



Historic Resources Inventory

The City also maintains a Historic Inventory which is a comprehensive list of buildings, structures, sites, and objects, primarily 50 years old and older, identified after field and research analysis. The properties have architectural or historic significance in the context of Olympia history. The inventory is authorized by city ordinance and does not require owner consent. All of the Inventory properties are mapped at www.trpc.org. *Select Programs, Historic Preservation and Historic Property Site Locator*. There are over 500 properties on the City's Inventory.



The Old Capitol and Sylvester Park before the loss of the clock tower. *Jeffers Studio photo from the Washington State Capital Museum, Washington State Historical Society.*

Olympia Heritage Commission Design Review

After placement on the Olympia Heritage Register, the Heritage Commission reviews any proposed exterior changes to register properties which require a building permit or other city land use review process. This review takes no more than 30 days. Compliance with the advice of the Heritage Commission is voluntary, but if the building's historic character is substantially altered, the building may be removed from the register. Ordinary repair and maintenance, emergency repair, and painting of structures are not subject to review. The Commission uses the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation as their design review standards. These standards emphasize retention of the property's historic character over replacement or alteration. They also prescribe the treatment of special features of the building and its site while providing for a new or compatible use of a building. Alterations are not forbidden but must be compatible, yet differentiated from the historic structure. Illus-

trated guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior Standards are available at www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/tax/rhb or by contacting the city's preservation staff.

City of Olympia Design Review

Historic register or inventory properties located in the City of Olympia Design Districts which include Downtown, Entrance/Exit Corridors, State Highways, as well as multi-family developments and developments which require a conditional use permit as part of a development over 5000 square feet are subject to the City's Design Review Standards (See Titles 18.20 and 18.50 of the City of Olympia Uniform Development Code at www.ci.olympia.wa.us). The review considers how the proposed action will affect the significant historic features of the properties, which are listed on the Inventory Form for each property. Changes that require a building permit to properties abutting or directly across the street or alley from Olympia Heritage Register Properties are subject to City of Olympia Design Review before a building permit can be issued to determine how the proposed work affects the register property.

Consideration in Land Use Actions

Consideration will be given under the Washington State Environmental Policy Act as to how land use actions affect historic inventory and register properties. Mitigation, such as photographs, may be required for demolition or substantial changes to identified properties. The City of Olympia has adopted SEPA mitigation policies for historic properties. Information on specific SEPA mitigation requirements is available from the city's preservation staff about properties in the Downtown and High Density Corridor I and II areas.

Building Code Relaxation

Some relaxation of strict building code requirements is available to properties on the Olympia Heritage Register in the interest of preserving historic character while still meeting safety requirements. This is discussed on a case-by-case basis with the Olympia Building Official, Brian Washko, who is located in the Community Planning and Development Office, at 837 7th Avenue in Olympia, 753-8420 or e-mail bwashko@ci.olympia.wa.us.



Special Property Tax Valuation

The Washington State Legislature has enacted legislation that allows owners of Olympia Heritage Register buildings or contributing buildings in a historic district to receive Special Property Tax Valuation. The properties must have undergone an approved rehabilitation within the two years prior to the date of application with the approved expenditures equaling or exceeding 25% of the assessed value of the improvements, exclusive of land value, prior to rehabilitation. Allowable costs are those attributable to work within the original envelope of the building, permit and development fees and other expenses incurred during rehabilitation period. Costs associated with acquiring the property or enlarging a structure are not allowable.

Property owners interested in the program must apply to the Thurston County Assessor by October 1 of each year. The Assessor forwards the application to the Heritage Commission which determines if the rehabilitation meets the cost and preservation standards. The owner signs an agreement with the Heritage Commission which stipulates maintenance standards for the property. The Commission certifies the rehabilitation to the Thurston County Assessor who then subtracts the approved costs from the assessed value of the property every year for ten years, reducing the property tax obligation. The property owner must receive written approval from the Heritage Commission before making changes to the property and new owners must sign the same agreement to keep the special valuation in effect. There is also an application fee for this program. See www.co.thurston.wa.us/assessor/ and www.trpc.org/programs/historic_preservation for forms and guidelines for this program.



Olympia Bus Depot and Fleetwood Building. *Ellis Postcard from a private collection.*



Mid-1940's street scene looking west on Fourth Avenue past the Art Moderne-style Spar Cafe and Baretich Buildings. *Ellis Postcard from a private collection.*

Washington Heritage Register

The Washington Heritage Register (WHR) recognizes historic and cultural properties that are significant to local communities and to the state. Eligible properties must meet specific criteria. After review by Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) staff, the State Advisory Council on Historic Preservation makes the final determination for the WHR. Consideration must be given to the effects of land use actions on State Register properties under the Washington State Environmental Protection Act. Properties nominated to the National Register automatically receive listing in the Washington Heritage Register. State Register forms and information are available at www.oahp.wa.gov.

In Olympia, there are 13 properties listed only on the Washington Heritage Register and 34 properties listed on the WHR and National Register. A complete list of Olympia Washington Heritage Register properties is listed at www.trpc.org. *Select Programs, Historic Preservation.*

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register, a listing of the country's most significant historic properties, is administered by the Department of the Interior, National Park Service and locally by the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP), part of the Office of Community, Trade and Economic Development in Olympia.

Eligible properties must meet specific criteria. After review by OAHP staff, the Olympia Heritage Commission reviews nominations to the National Register prior to their consideration by the State Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The State Council makes a recommendation relative to the property's placement in the National Register and also has the authority to list it in the Washington Heritage Register (WHR). The National Park Service in Washington, D.C. makes the



final determination for listing on the National Register. Property owners have the opportunity to object to the National Register nomination prior to the Advisory Council review. If an objection is made, the property may be determined eligible, but not officially listed, on the National Register. Whenever a federally funded, permitted, or licensed project has potential to affect a National Register designated or eligible property, the State Historic Preservation Officer has an opportunity to review and comment on the project. Consideration must also be given to the effects of land use actions on National Register properties under the Washington State Environmental Protection Act. National Register forms and information are available at www.oahp.wa.gov. In Olympia, there are 31 individual properties listed on the National Register as well as three districts. A complete list of Olympia National Register properties is listed at www.trpc.org. *Select Programs, Historic Preservation.*



Elks Club Building and historic Governor House Hotel. *Ellis Postcard from a private collection.*

Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 enables owners of National Register Properties to take a 20% federal income tax credit for the rehabilitation costs of depreciable properties. The National Park Service and the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation administer the program which has strict guidelines. More information is available at www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/tax/irs.htm.

Certified Local Government

Local governments that establish a historic preservation program meeting federal and state standards are eligible for a certification is known as a “Certified Local Government” or “CLG,” from the National Park Service and OAHP. The City of Olympia has been a CLG since 1983.

Responsibilities of a CLG include maintaining a historic preservation commission, surveying local historic properties, enforcing state or local preservation laws, reviewing National Register Nominations, and providing for public participation.

Obtaining status as a CLG may help a local government encourage, develop, and maintain its local preservation efforts in coordination with its development plans. In addition, CLG’s may apply for special grants from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO); receive recognition for their preservation expertise by local, state, and federal agencies; obtain technical assistance and training from the SHPO; participate in the review of nominations to the National Register of Historic Places; participate in the national historic preservation assistance network; regularly exchange information with the SHPO; and participate in statewide preservation programs and planning. Certified Local Governments and OAHP share in the role as primary agencies with knowledge and expertise in historic preservation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



City of Olympia Historic Preservation Program

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Washington State and Federal Programs

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