

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only	
received	NOV 15 1984
date entered	DEC 23 1984

Historic Downtown Hartford
Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 31

B.P.O. Elks Lodge
34 Prospect Street

1903
Photographs 77, 7A
Building #19

Description

The yellow brick building of two stories and attic in the Neo-Classical Revival style that houses Lodge No. 19 of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks faces west on Prospect Street. It is across Prospect Street from the Avery Memorial building of the Wadsworth Atheneum, south of the Hartford Club and north of the Hartford Times Building.

The symmetrical facade of the Elks Lodge is carefully designed with classical details using brownstone and limestone trim with the yellow pressed brick. The plan of central, shallow, projecting pavilion and hollow chamfers at the corners of the building provides five principal wall surfaces in the front elevation. The wall planes are further enriched by periodic raised wythes of brick, in inverse rustication, by the arched recesses and square panels of the second-floor windows and by molded string courses.

The central front entrance is approached by broad brownstone steps between heavy piers on which stand iron figures of elk. The double front door under stained glass transom has molded architrave and molded cornice cap with dentil course supported by consoles. Iron light fixtures flank the doorway. In the fascia over the door there is bronze lettering reading "B.P.O.Elks." flanked by heavy double consoles that support an iron balcony. The door surround, fascia and consoles are limestone.

A high, quarry-faced brownstone foundation wall with chiseled limestone water table, left and right of the front steps, is interrupted in the chamfers for basement windows. At the first floor, there are two 1-over-1 windows on each side of the door. They have limestone sills and splayed lintels of vertically laid brick with limestone console keys. Above the windows, smooth limestone over a course of small blocks forms a first-floor cornice or string course.

At the second floor, there is a large, central, round-arched stained glass window over the iron balcony. The periphery of its sides and arch are divided into small sections, over a limestone lintel and two recessed panels. Egg-and-dart moldings enrich the reveals of the panels. The window is recessed and its arch is surrounded by a raised limestone molding, an arrangement that heightens the three-dimensional interest of the facade. The arched molding springs from a limestone string course.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Historic Downtown Hartford
Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

32

For NPS use only	NOV 15 1984
received	
date entered	DEC 23 1984

Similar recessed arches under limestone moldings to left and right are filled with paired, round-arched, stained glass windows over stone sills and recessed panels. These arches have central oculus windows in their tympani. The chamfered corners of the building have similar single window compositions. The stone moldings surrounding the arches of these four windows do not rise as high as that of the central window.

At the roof line a molded cornice with modillion blocks projects over a dentil course. A parapet rises above the cornice. It has a brownstone molding at its top and is divided into sections by vertical brownstone moldings. The central section supports a cartouche with projecting elk's head. A hipped roof covered with slate rises to a flat skylight now with louvered ventilation housing.

The interior is notable for its oak and mahogany finish. The first floor is given over to assembly and social rooms. Wide, arched openings between the rooms are supported by fluted Ionic columns. A large, open, ceremonial, double staircase under the skylight ascends to the second floor where most of the space is occupied by the lodge room. The lodge room is a large, 8-sided room with high ceiling, as articulated by the exterior front elevation of the building. Walls and domed ceiling are extensively embellished with paneled Ionic pilasters, egg-and-dart moldings, beams and coffers. The many moldings are gilded, giving an overall effect of broad use of gold leaf. (Photograph 7A)

Significance - Criterion C, Architecture

The Elks Lodge is a fine example of Neo-Classical Revival architecture executed in the yellow brick popular at the time it was built, with stone dressing and restrained but complex detailing. The outstanding interior and the exterior are little altered since construction.

The front elevation is carefully designed in a series of different planes to present a rich but restrained Neo-Classical Revival appearance to the street. The horizontal rustication, cornices and string course are balanced by the verticality of the second-floor windows. The slightly projecting central section is flanked by receding planes leading to the chamfered corners of the building. The result is an overall unity of Roman antecedent, skillfully designed.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only	
received	NOV 15 1984
date entered	DEC 23 1984

Historic Downtown Hartford
Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 32A

The two floors of the interior present a dramatic contrast. From the dark elegance of the paneling of the first floor, the wide mahogany staircase, brightened by the skylight above, leads up to the brilliantly decorated lodge room of Baroque elegance. The lodge room ranks as one of the architecturally most important interior spaces in the city. It is virtually all original; even the control mechanism for dimming the lights, activated by a large iron lever, is original equipment.

The Elks Lodge was designed by the Hartford-born architect John J. Dwyer (1856-1911) who worked in the New York office of J. Cleveland Cady before opening his own practice in Hartford early in the 1890s. He designed a number of institutional buildings, all in the Neo-Classical Revival style, including Mount St. Joseph Academy (1905) listed in the National Register of Historic Places, St. Patrick's School (1896) demolished, House of the Good Shepherd (1903, 1905) and St. Michael's Church (1905).

Geographical Data

Acreage	Less than one acre
UTM Reference:	18/690320/4625940
Boundary:	City map No. 5, parcel No. 496