A. FINDING BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE LAND OR BUILDING

The following will help guide you to the basic information and locations for such information you need to find the history of land or a building.  [If more space is needed, use additional sheets]

Tax Parcel Number:  (Listed on property tax bill from the Assessor.  Search for number online at www.geodata.org/online map). Platted property (usually in towns) is legally described by Plat, Lot and Block. Rural property is described by Section, Township, and Range, or Donation Land Claim.

Tax Parcel Number:  

Legal Description: (from deed or Assessor’s records, see Sources of Information).

Historic Inventory Designation:  (Contact Heritage Commission staff at (360) 753-8031 for this information. Or for new historic properties online at www.trpc.org, select programs; select Historic Preservation; select Thurston County Historic Property Locator.)

Yes ________ No ___________ If yes, Inventory Number __________________________

Assessor’s Records Information:  Assessor Field Books are now at State Archives, Southwest Region, 1129 Washington Street SE, call (360) 753-1684 for an appointment. They are indexed by legal description. (See your tax parcel number for this information.)

Date Built: ___________________ Date Remodeled: __________

CAUTION:  This may not always be accurate. Verify with tax roll information.

Picture Number (from Assessor’s Field Books): _______________  
(These are also at State Archives, SW Region, See above or Sources of Information)

Other Notes and Information:  ________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

Previous Owners:  (Also complete legal description, if necessary, from the information in the field books.)

Name  Dates  Name  Dates

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________
Title Report or Title Company Records: (These are generally arranged chronologically and by legal description, but it varies by business.) Some commercial title companies will allow you to do historic research in their records, others may not, call in advance. Search backwards from current owner. Note: Grantor sells, Grantee buys.

Public Grantee/Grantor Records: (Arranged chronologically.) Thurston County Auditor’s Office (see Sources of Information). The Records Section is open Monday – Wednesday and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Thursday’s hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (360) 786-5405. All records are on microfilm. Ask staff to help you use them.

Chain of Title:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Instrument (Mortgage)</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Washington State Archives (WSA), 1129 Washington Street SE: (Call ahead for appointment, (360) 753-1684.

Tax Assessment Rolls for Thurston County. These are arranged by legal description (refer to tax parcel number information) and year. Use the information from Grantee/Grantor records and the Assessor’s Office to check yearly for any change in the value of improvements which are listed separately from the value of the land. The best indication of the date when a house or structure was built is to identify when an improvement was made on the land or when the value jumped significantly. Photographs of properties from the 1930s and 1950s are also available here.

B. FINDING OUT ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN YOUR HOUSE

A list of owners can give you a place to start.

City Directories have information about what the occupation of the residents were at different periods. (See attached list of Sources of Information for locations of City Directories.)

The Washington State Library Washington Room has a file of information about individuals. There are also copies, on microfilm, of the death index for Washington State. By finding out when persons died, you can then check newspapers for their obituaries. A recent publication, “Cemetery Records of Thurston County,” collected by the Olympia Genealogical Society and available at local libraries, can also assist you in finding out death dates. It is also available at www.rootsweb.com/~waogs.

Another source, when the death date has been established, is probate records. They are available from the Thurston County Clerk’s Office (see Sources of Information.) It is better to call ahead for information: (360) 786-5430.

Other general historical and genealogical material is available in the Sources of Information section of this packet.

C. FINDING OUT ABOUT THE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE OF YOUR HOUSE.

The most obvious place to begin is with the structure itself. Sometimes, taking photographs of your site or building can be a helpful way to focus on it more objectively by eliminating other “visual noise.” Take notes about the materials of the building, unusual architectural features, or any references made to date or names.
Careful examination of the grounds may reveal signs of previous structures or activities, such as foundations or wells, pathways or roads. Can you identify the building style, or does it seem to be a blending of different periods? Are there old blueprints in storage? Is your building similar to others around it, or does it stand out, either in size, style or age? Your analysis of these and the following questions may help you determine the era in which the structure was built.

- What is the general style? (See attached materials.)
- What is the method of construction?
- Was there an architect? If yes, who was it?
- Does the house or building resemble nearby or other buildings in the cities of Lacey, Tumwater, Olympia or in Thurston County?
- Do neighbors/previous owners or their families have information?
- Was the house built adjacent to a public or noted building?

Other helpful sources include:

**Architectural Guides**


**D. FINDING OUT ABOUT YOUR PROPERTY (NON-STRUCTURE) FROM OTHER RESOURCES.**

If you want to research your property and it does not have a house or structure on it, follow the guidelines for tracing the land ownership. Early land records such as Donation Land Claim Records and Survey Maps and Records are good resources. Another resource is aerial photographs. The Thurston County Roads and Transportation Department has aerial photographs from the 1930s and 1950s. These are available from the Department of Transportation Aerial Photo Lab at (360) 709-5550. The Department of Natural Resources also has aerial photographs, as well as the survey notes, from the early surveys of the county dating to 1853. Call (360) 586-6360 for information.

**E. SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

Note any special rules regarding using or removing material, and use extreme care when handling archival material such as original photographs or manuscripts. Also, be mindful that although staff members are more than willing to provide you with assistance, they will not conduct your research for you.

The abbreviation next to the resource refers to the following sheet, which lists various types of information and where it can be found.

**Joseph Wohleb Drawings.** (Wohleb designed many local houses and buildings), Special Collections Allen Library, Seattle Campus, University of Washington, Call (206) 543-1929 for hours or operation. Resource: Material for in-library use only; photocopies and prints available.

Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), 1063 South Capitol Way, Suite 106, Olympia, WA 98501, Phone: (360) 586-3065; Webpage: www.dahp.wa.gov.

Olympia Timberland Library (OTL), 313 8th Avenue SE, Olympia, WA. Phone: (360) 352-0595. Hours vary. Resource: Clipping files, city directories, genealogy collections.


Thurston County Assessor’s Office (TCAS), Building 1, First Floor, Room 127, Thurston County Courthouse, 2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Olympia, WA 98501. Phone: (360) 786-5410

Thurston County Auditor’s Office (TCA), Building 1, First Floor, Room 126, Thurston County Courthouse, 2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Olympia, WA 98501. Phone: (360) 786-5224.

Thurston County Clerk (TCC), Building 2, Room 136, Thurston County Courthouse, 2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Olympia, WA 98501. Phone: (360) 786-5410.

Thurston County Coroner (TCCO) Building 3, Lower Level, Thurston County Courthouse, 2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Olympia, WA 98501. Phone: (360) 786-5529.

Tumwater City Hall, Development Services, 555 Israel Road SW, Tumwater, WA. Hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Resources: Has a file for each City address with information about permits, etc. May not have complete information about older buildings.

Tumwater Timberland Library, 7023 New Market Street, Tumwater, WA. Phone: (360) 943-7790. Hours vary. Resources: Clipping files; city directories.

Washington State Library (WSL), located at 6880 Capitol Boulevard South. Hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, daily. Recommended to call ahead: (360) 704-5200. Resources: City directories, general histories, biographical files, census records, death records, photographs, pictorial works, manuscripts.


F. WEBSITES

www.trpc.org/programs/historic_perservation. Thurston County Historic Properties
www.dahp.wa.gov. Washington State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation
www.rootsweb.com/~waogs. Olympia Genealogical Society
www.olympiawa.gov/cityservices/historicpreservation. City of Olympia Historic Preservation
G. HISTORIC INFORMATION RESOURCES

WSL  1889 Census, Thurston County, Washington Territory
     1936 project under Old Age Assistance
WSL  Biographical/Index file at the Washington State Library
WSL  Biography & Genealogical Questionnaires of 120 Pioneers Arriving in Washington Territory Before 1889
TCA  Birth records
WSL  Blankenship, Early History of Thurston County, Washington
     Cemeteries and sexton’s records (contact individual cemeteries)
TCA/WSA  Census-Auditor’s: 1871, 1873, 1875, 1877, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1883, 1885, 1887, 1889, 1892
     Church records (contact local churches)
TCCO  Coroner’s records
TCC  Court records (civil and criminal, probate)
WSL  Daughters of the American Revolution records
WSL  Donation land claims
     Family records
WSL  Frontier Justice: Guide to Court Records of Washington Territory
WSA  Government Land Office Survey records. These survey records date from the 1850’s. Microfilm
WSL  Homestead records
     Inheritance tax
TCA  Land records (grantor-grantee indexes, mortgages, deeds, plat books, etc.)
TCA  Licensing records
TCA  Marriage records
WSA  Military records and veterans records
     Mortuary records
OTL  Newspaper Genealogical Abstracts: The Morning/Daily Olympian, Thurston County, Washington
WSL  Olympia city directories ('1901-') & gazetteers
OTL  Olympia Genealogical Society Bulletin
WSL  Pacific Northwest Quarterly Index
WSL  R. L. Polk & Co.,’s 1888 Puget Sound Directory
WSL  Specialized records: Eminent Judges and Lawyers for the Northwest 1843-1955, History of Olympia Lodge
     No., 1., F & A.M. 1852-1935, Who’s Who in the State of Washington, 1939-40, History and Register,
     Daughters of the American Revolution, (etc.)
TCAS/WSL  Tax rolls (assessment rolls)
WSL  Territorial Newspaper Index
TCA  Thurston County Birth Records 1891-1907
     Thurston County Pioneer and Historical Society records
WSL  Thurston County pioneers before 1870
WSL  Told by the Pioneers (plus unpublished interviews)
TCA  Voter registrations
WSL  Washington State Death Index (1907-1979)
OTL  Zaverl, Biographical Data on the War Veterans of Olympia and Thurston County, Washington 1812-1965