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SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON UP TO 1975

CONTEXT STATEMENT

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INTRODUCTION AND SETTING

Olympia, Washington is located in Thurston County at the confluence of the Olympia Peninsula and the southernmost point of the Puget Sound. Olympia is developed atop a bluff that is divided by Budd Inlet and Capitol Lake. It is surrounded by the cities of Tumwater to the south, East Olympia to the southeast, Lacey to the east, and the City of South Bay to the northwest. To the west of Olympia are the foothills to the Capitol State Forest. Olympia is the Capital of Washington and hosts a current population of 48,338¹ making it the state's 24th largest city.

Since its earliest discovery, this capital city of Washington has been an ever changing landscape. From the first native peoples who found permanence in this region for its natural sustenance to the modern-day student or administrator that calls it home, Olympia has experienced great changes and so has its architecture. These changes were prompted by many factors including European and American explorers in the 19th Century, its Capital title, the introduction of new technologies and infrastructure, and, like many cities, the effects of pre- and post-War economies and culture. However, as much as Olympia has experienced great change over its long-standing history the one aspect that has remained consistent is its exponential growth, which was highlighted from 1940-1970 when its population grew from 13,254 to 23,296.²

This document provides a contextual framework for the changes that have contributed to the city of Olympia's growth from a historical and architectural perspective. Based on recognizing broad patterns of history, local and national trends, and the rise and use of single-family homes in Olympia, this document is expected to be used as a resource to learn about the development of Olympia's single-family housing. With this expectation, this document can be used by local and state agencies, students, historians, and neighborhoods associations, among others, with the intent to help identify historic resources and potential historic districts within Olympia.

¹ United States Census Bureau, *State & County Quick Facts: Olympia (City), Washington*, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53/5351300.html>.

² Olympia Heritage Commission, *Mid-Twentieth Century Olympia: a Context Statement on Local History and Modern Architecture, 1945-1975* (Olympia: Olympia Heritage Commission, 2008), 5.



HISTORY OF GROWTH AND SUBURBANIZATION

Dating back as far as the prehistoric era, the land that now makes up Olympia was first occupied by multiple native peoples including the Stehtsasamish, Nisqually, Duwamish, Squaxin, and the Coastal Salish. According to ethnologists the Stehtsasamish “had a village at the south end of Budd Inlet at the outlet of the Deschutes River”³ and the Nisqually occupied a permanent village for 500 years before European and American settlement of the land. Permanent houses during this time were large communal long houses constructed out of cedar logs and planks. These houses were built “parallel to an adjacent beach or river”⁴ and featured vertical plank walls with large corner posts and shed roofs. Typically, these houses would also feature storage platforms, drying racks, and in some cases fire pits.

Years later, after the introduction of the first European explorers in 1792, the first local settlement, Fort Nisqually, was established by the Hudson Bay Company in 1833. However, though Fort Nisqually was the first regional settlement, it was not until 1841 that what is now Olympia can cite its first permanent settler, Thomas Otchin.⁵ Around this time as this region experienced early European settlement, American settlers started to claim this land as well. And in 1846 “Levi [Lathrop] Smith and Edmund Sylvester claimed the site of what is now Olympia”⁶ and named it “Smithers or Smithster” after combining their last names.⁷ Four years later, in 1850, the town of “Smithers” was renamed Olympia by Isaac N. Ebey in reference to the Olympic Mountains, which are viewed to the northwest. This same year, Olympia was officially plotted by Edmund Sylvester who planned it “much like a New England village.”⁸ This plan included a town square, tree lined streets, the capitol grounds, land for schools, and a Masonic Hall.

By 1853 Olympia hosted 966 American settlers, a Custom House, a U.S. Post Office, and was the county seat for Thurston County. In 1853 it also became the temporary capital of the Washington Territory as imposed by the first Washington Territorial Governor, Isaac Stevens. This capital title helped lead to Olympia’s early 1850s



Crowell Sylvester House, c1860
(Courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives)

population growth, which was matched with new businesses, brickyards, dry docks, and hotels. Years later, on January 28th, 1869 Olympia became an incorporated town. And by the 1870s timber mills established around Olympia were experiencing an influx in business. This contributed to the ability to build homes quickly and cheaply for the many new settlers from New England and the Oregon Trail, as they found permanence in this region. Using the abundance of virgin growth timber, Olympia featured many “box or vertical plan construction” homes with cedar sidewalls and rafts of cedar logs for their foundations.⁹ Many homes during this time were either vernacular in style, or featured common styles such as Greek Revival or Italianate.

In 1873 Olympia suffered its first major development setback when the Northern Pacific Railway was routed to Tacoma, Washington instead of Olympia. But, with the help of its residents, who bonded themselves, a narrow-gauge railroad was built from Olympia to its neighboring town of Tenino to help alleviate this issue.¹⁰ At this time, Olympia was still heavily reliant on the Mosquito Fleet, which was fleet of steamboats in the Puget Sound that supported transit and communications, so it also built a 4,798 foot wharf off of what is now Capitol Way out to deep water for ships to reach Olympia regardless of low tide.¹¹

3 Shanna Stevenson, *Olympia Residential Architecture from Early Settlement to 1944*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995), E-1.

4 *Ibid.*, E-2.

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*

7 City of Olympia, *History of Olympia, Washington: From Past to Present*, <http://olympiawa.gov/community/about-olympia/history-of-olympia-washington.aspx>.

8 Shanna Stevenson, *Olympia Residential Architecture from Early Settlement to 1944*, E-3.

9 *Ibid.*, E-4.

10 Ken Balsley, *Olympia Washington History*, <http://www.thurstontalk.com/2012/06/05/olympia-washington-history/>.

11 David Wilma, *Olympia -- Thumbnail History*, http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=5105.



In 1889 the Washington Territory officially became a state and after a statewide vote Olympia retained its capital status. During this time of statehood, Olympia's development flourished with the introduction of an Opera House, city water system, street lamps, and a street car, which supported growth in Olympia's south, east, and west neighborhoods. Telephones, new streets, and hydroelectricity were also introduced around this time as well. As Olympia began its growth in infrastructure and technology it soon saw a change in topography when twenty-two blocks were added downtown during 1911-1922 after a deep water harbor was dredged.¹² Also around this time, beginning with the construction of a Georgian style governor's mansion on the capitol grounds in 1908, Olympia saw a rise in the construction of new home and architecture firms. This growth in capital contributed to the transformation of box style homes to more high-style homes such as Queen Anne and Victorian style homes, which were predominately built on the east side.¹³ This early 20th Century development was soon reinforced by a post WWI stimulus that increased the development of Olympia's downtown and new residential areas to the south and west of the city center. Between post WWI growth and before the changes brought on by WWII, Olympia experienced a rise in housing construction supported by the introduction of the Anderson Brother's pre-cut home. Over the course of twenty years, over five hundred homes were built.

By the end of WWII, Olympia had undergone a fluctuation in employment and development. During the Great Depression, Olympia was affected by a high rate of unemployment, like most U.S. cities. This was eased by the onset of WWII, as Olympia "hummed with shipyards."¹⁴ The Olympia airport became a satellite for McChord Field at Camp Murray and the port became a "major avenue for lend-lease materials for the Soviet Union."¹⁵ After the War Washington's state government grew quickly and by 1950 most of the state agencies moved to Seattle. In 1954 the state headquarters were mandated to return or stay in Olympia. This victory, which was led by the Olympia Chamber of Commerce, along with the flourishing lumber mills that sprinkled the Port of Olympia, helped bring and sustain significant business in Olympia.¹⁶

Other major changes that shaped Olympia during this Post-War Era were the damming of the Deschutes River, which formed Capitol Lake, the earthquake of 1949, the construction of Interstate 5, and the expansion of the city limits. The earliest Olympia annexations took place in the 1930s; however, many more additions to the City were added in the 1940s and 1950s. Areas of residential growth were initially quite small, occurring eastward along the 4th Avenue and State Avenue downtown spine, westward along 4th Ave and Harrison Avenue, and south to capture Gov. Stevens Avenue and the west end of Eskridge Boulevard. The 1960s annexations were noticeably larger in size. These annexations, along with the construction of Interstate 5, which slices through the city, forever shifted the landscape of the city to much of what it is today. These events during Olympia's Post-War years contributed to and are a reflection of, the 19% population growth from 1940-1950 and the 16% population growth from 1950-1960.¹⁷

Many of the newer housing developments of the 1940s and 1950s were developed on what had been rural or agricultural land. Thurston County was primarily still farmland in the mid-1950s, but from that time to the present, over 75% of its agricultural land has been lost to development (not all of it residential).¹⁸

By the 1970s Olympia, once again, underwent major changes. These changes start with the closing of three major lumber mills, Simpson, Georgia Pacific, and St. Regis, which were "victims of a changing market"¹⁹ and environmental regulations. However, this economic misfortune was soon filled with the construction of Evergreen State College in 1972, which "changed and enlivened the Capital City's cultural and social climate."²⁰

¹² City of Olympia, *History of Olympia*, Washington: From Past to Present.

¹³ Shanna Stevenson, *Olympia Residential Architecture from Early Settlement to 1944*, E-6.

¹⁴ David Wilma, *Olympia -- Thumbnail History*.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ken Balsley, *Olympia Washington History*.

¹⁷ Lauren Danner, *Schmidt, Trueman and Virginia, House*, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2014), 8.

¹⁸ Washington State University Extension, *Thurston County*, <http://ext100.wsu.edu/thurston/agriculture/>.

¹⁹ City of Olympia, *History of Olympia*, Washington: From Past to Present.

²⁰ Ibid.



TRANSPORTATION

Olympia's early transportation focus had been its waterways and Port combined with its railways. In the early 1850s, Olympia only had trails and its water's edge was heavily forested. In support of its population a collection of steamboats called the Mosquito Fleet "used the Sound as a watery freeway to move mail, products and passengers."²¹ Years later, in 1870 Northern Pacific Railway began construction of their new railway system that connected the Midwest to the Pacific Northwest. Unfortunately, in 1873 this did not include a route to Olympia. However, "Olympians responded with a railroad of their own. Every Thursday 300 men worked on a line to Tenino with 75 women preparing the food. In 1878, a narrow-gauge railroad connected the capital to the Northern Pacific."²² Thirteen years later, in 1891, Northern Pacific finally created a spur line to Olympia connecting the city to the rest of the United States. This victory of Olympia was important; however, rail transportation has never been as vital to Olympia as its waterways.

Located at the southern tip of the Budd Inlet, Olympia has relied on its geographical location to the Puget Sound for early development, such as the Mosquito Fleet, but as it evolved so did its port and waterways. In 1885, the City built a 4,798 foot long wharf out to deep water so that ships could tie up regardless of the tide. This wharf was only needed until 1895, "when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredged the harbor."²³ By 1895 not only was the long wharf not needed, but the peninsula that makes up the city of Olympia had changed quite drastically, as wharfs were added to a connecting bridge on the west side and new mills were located on the northeast side near the southwest point of what is now East Bay Waterfront Park. By 1908, Olympia's port had expanded once again. This time not only in size, but in infrastructure, which included the addition of new rail lines that extended out to its furthest points. This addition finally combined Olympia's waterways and port with its railways creating one wholistic transportation epicenter. Later in the 1920s new plywood and lumber mills were calling this port home. By the mid-1960s the port had expanded again due in alignment to the City's comprehensive plan and the purchase of tidelands located near the East Bay.²⁴

By 1919, Olympia had expanded its transportation infrastructure once again with the addition of a new concrete bridge that connected downtown to the westside.²⁵ In addition to the construction of a new bridge, the year 1919 also introduced the Washington State highway system that made Olympia the crossing point of two major highways. Pacific Highway (99) was the primary north-south connector while the Olympic Highway (later State Highway 9) extended east-west. During the 1950s, the State upgraded the Pacific Highway (99) to a four-lane Highway. This route was later superseded by the introduction of Interstate 5 later this decade, prompting the social, developmental, and architectural trends that helped shape Olympia in the second half of the 20th Century.

The automobile played an enormous role in shaping residential communities even before World War II. The "Streetcar suburbs" that had fostered a tremendous expansion of suburban growth in many U.S. communities from the late 1890s into the 1920s were in turn dwarfed by the influx of the automobile. Automobile ownership soared as cars became more reliable, affordable, and as roads and highways were improved. The automobile industry, in particularly the "Big Three" companies of Ford, GM, and Chrysler, were uniquely well situated to ramp up production to meet a pent-up demand for cars after the war, because these companies had also been involved in military production of equipment such as engines, aircraft, and guns. The "Big Three" accounted for 94 percent of the American automobile market by 1955.²⁶ The explosion of car ownership not only drove big changes in communities, with mobility dramatically increased and growth no longer confined to specific corridors or rail lines, but also in architecture. People needed places to put these proliferating vehicles, both at their homes and at their workplaces and other destinations. Garages became not just an amenity, but a critical part of a house. The post-war era also saw the rise of new, automobile-centric types of architecture, including drive-through restaurants and banks; automobile showrooms; 'roadside' architecture which was intended to induce passing motorists to stop; and multi-level parking garages.

21 Ibid.

22 David Wilma, *Olympia -- Thumbnail History*.

23 Ken Balsley, *Olympia Washington History*.

24 Port of Olympia, *History: A Proud Tradition & Promising Future*, <http://www.portolympia.com/105/History>.

25 City of Olympia, *History of Olympia, Washington: From Past to Present*.

26 James J. Flink, *The Automobile Age* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1988), 272-279.

Single-family housing in Olympia also started to reflect the same auto-centric trend that was shifting American culture after WWII. Houses built during 1945-1975 were predominately built in new suburban neighborhoods, spurred by a national ethos that promised to bring people out of the harsh elements of the city and into a safe community that was more conducive to raising a family. In addition, the influx of young families after the War prompted new development and architectural styles. Single-family homes built during this time were typically one-story Ranch style houses with a low-pitched roof (either hipped or gable) with overhanging eaves. Though this period introduced many new styles of single-family residents, the Ranch style is by far the most prevalent.



1925 Union Pacific Depot (Courtesy of Washington State Historical Society)



Northern Pacific Railroad Depot, c1914
(Courtesy of Olympiahistory.org)



1963 Port of Olympia
(Courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives)



LEGISLATIVE IMPACTS

Prior to post-WWII legislation such as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act in 1944, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944, and the Housing Act of 1961, which collectively contributed to the reshaping of the American way of life, both locally and nationally, there were few legislative impacts that influenced single-family houses. However, outside of these three Acts, there were two prominent actions taken during this period that helped sustain the population of Olympia. The first is the retention of state agencies in Olympia.

After WWII, national and state governments began to grow and move to larger cities, as observed in Washington. Prior to 1953 the state "added more agencies over the years [and] many of them were allowed to locate their main offices in Seattle."²⁷ However, in August, 1953 several Olympia citizens and the Casco Company filed suit against Governor Arthur Langlie to mandate that state agencies move back or stay in Olympia. One year later, the Supreme Court ruled that Seattle was "unconstitutionally becoming the second seat of government, and ordered the [thirteen] agencies to relocate to Olympia."²⁸ This ruling was monumental in not only keeping and sustaining business in Olympia, but also in reaffirming the historic role of the city. The second important legislation that affected the city of Olympia during this time was the creation of Evergreen State College in 1967, which currently supports 5,277 faculty, staff, and students. Acting as Washington's first 4-year public college of the 20th century, Evergreen State College along with the retention of state agencies, helped shape Olympia from a struggling post-industrial town into a thriving capital. These two factors may not support the development of single-family houses during this period, but they add to Olympia's continued growth and overall context.

In 1944, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (The G.I. Bill) included VA loans or loan guarantees for veterans which started the residential post-war boom. The Housing Act of 1961 provided additional incentives for home ownership and for urban renewal initiatives. \$4.88 billion was allocated towards loans or grants to city or county governments to spend on urban renewal, public housing and middle-income family housing, home improvement, transportation improvements, and a liberalized Federal Housing Administration (FHA) home mortgage insurance program.

The FHA actively promoted developments of "small houses" especially during the 1940s. Their literature suggested omitting "all nonessential features" of a house, and that builders should concentrate on providing a simple, compact home with a minimal porch or stoop.²⁹ Stylistically, these are Minimal Traditional houses (see Post-WWII Architecture section for further discussion of styles). Builders took the FHA's recommendations to heart, as the fastest way to getting a loan was to build according to the FHA's suggestions. The economical use of space and materials in these small houses were necessary in the Great Depression years and during World War II, when materials were often hard to come by and loans could be difficult to obtain.

Congress set up two government-sponsored mortgage loan institutions: the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac), as well as a wholly government-owned institution, the Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae) in the years 1968-1970. The result of the creation of these three enterprises was to increase home ownership rates in U.S. communities.

Starting in the 1960s, there were also reactions against the impacts of twenty years of growth across the United States. Governments began to pass legislation to address environmental, energy, and historic preservation concerns by the late 1960s and early 1970s. Thurston Regional Planning Council was formed in 1967 to provide planning guidance, growth management, and to address issues such as environmental quality and economic opportunity. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was signed in 1970, and Washington State passed its own State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) in 1971. Washington State further voted to approve the Shoreline Management Act in 1971, "to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state's shorelines."³⁰ Building permits and development permits had to meet increasingly stringent requirements at most levels of local government.

²⁷ David Nicandri and Derek Valley, *Olympia Wins: Washington's Capital Controversies* (Olympia: Washington State Capitol Museum, 1980), 33.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁹ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2000), 588.

³⁰ Department of Ecology, *State of Washington, Shoreline Management Act of 1971*, § 90.58.020, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=90.58.020>.



It is worth noting that the Thurston County communities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater worked with the Thurston Planning Council to cooperatively manage growth even before they were mandated to do so by Washington State's Growth Management Act of 1990.³¹ An urban service boundary was established in the late 1970s around the three communities in order to establish an area where growth could be accommodated and where intensive public services could be provided.³²



1956 Aerial View of Washington State Capitol (Courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives)

³¹ Edward W. Kozak, "Urban Growth Boundary Policy in Comparative Perspective: Lessons Learned and Future Policy Directions for the Lower Mainland," (M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1997), 74.
³² *Ibid.*, 90-92.



SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

In Olympia, the major economic driver of growth up until World War II had been the timber industry. Though the capital title was Olympia's claim to fame, "it was logging, lumber and plywood, which provided much of the city's money"³³ and housing. Dating back to 1920s "the lumber industry in the area produced a housing type which can be described as "lumber baron."³⁴ These homes were built by owners of local businesses, lumber mills, logging operations, and breweries. Other homes built out of the prominent stake that the lumber and plywood industry had on Olympia were pre-cut homes from the Anderson Brothers' Tumwater Lumber Mills Company starting in 1922. These homes included "instructions, drawings, specially marked lumber which indicated the section of the house, finishing lumber and frames for doors, windows as well as crated built-in features, including cabinetry, fireplaces, and wainscoting."³⁵

Dating back to its founding in 1850, agriculture has played a vital role in the history and development of Olympia. Farming in this region was first prompted by the Preemption Act of 1841 and the Donations Land Claim Act of 1850, which spurred land ownership. Early farms included the Levi Smith farm, which hosted a diverse array of crops and livestock on two acres downtown, Olympia and the St. Joseph's of New Market (later Tumwater) in 1848.

By the early 20th Century, growth and technologies increased not only the size of Olympia, but the region's farming operations. In 1907 Thurston County hosted 655 farms with an average size of 194 acres.³⁶ These farms grew a wide range of crops including "oats, barley, buckwheat, rye, beets carrots, parsnips, rutabaga, ma, potatoes, and other vegetables," along with fruits.³⁷ Lasting through the 1930s and 1940s, these small farms and associated businesses, such as canneries, flourished in Thurston County; however, by the Post-WWII era, farms consolidated into larger operations due to mechanization and rising costs.³⁸ By the 1950s, the remaining agricultural farms were smaller, "in part because of the increased costs for cut-over lands and the subdivisions of large homesteads,"³⁹ and transitioned to specialty products such as Christmas trees, lavender, mushrooms, and dairy.⁴⁰ Increased mechanization meant that there were far fewer agricultural jobs available than there had been before the War.

Another industry related to the development of Olympia was aquaculture, and as it pertains to Olympia, oyster harvesting. Blessed with its natural geography and marine conditions, Olympia began its relationship with the shellfish industry in 1878 when the Olympia Oyster Company was founded by S.C. Woodruff.⁴¹ After statehood, tidelands were available for purchase, which led a surge in the industry with the founding of three new businesses, the Olympia Oyster Company, Simmons Oyster Company, and Brenner Oysters.⁴² "In 1908 alone, 810,726 pounds of opened oysters and 1,602,745 pounds of oysters in the shell were shipped from Olympia."⁴³ By the 1920s pollution led the decline in the oyster population and industry. Today the most of the industry is privatized with regional operations in the Eld and Totten Inlets.

Across the United States just after the end of World War II, numerous factors shaped the social and economic trends of the time. Family sizes increased, creating the Baby Boom that continues to shape our collective social and physical landscape. Prosperity increased as well, with higher personal incomes and a corresponding trend towards consumerism. Populations began to shift from urban centers to suburban locations, and across the U.S. in general from the East Coast and Midwest towards the South and West. The Civil Rights movement drove desegregation and shifts in the African-American population towards the upper Midwest from the South. Finally, there was a pervasive sense of optimism regarding technology and rapid scientific innovations, tempered by a sense of anxiety regarding the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

³³ Ken Balsley, *Olympia Washington History*.

³⁴ Shanna Stevenson, *Olympia Residential Architecture from Early Settlement to 1944*, E-8.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Shanna Stevenson, *Agriculture in Thurston County: First Settlement to 1951*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002), E-17.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., E-18.

³⁹ Ibid., E-30.

⁴⁰ Ibid., E-18, E-25-31.

⁴¹ Ibid., E-31.

⁴² Ibid., E-32.

⁴³ Ibid.

During WWI, Olympia became the center of the region's lumber processing. "Smokestacks rose around the waterfront and downtown buildings were constructed. Residential areas South and West of the city blossomed and, by the time the domed capitol building was completed in 1927, the developing community complemented the grand, imposing structure."⁴⁴ By the 1930s and into the 1950s, logging continued to bring "significant business into the city, [as] a half dozen lumber and plywood mills opened up in and around the Port of Olympia, where the finished product was later shipped."⁴⁵

When forest products became scarce in the 1930s and 1940s, state government finally surpassed timber as Olympia's dominant economic engine by the early 1950s.⁴⁶ And by the late 1960s three major lumber mills in the area were closed, including Simpson, Olympia Veneer's plant (later St. Regis) in 1967, and Buchanan Lumber in 1963. Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, which owned the majority of Washington Veneer in 1947, sold its share to Georgia-Pacific, which then closed the plant in 1969. A few lumber companies, including Hardel Plywood, Solid Wood Plywood and Delson Lumber, lasted into the 1980s or 1990s.⁴⁷

Another prominent industry was the Olympia Brewing Company. Opening its door in 1906, Olympia Brewing Company was an "important part of the economic community, with many generations of local families in the work force."⁴⁸ Unfortunately, like the lumber industry that built Olympia from the ground up, the Olympia Brewing Company did not survive either. In 1983 it was purchased by Pabst Brewing Company who then sold it to Miller Brewing Company in 1999, who then sold it once again in 2002 when it was left vacant and foreclosed.

Olympia was almost entirely Caucasian in population well into the 1970s, and there were incidents of racism during the 1960s and 1970s as a few African-Americans started to live and work in Thurston County. While larger cities in the Pacific Northwest saw fires, protests in the streets, and angry rhetoric from people who had felt the effects of discrimination, Olympia's social change came about in quieter ways.⁴⁹

Olympia was impacted by the same trends affecting the rest of the United States in the postwar period, including larger families and increased prosperity, an increase in personal mobility and a romantic notion of the West as a place to "start again," and increased consumerism for home ownership, cars, and appliances. Olympia's unique position as the seat of Washington State's government also drove an increase in single-family homes, even as timber jobs and rural agricultural jobs became scarcer.



Olympia Brewing Co., c1910 (Courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives)

⁴⁴ OlympiaOnline, *History of Olympia*. <http://www.olympiaonline.com/Community/history.php#HistoricSites>.

⁴⁵ Ken Balsley, *Olympia Washington History*.

⁴⁶ Thomas Rainey, *A Short History of Industry and Manufacturing in Thurston County, Washington*, <http://olympiahistory.org/wp/rainey-short-history-of-manufacturing/>.

⁴⁷ Olympia Heritage Commission, *Mid-Twentieth Century Olympia: a Context Statement on Local History and Modern Architecture, 1945-1975*, 22-24.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ralph Munro, *Olympia's African American Trailblazers*, <http://olympiahistory.org/wp/olympias-20th-century-pioneers/>.



INFRASTRUCTURE, SITE PLANNING, AND LANDSCAPE

Early land development of Olympia was spurred by the Preemption Act of 1841, the Donations Land Claim Act of 1850, and the Homestead Act of 1862. The Preemption Act of 1841 “allowed settlers to acquire 160 acres of land at the cost of \$1.25 per acre if they had not already acquired 320 acres of land.”⁵⁰ Years later, with the introduction of the Donations Land Claim Act of 1850, white settlers, who already had settled the territory, could claim up to 640 acres of land before December 1, 1850.⁵¹ This Act also “encouraged new settlers to the area by offering, at no cost, up to 320 acres of land to white males who settled in the territory by December 1, 1855.”⁵² The Act also “granted 160 acres to single men or 320 acres to married men who were over the age of 21 [and] required settlers to live on the land and cultivate it for four consecutive years.”⁵³ Sixteen years later, the Homestead Act of 1862 “granted settlers 160 acres of free land for living on and improving the land for five years.”⁵⁴ These three Acts, in addition to the regions location to natural resources, were great incentives for not only moving west, but settling Olympia.

By 1856, Olympia was predominately developed on the west side of its peninsula near the West Bay. Development was curbed to three blocks north, along modern day Capitol Way. The rest of Olympia to the south and east, though plotted, was still undeveloped as many block only hosted single occupancy sites. Predominately used for ranching or farming, as “the more remote areas of what is now the city”⁵⁵ featured small farming operations. Many of these homes were T-shaped with a front or side gable and were located on land



1952 Olympia Neighborhood
(Courtesy of Tacoma Public Library)

larger than city lots. By 1888 Olympia’s land use was changing, as most of the peripheral land surrounding the downtown core was developed. However, though Olympia was growing out at this point, many of these lots still were single occupancy sites, with orchards and vacant land.⁵⁶ As Olympia’s growth continued to spiral outwards, the land once used for farming continued to become filled with homes and businesses. During this time, homes began to change in style and size. Early homes in Olympia were vernacular in style with box or vertical plank construction, but by the turn of the century new homes were becoming larger in size with high-style design.

Established in 1919 the Pacific Highway (99) and Olympia Highway where the first of many state highways to affect the development of Olympia. Crossing through downtown Olympia, these highways, like other prior forms of infrastructure provided access to urban cores and supported ribbon development. These developments, much like “streetcar suburbs,” grew and developed based on their proximity to primary transportation infrastructure. These types of development was superseded throughout the United States with the creation of massive interstates as part of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which prompted the construction of 41,000 miles of the Interstate Highway System. In the 1950s Olympia experienced the effects of Interstate 5 as it cut through southeast Olympia contributing to the demolition of homes, dividing of neighborhoods, and changes to single-family residential development in Olympia.

Generally, infrastructure expansions in Olympia were piecemeal with each annexation. Water, gas, telephone cable, electric cable, and street light poles were developed on contract to Thurston County, in addition to the right-of-way development of roadways, curbs, and sidewalks. In 1941, the City of Olympia purchased McAllister Springs, to provide a steady supply of drinking water to the expanding population of Olympia and to replace the previous dwindling source, wells within Watershed Park. The McKinley Water Company was granted a franchise to operate at least a portion of the water system in 1954.⁵⁷

50 Shanna Stevenson, *Agriculture in Thurston County: First Settlement to 1951*, E-8.

51 Shanna Stevenson and Gayle Palmer, ed., *Thurston County Place Names: A Heritage Guide* (Olympia: Thurston County Historic Commission, 1992), 113.

52 Shanna Stevenson, *Agriculture in Thurston County: First Settlement to 1951*, E-8.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., E-9.

55 Ibid., E-6.

56 Olympia, Washington [map], 1888, “Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1884-1924 – Washington,” UO Libraries, http://sanborn.umi.com.libproxy.uoregon.edu/cgi-bin/auth.cgi?command=IP_Auth.

57 Thurston County Commission, *Commissioners’ Minutes No. 19*, <http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/wl-bocpublic8/0/doc/3006319/Page2.aspx>.



Puget Sound Power & Light Co. (PSP&L) was the successor to the Olympia Light & Power Company in Olympia, but Puget Sound was a regional company, operating in Seattle, Bellingham, and many places across the State. PSP&L had been forced to break up and reincorporate due to legal challenges starting with the 1935 Public Utility Holding Act and Federal investigations of large power companies during the 1940s.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, PSP&L appears to have been the major, if not the only, electric utility in Olympia during the 1945 to 1975 period. Until the mid-1950s, sewers in Olympia combined with storm flow and emptied directly into Budd Inlet. Although a sewage treatment plant was constructed in 1952, it initially provided only a rudimentary treatment of some wastewater, and measurable pollution continued in Capitol Lake and Budd Inlet. By 1975, Capitol Lake was still unfit for public use, though Tumwater, Lacey, and Olympia formed a partnership by 1976 to upgrade the treatment plant and coordinate its management.⁵⁹

In 1949, an earthquake struck the south Puget Sound region. The majority of existing larger buildings were damaged in Olympia, as well as in Tacoma, Seattle, Chehalis, Puyallup, and other communities. By 1955, Washington State required that the design of public buildings include earthquake forces. After another regional earthquake in 1965, the State again strengthened seismic requirements in 1973.⁶⁰ The Puget Sound area is considered highly vulnerable to seismic activity.

The construction of the Washington State Capitol Campus and the creation of Capitol Lake have also had a lasting impact on Olympia's landscape and its surrounding neighborhoods. Built 1908-1930, the Washington State Capitol Campus contributed to the spurred development of multiple single-family homes in its surrounding neighborhoods. Paralleling its primary development, 307 houses were built just south of the Capitol in the South Capitol Neighborhood.⁶¹ These homes, which range in style, served as the homes of state official and government employees. However, like Olympia, the Washington State Capitol Campus also grew. And in the 1960s the east Capitol Campus was developed. This development expanded the Capitol grounds to include multiple government buildings and "involved the demolition of all the residences north of Maple Park to make way for new state buildings."⁶² Around this time the City of Olympia also followed through with the creation of another significant alteration to Olympia's landscape, Capitol Lake. Created in 1951 by the damming of the Deshutes River, Capitol Lake played an important role in the Washington State Capitol Campus comprehensive plan. However, its creation also contributed to the relocating and demolition of single-family residents.

Landscape planning as applied to single-family residential homes was not a real factor for most developments in Thurston County. Street trees were only occasionally planted in the zone between sidewalk and street in most of the post-1945 developments. Grass was always laid down around the new house on the lot, sometimes with a few shrubs planted along the front of the house. A walkway typically extended from sidewalk to the front entry of the house, sometimes taking a meandering path and other times perpendicular to the sidewalk. Later, as driveways and garages became more prominent, the separate walkway might be dispensed with altogether and the entry would be directly from the driveway. Rear yards began to have more prominence in family life during the 1950s, and both the front yard plantings and the rear landscaping began to take on a more inviting, and less "utilitarian" appearance.

An interesting feature of local topography impacted the design and layout of some properties in Olympia during the mid-Century era. One of these, the Trueman and Virginia Schmidt House on SE Maringo Road, is built "into the rim of a glacial kettle, a geographic feature common in Thurston County formed by large chunks of ice that broke off as glaciers retreated in prehistoric times. As the ice melted, it created a deep kettle or pothole filled with water."⁶³ Larger kettles in Thurston County include Ward Lake, Hewitt Lake, and one on the campus of Olympia High School, but smaller ones are incorporated into backyards in Southeast Olympia and Tumwater.

58 University of Washington Library, *Puget Sound Power and Light Company records, Inventory, Accession No: 2250-001*, <http://www.lib.washington.edu/static/public/specialcollections/findingaids/2250-001.pdf>.

59 City of Olympia, *Appendix E History of Olympia's Wastewater System, City of Olympia Wastewater Management Plan* (Seattle, WA: Code Publishing Company, 2013). <http://www.codepublishing.com/wa/olympia/wm/OlympiaWM99E.html>.

60 Project Impact Seattle, *Home Earthquake Retrofits Series: Overview* (Seattle WA: City of Seattle, Emergency Management, 1999), 7.

61 Shanna Stevenson with ed. assistance by Heather Lockman, *South Capitol Neighborhood Historic District*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1991), 7-3.

62 *Ibid.*, 8-3.

63 Lauren Danner, *Schmidt, Trueman and Virginia, House*, 3.



SINGLE-FAMILY ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Early Territorial period homes constructed in Olympia were generally constructed using “box” or vertical plank construction, using thick, hand-hewn planks attached to wood timber horizontals at top and bottom of the wall. Examples include the 1856 home of Governor Stevens and his family, a Greek Revival style residence; and the 1854 home of early settler Daniel Bigelow, a “Carpenter Gothic” style residence which is the earliest extant home in Olympia. Other predominant styles of this period include Italianate Revival and vernacular farmstead styles.

The 1880s saw a railroad expansion and an influx of money and population to the area. Homes became more decorative and complex, with Queen Anne and Victorian styles, which were more often built on the east side of Olympia. By the 1890s, Olympia had its first architectural office, Hartsuck and White. However, by the mid to late 1890s the economy hit a rough patch, with bank closures, strikes, and loss of investments. The ornate styles of the earlier decades were replaced by more modest types such as the Foursquare by the turn of the century.⁶⁴ The American Foursquare is typically a two-and-a-half story house, with raised basement, a wide porch across the front, and four large rooms on each level. The Foursquare appeared in several stylistic variations, including Colonial Revival.⁶⁵

The bungalow had become the ideal suburban form by 1910 across the United States. A bungalow can be described as a one or one-and-a-half story home with a wide, shallowly-pitched roof with broad overhanging eaves. The floor plan is generally open, with private bedrooms at the rear or upstairs, and a wide, open front porch. Bungalows may be in English Cottage, Mission Revival, Craftsman, or other styles. “From the 1910s until the 1930s it was the Craftsman/Bungalow style which predominated in Olympia. The style was interpreted in grand and modest versions. Stylistically, most of the homes from the historic period fall under the category of the Craftsman/Bungalow style. The growth of Olympia during the 1910s to 1930s, the affordability of this style, and the influence of the pre-cut houses designed in the Craftsman/Bungalow style contributed to this pattern.”⁶⁶ Other popular styles during this period included English Revival, Mission, Colonial, English, Dutch Colonial Revival, and Art Moderne.⁶⁷ The construction of the State Capitol Campus, completed in 1927, fueled a construction boom in the residential market during this period in Olympia. It also led to the demolition and relocation of many earlier residences to other parts of the city.

Tumwater Lumber Mills Company was founded by the Anderson siblings; 6 brothers and 2 sisters from Sweden. In 1922 they started Tumwater Ready-Cut Homes, which were prefabricated houses designed by the Andersons. Theirs was the first such operation in the west, and was very successful not only nationally, but even internationally. Over 500 of their pre-cut homes were sold and constructed in Olympia during the 1920s to the 1940s.⁶⁸

Homes constructed from 1919, after World War I, to 1945, after World War II, were compact. This trend was seen across the United States, and was primarily the result of the economy. The small house of the 1920s appeared in many forms and styles, mostly in period revival styles such as English Tudor, French, Spanish, and American Colonial. Although the Great Depression severely curtailed new building and led to a high rate of mortgage foreclosures, the 1930s also saw the rise of experimentation with prefabrication, modular systems, and mass production in the housing industry.

Single-family residential architecture in the initial postwar period from 1945 to about 1950, as a whole, can be easily differentiated from pre-war housing. Differences are attributable to three major factors:

- FHA programs to stimulate home construction and to set construction standards for new homes;
- Adoption of new building technology and materials developed during or just before the war, but only applied to construction in the post-war period; and
- Changes in the building industry, labor, and the market resulting from wartime mobilization and production.

64 Shanna Stevenson, *Olympia Residential Architecture from Early Settlement to 1944*, E-4-E-7.

65 David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002), 56.

66 Shanna Stevenson, *Olympia Residential Architecture from Early Settlement to 1944*, E-9.

67 Ibid., E-8.

68 Ibid., E-8.



FHA-insured homes in this early postwar period were compact and unadorned. Exterior trim was reduced to a plain fascia board, with no finish eave soffits. The entry might have a simplified representation of historic trim, and there were usually corner boards. Interior finishes and trim were even more reduced. Flooring initially was still wood, though using shorter boards than in the past, but later often became carpet or linoleum directly over a subfloor. Gypsum wallboard replaced lath and plaster, and ceilings were often “textured” to hide defects and to eliminate joint taping and finishing. Some interior items, such as cabinetry, could be made offsite and installed in place.⁶⁹

By about 1951, however, growing prosperity, larger families, and the increase in consumerism were driving another change in the postwar house. Early buyers of small houses, typically under 1,000 sf in size, were ready to “trade up.” The ideal popular home had at least 3 bedrooms, plus a spacious garage that could accommodate one or two cars, plus some of the shop or garden equipment that many people owned.⁷⁰ The layout for this type of expanding home (as both a style and a form) was the Ranch house. Ranch houses were hugely popular in Olympia and in most communities across the United States.

“Most critics overlooked or ignored the prototypical Ranch house architecture, the variety of its manifestations, the social complexity of its neighborhoods, and the tract Ranch’s often innovative mass-construction methods. To most critics living in traditional cities with little contact with the conditions, desires, and apparent satisfactions of middle-class suburban life, the suburbs were a foreign land.”⁷¹

Residential Styles up to 1900

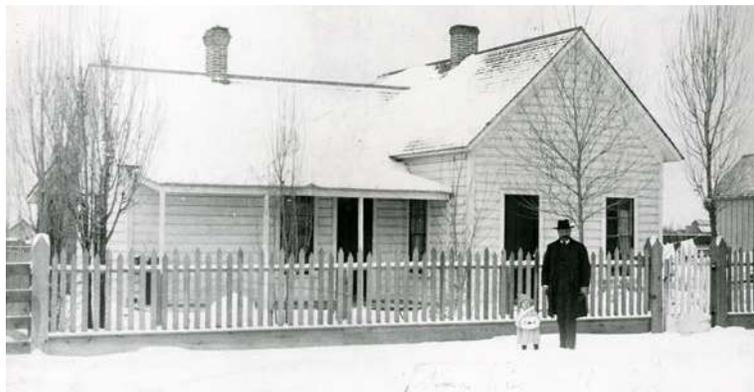
- Greek Revival
- Italianate
- Gothic Revival
- Vernacular Farmstead
- Victorian (including Queen Anne, Shingle, and other variants)



Gothic Revival style house, c1910
(Courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives)

Residential Styles 1890 to 1935

- Tudor
- English Cottage
- Dutch Colonial
- Spanish Colonial or Mission Revival
- Colonial Revival
- Italian Renaissance Revival
- French Eclectic
- Neoclassical



Vernacular style house in 1887 (Courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives)

Residential Styles 1900 to 1945

- Craftsman
- Arts & Crafts
- Prairie (Wrightian)
- Early Modern

⁶⁹ Alfred M. Staehli, “They Sure Don’t Build Them Like They Used To: Federal Housing Administration Mortgage Insured Builder’s Houses in the Pacific Northwest from 1934 to 1954.” (M.A. Thesis, Portland State University, 1987), 196-200.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 200-214.

⁷¹ Alan Hess, *The Ranch House* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004), 192.



Residential Styles 1940 to 1975

- Stripped Classical
- Modern Minimal Traditional
- World War II-Era Cottage
- Early or Transitional Ranch
- Ranch
- Split-Level or Split Entry Ranch
- “Styled” Ranch
- Contemporary Ranch
- Northwest Regional Style
- A-Frame

(For illustrations of these architectural styles, visit the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation’s Architectural Style Guide, currently found online at: <http://www.dahp.wa.gov/learn-and-research/architectural-style-guide>.)

Other Modern architectural styles that are rarely found in residential single-family building types include Brutalist, International Style or Miesian, Neo-Expressionist, Pavilion, Geodesic Dome, and Articulated Frame styles. Post-Modernism, which also began in the 1960s, has few representative single-family examples across the United States contributing to Olympia’s lack of this particular architectural style.



Minimal Traditional style house in 1948
(Courtesy of Thurston County Assessor Archives)



English Cottage style house in 1938
(Courtesy of Thurston County Assessor Archives)



Ranch style house in 1950 (Courtesy of Olympiahistory.org)



MATERIALS

Prior to World War II, wood was used almost exclusively in single-family home construction in Olympia. By the mid-1900s, modern materials and building technologies revolutionized and dramatically expanded the possibilities for structures and forms. One of the major shifts in construction technology was the use of lightweight steel for the internal structure of a building, allowing for the exterior of the building to be “hung” from the structure rather than being load-bearing. Curtain wall construction was typically used on large buildings rather than on single-family residential buildings, but the single-family dwellings of the Post-WWII period share a commonality with large office towers in that the exterior walls were much lighter and typically have more glass than their counterparts from the prewar era. In some cases, the structure was even moved to the outside of the building and visually expressed, leaving the walls to provide the important building envelope work but having little structural contribution.

- Pre-engineered wood and metal trusses were developed and became widely available in the postwar years. Trusses not only use less building material than post-and-beam construction, but they also lower the pitch of the roof, so the builder could eliminate the inefficient attic space of a traditional home and construct a building with lower costs. As one of a standard kit-of-parts available to the builder, labor costs could also be kept to a minimum.
- Other pre-fabricated components that were developed during and after the War included glue-laminated timbers and wall panel systems. Material efficiency and standardization were the driving forces behind these new products, and people generally believed in the capitalistic idea that a large corporation, using an assembly line model, could be a more efficient producer of a product than a small business or individual.⁷² Entire houses were packaged and sold in components.
- Technological innovations in construction materials also drove the form and appearance of the architecture of this period. New fiber-reinforced plastics, lightweight concrete, glass block, weathering steel, vinyl tile, and new sealants all came to market and were incorporated into single-family residences as well as other types of buildings. Engineers and architects began to experiment with innovative structures such as thin-shell concrete systems, tensile systems, and other types of structures never seen before in residential construction.

One of the few exceptions to the predominance of wood in single-family residential construction in Olympia was during World War II, when the demand for wood was exceptionally high. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, F. A. Schmidt constructed concrete block homes in southeast Olympia, designed by Joseph Wohleb. “The houses feature 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 some of which have interior concrete walls while others have some frame construction.”⁷³

⁷² Edward R. Ford, *The Details of Modern Architecture: 1928 to 1988 (Volume 2)* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003), 11.

⁷³ Shanna Stevenson, *Olympia Residential Architecture from Early Settlement to 1944*, E-12.



ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS IN OLYMPIA

Early Territorial-period homes were typically constructed by carpenters, or by the family to live in the house. It was not until the 1890s with the rise of the fashionable and complex high Victorian styles that the first architectural office opened in Olympia. From the 1890s until the post-World-War-II era, architects were typically involved in the design of a house, even if the house was prefabricated. The most well-known Olympia architects practicing from the 1890s until about 1945, or sometimes into the post-War period, are listed below:⁷⁴

- **Benjamin Hartsuck** arrived in Olympia around 1887 and began the first formal architectural practice, with his partner J. W. White, in Olympia.
- **Charles Patnude** was a carpenter who was born in Quebec, Canada and built many early buildings in Olympia, including the Chambers Block and the 1893 Patnude House.
- **Joseph H. Wohleb** practiced in Olympia starting in 1911, forming a partnership with his son Robert in 1945. Most of his work, including residences such as the Clarence J. Lord residence which was later adapted to be the Capitol State Museum, was in pre-Modern architectural styles. Wohleb was the primary architect practicing in Olympia during the early and mid-twentieth century, up until his death in 1958.
- **Elizabeth Ayer**, the first woman licensed in the State of Washington in 1930.
- **Virgil Westbrook** worked in Joseph Wohleb's office during the early 1920s, and became an artist and architect in the Los Angeles area by the late 1920s.
- **Frank Stanton** was a partner to Joseph Wohleb for a time in the 1920s and a graduate of the University of Michigan. He later moved to Bellingham, Washington.
- **Trena Worthington** was an attorney and contractor who designed a number of homes copied from designs in *Architectural Digest*.

The majority of housing constructed in Olympia from 1945 to 1975 was speculative housing; that is: houses built by a developer or contractor, typically in groups or multiples on adjoining lots, and sold to the consumer once completed. While some of these houses were based on plans drawn up by architects, many were completed without an architect's involvement at all.

Architects, however, were involved in a number of houses for individual clients in Olympia, and these structures tend to show the most developed examples of Modern architectural styles. Architects working in Olympia during the 1945-1975 period generally worked across a spectrum of building types and uses rather than specializing in residential construction. The following architects list residential architecture as one of their services, but it is not known whether all of them designed homes in Olympia.

- **Gordon Stacey Bennett** graduated from the University of Oregon School of Architecture in 1945 and worked for a short time in Spokane. He then began in the office of Joseph Wohleb, and stayed until 1961. In 1962, he formed a partnership with Steve Johnson, and in 1971 the firm changed their name to Bennett, Johnson, Selenes and Smith, AIA. Bennett designed the Trueman and Virginia Schmidt House in Olympia, among other residential and non-residential work.
- **Warren A. Brown** was an architect for the State Department of General Administration. It is not known whether he designed single-family residences, but his 1958 Brutalist style Union Avenue Parking Garage in Olympia is considered the earliest Brutalist building in the State of Washington.
- **George L. Ekvall** had a long architectural career beginning in his hometown of Tacoma. He designed numerous residences, institutional buildings, and apartment buildings such as the Roosevelt Apartments in Tacoma (1929) with his partner Charles Lundberg. When Lundberg retired in the late 1930s, Ekvall moved to Olympia where he worked in the Wohleb office for a time before opening his own practice in 1946. At this time, he also became the architect for the Washington State Parks Commission.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Ibid., E-6-E-10.

⁷⁵ Michael Houser, *Ekvall, George L. (1895-1974)*, http://www.docomomo-wewa.org/architects_detail.php?id=105.



- **Steve Johnson** was not only Gordon Stacey Bennett's partner beginning in 1962, but before that point worked on the Seattle World's Fair and at Boeing. In Olympia, Johnson worked on a variety of projects, including a number of residences and single-family developments. He collaborated with at least two developers in Olympia; the Dawley Brothers, on the Eastwood development in SE Olympia; and Jim Dutton and Virgil Adams, on the Holiday Hills development in SE Olympia. In Holiday Hills he designed a number of homes directly with families.
- **Robert H. Wohleb.** The younger Wohleb was educated at the University of Washington and worked as a draftsman in his father's office from 1939 to 1944. He became a partner of the firm Wohleb & Wohleb, which continued until his father's death in 1958. The firm then became Robert H. Wohleb AIA. Wohleb was active in the AIA, and served as Vice President of the SW Washington Chapter of the AIA. He was also active in the Washington State AIA Chapter.⁷⁶

Some of the most active developers in residential construction from the pre-War period up to 1975 in Olympia include:

- **Anderson Brothers.** The owners of the Tumwater Lumber Mills Company began "Tumwater Ready-Cut Homes" in 1922, and many of their homes were sold and constructed locally, though they also had national and even international success.⁷⁷ They continued producing these homes into the 1940s.
- **C.H. Dawley** was a general contractor in Olympia listed in the 1921-22 Polk's Directory. The firm was later known as the **Dawley Brothers**. Leo E. Dawley and his brother J. M. Dawley were likely sons of C.H. Dawley. They constructed many of the early and mid-century downtown commercial buildings in Olympia, but they also built many residences. The Dawleys did have in-house architectural services, unusual for a construction firm.
- **A. G. Homann.** Al Homann was a contractor working out of the nearby community of Lacey, Washington, during the 1950s and 1960s. He was also Lacey's first mayor.
- **Virgil Adams.** Developer, with Jim Dutton, of the Holiday Hills neighborhood in Olympia. Virgil Adams later became a realtor.
- **Berschauer Construction Company.** The Berschauer Company was formed by Henry Berschauer in 1940 in Olympia as Henry Berschauer Construction.
- **Harley Ellsworth** was listed as a general contractor in the Olympia directory of 1921-22.
- **Henry Mallory** was an Olympia contractor of the 1910s and 1920s. He also was the father of Ernest Mallory who later became Mayor of Olympia.
- **Garrard Brothers** platted and developed homes in the northeast Olympia Garrard's Addition (1954).
- **Chester J. Ziegler** was mentioned in the Daily Olympian for having constructed 100 homes in West Olympia by 1950.
- **E.K. (Edward Kelsey) Armstrong** was a post-war developer active in Olympia.

For further research on many of these architects and contractors one might start with local directories of the era. Early Business records might have been preserved even as a firm changed its name or relocated.

⁷⁶ R.R. Bowker, *American Architects Directory* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1962), 773-774.

⁷⁷ Shanna Stevenson, *Olympia Residential Architecture from Early Settlement to 1944*, E-8.



CONCLUSION

Since Olympia's early foundation, single-family housing has played a fundamental role in shaping its built environment. From the native long houses that pre-date American settlement to the mid-modern ranch style homes that mirror each other at the end of a cul-de-sac, Olympia's single-family housing, dating to 1975, has changed as drastically as the city itself. Collectively, this interwoven relationship between architecture and change has contributed to the diversity in single-family housing style and size that continues to tell a visual history of Olympia.

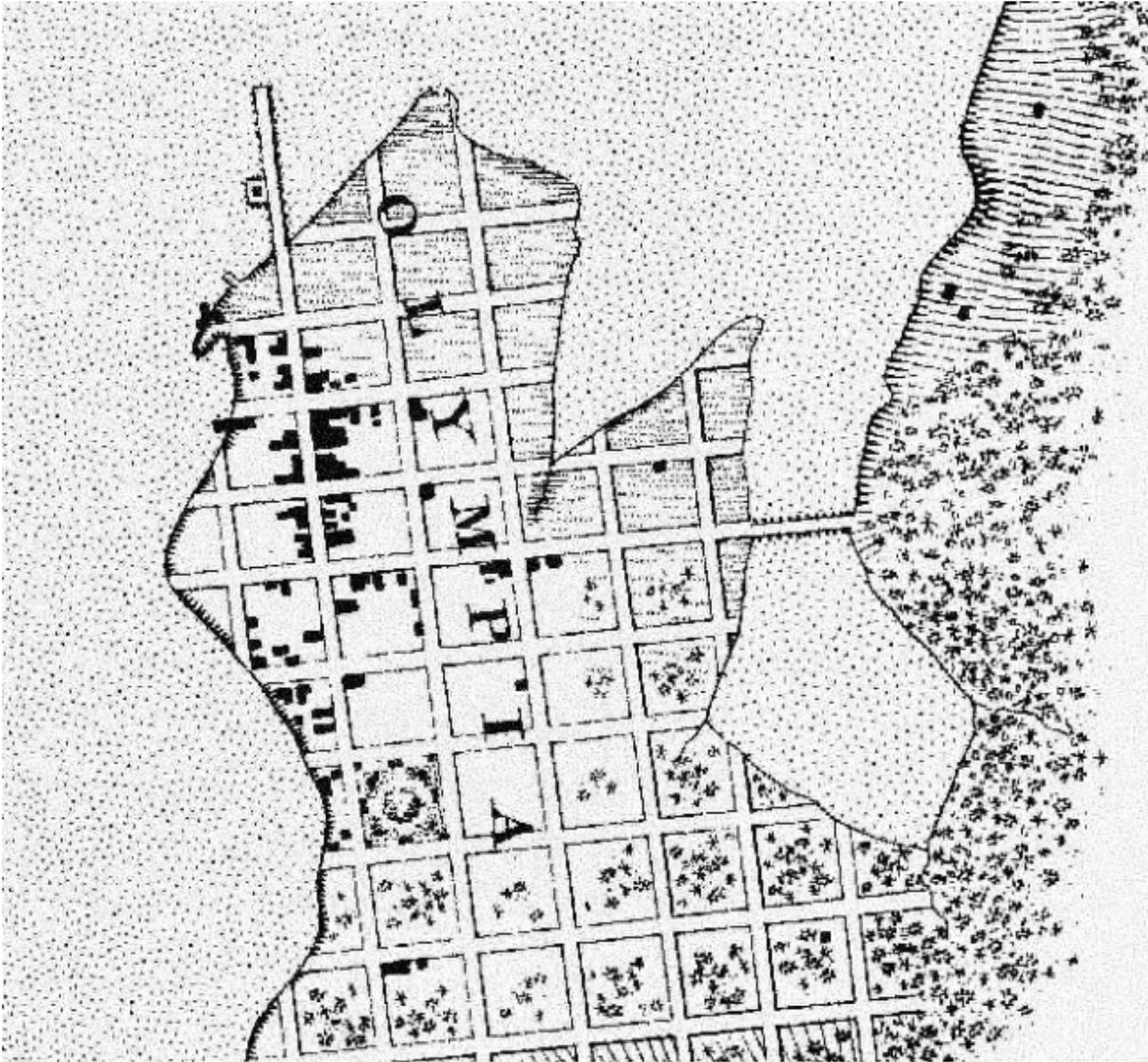
Prompted by its "unofficial" capital title in 1853 and the rise on the timber industry in the 1870s, Olympia became a conclusion to one of America's earliest expansions from a stream of new residents that traveled from the Oregon Trail. This pilgrimage along with Olympia's capital status and industry contributed to the rise in early single-family residential housing that can still be viewed today. Years later, after Olympia received its official capital title of the newly inaugurated state of Washington in 1889, Olympia, in a tradition that it was becoming familiar with, continued to grow, as did the range in housing type and style. This later evolution of Olympia and its architecture were the result of multiple social and technological changes. These factors, which include the pre- and post-War economies, the expansion of city limits, and the introduction of Interstate 5, contributed to shifting the single-family home to reflect a new American culture. This culture, largely driven by major changes in American industry and outlook, turned the single-family residential home in Olympia, like much of the United States, from a just a home into a reflection of new suburban community ideals. Prompted by an expanding landscape, these suburban communities redefined the single-family home and how American live, as many continue to do so today. Up to 1975 and continuing to the present day Olympia has continued to grow and change. Like many communities in the Pacific Northwest, Olympia has had to adapt to the decline of its early economic base; the timber industry. However, Olympia experienced a new demographic in the Evergreen State College, which was founded in 1967. This new demographic, along with the continuing governmental presence in Olympia, supported the development of growth in single-family housing through the late 1960s to 1975.

Overall, viewed through the diversity in single-family housing throughout the City of Olympia and Thurston County, is the story of early settlement, industry, setbacks, and continued growth that gives the Olympia its proud sense of history in the Pacific Northwest. Today these housing not only continue to tell a visual history of Olympia, but continue to contribute to an ever changing landscape that is Olympia.

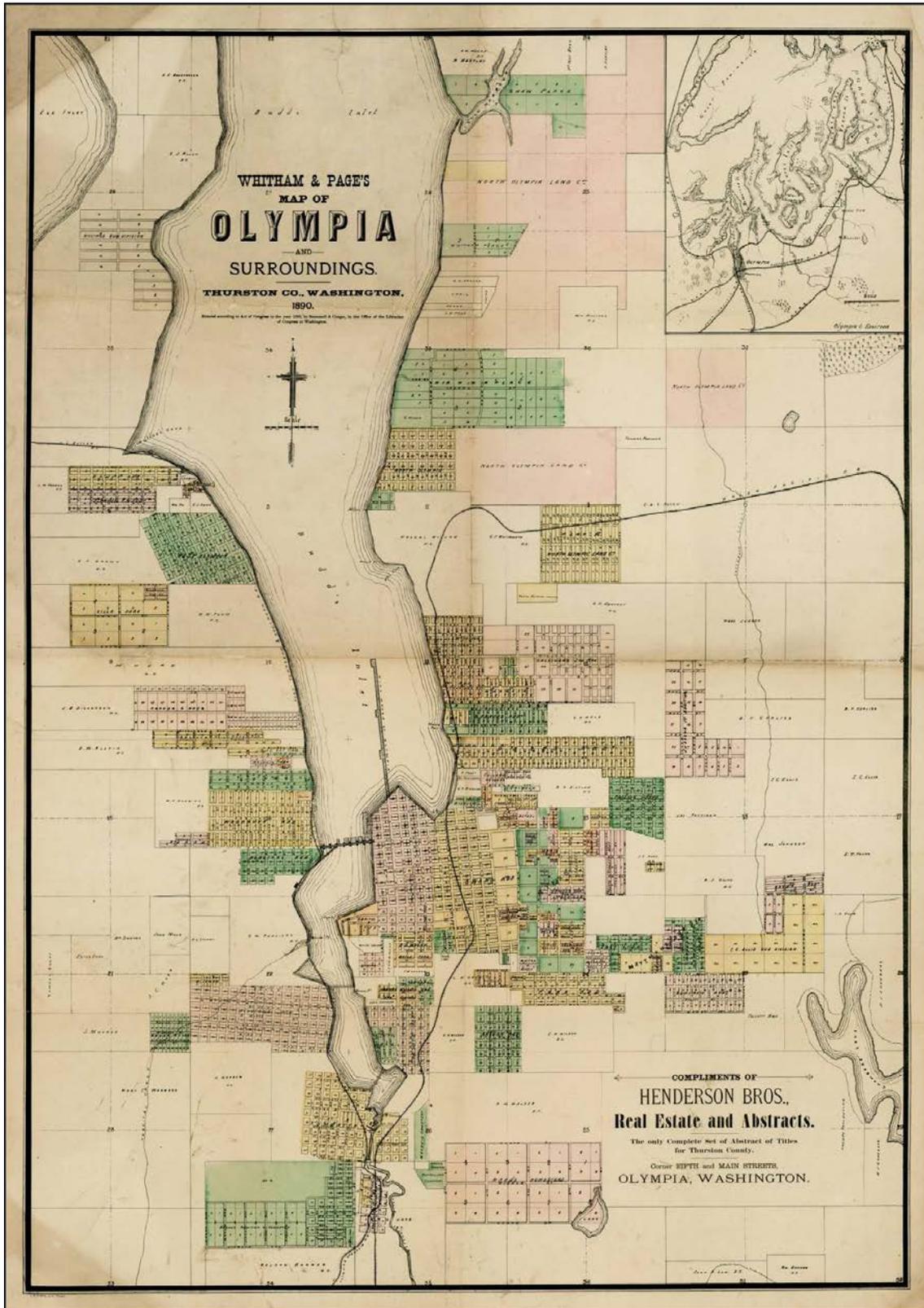
This document, along with other existing historic context statements written for and about the City of Olympia,⁷⁸ ⁷⁹ can be used as the basis for research into development of single-family residential areas in the City. Ultimately, the document may help prompt the appreciation and preservation of representative neighborhoods and structures across time in Olympia.

⁷⁸ Olympia Heritage Commission, *Mid-Twentieth Century Olympia: a Context Statement on Local History and Modern Architecture, 1945-1975*.
⁷⁹ Shanna Stevenson, *Olympia Residential Architecture From Early Settlement to 1944*.

APPENDIX A: MAPS



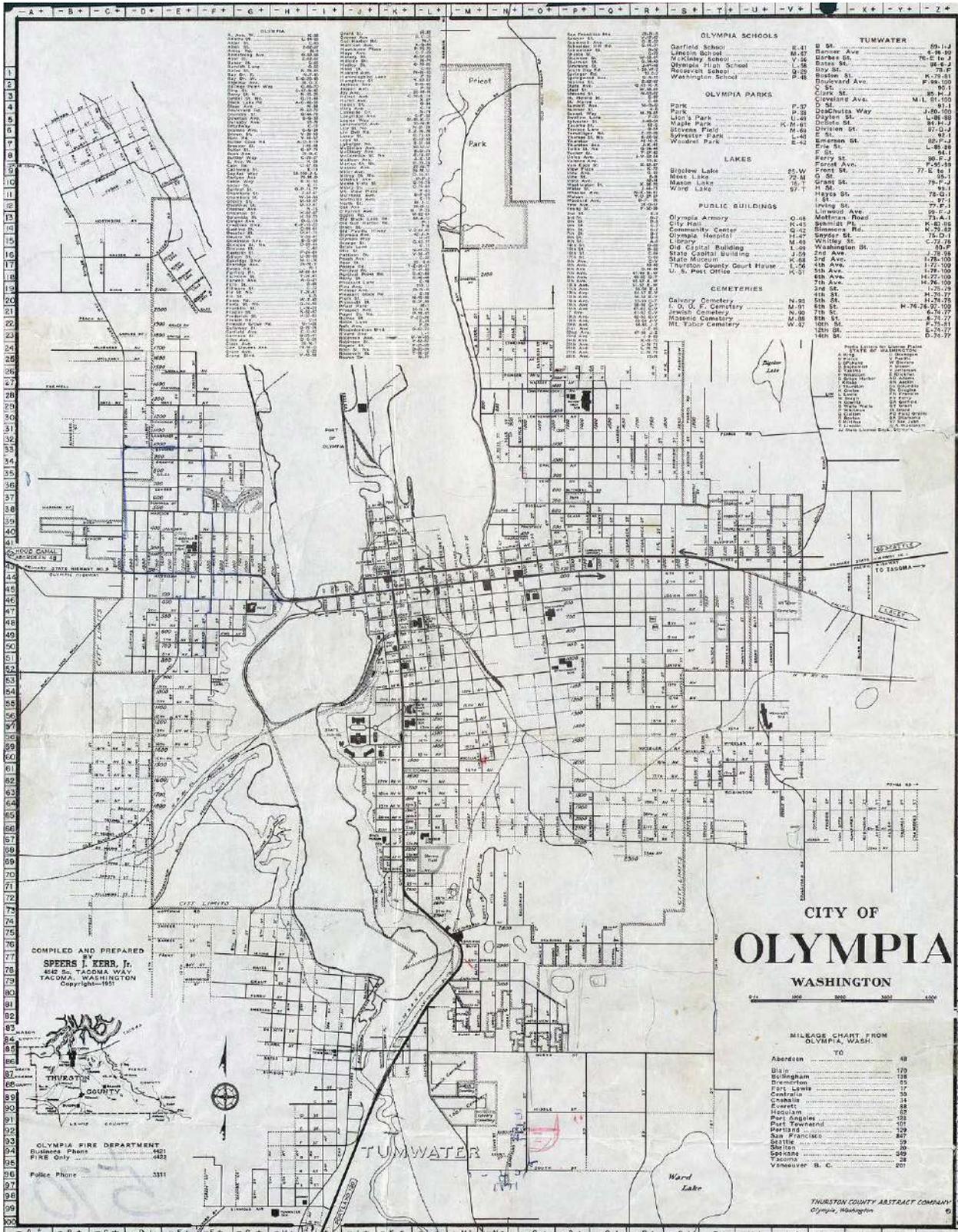
1856 Olympia Map (Courtesy of Olympiahistoryspot.org)



1890 Map of Olympia (Courtesy of OlyBlog.net)



1948 Deschutes Basin Dam & Parkway Planning Map (Courtesy of City of Olympia)



1951 Olympia Speers J. Kerr Jr. Map (Courtesy of City of Olympia)

APPENDIX B: AERIAL PHOTOS



1961 Olympia Aerial View (Courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives)



1974 Olympia Aerial View (Courtesy of Washington State Digital Archives)



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