

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

RECEIVED
FEB 11 1992
NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the Instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name B.P.O.E. Building
other names/site number Elk's Club

2. Location

street & number 1412-1414 Cornwall Avenue not for publication
city, town Bellingham vicinity
state Washington code WA county Whatcom code 073 zip code 98225

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	— buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	— sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	— structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	— objects
		<u>1</u>	— Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Jacob E. [Signature] 12/16/91
Signature of certifying official Date

Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. **Entered in the National Register**
 See continuation sheet. 3/26/92

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Social/ClubhouseCurrent Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Commercial/Restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:
Neo-Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
walls brick
stone
roof
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Bellingham Elks Club building was constructed in 1912 at a cost of approximately \$30,000 on Dock Street, later renamed Cornwall Avenue. Located mid-block on the south side of the street, the building's architecture and integrity of design lends dignity and interest to the streetscape of the central business district's principal commercial thoroughfare. The National Register listed Federal Building (1912) and Mt. Baker Theater (1927) are within a block of the Elks Club. Otherwise, the area immediately surrounding the building is comprised of one to three story commercial structures with retail uses on the first level and office space above. Though many of these commercial buildings date to the turn of the century (and earlier), extensive alteration in recent years serves to accentuate the architectural significance of the Elks Club.

The Elks Club has two levels plus a half basement and enjoys a 55 foot frontage on the south side of the street. Located at mid-block, the building is rectangular in plan stretching 125 feet to the rear alley. With a perfectly symmetrical facade, the building is faced with buff colored Roman brick and accentuated by light toned stone trim. The notable stonework is used extensively on the Cornwall Avenue facade, principally at the cornice and parapet; for window surrounds and column capitals; and as pilasters. Stylistically, the building exhibits a strong classical influence most notably in the prominent cornice and parapet; rusticated pilasters; and elaborate second floor window arches.

When viewing the front facade, the main entry to the building is prominently located within a central pavilion which rises the full height of the building. For emphasis, the pavilion is slightly pulled forward from the building's main mass. Internally, this pavilion houses circulation areas such as the main entry and stairway connecting the first and second levels. On the exterior, the original double leaf doors have been removed and replaced by solid panel doors. These doors constitute the most unsympathetic change on the facade. A triangular marquee overhangs the entry and extends over the sidewalk. The marquee has a vaguely Art Moderne flair and was probably added during the building's 1938 remodeling. Also, the marquee may well mask an entablature over the door. Flanking the entry are massive rusticated pilasters which, together with matching pilasters at the building's east and west edge, visually support the building composition. Immediately above the entry between the main and second levels is a small square window providing light to the interior staircase. At the second level above the entry are paired, double-hung sash windows with arched transoms. A pilaster separates the windows. The paired sashes are joined by a distinctive sandstone window surround which comes to a point just below the frieze. An elaborate cornice caps the entire building and is surmounted by a paneled parapet wall with nameplate at the center. Divided into three panels, the nameplates contains the year the building was constructed: (1912) and "BPOE".

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 7 Page 2

Flanking the central pavilion on each side are two bays of windows. At the sidewalk level, eight windows (four on each side of the entry) provide light for the half basement. Basement window frames are brick and unadorned and at present, the openings are boarded up. A cast stone foundation facing serves as window sills for the basement windows.

At the first level, four windows (two on each side) are large, single pane, fixed in place sash with divided transoms. The windows are separated by a brick pilaster with decorative stone capitals and plinth. Above the windows is a continuous stone band scored to resemble radiating voussoirs. On the second level, four window openings (two on each side) house paired, double hung sash windows. The second level windows again have divided transoms with triangular lights. In contrast with the flat lintels above the first level windows, the second floor openings have semi-elliptical arches and elaborate sandstone surrounds with radiating voussoirs and keystone. The second floor window openings are also separated by pilasters repeating the design from the first level. Continuous stone sills also serve as a banding or belt course visually separating the two levels. The spandrels between the first and second level windows are brick with four alternating courses slightly indented giving an interesting yet subtle banding effect. The entire building composition is framed on both the east and west edges by rusticated ashlar pilasters rising from the sidewalk to the sill of the second floor windows. Above the rusticated pilasters are short brick pilasters which support the semi-elliptical window arches. A final exterior detail of note are circular bulls eyes or medallions which are placed between the arches on the second level and above the pilasters on the first level.

The interior of the Elks Club has undergone more extensive alteration reportedly in the late 1930s or 1940s and again in the 1960s. However, much of the original floor plan is intact and the flow of spaces is reminiscent of the building's history as a clubhouse. Beginning just inside the front entry at the sidewalk level, a staircase to the basement is immediately to the left. Originally housing a three lane bowling alley, card rooms, and pool tables, the basement has been remodeled several times, most recently for a delicatessen and storage.

Returning to the main entry at the sidewalk level, a half flight of steps ascends to the main floor. The stairs open into a rectangular foyer or reception area. Immediately to the left is the stairway leading to the second floor. At the far end of the foyer, opposite the entry, double doors lead into the main dining room. This is now the largest room on the first floor and spans the entire width of the building. Beyond the dining room is the kitchen and service areas. Flanking the stairway areas at the front of the building are smaller, more intimate rooms which were likely used as lounge or meeting space. Both rooms benefit from light admitted by the large windows facing Cornwall Avenue. One room retains a massive brick fireplace and chimney with copper andirons, perhaps the only interior feature which survives from the original clubhouse design. Historically, the first floor

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 7 Page 3

was used for offices plus meeting and reading rooms. Probably during the 1960s remodeling, the dining room was relocated from the second floor to the first.

Returning to the foyer, a broad stairway leads to the second level. A landing is provided at a window overlooking the street. The large meeting room/ballroom on the second floor was the largest and most impressive space in the building being used for ceremonies and social events. Towards the rear, a kitchen provided food service. Although since remodeled for use as a nightclub, the ballroom retains notable decorative elements such as pilasters and ceiling moldings.

Overall, the Elks Club remains as one of the more impressive structures in downtown Bellingham dating to the early decades of the century and retaining a high degree of integrity. The design clearly demonstrates considerable talent. In addition, it important to note the fine craftsmanship and materials which were incorporated into the design.

With the exception of the removal of the front doors, the exterior is unaltered. The marquee, though not original, probably dates to the 1930s/40s and may have attained significance in its own right. In contrast, the interior has undergone several major remodeling which have removed much of the original fabric. Nevertheless, the sequence of public, private, and support spaces conveys a strong sense of the building's role as the home of a prestigious civic and social organization.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Social History

Period of Significance

1912-1940

Significant Dates

1912

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cox, William

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Elks Club building is significant for demonstrating the role of fraternal organizations in the growth and development of Bellingham as well as for enhancing the streetscape and architectural character of the downtown area. Throughout much of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, fraternal organizations played a major role in communities. These clubs provided a relaxed setting away from home and office in which community leaders gathered for purposes of undertaking civic and charitable causes as well as for recreation and socializing. Additionally, the building serves as a prominent downtown Bellingham landmark setting a high standard of design, materials, and craftsmanship and retaining a high degree of architectural integrity.

One of the most dramatic developments concerning community social life in the United States involved the remarkable growth of fraternal organizations in the late 1800s. A number of fraternal organizations proliferated during this period and many communities fostered their own chapters or lodges of Elks, Masons, I.O.O.F., and others. Initially, these organizations would meet in homes, churches, or hotels. As memberships increased and activities diversified, many organizations sought to construct their own facility. Fraternal lodges characteristically contained spacious halls for membership meetings, initiations, and social events. Several groups came to add areas for dining and recreation, while a few even provided rooms for overnight guests. For those prosperous fraternal organizations, elaborately designed and appointed lodges provided an opportunity for clubs to display their prominence in the community.

Turn of the century Bellingham was no exception to this nationwide trend. By the 1890s, a host of service organizations had formed in the four communities which were to consolidate as the City of Bellingham in 1903. Initiated in Fairhaven (one of four municipalities which later became Bellingham), Lodge 194, Benevolent Protective Order of Elks (B.P.O.E.) was chartered by the Grand Elks Lodge in 1891. Holding meetings in the Knights of Pythias Hall, the Fairhaven lodge struggled for nine years until losing its charter in 1900. At that time, prominent Bellingham entrepreneur Roland G. Gamwell spurred a revival of the local Elks organization. This effort resulted in the petition and receipt from the Grand Lodge of a charter for Bellingham Bay Lodge 542. Shortly thereafter, the Lodge once again petitioned the Grand Lodge to reinstate the number of the former Fairhaven lodge. The request was granted and the Bellingham Elks retain designation as Lodge 194. Gamwell remained active in the local, state, as well as national Elks organization.

In order to obtain a permanent home, the Elks purchased the present building site in 1912. Construc-

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Section number 8 Page 2

tion was completed in 1913 at a cost of approximately \$30,000 and considered one of the most handsome fraternal lodges in the state. During this period, Bellingham enjoyed a boom of new construction and growth with several commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings completed including the Federal Building (1912-13), the Bellingham National Bank Building (1912-13), and Citizens Dock (1913). In the midst of this civic expansion, the Elks Club opened in 1913 with great fanfare and gala entertainment. The buildings was designed by local architect William Cox. Cox came to Bellingham in 1889 and bought the Bellingham Bay Gurney and Transfer Company where he reserved a small office for his architectural business. In addition to the Elks building, Cox designed the Nelson Bank building in Fairhaven, the Roeder home at Elm and Monroe, and the part of the Leopold Hotel.

For many years, the Elks Club was one of Bellingham's most prestigious social organizations with many political and civic leaders comprising its membership. A prime location and full range of recreational facilities enhanced the lodge's prestige. The organization was active in many charitable, patriotic, and civic causes in addition to strong support of youth activities. The building reportedly received extensive interior remodeling in 1938 and again in the mid 1960s. In 1971, the Elks elected to sell its lodge following completion of a new clubhouse building in a suburban location. Since then, the building has either stood vacant or partially utilized as a restaurant or nightclub.

Within the context of Bellingham fraternal lodges, the Elks Club building represents the last of the grand downtown lodges and the important role fraternal organizations played in the community. Built at a time of optimism about Bellingham's prospects of becoming an important urban center, the lodge joined a host of other major civic improvements constructed in the city in the early 1900s. Unfortunately, many of these buildings have been demolished or altered. Indeed, only a handful of historic lodges survive in central Bellingham and Fairhaven business district. Of these, the Elks Club marks a culmination for this property type in terms of its architectural ambition and sophistication.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bellingham Herald, February 17, 1912, page 1.
Bellingham Herald, Centennial Edition, April 26, 1953, page 20.
Downtown Bellingham Central Business District Architectural Resource Overview, February 1985, Chronicles & Design, Bellingham.
Telephone Interview with Robert Dahms, City of Bellingham, Planning and Economic Development Department, October 2, 1991.
Roth, Lottie Roeder, Supervising Editor, History of Whatcom County, Volume I, 1926, Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, Chicago and Seattle.
Telephone Interview with Galen Biery, local historian, November 6, 1991.
Turbeville, Daniel E., An Illustrated Inventory of Historic Bellingham Buildings, 1852-1915, November 1977, Bellingham Municipal Arts Commission, Bellingham.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

A	<u>10</u>	<u>538570</u>	<u>5399740</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 5, Block 45, map of the town of New Whatcom, Whatcom County, Washington, Section 30, Township 38 North, Range 3 East.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the footprint of the B.P.O.E. Building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title	<u>Greg Griffith, Comprehensive Planning Specialist</u>	date	<u>November 1991</u>
organization	<u>Archaeology and Historic Preservation</u>	telephone	<u>(206) 753-9119</u>
street & number	<u>111 21st Street SW., P.O. Box 48343</u>	state	<u>Washington</u> zip code <u>98504</u>
city or town	<u>Olympia</u>		