

STAFF REPORT

Judge French House

Public Hearing: June 26, 1991

**Thurston County Courthouse, Building #1, Room 152
2000 Lakeridge Drive S.W., Olympia, WA 98502**

Staff Report Prepared by: Shanna Stevenson

Application Number: OHR-91-6

Name of Property: Judge French House; Historic Name

**Location of Property: 221 West 20th
Olympia, WA 98501**

**Owner: Terry & Lana Poole
221 West 20th
Olympia, WA 98501**

Date Built: ca. 1912

A. Background and Historical Significance

The house was built according to Title Company Records ca. 1912 for a Mrs. Ursula Clark who was the widow of William Clark who worked for the State Land Commissioner's Office. The house was purchased in 1927 by Walter M. French who was a Justice on the Washington State Supreme Court from January, 1927 until his death in 1930. He was a Superior Court Judge in Kitsap County before being named to the Supreme Court. His widow, Bessie French lived in the house for many years. Subsequent owners were Emma Ridgway, Edwin Simpson

and the current owners, Terry and Lana Poole. The house is a well preserved example of the craftsman/bungalow style.

Source: Pioneer Title Company Records; Polk City Directories.
"Background and Selection Patterns of Justices of the Washington State Supreme Court: 1889-1974", research paper, Pullman, 1974.

B. Significant Historical Characteristics

These are the features that contribute to the property's historical significance and which should be preserved and maintained as it is kept up over the years. Important lost features are also listed, because owners are encouraged to consider restoring these features when rehabilitation work is planned. Replacement either by exact restoration of the original or a modern, compatible design is acceptable. Non-historic additions are also listed. The Heritage Commission may make some recommendations regarding these additions.

1. One and one half story craftsman style has hipped roofline and hipped dormers on three sides which extend from the top of the roofline.
2. Shingle and clapboard cladding. A band separates the two materials.
3. Recessed entry has small gable canopy with decorative brackets.
4. Variety of fenestration including tripartite, picture window and one over one sash.

C. Qualifications for the Local Register

An attachment to this staff report provides general background about the Olympia Heritage Register and requirements for placement on the register. A second attachment contains the section of the Olympia Historic Preservation Ordinance which gives the criteria for designation to the register.

There are six categories of eligibility as described in the enclosures. The Judge French House relates to those eligibility requirements as follows:

1. Significance: The Judge French House has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the county, state or nation.

The Judge French House is a well-preserved and good example of the bungalow style in the South Capitol Neighborhood associated with Justice Walter French, a Washington State Supreme Court Justice

2. Age: The Judge French House is 79 years old and so meets the 50 year age criterion.
3. Possesses at least two elements of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association: The Judge French House possesses all elements of integrity.
5. The Judge French House is well maintained.
6. Specific Criteria/Associations:

The Judge French House is a good example of the craftsman/bungalow style and so meets criterion #2 for determining designation to the Olympia Heritage Register as embodying the distinctive architectural characteristics of the type, period and style. It also meets criterion #2 in that it is associated with Judge Walter French who was significant in state history.

D. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends placement of the Judge Walter French House on the Olympia Heritage Register under criteria #2 and #3.

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Enclosures

STAFF REPORT ATTACHMENT

GENERAL BACKGROUND ABOUT OLYMPIA HERITAGE REGISTER

The Process for Designating Properties to the Register

The Olympia Historic Preservation Ordinance (#4438) in Section 5.B describes this process as follows: Owner approval is required for designation to the register. A public hearing must be held by the Heritage Commission with notice given to the public and the owner(s). Appeals to the Commission's designation decision may be made to City Council within 30 days.

Basis for Decision Making Regarding Designation to the Register

Criteria for determining eligibility to the Olympia Heritage Register is found in Section 5A of the Olympia Historic Preservation Ordinance. Properties may be designated if they are:

1. At least 50 years old (or lesser age if they are exceptionally important)
2. Associated with the heritage, culture and development of the City in at least one of several ways, such as:
 - a. Outstanding examples of earlier architectural styles or construction methods; or
 - b. Associated with important historical events or with persons significant in local history; or
 - c. Comprise a district representative of an earlier period.
 - d. Archaeological sites are also eligible.

THE FULL LIST OF DESIGNATION CRITERIA FROM ORDINANCE #4438 IS ENCLOSED.

Review of Changes to Heritage Register Properties

Properties designated to the Olympia Heritage Register are subject to an advisory review process by the City's Heritage Commission when any changes are proposed to exterior architectural features, identified historic interior features of public buildings, or to any proposed demolitions or new construction on the property. The purpose of the review is to try to prevent detrimental alterations to or destruction of significant historic features of the property. Standards guiding the review are the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation 1983." Copies are available at the Olympia

Historic Preservation Office or Planning Department.

Those features which the Heritage Commission will be concerned about are listed in the staff report for each property and will become part of the official register designation action. Compliance with any advice on proposed changes to the historic property is voluntary on the part of the owner or person proposing the change. If, however, changes result in the loss of the building's historic character, the Heritage Commission may remove it from the Heritage Register after public hearing. The review process for proposed changes to historic properties on the Heritage Register is to take no more than 30 days and is tied to application for other existing City permits.

In addition, a recently enacted property tax exemption for historic renovations requires binding review and approval of the renovation before the tax exemption is granted. A separate meeting to review renovation plans must be arranged for any properties wishing to claim this exemption.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING DESIGNATION TO THE OLYMPIA HERITAGE REGISTER

(Section 5.A. of Ordinance #4438)

Any building, structure, object, site or district may be designated for inclusion in the City Heritage Register if it has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state or nation; is at least 50 years old, or is of lesser age and has exceptional importance; possesses at least two elements of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association; is well-maintained; and if it falls into at least one of the following categories:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state or local history.
2. Embodies the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, period, style or method of design or construction, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
3. Is an outstanding work of a designer, builder or architect who has made a substantial contribution to the art.
4. Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering or architectural history.
5. Is associated with the lives of persons significant in national, state or local history.
6. Has yielded or may be likely to yield archaeological information important in pre-history or history.
7. Is a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance.
8. Is a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event.
9. Is a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.

10. Is a cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events, or cultural patterns.
11. Is a reconstructed building that has been executed in a historically accurate manner, within a suitable environment and which is congruent with the City's history.
12. Is a creative and unique example of folk architecture and design created by persons not formally trained in the architectural or design professions, and which does not fit into formal architectural or historical categories.

NOTES FOR OLYMPIA HERITAGE REGISTER HEARINGS

NOMINATIONS

I. PROCESS

- A. Public Hearing--Heritage Commission
- B. Appealable to City Council within 30 days

II. BASIS FOR PLACEMENT

- A. Must be 50 years old.
- B. Must fall into at least one of 12 categories. Key ones:

- #1 Association with historical events
- #2 Embodies distinctive historical architectural style, type, method of construction
- #3 Outstanding work of architect/builder
- #4 Reflects special elements of city's history
- #5 Association with person important in history

III. AFTER PLACEMENT ON REGISTER

- A. Changes are reviewed
- B. Advisory review--NOT ADDITIONAL NEW REGULATIONS

Purpose of Review--To aid in maintaining building's significant historic characteristics.

Significant historical features are listed at time of nomination:

- Extant . . . don't destroy
- Lost . . . bring back when can

IV. PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION WITH RENOVATION

- A. The review for this is done at a separate time.
- B. This review is NOT advisory.
- C. The list of significant features must not be destroyed if property tax exemption is to be granted.
- D. Also, buildings that have lost major features must restore them through exact restoration or modern adaptation in order to receive the tax exemption.