

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



MAR 25 1982

**1. Name**

historic C.A. ELSTER BUILDING  
and/or common \_\_\_\_\_

RECEIVED  
APR 10 1981

**2. Location**

street & number S.E. Corner of Highway 190 and Tule River Dr. <sup>CA</sup> not for publication  
city, town Springville vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 18th  
state CA code 06 county Tulare County code 107

OHP

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name J. Patrick Kidd; Lesco Ltd.  
street & number 2911 East Harcourt Street  
city, town Compton vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Calif. 90221

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorders Office, County of Tulare  
street & number Room 203 Civic Center  
city, town Visalia 93291 state CA

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title n/c has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local \_\_\_\_\_  
depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_  
city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**  
 excellent     deteriorated  
 good     ruins  
 fair     unexposed

**Check one**  
 unaltered     original site  
 altered 6/76     moved    date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

SP 25

The building is a classic 1912 commercial structure of a prominent architectural style found in many small California towns of the period. The 60' x 85' business block is divided into four retail store bays and is two stories in height. The structure layout provides for a main corner building with two retail shops and two smaller store bays to the west. The building originally contained a second story above all but the most easterly retail establishment.

The front and east facade are unchanged from the original 1912 construction. The front elevation is divided into horizontal elements by a brick band (string course) below four large double hung windows. The parapet is crenelated with a bracket cornice attached to the main portion of the building. The architectural detailing of the front and east facade gives a symmetrical appearance to the structures. The front facade has thematic brick detail that is located between the upper story windows, below the string course and centered on each of the brick first-story columns. This detail, combined with soldier course headers over the windows and column tops gives the structure a strong architectural identity in the community.

The current owner acquired and renovated the structure after it had been condemned by the County of Tulare. The building alterations included a new foundation, exit stairwells, structural support, and reconstructed office space behind the front facade over the easterly two store bays. The front and side facades were unaltered except for the ground level retail store entryways and display windows. The alteration of these elements is unobtrusive and compatible with the original layout and design of the building. The second floor reconstruction over the easterly store bays is not visible from the public right of ways and is of compatible color and material.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1980	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1912 **Builder/Architect** unknown

**Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)**

The C.A. Elster Building is of local and state historical significance in several categories, including architecture, commerce, and settlement. The Elster Building was constructed during the regional boom of 1912 by a prominent commercial figure in the history of Tulare County and the moving force behind the existence of Springville. The building was one of three brick business blocks in the town and today two remaining blocks face each other across Main Street.

Charles Alonzo Elster, born in Grass Valley, California in 1862, was a major land owner, commercial entrepreneur, and timber mill owner in Tulare County. He was the father of the Tulare Electric, Water and Power Company, one of the original stockholders in the railroad which came to Springville from nearby Porterville and Lindsay, and the owner of the largest ranch home in the Springville area.

The business block constructed in 1912 for the price of \$12,000 was a two-story building 48' x 60'.

The C.A. Elster commercial building was the retail center of Springville, and Springville was the center for much of the commercial logging activity on the Tule River Watershed. An 1890 history of the county noted "all the lumber saved in the great timber region above must pass Springville on the way to the Valley." Springville's C.A. Elster Building had the major commercial retail services located there. These included the Pioneer Bank (1912-1918), the post office, Oddfellows Fraternal Hall, the drug store, and the first telephone in town (1912). Charlie Elster, being a major saw mill owner, made sure his payroll was stored in his building's Pioneer Bank. The basement of the Elster building was also the first ice plant in town.

Architecturally the building was a substantial, well-constructed brick business block. It was similar stylistically to many commercial buildings of the period and the mixed use of second floor residential and first floor commercial served the needs of the community for retail trade and lodging for tourists and new arrivals.

The Elster Building is significant because it is the remaining symbol of the role of C.A. Elster in the development of the rural community of Springville. It is also symbolic of the achievements of pioneer entrepreneurs in the development of the Southern Sierras. Throughout the Sierra foothills these significant commercial structures mark the prosperity and growth of rural California. This growth fueled by timber and water power established the settlements and communities of present day California. The populations of Springville and similar rural towns have not grown significantly since the 1920's, yet the substantial commercial structures of the period remain to identify the history of the California frontier.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

History of Tulare and Kings Counties with Biographical Sketches of Leading Men and Women, Eugene L. Menefee and Fred A Dodge. Historical Record Co. Los Angeles, CA 1913 pps 771-772.  
 Memmorial and Biographical History of the Counties of Fresno, Tulare, and Kern CA illus. Lewis Publishing Co. Chicago, 1890. pps. 221-222.  
 See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .31 ac.

Quadrangle name Springville

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	1	3	3	6	5	4	0	3	9	9	7	5	0
Zone				Easting				Northing					

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 4 and the westerly 32 feet of Lot 3  
 in Block 3 of the Town of Springville, County of Tulare, State of California

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state 7/2 code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Harold M. Thomas

organization

date 4/3/81

street & number 206 W. 4th St. #316

telephone 714-836-4314

city or town Santa Ana

state CA 92701

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date 12-22-81

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Nyne A. Beebe

date March 25, 1982

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: [Signature]

date 3/25/82

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 8 1982

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

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ITEM NUMBER

9

PAGE

1

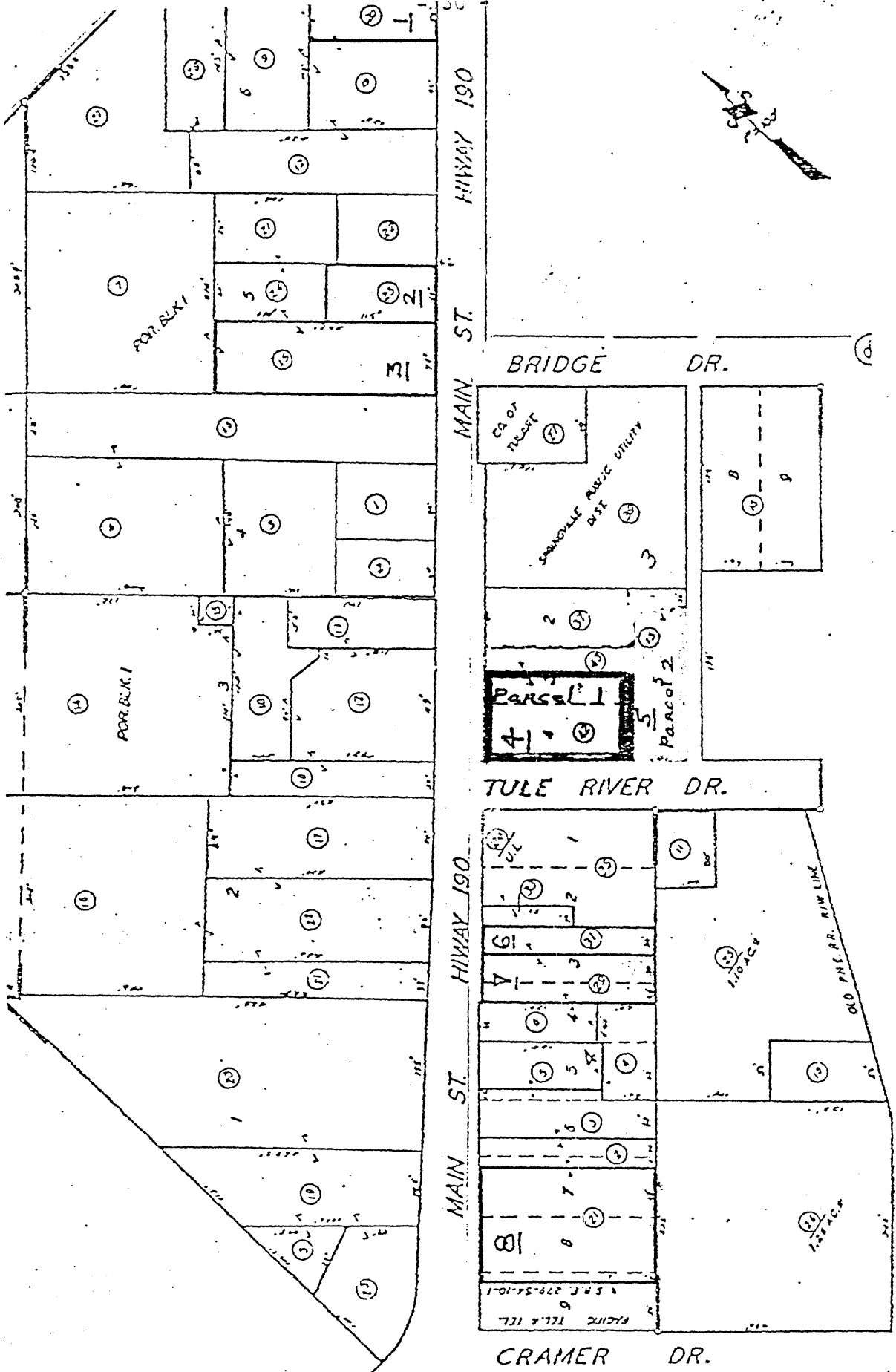
Major Bibliographical References Continued-

The Men of Mammoth Forest, A Hundred Year History of a Sequoia Forest and it's  
People in Tulare County CA. Floyd L. Otter. Edwards Brothers Inc Ann Arbor MI. 1963

CONVERSATIONS

Conversation with Robert Badaracco editor Tule River Times. 2/26/81

Conversation with Virginia Radeleff Town of Springville historian, Springville CA  
2/26/81.



NEIGHBORHOOD  
 AREA MAP