>

## Summary

Opportunities for higher education increased and changed considerably in the Olympia area during the Modern Period, with three very different institutions of higher education contributing to the mix. Social relationships have changed in the area, as well as the political and business environment, and housing and transportation because of the impact of these institutions.

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<sup>lxxxvii</sup> Scott, John C. *This Place Called Saint Martin's, 1895-1995: A Centennial History of Saint Martin's College and Abbey, Lacey, Washington*. Virginia Beach, Virginia: Donning Co., Publishers, 1996 and Saint Martin's University Home Page, About Us, <http://devweb.stmartin.edu/about/history.htm>.

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Fenske, Lois, *A History of South Puget Sound Community College, 1957 to 2006*. Olympia, Washington: South Puget Sound Community College, 2006.

<sup>lxxxix</sup> Statement by Frank Smith of Bennett, Johnson, Selenes and Smith (now Ambia), March 2007.

<sup>xc</sup> 20 Years of Making a Difference, *The Evergreen State College, 1967-1987*, *The Evergreen State College, 1987*. *The Evergreen State College - Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia (redirected from *The Evergreen State College*).

<sup>xci</sup> Statement by Michael Houser, Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), April 2006.

# RECREATION AND SOCIETY

From 1940 to 1945, the people of Olympia were completely absorbed in the war effort. Recreation, amusements and socializing took second place in their attention. At the beginning of the Modern Period in 1945, Olympia was on the cusp of change and this was especially apparent in the choices that the residents began to make.

Big changes began to take place. The creation of Capitol Lake, the influx of state workers, a general increase in the population bringing more diversity and sophistication to the city, and finally the establishment of two schools of higher education all had a major impact on recreation and society in Olympia. Activities available were far different at the end of the period than they had been in the beginning in 1945. In fact, by 1975, the city had begun to have the possibility of being the regional center for the arts.

## **Parks**

Until 1945, the city had acquired some major parks, for example, Priest Point Park in 1906. Two parks are within the city but are not owned by the City. One, Heritage Park by Capitol Lake, is an extension of the Capitol Campus and is managed by the Department of General Administration. It was originally designed in 1911 by architects Walter Wilder and Harry White, but the plan did not become a reality until the 1980s.

The other, Sylvester Park in downtown Olympia, was developed on land donated by Edmund Sylvester in 1850. In the mid 1950s the park became the center of controversy when the 1955 legislature passed an act which retracted the city's proprietary rights to the park. The State was planning to build an underground parking garage at the site. Under the stalwart leadership of Margaret McKenny, Herb Legg, and John Robinson, the City enacted a protective ordinance for the preservation of the park through a public vote in 1955.

Only four parks were acquired by the City during the context period. Lions Park was acquired in 1946 at 800 Wilson Street SE. This park is 3.72 acres and contains a sports field, tennis courts and playground area. The Olympia Lions Service Club and the Eastside Neighborhood Association collaborated to develop this small East Side Park.

Watershed Park was acquired in 1955 at 2500 Henderson Blvd SE. It contains 153 acres. In 1917 the city acquired the waterworks and operated the wells until they were replaced in the 1950s. In 1955 the property was to be logged and sold. Citizens were so overwhelmingly opposed that they appealed to the State Supreme Court to preserve the area and were successful. The park is popular for trail walking.

Stevens Field was acquired in 1963 at 300 2Fourth Avenue S.E. It is 13 acres and is owned by the Olympia School District but leased to the City of Olympia. It contains athletic fields, basketball and tennis courts and picnic areas.

The Little League Baseball Association Park at 3333 Morse-Merryman Road S.E. was developed in 1974 and is almost 23 acres of baseball fields as well as a running track and playground in Southeast Olympia. The park development was a cooperative arrangement between the Association and the City of Olympia.

As part of the creation of Capitol Lake in the 1950s and a citywide bond issue in 1962, a bathhouse and swimming area were installed at the northeast corner of the lake. The bathhouse, called The Capitol Lake Restrooms, was designed by local architect George Ekvall. It is constructed in concrete block and is in the Modern Utilitarian style and exhibits a sawtooth roof.<sup>xcii</sup> The swimming area has since been closed and the restrooms are due to be razed as part of a re-design of the area, which is part of Heritage Park.



Photo of the Capitol Lake Restrooms. Photo from Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

The preservation of Sylvester Park in downtown Olympia was ensured by a public vote in 1955. As part of the celebration of the federal bicentennial in 1976, a group of citizens built a new gazebo in the park, modeled after a 1930s structure. This was the latest in a series of bandstands in the park. It is now the site of concerts, various protests and marches and political gatherings.<sup>xciii</sup>

The development of the Percival Landing Boardwalk on Budd Inlet on the city's waterfront was done in three segments in 1977, 1984 and 1988. Although the actual construction of the boardwalk took place after the Modern Period, starting in 1977, the planning of the boardwalk took place during the context period and was an important element in the focus of the period on downtown revitalization. The development was facilitated by the efforts of then Commissioner of Public Lands, Bert Cole, who declared the shoreline public lands. Jim Swanson sold the former Copeland Lumber site at Fourth and Water to the city. City Parks Director Don Clark, long-time Mayor Eldon Marshall and Al Kimble, City Engineer of Olympia, were instrumental in the creation of the boardwalk. The name of the boardwalk commemorates the city's steamboat era when John Percival was the ticket agent for steamboat service from a dock at the site. The name was suggested by maritime historian, Gordon Newell.<sup>xciv</sup>

### **Festivals and Events**

Olympia hosted a number of summer celebrations including an annual "Pagan Fest," or "Pagan Days," as some local residents called it.<sup>xcv</sup> The event was especially popular in the late 1930s. In one parade in about 1937, bearded men wearing only loin clothes paraded down Capitol Way.<sup>xcvi</sup> When the last festival was held is unknown. Why the pagan theme was used is unknown as well.

Also begun in the 1930s, the Pet Parade was initially part of the 4-H Harvest Festival and by 1935 was officially sponsored by the *Daily Olympian*. It has been held annually since that time as an end of summer vacation event sponsored by the paper. The event features a parade of children and their pets in costumes, with participants vying for prizes from local businesses.<sup>xcvii</sup>

Christmas Island was a well-known local attraction during this era. In December 1941, Leonard Huber, a local designer, built his first version of a lighted Christmas scene, which became known as “Christmas Island.” It was to become an important Olympia holiday tradition. Huber first installed it at his home on the east side of Olympia. The lighted display immediately drew approving crowds. In the late 1950s Huber created a larger display that was anchored in Capitol Lake and installed with the help of Ft. Lewis soldiers. It burned in 1961 and Huber rebuilt it by 1964. The Olympia Chamber of Commerce, which had long supported the effort, withdrew funding for the display in 1970. The scene was relocated to Boston Harbor but returned to Capitol Lake by 1975 and continued until 1979. It was later shown in Lacey and at a local church.<sup>xcviii</sup>

In 1950, the City of Olympia celebrated its Centennial with a parade, pageant, street fair and other activities. Many residents donned pioneer style clothes and men grew beards for the celebration. A small log cabin was built in Sylvester Park as headquarters for the event.

In 1956, Olympia hosted a carnival and in 1957 officially dubbed the celebration “Lakefair.” The capital’s summer fest is organized by volunteers and has been celebrated annually since that time with a parade, royalty, carnival, sports events, concerts, arts and other festive events centered at Capitol Lake, Percival Landing and downtown.

### **Theater, Arts, Music and Museums**

In the area of entertainment, the State Theater was built in a Moderne Design by Wohleb and Wohleb Architects in 1949.<sup>xcix</sup> The Liberty Theater at Fifth and Washington was built in 1924 as a vaudeville house and was renovated and refurbished in 1948 becoming the Olympic Theater movie house. The Olympic was then taken down to just a few exterior walls in the early 1980s and completely rebuilt as the Washington Center for the Performing Arts, opening in 1985. While the building’s façade still retains a few elements of the 1924 architecture, the interior is contemporary and modern.<sup>c</sup> The Olympia Little Theater built a new building at 1925 Miller Avenue N.E. in east Olympia in 1973.



Olympic Theater before it was completely rebuilt into the Washington Center for the Performing Arts. Photo courtesy of the Southwest Regional Branch of the Washington State Archives.

The impact of the Seattle World's Fair of 1962, "Century 21," was enormous in the area. The Jacaranda Restaurant started as the model "Century 21 Plywood Home of Living Light" at the fair. (See Commercial Section.) A Century 21 Totem Pole was



Vintage postcard of the Seattle World's Fair depicting space age totem poles and a geodesic dome.

designed in 1961 by architect Fred Bassetti and manufactured by the Cascade Pole Company. The 60-foot log pole was designed especially for the State Capitol Museum at 211 21st Avenue S.W. as a replica of several poles, which were installed at the south entrance to the Seattle World's Fair. The pole was removed in 1990 and now sits in three pieces on the ground at the museum.

The log pole was turned into a sculptural element with a variety of round divets and resembles a children's toy.<sup>ci</sup>

By the early 1970s, the impact of the Evergreen State College was felt in the arts community. The first Arts Walk was held in 1972 and is now held twice a year and in the spring is in conjunction with the Procession of the Species. The Procession of the Species, a parade where community members create elaborate costumes celebrating the diversity of earth's plant and animal life, began in 1995.

### **Marine Activities**

Pleasure boating was a growing marine-related activity during the modern area. Within Olympia, marinas were built and people started bringing their boats for moorage. West Bay Marina started around 1972 in a former manufacturing district. Prior to this, several marinas had started on Budd Inlet, Fiddlehead at 611 Columbia St. N.W. and Martin's at 401 Columbia Street N.W.

During the context period, as moorage for pleasure boats became more available, interest in boating organizations increased. The Olympia Yacht Club had been founded in 1904. Their present club headquarters at 201 Simmons Street N., called Steamboat Crest, was built in 1924 and has continued all through the Modern Period and to the present as a viable organization for boaters.<sup>ci</sup>In 1971, the South Sound Sailing Society was formed specifically for sail boat owners, offering cruising and racing opportunities. The organization does not have a physical building.

New maritime festivals entertained boating enthusiasts. Harbor Days, initiated in 1974, features tug boat races and an arts and crafts fair. The event started at the Port of Olympia and moved to Percival Landing Park. It is celebrated Labor Day weekend. The Wooden Boat Fair, which takes place at Percival Landing on Memorial Day weekend, began in the late 1970s and features vessels crafted from wood.

## Community Centers

The city built a new community center on East Fourth Avenue, which opened in 1947 and closed in 1986. The 1947 building replaced the USO center at the same site, which had burned in 1943. After World War II, the city started the purchase of the USO building with a donation from the Olympia Elks Lodge and completed the purchase in 1951. The building was demolished in 1994 after a new community center was built downtown on North Capitol Way.<sup>ciii</sup>

## Clubs and Organizations

Following World War II, Olympia's civic and social organizations flourished. The long-standing service clubs, e.g., Lions and Rotary, had been prominent in the city for many years, as were the fraternal organizations, e.g., Elks, Eagles, Moose and Odd Fellows. Other groups, in particular women's groups, became more numerous and influential during the Modern Period, e.g. Business and Professional Women, Zonta International, Junior League, League of Women Voters and American Association of University Women. A wide range of hobby clubs also started, e.g., the Olympia Genealogical Society began in 1970, and history related groups formed as well as garden and weavers groups. Youth organizations were numerous, e.g., Little League, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., and 4-H. Social service organizations also were important during the period and continue to be to the present, e.g., the Salvation Army, United Way, Bread and Roses.

Most of the groups operated out of rented facilities, but the Elks Club built a new curtain-wall style clubhouse near Capitol Lake in 1958 in a Wohleb and Wohleb Architects design. The multi-story building was razed in the 1990s for the construction of the Heritage Park Fountain.

## Summary

The opportunities for a wide variety of recreational activities and special interest organizations were available to the people of Olympia by the end of the context period. And they were more diverse than prior to 1945.

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<sup>xcii</sup> Historic Property Inventory Report developed by Michael Houser.

<sup>xciii</sup> General information on parks in this section is from City of Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation Plan, City of Olympia, 2002.

<sup>xciv</sup> Information from Eldon Marshall to Shanna Stevenson, 2005-2006.

<sup>xcv</sup> Interview with Winifred Olsen by Lois Fenske

<sup>xcvi</sup> From photograph discovered by Edward Echtle of the Olympia Historical Society.

<sup>xcvii</sup> "Camera to Film Pet Parade," Daily Olympian, August 30, 1930.

<sup>xcviii</sup> "Christmas Island: Huber's Sacred Scenes. A video of this famous Olympia holiday landmark." Leonard Huber and Videoland Productions, 1993.

<sup>xcix</sup> Wohleb Commission Records.

<sup>c</sup> Washington Center for the Performing Arts website, <http://www.washingtoncenter.org/>. Accessed December 25, 2007.

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ci Historic Property Inventory Report developed by Michael Houser; and Daily Olympian, April 21, 1963, p. 2.

cii Olympia Yacht Club website, <http://www.olympiyachtclub.org>. Accessed December 25, 2007.

ciiii Christie, Rebecca, Workingman's Hill: a History of An Olympia Neighborhood, Bigelow Highlands Neighborhood Association, 2001.

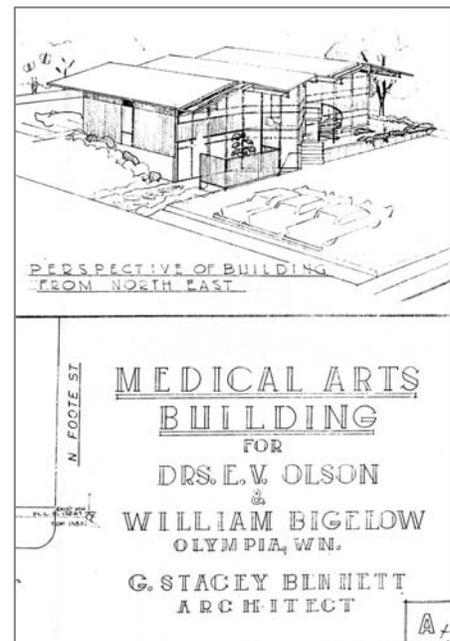
# HEALTH AND MEDICINE

In 1947, the University of Washington opened its School of Medicine, providing a training ground for doctors who practiced in the Olympia area. Provision of affordable health care was a challenge during this time, as healthcare was expensive and many people did not have access to health insurance. At the time, physicians primarily cared for their patients in independent offices or visited patients at their homes. The adoption of Title XVIII and Title XIX of the Social Security Act in 1965 extended government-funded health coverage to almost all Americans aged 65 and over and provided health services to low-income children and those with disabilities. Olympia saw substantial growth in the area of health and medicine.

A group of local doctors led by Dr. Kenneth Partlow opened the Memorial Clinic between Fourth and Fifth Avenue near the new Capitol Lake in 1948. The clinic was billed as a “One Package” medical center, where patients could receive their X-rays, lab work, and minor surgery in one place. Specialists worked in the clinic part-time, and an experimental lab was available, complete with guinea pigs for testing and research purposes. Joseph Wohleb designed the downtown building at Fourth Avenue and Brenner Street. It was a distinctive design with freestanding walls and radiant heat. Wohleb and Wohleb also designed the O’Leary Clinic at 1010 Washington S. in 1953.

The Medical Arts building was opened in 1966. Built at a cost of \$110,863, the building was developed as a series of medical offices by Dr. EV Olson and Dr. William Bigelow. The building also housed a pharmacy run by Dick Floyd and had offices for three other physicians. The building was designed by noted Olympia architect G. Stacey Bennett, whose work in the 1950s and 60s set the architectural standard for the city. The building is an exceptional example of contemporary Sawtooth Roof/Folded Plate style.

Olympia’s only hospital between 1945 and 1975 was Providence St. Peter Hospital, located on a hill overlooking downtown Olympia. In 1968, ground was broken for a new hospital building on Lilly Road. This state-of-the-art facility, built at a cost of \$4 million, was dedicated by the Sisters of Providence in a deluge of rain on December 7, 1970 and the hospital opened in 1971. The original ten-level tower and a two-level service base hospital was designed by the national architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill Architects. The building was designed to be enlarged, which has been done extensively since the original design. Several of the additions were designed by Bennett and Johnson Architects.



The new St. Peter Hospital building spurred development of medical-related and other auxiliary services near the hospital, including a new Memorial Clinic building, designed by Bennett and Johnson architects.

In 1973, the federal government passed the HMO act, which provided start up grants and loans for the development of Health Maintenance Organizations. Group Health, the Olympia area's largest HMO, opened a medical center in Olympia in the early 1970s. HMOs, championed by farmers and union members since the late 1940s, were a radical idea at the time. The success and rapid expansion of Group Health in the Seattle area, as well as the new Medicare and Medicaid systems, contributed to the company's expansion into the Olympia area.<sup>civ</sup>

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<sup>civ</sup> History of the Cooperative on the Group Health website, [http://www.ghc.org/about\\_gh/co-op\\_overview/history.jhtml](http://www.ghc.org/about_gh/co-op_overview/history.jhtml). Accessed December 28, 2007.

## RELIGION AND FUNERARY

At the beginning of the Modern Period there were about 28 houses of worship located in the downtown area representing mostly mainstream religions.<sup>cv</sup> During the Modern Period, with the increase in population in the city, came a greater diversity in the residents with many different congregations building new larger facilities. Many of the original congregations moved from downtown Olympia and built larger structures to accommodate the increased number of worshippers.

### **Houses of Worship**

There were many architecturally significant religious buildings built during the Modern Period in Olympia.

#### ***St. John's Episcopal Church***

St. John's Episcopal Church was incorporated in 1864; it was the first church in the state to do so. At that time, the congregation purchased an old frame carpenter shop and converted it to a church. By 1894, a new building was erected to meet their growing needs. It was located downtown at Washington Street and 9th Avenue and was used until 1949 when it was sold to the First Baptist Church.

The present church at 114 20th Avenue S.E. was built in two phases in 1949 and in 1957. The main administrative wing was constructed in 1949 in the Gothic Revival style. It was designed by Architect Harold C. Whitehouse of Spokane. In 1957, a main sanctuary space was added to the existing structure. The architects for the second phase were Young, Carlton, Detlie and Richard of Seattle. John Sellen and Company, also of Seattle, acted as the general contractor.<sup>cvi</sup>

The church encompasses one entire block on Capitol Way and 20th with the sanctuary perpendicular to Capitol Way. The building is two-story and constructed in concrete and yellow brick. The nave space is punctured by a variety of random laid and cut stained glass windows, forming a "cookie cutter" look. A 2-and-one-half-story square steeple capped with a large cross is located on the southwest

corner of the building. Entry to the sanctuary is off 20th Avenue. Attached to the east side of the sanctuary is a complex of offices, meetings rooms and a small chapel.<sup>cvi</sup>

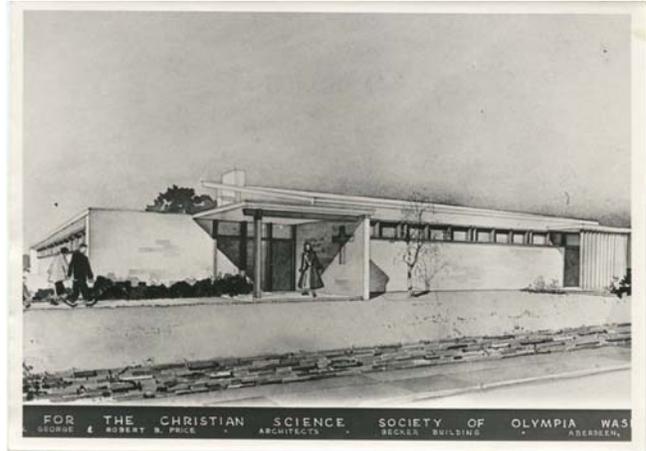


Photo courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

#### ***The Second Church of Christ Scientist***

The Second Church of Christ Scientist is located in West Olympia at 1403 Garfield Street N.W. In the 1940s, the congregation had contacted architects Clarence W.

George and Robert B. Price and were ready to build the structure in plywood. They were refused a construction permit by the Civilian Works Administration because the plywood was needed for housing for returning veterans. The building was eventually built with “pumice” or concrete block. The building reflects the beliefs in simplicity of the Christian Science Church and there was even some controversy over the appropriateness of the simple inset



Drawing of the Second Church of Christ

cross by the entry. The building features the modern amenity of radiant heat. The furniture, specially designed for the building in red birch and cedar, includes pews, the podium and chairs. The sanctuary has a backdrop of figural red birch wood. A shelf element designed to hold plants in the sanctuary was originally designed to extend to the outside. The church, which cost \$30,000, was dedicated on November 13, 1950. Unfortunately, an inconsistent remodel of the front entry of the building in the early 2000s altered the original concept of the building.<sup>cviii</sup>

### ***The Seventh Day Adventist Church***

The Seventh Day Adventist Church at 1717 Eskridge Boulevard S.E., off Henderson Boulevard, was built in 1974 in a design by Don Kirkman and Associates of Auburn.<sup>cix</sup> It is a relatively small, one-story structure, with a large undulating roof area that overhangs a large welcoming area. The building is topped by a long slender steeple. The church, named the Center, is adjacent to the Olympia Watershed Park in a calm, semi-rural setting.

The interior is dominated by the wide entryway coming in from the welcoming porch area. Several large doors lead one from the entryway to the half-round sanctuary, which is light, airy and friendly, but minimal in decoration.<sup>cx</sup>



Seventh Day Adventist Church. Photo courtesy of Transformation Life.

### ***Gloria Dei Lutheran Church***

In 1905, a small group of Swede-Finn immigrants gathered together in Olympia to start a church. The Swedish-Finnish Lutheran Church, as it was named, initially held its services in Swedish, but by the early 1930s, as more and more members were American-born, the transition to English was made. It is the oldest Lutheran congregation in Olympia.

The congregation originally met in members' homes and later in a white frame building at Fifth and Adams streets in downtown Olympia. After 1921, the name of the church was changed to the Evangelical Lutheran Bethesda Church and finally in 1934 to Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. The congregation used the white frame church until 1951.

Work on a new church began that year from a design by architects Decker and Anderson with an addition in 1967 by architects Grant, Copeland and Chervenak, with Robert Chervenak as the main designer. Situated just south of Harrison Avenue between Thomas and Perry Streets at 1515 Harrison Avenue N.W., the church was built over a 15-year period with volunteers giving over 4,000 hours of skilled and unskilled labor to the project. The copper spire was designed and built by church member, Pete Skoog, in his shop in downtown Olympia.

The building is typical of church designs in the 1950s and shows minimal exterior decoration, which is limited to the massing of the building and entry porch columns. The brick sanctuary has a traditional Latin cross footprint but is softened by rounded corners and boasts dalle de verre stained glass windows, which are set in concrete. Artist Ernest Schwidder of Edmonds designed and built the interior furnishings.



1951 Sanctuary. Photo Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

Gloria Dei Church is built in a simple yet elegant design, with expansive steel construction and brick veneer. The building style is considered New Formalism.<sup>cxii</sup>

### **First United Methodist Church**

The Methodist Church began in Olympia in 1852 and the only place in town large enough to hold church services was the local saloon. There were several buildings and sites for the congregation in the ensuing years. By 1901, a new church had been erected on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Adams Street. By 1914, more room was needed and the entire building was lifted and a basement was built under it to provide this room. A problem arose, because much of the downtown was built on reclaimed tidelands and flooding occurred in the new basement. By 1949, the earthquake extensively damaged the building and it was condemned. Various temporary locations were used until in 1954 a new church was built at 1224 Legion Way S.E.<sup>cxiii</sup>



Photo courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.<sup>62</sup>

Designed in 1950, mainly by Donald Edmundson of the firm Edmundson and Kocherdoefer, actual construction of the church did not begin until May of 1953. Dedication ceremonies were held on August 1, 1954. The church, built in the Modern style, is typical of many religious structures built during the 1950s. The multi-colored windows were designed by Pastor Walter A. MacArthur and were constructed by members of the church, who put in over 2,000 hours of labor on the project. The altar windows, also designed by Pastor MacArthur, were constructed in Chartres, France by the Loire Glass Works.

The structure was built into the hillside with its original entrance facing Legion Way. Here a tower is removed from the main body of the church and stands as a freestanding sculptural element with an edge strip of lights and a slender cross. The exterior of the church is poured concrete and has a variety of gabled roofs. The building has been heavily altered on the exterior with numerous additions, although the inside sanctuary remains true to its original form and design. Here blond trim, altar furnishings and pews contrast with the brightly multi-colored stained glass windows.

### ***The United Churches***

The United Churches in Olympia is a federation of the First Presbyterian Church and the First Congregational Church in Olympia. In 1854, a cooperage at Fifth and Columbia Streets, owned by J. R. Woods, was the first meeting place for the first Presbyterian service north of the Columbia River. By 1862 the congregation purchased land at Legion Way and Franklin Street and a “Little White Church” was built, designed by T. M. Reed. By 1907, they had outgrown this building and sold it to the YMCA, who moved it to another site. A new building for the church was built on the land on Legion Way, which served the congregation until it was severely damaged in the 1949 earthquake. The members of the church had been developing a building program since 1931 but the plans were delayed by the Depression and World War II. After the 1949 earthquake, the program was finally implemented and ground was broken for the present structure in 1950 and dedicated in 1955. Stained glass windows from the old church on Legion Way were placed in the new chapel.<sup>cxiii</sup>

### ***The First Christian Church – Koinonia Hall***

The First Christian Church grew out of the Disciples of Christ movement in the early 1800s, which sought to bring Christians together. The congregation was formally organized in Olympia in 1891 and by 1927 had built a permanent church at 7th Avenue and Franklin Street. The structure is still in use. A major addition for church activities was built in 1962, when Koinonia Hall was dedicated. Koinonia, a Greek word for community, is a national movement. The Olympia structure has office space and many meeting rooms and classrooms and is much in demand by members of the Olympia community, not necessarily just church members.<sup>cxiv</sup>

### ***St. Michael Catholic Church***

St. Michael Catholic Church was originally established in Olympia in 1882 on land at Columbia and Main Streets (now Capitol Way). The current St. Michael Church and rectory at 1021 Boundary St. S.E. was designed by Robert Wohleb in 1965 and

completed in 1966. It is adjacent to the school. The church has recently been extensively remodeled. The most unusual feature of the remodeling is the reversal of the altar in the sanctuary.<sup>cxv</sup>



Interior of St. Michael Catholic Church. Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

### ***The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints***

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on Yew Street, built in 1968-69, was designed by Olympia architect George Ekvall.<sup>cxvi</sup> It is in the Modern style and is typical of church design during this period. The present structure has not been extensively altered on the exterior, but the interior is in a continual state of change to meet the many needs of the congregation. The building houses not only a sanctuary but many meeting rooms, offices, class rooms, an auditorium and the research library of the Family History Center. It is a much-used facility.

### ***The Evergreen Christian Community***

In 1974, the Evergreen Christian Community complex was built in West Olympia on Black Lake Blvd, and includes an elementary school.<sup>cxvii</sup>

### **Funeral Homes**

The funeral homes of Olympia did not change very much throughout the Modern Period. Mills and Mills is listed throughout this time at a downtown location at 414 Franklin Street S.E. In the last few years, the business was moved to Littlerock Road in Tumwater. A second business with several different owners, from Warnica, to Selene and Eros to Selene was listed in the Olympia City Directories but apparently is no longer in business.<sup>cxviii</sup> Currently, Forest Funeral Home at 2501 Pacific Avenue S.E. is actively in business. (See cemeteries below.)

### **Cemeteries**

The cemeteries in the area also changed very little during the Modern Period. Forest Memorial Gardens (in conjunction with Forest Funeral Home on Pacific Avenue S.E.) is the only cemetery within the city of Olympia. The Burgman family, a local family that has been in this business in the Olympia/Lacey/Tumwater/Shelton area since 1964, purchased the funeral home and cemetery in 1985. It was formerly known as Mt. Tabor Cemetery. This historic cemetery, located east of downtown, is the final resting place for many of Olympia's pioneer families – the Whites, Sylvesters, Percivals, Bigelows and Ruddells. One section includes graves of the early Chinese immigrants to Olympia. The cemetery features a small chapel highlighted by a stained glass window custom designed by a nationally recognized artist.



Picture of Mills and Mills in 1964. Courtesy of the SW Regional Branch of the Washington State Archives

All other area cemeteries are outside the boundaries of the city of Olympia.

## Summary

The number of houses of worship in Olympia did not increase greatly during the Modern Period, with only 33 in the city in 1974.<sup>cxix</sup> Many congregations moved from downtown to other areas of the city or to the developing suburbs, to meet the needs of their congregation and to allow for larger facilities to accommodate their growth.

Although the State of Washington has been called the most “unchurched State in the Union,” the design and construction of houses of worship was taken very seriously by these congregations during the Modern Period using the services of top flight architectural firms and the best materials. The result is many prominent structures reflecting the needs and styles of the period.

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<sup>cv</sup> Polk Directories, Olympia, WA, 1939, 1949.

<sup>cvi</sup> “St. John’s Episcopal Church: The Building of a New Church,” by St. Mary’s Guild, 1977; and More Than 100 Years of Ministry in the Episcopal Church in Western Washington: Diocese of Olympia. Joanne M. Scallon, Editor. The Diocese, 1988.

<sup>cvi</sup> Historic Property Inventory Report developed by Michael Houser.

<sup>cvi</sup> Information from Church Records.

<sup>cix</sup> Ibid.

<sup>cx</sup> Personal observations by Lois Fenske.

<sup>cx</sup> Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Lutefish and Liturgy, Gloria Dei Church, 2005.

<sup>cxii</sup> “Equipping Olympia’s Saints: Historic Sketches of First United Methodist Church of Olympia,” n.d., n.p., booklet compiled by parishioners about the church.

<sup>cxiii</sup> Cushman, Julie, Compiler. History of the United Churches, Olympia, Washington. Olympia, WA: The Church, 1981.

<sup>cxiv</sup> Lawson, Jim. 100 Years of Christian Witness: A History of the First Christian Church, Olympia, Washington. Olympia, WA: The Church, 1991 or 1992.

<sup>cxv</sup> Contris, Michael, Ed., St. Michael School, 100 Years, 1882-1982, St. Michael’s, 1982.

<sup>cxvi</sup> Information from City of Olympia Building Department.

<sup>cxvii</sup> Earl Pilgrim, Historian of The Evergreen Christian Community. Interview with Lois Fenske.

<sup>cxviii</sup> Polk Directory, Olympia, WA, 1974.

<sup>cxix</sup> Ibid., 1939, 1949, 1960, 1974.

# ARCHITECTURAL STYLES AND BUILDING FORMS OF THE MODERN ERA

*Between 1930 and 1960, dislike of the word style, together with a refusal to recognize the realities that it stands for, united the adherents of the two extremes of architectural opinion – the romantics, who believed that an architectural design should be the product of the architect’s unaided genius, and the rationalists, who believed that it should be the product of a quasi mathematical assessment of the functions of the projected building. The fact that historians of architecture continued to employ the word was another mark against it, and them; some architects went so far as to regard the historians as necrophilous disturbers of the graveyards of the past, who might at any moment disinter a corpse whose style was still capable of infecting the living. – Marcus Whiffen in *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*.*

*Names like “Bauhaus Style,” “International Style,” “Functional Style” have almost succeeded in hiding the human core behind it all, and I am eager, therefore, to put a few cracks into this dummy that busy people have slipped around me. – Walter Gropius in *Scope of Total Architecture*.*

This chapter, which describes common styles and building forms of the context period, is intended as a resource in the identification of historic buildings. While some prominent architects of the modern era argued against use of the term “style” to describe works of architecture, this chapter is written with the belief that the concept is useful in understanding buildings and their cultural and historical context. This chapter is not intended to undercut the importance of understanding the creative or technical genius of individual architects or builders; instead, it provides a framework that can help facilitate an understanding of the environment in which individual architects and builders worked. Individuals brought their own perspectives and talents to designing buildings, yet those designing during the modern era often shared a design vocabulary and were responding to the technology and cultural expectations of the time.

A choice was made to include styles associated with both high style architecture and the architectural styles common among the everyday buildings designed and built by builders, often from standard plans. In a book about ranch houses, author Alan Hess raises the question, “What determines architectural significance: an impact on high-art theory and ideas, or an impact on the built landscape and the buildings in which most people live their lives?”<sup>xxx</sup> During the modern era, there were deep differences between the functionalist aesthetics of signature buildings designed by famous architects and the flashy, futurist designs of coffee shops and diners in commercial strips along American roadsides. The divisions between the high style and the vernacular played out across America and buildings of many different styles made their appearance in Olympia as in many other cities. Ranch homes in large subdivisions greatly outnumbered the Contemporary Style homes designed by architects. Which is of more importance to the history of Olympia – the tracts of ranch homes or the rarer high style homes? Without

presuming the importance of describing the high style over the vernacular, this section includes styles of the everyday, from the Quonset hut to the Ranch, along with the high styles associated with the most famous architects of the time period, including the Miesian Style, Neo-Expressionism, and Brutalism.

This chapter includes a few styles and building forms that may not be widely identified or even found in Olympia. This was done to aid those who are interested in finding historic resources, even if they are rare. In fact, the absence of buildings in a particular style can provide important clues as to the history and scale of development in Olympia. Examples of each style are noted where they are available; however, the inventory of modern resources has been limited--doubtless many historic resources of the modern era have yet to be identified.

### **Trends in Modern Architectural Styles**

The modern period of architecture represented a thrust into new approaches to design and the ability to use new materials and construction techniques, based on the needs of a modern, progressive society. J.M. Richards sums this up in the 1963 book *Modern Architecture*: "...the principal reason why a new architecture is coming into existence is the *needs* of this age are in nearly every case totally different from the needs of previous ages, and so cannot be satisfied by methods of building that belong to any age but the present. We *can* satisfy them in the practical sense, by utilizing modern building technique and modern scientific inventions to the full; and we can satisfy them in the aesthetic sense, both by being honest craftsmen in our own materials and by taking special advantage of opportunities these materials offer of creating effects and qualities in tune with our own times."<sup>cxix</sup>

While modern architectural styles are quite diverse, there are trends that can be identified in its evolution. The following are brief descriptions of these trends.

*Functionalism or function over form.* In early modern architectural styles, architects focused on the design of buildings based on their intended uses, rather than designing buildings primarily for their aesthetic appeal or from historic precedent. From an emphasis on function came a greater appreciation for simplicity and bold geometric forms. As modern architecture evolved through various modes, some styles continued to emphasize a strict adherence to function, while others emphasized experimentation and the sculptural effects that could be achieved with new building materials and construction methods.

*Rejection of imitations of historical styles.* Many of the architects of the context period rejected the use of historical styles or precedents in designing buildings. These architects reacted against the revivals of historic architectural styles typical of buildings designed in the early twentieth century in America. Modern-era architects generally focused on designing buildings that were fit for the machine age and looked to the future instead of the past for inspiration. One exception to this trend was the New Formalism movement, in which architects hearkened back to elements of classical temples to add

to the monumentality of their designs. Late modernism began to reference historical styles as it transitioned to Post-modernism in the mid- to late 1970s.

*Lack of ornamentation.* Some architects of the modern period spoke out against the ornamentation characteristic of the Victorian period. Early reactions against the Victorian period included the Arts and Crafts movement, which occurred before the context statement. The Arts and Crafts movement reacted against the increasing use of machines in producing building materials, instead focusing on high quality craftsmanship and design. Many architects during the context period embraced the use of machines and modern technology and instead reacted against what was perceived as the excessive use of ornament in earlier architectural styles. Ornamentation was perceived as cloaking the essential functions and nature of buildings. Instead of ornate architectural features, architects emphasized the materials that were the basis of these new styles, such as new ways of using concrete, glass, plastics, and steel. Architects chose to emphasize structural features or even mechanical systems instead. In some cases the processes used to shape the exterior were used as ornament, such as the practice of leaving the imprints of wooden boards that had formed molds for poured concrete on Brutalist buildings.

*Aesthetics of the machine evolving to sculptural effects and organic forms.* Although ornamentation was limited in modern architecture, many architects emphasized the aesthetics of the machine in their buildings. Le Corbusier, an early proponent of modern architecture, went as far as to call houses “machines for living in.”<sup>cxvii</sup> Architectural styles emphasized efficiency, economy, and machine precision. In later styles, such as Neo-expressionism and Brutalism, the sculptural effects of buildings were emphasized and there was a movement away from the aesthetics of the machine and towards designing new and innovative sculptural effects based on the technology of the era. Later architectural movements within the time period also included a greater emphasis on organic forms that expressed human’s relationship to nature.

*Design emphasizing new materials.* Throughout the modern period, great emphasis was placed on the use of reinforced concrete and steel. While these technologies were developed prior to the context period, their uses were greatly promoted and expanded during the post-World War II era. The use of reinforced concrete and steel skeletons for the structural stability of buildings allowed the exterior walls to function as “skin” or “curtain wall” instead of bearing weight. As a result, modern buildings could let in more light with bands or entire walls built of large windows. Aluminum also began to make an appearance after the industry expanded to meet the demands of World War II. There were also innovations in glass, window sealants, and plastics during this period.

*Prefabricated Buildings and Assembly-line Production.* The use of prefabricated buildings increased greatly during the context period. Although pre-cut buildings could be ordered by catalog as early as the 1900s, the post-World War II period brought a huge increase in the number of companies that provided prefabricated homes.<sup>cxviii</sup> Whole subdivisions were developed at once and houses were built quickly using standardized components and assembly-line building techniques. Even prominent high style architects

experimented with designing prefabricated housing, including Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>cxv</sup> Prefabricated building components were also used in commercial designs.

The following are descriptions of common architectural styles and building forms to aid in the identification and appreciation of buildings during the context statement period. Styles and building forms are organized by primary uses. The first sub-section focuses on commercial and institutional uses and the second focuses on those used primarily in residential development. It should be noted that some styles, such as the International Style, Mansard Style, and the Populuxe Styles cross over into both residential and commercial applications.

### **Architectural Styles Primarily Used in Commercial and Institutional Buildings**

The following are architectural styles used primarily in commercial and institutional buildings such as government offices and banks. Some styles are more common among “high style” institutional buildings, such as the International Style, Miesian Style, New Formalism, and Brutalism. Other styles are associated with smaller businesses and are considered “vernacular.” Buildings in these styles were not necessarily architect designed and were often built from standard designs or designed by contractors. These include the Goochie, Sawtooth/Folded Plate, Pavilion, and Mansard Styles.

#### ***International Style (1920s to early 1960s)***

The International Style was initiated in Europe in the 1920s and was to have a profound effect on architecture in the United States during the mid-twentieth century, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. The term “International Style” came into general usage after Philip Johnson and Henry Russell-Hitchcock published the book *International Style: Architecture since 1922*. European architects Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, who immigrated to the United States from Nazi Germany, were instrumental in spreading the popularity of the International Style among architects. Le Corbusier also strove to promote the modern architecture movement and was important to the spread of the International Style worldwide.



General Administration Building. Photo courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

The International Style was a foundation from which many individual architects and architectural movements were to proceed. Prior to World War II, American architects emphasized the revival of historical styles, but after World War II the International style became the dominant style for commercial and institutional buildings.

The International Style emphasized functionality, and buildings were designed without ornament and with minimal use of color. International Style buildings are asymmetrical,

yet balanced in composition. There is an emphasis on volume over mass. Windows are built in bands or ribbons of large plate glass and buildings sport corner windows and horizontal cylindrical windows. Buildings are often made of steel and concrete, although wood is sometimes used, as in the design of Olympia's Georgia Pacific Plywood Company office building. Wall surfaces are uniform and smooth and are plastered and painted white. Cantilevers are commonly used, so that elements, such as porches, upper floors and balconies project out from walls. Flat roofs are defining features of the International Style. Buildings often have a low parapet (wall or railing) along the roof.

Olympia Examples:

- Georgia Pacific Plywood Company Office at 600 Capitol Way N.
- General Administration Building at 210 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.W.
- Capitol Center Apartments at 1517 Capitol Way S. (Residential example)
- Nash House at 7608 Cooper Point Road N.W. (Residential example)

### ***Northwest Regional Style (1930s – 1960s)***

Literature on architecture in the Pacific Northwest identifies a style emerging from the International Style that is specific to the climate, materials, and associations of the region.<sup>CXXV</sup> The literature focuses on the architectural works of architects Pietro Belluschi and John Yeon. These architects were prolific in Oregon. Many early examples of the Northwest Regional Style are residential, but this style was expressed in a variety of commercial and religious buildings later in the period. Several sources describe the peak of this style as being in the 1950s and dwindling over time.

The Northwest Regional Style is characterized by the use of wood in both exteriors and interiors. Wooden exteriors often incorporate cedar and fir, which are stained earth tones or left unfinished and unpainted. Northwest Regional Style buildings have wide overhanging and low-pitched roofs and buildings are clearly associated with the climate and terrain of the Pacific Northwest. Buildings are oriented towards existing topography and views and landscapes use existing foliage and trees. Buildings are designed with an emphasis on simplicity and have open plans.

Olympia examples:

- At this time, no examples of the Northwest Regional Style have been identified in the City of Olympia inventory.

### ***Miesian (1950s – 1960s)***

The architecture of Mies van der Rohe proved to be extremely influential and American architects of the context statement period often emulated both his low-rise and high-rise architectural designs. The Miesian building is defined by a box form with a flat roof. Miesian Style buildings often have curtain walls and are defined by a regular grid pattern of steel and windows. The emphasis



Capitol Center Building. Photo courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

is on precision, simplicity, and the regularity of the grid pattern. Buildings in this style are generally set back from the street with an open plaza. Some sources identify the Miesian Style as a sub-type of the International Style, while other sources describe the two styles as distinct and without hierarchy.

Olympia examples:

- Capitol Center Building at 410 Fifth Avenue W.

### ***Curtain Wall (1950s – 1970s)***

The term “curtain wall” is sometimes used to describe a style of building, but is more specifically a building form. This building form is often associated with Miesian style buildings. The curtain wall is basically a wall of glass and metal – usually steel or aluminum. The ability to move supports to the interior structure of buildings made the curtain wall a light exterior “skin.” The emphasis in Curtain Wall buildings is on lightness, precision in design, and modern building materials.

Advances in the aluminum industry associated with World War II created an abundance of aluminum products that could be used in the postwar construction boom. Aluminum was found to be lighter than steel and less material was needed to construct curtain walls; this resulted in greater ease in construction and more floor space within buildings.

In addition to advances in aluminum, the widespread use of curtain walls in the post-World War II era spurred advances in glass, sealants, and insulation materials. By 1959, a “float method” for glass was developed, which resulted in perfectly flat surfaces. Over time, various sealants were developed that also

improved curtain wall performance. Insulating glass units (IG units), were developed in the 1970s in response to greater demands for energy efficiency.

In the 1960s, architects began using pre-cast concrete in curtain walls, moving away from an earlier emphasis on the precision and lightness of building’s skin. Architects began focusing instead on contrast between light and shadow, solidity, and mass in their designs.

Olympia examples:

- Federal office building at 1007 Washington St. N.



Photo of the Federal office building at 1007 N. Washington St. Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

### **Articulated Frame (1950s – 1960s)**

The design of Articulated Frame buildings emphasize solidity, regularity, and the structural bones of buildings. In these buildings, supporting columns are exposed and emphasized on the exterior. With supports on the outside, the need for internal columns is eliminated and interior spaces are opened up. In *A Field Guide to Contemporary American Architecture*, Carole Rifkind describes two primary kinds of Articulated Frame buildings, those with exposed structures of steel and those with concrete. Most of her examples are high-rises, which are built at a much larger scale than buildings found in Olympia.

Olympia examples:

- Daniel J. Evans Library at The Evergreen State College, 2700 Evergreen Parkway NW (outside of Olympia city limits.)
- Evergreen Plaza, 711 Capitol Way S.

### **Solid End Wall (1950s – 1960s)**

The term “solid end wall” is less an architectural style than a building form. The precise use of this term and its connection to architectural styles is still under development according to Michael Houser, Architectural Historian at the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. It generally refers to buildings that have a prominent end wall with no windows or doors. The wall is usually blank, as in the Washington Public Utility building at 210 Union Avenue S.E. and often is constructed in concrete block. The blank end wall may also be used as a place to advertise the name of a business or of the building. The Golden Gavel Motel is another example of a building that features the solid end wall.



Photo of the Golden Gavel Inn. Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

This building style was also used in the construction of two-story apartment buildings.

Olympia examples:

- Washington Public Utility Building at 210 Union Avenue S.E.
- Golden Gavel Motel at 909 Capitol Way S.

### **New Formalism (1960s – to mid-1970s)**

Architects who designed buildings in the New Formalist Style used elements of Classical architecture such as columns and entablatures, colonnades, and symmetry to add



Photo of the Washington State Library. Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

a sense of monumentality and importance to institutional and commercial buildings. This style was a reaction against the austerity of the International and Miesian styles. The style has also been called “neo Palladianism.”

Buildings of this style are temple-like, elevated, and consist of a single volume of space. Buildings are designed with strict symmetry. Roofs dominate the form of New Formalist buildings. Roofs are designed as large, heavy slabs and have elements that project out from the building. Large, thick columns are often employed and arches are also incorporated in some designs. There is an emphasis on the plasticity of concrete with elements such as umbrella shells, waffle slabs, and folded plates.

Olympia examples:

- Washington State Library (Joel M Pritchard Library Building) at 415 15th Avenue S.W.
- Seattle First National Bank at 210 5<sup>th</sup> Street W.

### **Wrightian**

Marcus Whiffen, in *American Architecture Since 1780*, begins a chapter on the Wrightian Style somewhat mysteriously: “Fundamentally homogenous though superficially varied, Wrightian architecture is more easily recognized than described.” He goes on to point out some commonalities, such as the roof as a

character defining feature and a “prevailing horizontality.”<sup>ccxvi</sup> While roofs are character defining, they are varied and include flat, folded, and pitched forms.

Whiffen also calls attention to the use of ornamentation and elevations that reflect the overall plan design: “...a building with a design that is based on a hexagonal figure will have diagonal glazing bars and a sloping roof ridge, for example, a circular building a series of arches.”<sup>ccxvii</sup> Other common features are: piers that taper downward, parapets that angle outward, battered walls, and wooden or stone cladding that emphasizes horizontality. Concrete is smooth or painted. Contrast is employed when there are two or more materials used.

Olympia examples:

- Secretary of State Elections Division building (former Washington State Employees Credit Union building) at 502 Union Ave S.E.

### **Expressionism/Neo-Expressionism (1950s – 1960s)**

The name of this architectural style refers to an earlier Expressionist art movement in which the artist expressed his or her emotions in creating artwork. Neo-Expressionist architecture emerged as leading architects experimented with sculptural forms using



Former Washington State Employees Credit Union building. Photo courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

concrete. Well-known buildings in this style include the TWA building in New York City and the Notre-Dame-du-Haut at Ronchamp in France. The TWA building was designed by Eero Saarinen and built in 1956-1962. Le Corbusier designed Notre-Dame-du-Haut, built in 1955. Eero Saarinen's building was designed to express the feeling of a giant bird in flight, while Le Corbusier's was inspired by a crab shell that he found at the beach.



Photo of the Olympia City Hall. Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

This movement signified a move to whimsical or dramatic architectural forms and architects sought to move away from the standardized, box shapes of the International Style. The book *A History of American Architecture* includes possible explanations for this transition away from the austerity of the International Style, including the influences of American consumer culture and the desire for styling that goes beyond technological innovation. The author writes also of countercultural movements and notes, "Even the mainstream Americans, who in all other respects followed the bland norms of the period, enthusiastically drove the ostentatious cars of the period with their giant fins and loads of chrome. A society that could love these showboats was going to love a building that looked like a giant bird [referring to Saarinen's TWA building]." <sup>cxxviii</sup>

Olympia examples:

- Olympia City Hall at 900 Plum Street S.E.

### ***Googie/Populuxe/Doo Wop/Coffee House Architecture (1950s - 1960s)***

"Googie," "Populuxe," "Coffee House Architecture," and "Doo Wop" are various terms used to describe eye-catching vernacular buildings of the 1950s and 1960s. Buildings associated with these styles housed bowling alleys, motels, and coffee shops along commercial strips lining main arterial roads and highways. The terms have been used in reference to some institutional and residential development, although they are more often applied to commercial businesses. For brevity, the term "Googie" will be used in this description.

The term "Googie" originated in reference to Googie's, a coffee shop on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles. According to the book, *Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture*, Professor Douglas Haskell of Yale proclaimed, "Stop the car! This is Googie architecture" while driving in Los Angeles. <sup>cxxix</sup> Hereafter, the term came into usage, but was often applied in a derogatory manner by the architectural critics of the time.

Common building forms include the concrete shell vault, hyperbolic paraboloid, and other organic and free forms. Cantilevered roofs, glass walls built on diagonals, and

folded eaves are other common features. Some buildings were clad with flagcrete, an application of concrete that was made to look like stone.

Popular themes among Googie buildings include the atomic or space age and the exotic appeal of the Polynesian Islands in the Tiki genre. Design motifs in interiors and exteriors include boomerangs (a design feature on Formica counter tops, signs, and even as a building form) and dingbats, also called spiky balls or starbursts, which were somewhat reminiscent of electrons orbiting a nucleus. Googie buildings often feature prominent signs (freestanding or attached) that convey a feeling of excitement and progress. Neon was commonly used in signs and to highlight architectural features.



Photo of the Capitol Savings and Loan Building, which could be considered "Googie" or Neo-expressionist. Courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

Googie architecture is closely associated with Southern California, although there are examples of Googie architecture on the West Coast and nationwide. The National Trust for Historic Preservation used the term "Doo Wop" to describe the mid-century motels located along a prominent commercial shoreline that have "space age" themes in Wildwood, New Jersey. (These motels were listed in 2006 as one of America's 11 Most Endangered Places.)<sup>cxix</sup>

At the time of this report, there are no examples of buildings on the City of Olympia Inventory that have been identified as "Googie." Under some definitions, the downtown Safeway and the Capitol Savings and Loan building might be considered Googie, although they are identified as other styles on the Olympia inventory.

### **Sawtooth Roof/Folded Plate (1950s – 1960s)**

The sawtooth roof is primarily associated with commercial development, although at least one residence was identified with a sawtooth feature. The sawtooth roof is a common building form related to other architectural styles, primarily the Googie Style. The book *Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture* refers to this building form as a "folded plate," and the author points out that the form is not only used in roofs, but was also used as a design motif applied elsewhere, for instance as a decorative element above windows.<sup>cxix</sup>

These features are commonly built of wood or concrete.



This house features a sawtooth roof on a covered garage. Photo courtesy of the Southwest Regional Branch of the Washington State Archives.

Olympia examples:

- Restrooms at Capitol Lake
- Medical Arts Building at 1015 Fourth Avenue W.
- Westside Lanes at 2200 Garfield Avenue N.W.

### **Brutalism (1960s – 1975)**

“Brutalism,” originally called “New Brutalism,” describes monumental concrete buildings that were designed to emphasize their bulky mass. The term brutalism is generally attributed to the French phrase “Breton brut,” or “rough concrete.” However, there is also evidence that the term came from a nickname of prominent English architect Peter Smithson, who also went by the name “Brutus.” Peter Smithson and his wife Alison Smithson are generally credited with the origins of this style and according to one source “a fashionable joke in mid-1950s architectural circles was that: ‘Brutalism equals Brutus plus Alison.’”<sup>cxxxii</sup>

As mentioned above, most buildings designed in this style are constructed of concrete and are monumental in scale and massing. Concrete is often left unfinished with the marks of wooden formwork used in construction showing. Texture is sometimes added to distress or roughen the concrete. Treatment of windows contrasts with earlier modern architectural styles. Windows in Brutalist buildings are punched deep into walls, a huge shift from the widespread use of windows as a lightweight “skin” in Curtain Wall or Miesian Style buildings. Windows often appear small compared to the overall building. Composition of Brutalist buildings usually appears unbalanced. Other elements of the Brutalist building include the “waffle,” “egg-crate effect,” and “Russian wedge.”

Brutalism was used primarily in institutional buildings and some commercial buildings in the Pacific Northwest. Although the term was coined in the early 1950s, most examples of Brutalism in Olympia (and the Pacific Northwest) date from around 1960 through 1975. Perhaps the best examples in the region are located on the campus of The Evergreen State College, outside of Olympia city limits.

The design of Brutalist buildings is not always appreciated and sometimes reviled. The style guide on the Docomomo WEWA<sup>cxxxiii</sup> website explains: “Brutalism brought out the best and worst in what Modern architecture had to represent... However, under the damp grays skies of the Pacific Northwest, Brutalist buildings are often described as being unfriendly, cold and dark. The roughness of the exterior concrete soaks up moisture and turns black with age.”<sup>cxxxiv</sup> Several recent articles in *Preservation*, the magazine for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, describe the debates and difficulties in preserving Brutalist buildings that are sometimes deeply disliked.<sup>cxxxv</sup>

Olympia examples:

- Lecture Hall I and Campus Activities Building at The Evergreen State College, 2700 Evergreen Parkway N.W. (outside of Olympia city limits.)
- IBM Office Building at 410 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.E.

### ***Pavilion (1960-1980)***

Pizza Huts are likely the most well known examples of the Pavilion Style. Some architectural historians believe that this style may have been inspired by the Japanese Irimoya roof form, which was designed for Buddhist temples starting in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>cxvvi</sup> The Pavilion Style was popularized by architect Richard Burke, who developed the form for the Pizza Hut chain in 1964. This style was just one of several modern architectural styles during the 1960s that began to challenge the dominance of flat roofs in commercial development.



A Pizza Hut in neighboring Tumwater (c. 1970). Photo courtesy of the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

The distinctive roof form is the main character-defining feature of the Pavilion Style. The roof form consists of two roofs. The lower roof has a shallow hip form and the upper roof has a gable, mansard, or hip form. The upper roof form often serves as a place for large advertising signs and for the placement of mechanical equipment. Wide overhanging boxed eaves are common. Sliding glass doors are also common and designs usually include large openings of glass. Exteriors are clad in brick, clapboard, stucco, stone or other materials.

Olympia examples:

- No specific buildings in the Pavilion style have been identified in the Olympia inventory.

### ***Mansard (1965-1980)***

The Mansard style is described here among commercial styles of architecture, although it was a common style in the design of apartment complexes and some single-family homes. While some use the term “Mansard Style” to refer to the original Second Empire style, this description is specific to the modern adaptation that was developed a century later. The modern Mansard Style nods to the original Second Empire Style through a reinterpretation of a prominent and steeply pitched roof form.

One source lists the origin of the Mansard style as “emerging from oil companies who were aiming to soften the blow of their strict modern geometric gas stations to a growingly environmentally conscious market.”<sup>cxxxvii</sup> McDonald’s popularized this style with the “double mansard” roof constructed on a proto-type restaurant in Illinois in 1969. The mansard roof popped up in a variety of roadside businesses across the country and was even added as a feature to some roadside signs. The mansard roof was frequently used to update the exterior of older commercial downtown buildings; the steep roofs were used to hide architectural features that were considered out-of-date. A *Field Guide to American Houses* notes that some of the first examples of this style were apartment complexes in Florida and the southwest.<sup>cxxxviii</sup>



A residential example of the Mansard Style in Olympia, circa 1976. Photo from the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

The most important feature of the Mansard style is the prominent roof. Roofs are flat on top and have steep slopes that extend one or two stories down the side of buildings. Buildings designed in this style are usually two stories. The mansard roof often hides the top story of the building and mechanical equipment. Dormers or balconies “puncture” the mansard roof. Many dormers have an arched or segmental roof. In residential examples of this style, earlier buildings did not have through-the-cornice windows, but this became common in later buildings. The roof is generally clad with cedar shingles, although other materials were also used, including clay tiles, standing seam metals, and asphalt singles. The bottom floor is often clad in other materials such as brick, stone, clapboard, T-1-1 siding, and stucco. Other features of the Mansard Style are deep, recessed entries and aluminum sliding windows.

Olympia examples:

- No buildings in the Mansard style have been officially identified on the City of Olympia inventory.

### ***Corporate Modern/Slick Skin or Slick Tech (mid-1960s to present)***

Corporate Modern/Slick Skin is used to describe buildings that feature glossy, reflective materials, such as glass, high gloss enamel panels, and steel. These high style buildings tend to be high-rise office towers and, as the name implies, they project a high-tech corporate appearance. In the book, *Late-Modern Architecture*, Charles Jencks describes the Slick Tech building as having a grid of repeated shapes and using “wet look distortion” to produce a slick appearance. The Slick Tech building is but one type of building in his schema of late-modern styles, in which a “second machine aesthetic” began to transform the modern architecture movement from an emphasis on

straightforward, simple designs to a greater emphasis on complexity and effortless use of high technology.<sup>cxxxix</sup>

Olympia examples:

- No resources have been identified on the City of Olympia inventory.

### **Modern Architectural Styles Primarily Used in Residential Development**

At the end of World War II, the G.I. Bill and other federal policies enabled more people to buy their own home than in previous years. This resulted in a housing boom in the post-war years. In Olympia, the demand for housing and newfound prosperity resulted in a large number of new subdivisions that represented an ideal of home ownership, domesticity, and progress to many people.

In the book *A Field Guide to American Houses*, three main categories of residential houses are identified for the mid-century modern period. The category “Modern” includes: Minimal Traditional, Ranch, Split-level, Contemporary, and Shed. “Neo-eclectic” houses, popular from about 1965 to the present, is a category that includes the styles: Mansard, Neocolonial, Neo-French, Neo-Tudor, Neo-Mediterranean, Neoclassical Revival, and Neo-Victorian. The third category of houses, “Contemporary Folk,” includes: Mobile Homes, Quonset Huts, A-Frames, and Geodesic Domes. Only the styles that were prominent during the period of this context statement are described in this chapter.

#### ***Minimal Traditional (1930s-1950s)***

The Minimal Traditional Style began in the mid-1930s and was a dominant housing style in the post-war years of the 1940s and early 1950s. This style evolved from the earlier Tudor styles popular in the 1920s and 1930s. The style is simplified, evolving from earlier styles into a more stripped-down, modern form that lacks most ornamentation. This style diminished in popularity in the early 1950s as the Ranch Style

became the dominant style for new homes. This style is considered transitional, and these houses have characteristics of pre-World War II houses, but also exhibit commonalities with more modern architectural styles.

The Minimal Traditional house is usually one story, although a few examples are two stories. Roofs are usually low-pitched. Houses are characterized by limited decorative detailing on the exterior, although some houses have porch supports, decorative shutters or other exterior details. The interior of the Minimal Traditional home usually has some features in common with earlier styles, such as built-in cabinets and coved ceilings.



Donald and Irene Elliott house, Olympia, 1948  
Photo courtesy of the Washington State  
Department of Archaeology and Historic  
Preservation.

Olympia examples:

- Revell House at 116 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue S.E.
- Wisniewski House at 2013 Boundary Street S.E.

### ***World War II-Era Cottage (1940s to 1950s)***

The name of this style relates to World War II, when housing was in demand, but building materials were scarce. The alternative name for this style is Minimal Tract, which refers to the minimalist style of these cottage homes and the fact that many of these buildings were built on large tracts of land. While related to the Minimal Traditional Style, World War II-Era Cottages are more modest in style and usually smaller in size. They are prophetic of Ranch Style houses, which were to supplant World War II-Era Cottages in popularity.



Photo courtesy of the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

World War II Era-Cottages are usually small, one-story houses that are square or rectangular. Roofs are gabled or hipped and have minimal eave overhangs. Porches are generally absent, although there may be a small covering that provides a shield against the rain. Exteriors are clad in horizontal wood siding, and asbestos ceramic or wood shingles. Decorative accents include brick and stone. A single octagonal window added interest to the economic building form.

### ***Ranch (1950s – 1960s)***

Large subdivisions of Ranch Style homes are artifacts of the huge population explosion and housing boom after World War II. It was the most popular style in American homes in the 1950s. This style originated in California, and spread nationwide. It was popular throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The Ranch Style makes reference to the Hacienda, and homes are sited with expansive lawns on relatively large lots, reminiscent of large expanses of land, a historical association with the western frontier and the Southwest. Homes built in this style emphasize the backyard and patio rather than the front yard and front porch, a sign of the growing importance of family privacy and private leisure activities rather than public street life.



Photo courtesy of the Southwest Regional Branch of the Washington State Archives.

Ranch Style houses are single story and usually asymmetrical in composition. Roofs are low-pitched and have either a hipped gable (most common), cross-gable, or side-gable. There is a moderate to wide eave overhang. There is often a prominent built-in one- or two-car garage. Garages often have direct access to a kitchen or laundry room on the interior of the ranch house. Windows are usually smaller in the front and on the sides with larger expanses of windows in the back, although picture windows in the front are also common. Windows in the front are often horizontal in orientation. Cladding is usually in wood and/or brick. There are often modest decorative elements such as false shutters on windows or other elements that are borrowed from Spanish or English colonial styles. The interior often has an open plan.

### ***Split-level (1950s – 1960s)***

The Split-level Style is essentially a modification of ranch houses. A garage is a prominent feature of the home, and on top of the garage is another story, generally with bedrooms. Family recreation rooms are often on the bottom story, adjacent to the garage. A separate main or mid-level wing houses the kitchen and a formal living room. Cladding and windows are usually similar to the Ranch Style home. It is common for windows to have false shutters.

### ***Split-entry (1960s)***

The Split-entry style, like the Split-level, is a modification of the Ranch Style house. While it is similar to the Split-level, the main entrance of the Split-entry building does not open onto a middle floor like the Split-level. From the front door, the entry way is positioned in-between two stories. Upon entry to the Split-entry home, people are forced to make a choice to go either to the upper or lower floor. Split-entry homes are often grouped under the heading of Split-level, although some sources do differentiate into two different styles. In the book *American Shelter*, the term “bi-level” is used to describe homes in which the entry is placed one-half a flight of stairs below the main level and one-half a flight of stairs above the bottom floor.<sup>cxl</sup> The bottom floor is sunken about four-feet below grade. The author describes the bi-level house as functioning as any other two-story house, once one moves past the entry. The split-entry way in these houses was considered an economical way to create interest and elegance.

### ***Contemporary (mid 1950s – 1970s)***

Contemporary houses were typically designed by architects rather than builders and developers. This style developed in the mid- to late-fifties. Just as “modern architecture” can be confusing terminology, “Contemporary” is a term that implies the present, but in this case refers to a very specific type of residential design.



wood, brick, and stone in different combinations. The gabled roof subtype often has overhanging eaves and exposed roof beams. Cladding is similar to the American International subtype. In the Pacific Northwest, this gabled subtype may also be associated with the Northwest Regional Style, described above. Both subtypes have a lack of traditional detailing on the exterior.

Olympia examples:

- Brenner, Norman, and Isabelle House at 512 Sherman S.W.
- Ernest and Anne LeVasseur House, 2903 Sherwood Drive (pictured above)

### ***Dingbat (1950s to 1960s)***

The term “Dingbat” has scant reference in field guides or books related to architectural history, although it is described as a style in the City of Eugene’s Modern Architecture Context Statement. The use of this term is in reference to rectangular apartment buildings that are elevated above ground floor parking by poles or pillars. The buildings are two to four-stories in height. Many dingbats are clad in stucco, although some may feature other materials such as concrete blocks, wooden clapboard, or flagcrete. Dingbat Style buildings often sport the name of the apartment building written in a decorative font on a relatively unadorned wall. These names of apartment buildings may be themed (for instance, referring to the exotic or picturesque) and used to give the apartment building identity and market it to passersby.

Like other terms, this one can be somewhat confusing. One longtime Olympia resident and Heritage Commissioner remembers the use of the term “Dingbat” to refer to World War II-era housing that was built economically.<sup>cxli</sup> The term can also be used to refer to a common graphic design used in Googie architecture. No Dingbat Style buildings have been identified on the City of Olympia inventory.

### ***Shed (1960s - 1985)***

The Shed Style reached the height of popularity in the 1970s. Although this style was commonly used in houses, there are also examples of Shed Style schools and office buildings. Buildings in the Shed style consist of multiple box-like or cubist forms that are capped with multi-directional roofs that are single-sloped. Additional gabled roof forms are often present. The effect of the shed style building has been described as “colliding geometric shapes” and “bold diagonals, counterpointed shapes, and multiple massing.”<sup>cxlii</sup>

Shed buildings are also known for their distinctive cladding, with wood that is applied horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, and sometimes the use of a brick veneer. One distinction between builder-designed structures and the architect-designed shed building is in the choice of siding. T-1-11 siding is often the choice of builders while the architect-designed buildings often use cedar shingles.<sup>cxliii</sup>

Roof-wall junctions generally have little to no overhang. Windows are usually small and are asymmetrical. Some windows are angled to follow the roofline, while narrow windows hung horizontally or vertically are also common. Entrances are recessed and are often “obscured” or made less prominent in the design.

The work of Charles Moore and Robert Venturi are said to have influenced the development of this style. The acclaim that the 1965 Sea Ranch Lodge condominiums in Sonoma County received also influenced the rapid spread of this style in the Pacific Northwest. The energy crisis of the 1970s was part of the context of this style, and some examples include passive-solar design elements, such as south facing windows and an interior thermal mass that could collect and store heat.<sup>cxliv</sup>

Although shed houses are likely to be present in Olympia, no examples have been listed in historic inventory at this time.

### ***Organic Architecture***

The term “Organic Architecture” was used by architect Frank Lloyd Wright to describe his approach to architecture. He used the term to describe an architecture focused upon buildings designed as a unified whole. He advocated for the use of common sense in unifying form and function rather than looking towards historic building traditions to solve design problems. As architects experimented with more sculptural forms in the 1960s, some architects began drawing on the connection to nature and the ability to create free-flowing forms in concrete. Buildings began to resemble biological organisms and forms in nature. Interiors and exteriors of many of these late modern buildings avoid right angles, and consist of smooth, curved walls instead. As modern architecture evolved along with a growing awareness of ecology, buildings moved towards energy efficiency and the use of natural building materials, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. This term is also related to other styles described in this chapter, including: Expressionism, Wrightian, and in the context of Washington, the Pacific Northwest Regional Style.

At this time, no resources have been identified in Olympia.

### ***Machine Age Folk Houses***

The post-World War II period was a time of accelerated interest in the use of pre-fabricated materials for homes. This led to some unique solutions for affordable housing, such as the Quonset Hut, house trailers and mobile homes, and the A-Frame. The geodesic dome was another housing type that was popularized in the period, but did not rise to the level of popularity of these other housing types.

The Quonset Hut was developed by the U.S. Navy and could be built to suit with standardized components for a variety of uses.<sup>cxlv</sup> These structures were built with pressed-wood linings, pre-manufactured wood ribbing, and covered with corrugated sheet steel. Quonset Huts were light, built with economical materials, and could be assembled and disassembled with ease. After the war, Quonset Huts became commercially available to the public and were sold as homes as well as for agricultural or commercial uses. Quonset Huts for residential uses were customized with windows, porches, heating systems, and doors. Many Quonset Huts were replaced over time and most remaining Quonset Huts are now in rural, agricultural settings.

The house trailer developed as a low-income solution during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>cxlvi</sup> House trailers evolved into mobile homes when they grew in standard size and began to be permanently sited. House trailers and mobile homes could be transported nearly anywhere and could fit on small lots. Mobile home parks developed to accommodate this housing type.

The A-frame is another housing type that was frequently built with pre-fabricated products. It was mass-marketed as a solution for vacation-homes. It is probably more popular in the Pacific Northwest as a permanent home, than in other areas of the United States.<sup>cxlvii</sup> The A-frame is constructed with two side walls that rise from the base to form one large gable. The interiors of A-frames are often designed as an open plan with loft space.



Graphic depicting the joys of living in an A-frame home.

The geodesic dome was an innovative form that was developed by Richard Buckminster Fuller and piqued public interest in the 1960s. Geodesic domes were made of preformed metal or plastic and covered with either rigid materials or flexible plastic. While this form was popularized in the Montreal World's Fair of 1967, its unconventional shape drew few to call geodesic domes their home. Houses were not the only expression of the geodesic dome; this shockingly new form also found its way into schoolyards as play structures.

### ***Bomb Shelters (1950s and 1960s)***

Bomb shelters are both functional and expressive elements of the period. Private citizens as well as governmental agencies



Olympia bomb shelter on Fir Street, on the east side of Olympia. Photos courtesy of the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

built these shelters to withstand nuclear warfare. Bomb shelters express the fear of nuclear war associated with the cold war era. The Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA), an agency created in 1951, used various public campaigns to educate private citizens about ways that they could protect themselves; promoted strategies included building bomb shelters in homes and to “duck and cover” in the case of an imminent nuclear blast. While public education campaigns were national in scope, there was local coverage of bomb shelters. In 1961, local radio station KGY broadcasted live from a shelter where a family spent a week. The current location of the shelter is unknown. The shelter cost \$1,795 for a structure and was built eleven feet underground.<sup>cxlviii</sup>

Examples:

- Bomb Shelter at 410 Fir Street N.E.

### **Other Elements of the Modern Era Landscape**

It is not only the buildings and accessory structures (such as bomb shelters and garages) that reflect the mid-century modern era. The spaces around and between buildings can also tell us much about the past. Within these spaces are the remnants of a legacy of site design, planning, and landscaping that represented new approaches to the built environment.

The boundaries between parking lots, cars, and buildings were blurred. Off-street parking lots started as amenities and became necessities; the growing importance of car parking pushed buildings farther back from the road, behind expansive parking lots. Drive-thrus and drive-ins brought the car up to the building and accommodated vehicular movement. Garages were connected to the home. Parking garages were constructed in the styles of the times. The car and its requirements dominated the landscape.

The influence of landscape architecture grew in importance. New institutional and office buildings included plazas and landscaping. Innovative sculpted landscapes were created, such as the Water Garden designed by Lawrence Halprin for the Capitol Campus.

Changes in landscaping were also expressed in the home. Factors such as the growing amount of leisure time, popular notions of the good life and domesticity, and the environmental movement led to various approaches to lawns and gardens. The reshaping of outdoor spaces shifted with trends found in the popular culture of the times, such as the magazines *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Sunset*. New ways of screening for privacy became popular, including the use of concrete blocks for building screens and privacy fences. Backyards became the new focus for activity.

### **Conclusions**

There were innumerable changes upon the landscape during the mid-century modern period, as humans sculpted their commercial, industrial, and residential environments to meet shifting expectations. The architectural styles and building forms associated with this era allude to a legacy of innovation and change. Notions of progress shifted during the modern period and with this change came new aesthetic approaches. Architectural

styles varied greatly, ranging from the minimalist International Style to the complex biological forms of the Organic. Heavy concrete Brutalist buildings rebelled against the light transparency of Curtain Wall buildings. Outlandish Google buildings contrasted with subdued Miesian designs. Some lament the changes that these styles and building forms brought to Olympia's landscape; however, an appreciation of the varied approaches to buildings of this period offers a fascinating window into the intentions, innovations, and historic events of the period.

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- <sup>cxxx</sup> Alan Hess. *The Ranch House* (New York, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004), 15.
- <sup>cxxxi</sup> J.M. Richards, *Modern Architecture* (Baltimore, Maryland: Pelican Books, 1964), 28.
- <sup>cxxxii</sup> Peter Hall. *Cities of Tomorrow* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996), 205.
- <sup>cxxxiii</sup> Lester Walker. *American Homes: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Domestic Architecture*. (New York: Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, 2002), 242-244.
- <sup>cxxxiv</sup> Mark Gelertner. *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 269.
- <sup>cxxxv</sup> For example: Thomas Vaughan, Editor. *Space, Style, and Structure: Building in Northwest America* Volume II (Portland, Oregon: Oregon Historical Society, 1974).
- <sup>cxxxvi</sup> Marcus Whiffen. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*, Revised Edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), 267.
- <sup>cxxxvii</sup> Marcus Whiffen. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*, Revised Edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), 267.
- <sup>cxxxviii</sup> Mark Gelertner. *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context*. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 276.
- <sup>cxxxix</sup> Alan Hess. *Google Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture* (San Francisco, California: Chronicle Books, 2004), 68.
- <sup>xxxx</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation website. June 26, 2007. [https://www.nationaltrust.org/news/2006/20060510\\_11most.html](https://www.nationaltrust.org/news/2006/20060510_11most.html).
- <sup>xxxxi</sup> Alan Hess. *Google Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture* (San Francisco, California: Chronicle Books, 2004), 195.
- <sup>xxxxii</sup> Design Museum website: <http://www.designmuseum.org/design/alison-peter-smithson>. Accessed December 8, 2007.
- <sup>xxxxiii</sup> Docomomo WEWA stands for the Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement, Western Washington. Their website explains: "Docomomo WEWA is a local community of individuals who share a passion for Northwest Modernism. Founded in Seattle in 1998, as a chapter of DOCOMOMO\_US, we are dedicated to the Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement in Western Washington."
- <sup>xxxxiv</sup> Docomomo WEWA website: [http://www.docomomo-wewa.org/styles\\_detail.php?id=35](http://www.docomomo-wewa.org/styles_detail.php?id=35). Accessed December 8, 2007.
- <sup>xxxxv</sup> For instance: Ann Matthews, "Embracing the Brute: A much reviled architectural style has its admirers," in *Preservation* (May/June 2006).
- <sup>xxxxvi</sup> Docomomo WEWA website: [http://www.docomomo-wewa.org/styles\\_detail.php?id=26](http://www.docomomo-wewa.org/styles_detail.php?id=26). Accessed December 8, 2007.
- <sup>xxxxvii</sup> Mansard web page on the Docomomo-wewa site. July 15, 2007.
- <sup>xxxxviii</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 488.

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- cxxxix Charles Jencks. *Late-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1980), 32.
- cxl Lester Walker. *American Shelter*, Revised Edition (Woodstock, New York: The Overlook Press, 1997), 261.
- cxli Informal Conversation with Roger Easton and Jennifer Minner, 2007.
- cxlii Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 484.
- cxliii Shed Style web page on the Docomomo-wewa site. [http://www.docomomo-wewa.org/styles\\_detail.php?id=23](http://www.docomomo-wewa.org/styles_detail.php?id=23). Accessed May 17, 2007.
- cxliv Ibid.
- cxlv Jeffrey W. Howe. *American House: Domestic Architecture in the USA* (London: PRC Publishing Ltd., 2002), 382.
- cxlvi Ibid, 384
- cxlvii Ibid, 390.
- cxlviii Shanna Stevenson. *Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk, Virginia: Donning Co., 1985, reprint 1996).

# OLYMPIA ARCHITECTS OF THE MODERN ERA

The following are prominent architects who contributed to many of Olympia's buildings constructed during the period of 1945 to 1975.

## **Joseph Wohleb**

Joseph Henry Wohleb came to Olympia in 1911. Over the next 47 years, until his death in 1958, Joseph Wohleb would leave his stamp on houses, factories, shops and schools across Olympia. From office blocks on the state Capitol Campus to car dealerships downtown, Wohleb would eventually add more than a hundred buildings to Washington's capital city. His 1940s through '50s era works were done in partnership with his son Robert, who joined his father's practice in 1946. The firm became known as Wohleb and Wohleb Architects in 1949. The elder Wohleb died in 1958.

## **Robert Wohleb**

Robert Wohleb was born in Olympia in 1916 and graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in architecture in 1939. Robert Wohleb specialized in the design of breweries throughout the United States and designed the Olympia City Hall and St. Michael Catholic Church. He was a member of the Olympia Port Commission and was a member of several other local civic groups. Mr. Wohleb died in a freak boating accident in 1966.

Wohleb and Wohleb Architects' successors were Flotree and Sogge Architects, who maintained the Wohleb records for many years.

## **G. Stacey Bennett**

G. Stacey Bennett was born in 1916 and attended the University of Oregon School of Architecture, graduating in 1945. He began his work in 1945 with Victor Louis Wulff in Spokane. He was associated with Joseph and Robert Wohleb from 1945 to 1961. In 1961 he formed G. Stacey Bennett Architects and joined with Steve Johnson in 1962. In 1963, the firm became known as Bennett and Johnson Architects, AIA and Associates when he joined with Steve Johnson. In 1971 the firm became known as Bennett, Johnson, Selenes and Smith, AIA. In 1977 the firm became BJSS Architects and in 1995 BJSS Duarte Bryant and in 2005 Ambia.

## **Steve Johnson**

Steve Johnson was born in upstate New York in the Allegheny Mountains. He attended local Chautauquas, which he credits with increasing his interest in culture. He earned a degree in engineering and architecture at the University of Colorado. After graduation, he returned to New York for a time and then went to work with Boeing in Seattle. He worked with architect Robert B. Price on projects at the Seattle World's Fair. He then joined architect Stacey Bennett in Olympia in 1962. Bennett and Johnson worked with developer Mo Loveless to create small shopping centers along the west coast but did not build any of the centers in Olympia.

Johnson was interested in avant-garde architecture following the interests of the time. He liked the international style with Japanese influences using timber and wood. He used "glue-lam" and post and beam construction. With the advent of the Vietnam War he changed to a more bold and dynamic vocabulary using raw concrete as a material in itself. This was illustrated in the Olympia Bank and Washington Mutual Bank in downtown.

Johnson started embellishing architecture using art to soften steel and wood. This was evident in his design of the Olympia Federal Savings building, which employed wood designs by Walter Graham. He carried out this theme in the Abbey Church at St. Martin's in Lacey, one of his favorite designs.

In the 1970s Johnson remodeled the Hibberd and Cole building at the southwest corner of Fifth and Capitol as a counterpoint to the Olympia Federal Savings Building across the street. Johnson described his design of Capitol Center Building as having more to do with economics than architecture.

One of Johnson's favorite buildings is the Association of Washington Industries (now Association of Washington Business) building at 1414 Cherry St S.E. He described it as a "courageous" building, integrating concrete and wood. It has a timelessness, he stated, set into the contextual setting of the land.<sup>cxliv</sup>

Johnson worked with Olympia developers Jim Dutton and Virgil Adams to develop Holiday Hills in southeast Olympia and cited his own home and those designed for Dutton, Marshall, Stormans and Lovely families in the development as good examples of his residential work. He noted that the Eastwood development, also in Southeast Olympia, features several of Stacey Bennett's signature four-foot or more eave overhangs. This area was developed by Dawley Brothers.

Johnson worked on Pioneer School, which was one of the first schools in the area to have the open concept plan. It was designed after a trip to California to see the schools there.

Johnson worked on additions to the St. Peter Hospital after its initial design and designed the new Memorial Clinic adjacent to the Hospital. He designed the 1977-era Thurston County Courthouse in a campus design working with a hilltop site. Johnson worked on remodels of several state buildings.



Photo showing wood designs by Walter Graham on the Olympia Federal Savings building. Photo from the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

He describes the west Olympia branch of Olympia Federal Savings, which he designed, as a "pavilion in the park" concept.

Johnson began retirement in 1985 and left Olympia in 1996. He describes his career as being one of interest in modern forms and not designing for a crisis and not making a statement for now. He enjoyed working in a broad pallet of architecture. Mr. Johnson died in early 2006.

### **A.G. Homann**

A.G. Homann was a native of Plainsville, Kansas and later moved to Orchard, Washington where he owned a construction company. He worked as a carpenter at Fort Lewis, Washington during World War I and also worked as a carpenter and contractor in Vancouver, Washington. He moved to Olympia in 1939-40 and built the Rockway-Leland building in downtown Olympia.

He built most of the original South Sound Center in Lacey, the Goldberg's Store and State Theater in downtown Olympia and various schools and buildings for Olympia School District and St. Martin's College. He built the Niagara Wire building in Tumwater and the Georgia-Pacific packaging plant in Olympia. He was also the primary contractor for the Olympia Brewery after he arrived in the area in 1940. He was a major contractor at Fort Lewis during World War II.

Mr. Homann was Lacey's first mayor when it was incorporated in 1966 and a founder of the Lacey Volunteer Fire Department. He was active in many civic organizations and was a rancher in the Lacey area. He and his wife Anna Finnegan Homann donated the Al-Anna Park to the City of Lacey. He died in 1975.<sup>cl</sup>

### **NBBJ Architects**

The firm was formed in 1943. Floyd Naramore was a native of Illinois, born in 1879. He received training in engineering at the University of Wisconsin and received a degree in architecture from MIT. He worked for school districts in Portland and Seattle. He formed a partnership with Clifton Brady in 1939. He later formed Naramore, Bain, Brady and Johanson partnership, which built over 6,000 units of housing as well as schools and other facilities throughout the Northwest. William Bain was a native of British Columbia, born in 1896. He received his architecture degree from the University of Pennsylvania and worked in Seattle as a designer of apartments and homes, as well as sororities at the University of Washington. After joining the firm, he worked with them on several large projects including the Boeing facilities in Renton and Moses Lake. He died in 1985. Clifton Brady was born in Iowa in 1894 and received his degree from Iowa State College. He worked first with Floyd Naramore as an associate and later as part of the firm. He died in Seattle. Perry Johanson was born in Colorado in 1919 and received his architecture degree from the University of Washington. With the firm, he worked on several hospitals and medical centers. He died in Seattle.<sup>cli</sup>

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<sup>cxlix</sup> Telephone interview June 11, 2005 with Stephen Johnson and Obituary for Stephen D. Johnson, *The Olympian*, January 22, 2006, pg. C2.

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<sup>cl</sup> "Al Homann, Builder, Is Gone from Scene He Established," The Daily Olympian, February 18, 1975, pg. 1. "Albert G. Homann" Who's Who in Washington, 1963.

<sup>cli</sup> Dietz, Duane, "William J. Bain, Sr." and "Floyd A. Naramore," and editorial summaries in Shaping Seattle Architecture: a Historical Guide to Architects, edited by Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994, 1998.

# APPENDIX A: DETAILED POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

The tables below show racial composition within Olympia. Data is from the U.S. Census Bureau.

## 1940 – City of Olympia

Racial Categories	Number	Percent
Native White	12,117	91.4%
Foreign-born White	1069	8.1%
Negro	15	0.1%
Other Races*	53	0.4%
Total	13,254	100.0%

\* The category “Other Races” includes, 5 Indians, 8 Chinese, 32 Japanese, and people of an unspecified race.

## 1950 – City of Olympia

Racial Categories	Number	Percent
Native White	14,801	93.6%
Foreign-born White	979	6.2%
Negro	10	0.1%
Other Races**	29	0.2%
Total	15,819	100.0%

\*\* Did not include counts of people within the categories of Indians, Japanese, or Chinese, because there were less than 10 counted in each of these racial categories.

## 1960 – City of Olympia

Racial Categories	Number	Percent
White	18,134	99.2%
Negro	13	0.1%
Indian	51	0.3%
Japanese	24	0.1%
Chinese	14	0.1%
Filipino	19	0.1%
Other Races	18	0.1%
Total	18,273	100.0%

## 1970 – City of Olympia

Racial Categories	Number	Percent
White	22,753	98.5%
Negro	51	0.2%
Indian	148	0.6%
Japanese	31	0.1%
Chinese	19	0.1%
Filipino	42	0.2%

All Other	67	0.3%
Total	23,111	100.0%

1980 – City of Olympia

Racial Categories	Number	Percent
White	25,622	93.4%
Black	183	0.7%
American Indian	271	1.0%
Eskimo	0	0.0%
Aleut	6	0.0%
Japanese	87	0.3%
Chinese	68	0.2%
Filipino	98	0.4%
Korean	87	0.3%
Asian Indian	66	0.2%
Vietnamese	358	1.3%
Hawaiian	17	0.1%
Guamanian	3	0.0%
Samoaan	8	0.0%
Other	573	2.1%
Total	27,447	100.0%

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