NPS Form 10-900 (January 1992) Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

United States Department of Interior National Park Service

1. Name of Property



OMB No. 10024-0018

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

historic name Elkhorn Municipal Building	
other names/site number	
2. Location	
street & number 9 South Broad Street city or town Elkhorn state Wisconsin code WI county Walwor	$ \begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requir X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recomm statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional community of certifying official/Title State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin	end that this property be considered significant nationally
State or Federal agency and bureau	
In my opinion, the property _ meets _ does not meet the National Reg (_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)	gister criteria.
Signature of commenting official/Title	Date
e de la companya de l	
State or Federal agency and bureau	

Elkhorn Municipal Building		Walworth	Wisconsin	
Name of Property		County and St	tate	
I. National Park Service Ce	rtification		n n	
hereby certify that the property is: entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)	E So	n W. Beal	8.7.12	
	Signature of the	he Keeper	Date of Action	
5. Classification				
	check only one box) building(s) district structure site object		rces within Property eviously listed resources noncontributing buildings sites structures objects 0 total	
Name of related multiple property listing: (Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A		Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register		
6. Function or Use				
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions GOVERNMENT/city hall)	Current Functions (Enter categories from in GOVERNMENT/city ha		
7. Description				
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Dec		Materials (Enter categories from in Foundation concrete walls brick	nstructions)	
WODERN WO VEWIENT/AR Dec	U.	wans once		
		roof asphalt		
		other limestone		

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

DESCRIPTION

The Elkhorn Municipal Building is located in downtown Elkhorn, a small city in southeastern Wisconsin. Elkhorn's downtown surrounds the county's courthouse square, and the Municipal Building is at the southwest corner of Walworth and Broad streets just southeast of the courthouse. The building is part of a streetscape of commercial buildings that share party walls. Because it sits on a corner lot, the Municipal Building shares only one party wall with the building directly to the east. The party wall is only a partial one because the municipal building extends farther south than its neighbor.

The topography of the site is flat and because of the building's downtown location, sidewalks run entirely around the north and west elevations from the street curb and gutter to the building foundation. The sidewalks are punctuated with planting beds and occasional small street trees. A paved alley runs along the rear, or south, elevation between the Municipal Building and the modern fire station that sits directly south of the building.

Exterior

The building has a general rectangular plan and a flat roof. The walls are of tan brick on the north and west elevations and are decorated with an abundance of grey limestone architectural details. The south elevation and exposed east elevation are faced with cream bricks and are undecorated. The flat roof is capped on the north and west elevations with metal coping.

The building has three stories, but on the north and west elevations, the third story has the appearance of an attic story due to a flat limestone cornice that creates a parapet and the proportionally smaller windows of the third story on the west elevation. The north elevation is slightly shorter, with only a parapet above the cornice and no windows.

Madison architect Edward Tough designed the building in 1930 and it was completed in 1931. The decoration on the building is in the Art Deco style and includes stylized and vertical elements, including fluted pilaster strips and spandrels. Specific decorative elements will be discussed within the context of each elevation below.

The main elevation of the building is slightly lower than, and projects from, the rest of the building, creating somewhat of an entry pavilion. This section of the building is dominated by a central limestone panel. At the top of the panel is a smooth section engraved with the words "Municipal Building." Below this is a smooth cornice and a long panel decorated with three fluted pilaster strips

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with "capitals" that feature stylized leaf motifs. The panel descends down to surround three openings at the center of the first story and ends at the smooth limestone veneer foundation. In between the first and second stories, the limestone over the openings is decorated with rows of zig-zags filled with stylized arrows and a set of three horizontal lines.

On the second story, two windows sit on either side of this panel. They are filled with modern single panes over narrow horizontal panes, a window type seen in most of the building's window openings. Decorating these windows are stepped two-part limestone lintels and iron grillwork. Under these windows are brick spandrels with vertical grooves. On the first story, an entrance sits to the east of a bank of three centrally-located windows. It is filled with a double wood and glass door and decorated with a transom and lintel. Above the three windows and within the smooth limestone panel of the main elevation are lintels decorated with zig-zags and sets of three horizontal lines. To the west of the central three windows is a single pane window that was originally part of a two door corner entrance. The second door was located just around the corner from this window. This entrance was enclosed with modern single-light windows in the later twentieth century. The slightly projecting front of the building, or entry pavilion, results in a small side wall that includes the previously described former entrance on the first story and a second story window decorated with an identical stepped limestone lintel and iron grillwork as seen on the other second story windows.

As stated earlier, the west elevation of the building has a parapet above a limestone cornice creating an attic story punctuated by 12 openings. Seven of the 12 openings are filled with modern single lights. The five windows near the back of the building are filled with single-light, double-hung sashes. Lintels with a stylized floral swag decoration sit above these windows.

The first and second stories of the west elevation are decorated with two-story fluted limestone pilasters that have capitals with stylized leaf motifs. These pilasters flank window openings, along with tan brick pilasters that run between the windows. Tan brick spandrels sit under each second floor window opening and these windows are filled with either modern single panes or a single pane over narrow horizontal panes. They are decorated with limestone lintels.

The current main entrance into the building is at the center of the first story of the west elevation where originally there were three fire truck garage doors. The modern entrance enclosed one of the fire truck doors with glass windows and a glass and metal door. The original main entrance into the building is extant and sits toward the rear of the west elevation, south of the modern main entrance. This entrance is accented by four colossal limestone fluted pilaster strips that rise to the cornice. They are decorated with capitals with stylized leaves. The pilaster strips "sit" on high smooth limestone veneer bases. In between the pilasters is the original double door entrance that is topped with a transom, a lintel with horizontal line and zig-zag and arrow decoration, a panel with tall and narrow reveals with Gothic

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Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

arches, and an opening filled with a modern single light over a narrow horizontal light window.

The remainder of the first story of the west elevation consists of window groups between the limestone or brick pilasters. Toward the front of the building is a set of two openings with modern windows and lintels decorated with the zig-zag and arrow motif and the horizontal line motif. To the south of these windows are the remaining former fire truck doors. Originally, these openings were filled with two large garage-type doors. Today, these openings are filled with metal framed glass panels.

The window section south of the old fire doors has two smaller openings, but they are filled with the same single pane over one narrow horizontal pane window seen elsewhere. In addition, there are narrow horizontal openings below spandrels that sit below this set of windows. They are filled with modern single lights. An identical set of three openings, spandrels, and narrow windows is also located on the south side of the original main entrance, completing the details of the west elevation.

The rear, or south, elevation of the building, and the exposed section of the east elevation of the building, are largely undecorated. The walls are constructed of plain cream bricks and are punctuated with numerous window openings on each of the three stories and foundation level. The openings are largely filled with modern single light windows or single lights over narrow horizontal lights. There are modern fire escape doors on the second and third stories that are attached to the large metal fire escape structure that sits along the wall.

Interior, Basement

Currently, the basement is used for storage and utilities and is vacant. It is primarily divided into office spaces. Originally, the basement space had a shower/locker room and lounge for fire department personnel, display and storage space for the retail activities of the light and water commission, public rest rooms and lounges, along with utilities. Some of the fire department space has been divided into office space, but much of the floor plan is extant.

When entering the building through the original main entrance, the main staircase leads to the basement area in the south half of the building where the former public restrooms are located. Each restroom has an anteroom and toilet room, but the women's anteroom is significantly larger than the men's. Opposite the rest rooms are small utility rooms and the former shower and locker room. Much of this area has terrazzo floors, plaster walls, and wood panel doors with plain wood trim.

The front, or north, half of the basement is divided into office space with some new walls dividing up what was probably the fireman's lounge. In this area, the floors are terrazzo or are carpeted. Most walls are plastered and trim around doors and windows is plain wood. Period doors are of two panel wood

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Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

construction with dark stain and simple hardware.

At the northeast corner of the basement, at the end of a hallway, is a set of two curved terrazzo steps that lead to a landing in front of a set of wood and glass French-style doors with one sidelight. Beyond these doors is a large foyer that sits in front of a staircase leading to a secondary entrance into the building or to the upper floors. The curved steps were originally larger but were cut off with the addition of a wall for an office.

Interior, First Floor

When entering the building from the original main entrance on the west elevation, there is a foyer and the main staircase that leads to the upper floors at the center and to the basement via steps on each side. The floor of the foyer and the staircase are covered with terrazzo. The balustrades of the staircase are composed of wrought iron balusters that alternate between twisted and straight and wood railings. The newel post is round with a stepped design, increasing in size as it rises from its base. Other balustrade posts repeat this pattern. The iron elements have a patina and are marked so as to appear as if they were hand-hammered. The foyer also features plastered walls and heavy, wood-panel doors with plain wood trim covering entrances that were once used to enter city offices on the first floor.

The current main entrance to city offices leads into a modern foyer, off of which are offices that have been made out of the old fire truck storage area. There is a foyer, elevator lobby, and two large office spaces. These spaces have modern fabric-covered wall surfaces, carpeting, acoustical tile ceilings with fluorescent lighting, and modern doors and trim.

At the front of the building, accessible from the entrance at the north east corner, is a suite of offices. The four spaces were originally used for the Light and Water Commission. They included a show room for electrical products, office space, and storage. There was also a small vault in the office suite. These offices are extant and modernized but have some features on the outer walls that reflect the original building, such as wall surfaces, trim, doors, and the vault.

Behind, or to the south, of the remodeled offices in the old fire truck area, are two offices, a vault, and a work room. These rooms were originally used for the city treasurer, city clerk, street commissioner, and city engineer. They are used for city offices today and have been modernized with new ceilings and lighting, along with carpeting. At the back of the building on this floor are the original council chamber and two small offices. The council chamber has been moved to the second floor so that the room is used for office space now.

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Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

The second floor of the building was designed as a large auditorium, a ladies lounge, and a kitchen. The ladies lounge and kitchen area have been opened up and modernized for the current council chambers. This large room features modern wainscot paneling, a dropped acoustical tile ceiling with fluorescent light fixtures, carpeting, and modern council furniture.

Across from the council chambers is the largely intact auditorium. Now used for storage, it was designed as a public facility for dancing, theater, and other activities. According to a written account when the building opened, the auditorium measures 45 by 90 feet with a stage that has an opening of 21 feet wide and 15 feet high. The "full equipment of drapes" mentioned in this account are extant and include two sets of curtains and valances. The outer set is a dark red color with a gold band at the bottom of the valance. In the center of the valance is a large gold "E." The inner drapes are a more neutral color. Originally there were two sets of stock scenery, but they are not extant.

The proscenium features a wood frame with a decorative paint finish on the sides. Above the stage is a cornice with classical motifs of acanthus leaves, palmetto, and foliage. The floor of the auditorium is covered with narrow maple boards and there are plain baseboards around the entire floor. The ceiling has been covered with acoustical tile and of the six original Art Deco style light fixtures, three are not extant, and three only have their metal frames extant. These frames have a stylized scroll motif with raised stylized lyres.

The plaster walls of the auditorium are decorated with faux finishes and paint in a highly complex design. The walls are sponge-painted in pastel colors and the dominant motifs are sets of painted panels in shades of pastel green, pink, and orange. The plain areas of the panels are outlined with delicate borders featuring small flowers. In between the plain areas are colored rectangles painted with scrolls and birds on a deep purple background. Faux marble and granite painting create "wainscoting" along the lower level of the walls and the trim around doors. There are two extant brass wall sconces with white milk glass globes attached to side walls. Toward the back of the auditorium is a square concrete block elevator shaft that intrudes into the space.

The third floor was designed for a club house for the American Legion, a use still in effect. These quarters included a club room, meeting room, kitchen, and restrooms. These areas are all extant. To reach these rooms, a terrazzo staircase leads up to a terrazzo-floored hallway off of which are several doors. The doors are medium stained two-panel wood doors with plain molded trim. Hardware is original and door knob fixtures have Art Deco motifs.

The club and meeting room have most of their original decoration. The club room has plaster wall and ceiling surfaces and its wood floor is covered with carpeting. A stepped cornice makes the transition from the wall to the ceiling. Dominating the room is a large fireplace with a small oak mantel

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Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

supported by plain brackets and the stone firebox surround that has decorative tabs and keystone. Over the fireplace is a large (three foot) medallion with the American Legion emblem. Also extant are the light fixtures, including a cone-shaped light hanging over the fireplace, a circular shaped hanging light fixture, and a wall sconce. The hanging fixture and wall sconce are of metal.

Opposite the fireplace is the opening to the meeting room. The large opening can be closed by the original four-part folding medium-stained two-panel wood doors. Very simple wood moldings decorate the opening. The meeting room also has original details, including a narrow board wood floor, plaster walls and ceilings, and simple wood moldings around doors and windows. There is a "period" kitchen off of this room with older fixtures. The most important decorative detail is the original chandelier, a design of two cone light fixtures hanging from an iron triangle decorated with long loops.

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- _F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1931-1961

Significant Dates

1931

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Tough, Edward

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Section 8 Page 1

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

SIGNIFICANCE1

The Elkhorn Municipal Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. It is locally significant under criterion A for its association with the important activities of local government during the period 1931-1961. The construction of the municipal building was one of the most, if not the most, important achievements of Elkhorn's city government in the twentieth century, and also represents the growth and development of that government over the history of the community. The building also housed a retail component of the municipally-owned power company; this was common in the first half of the twentieth century.

The building is also locally significant for architecture under criterion C, as a fine and distinctive example of the Art Deco style, an unusual style not common in Elkhorn. The style details, themselves, are well executed and of high quality and give the building a distinguished appearance suitable to a public building. The modern design was executed by Madison architect Edward Tough, who designed other buildings with modern styles around the same period as this building.

Area of Significance - Government

The new municipal building was a culmination of the growth and development of Elkhorn's city government during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. During this time, local government grew from providing rudimentary services to the type of services that the public expects today. The municipal building also reflects what the city government thought was needed in a full-service public building at that time.

The growth of local government in Elkhorn was slow, but the earliest settlers in Elkhorn were thinking about government when they hoped their claims would result in a settlement that would be designated the county seat. When they came to the area in 1837, they chose this site because it was at the center of four towns, not for its potential water power that would fuel industry. In 1846, the settlers got their wish when the territorial legislature formally named Elkhorn as the county seat. ²

The period of significance was determined to be the date of the building's completion to the 50 year historic cut-off date because this was the period of historic activity in the building. Date of construction and architect information are cited within the text of Section 8.

² Elkhorn History Club, History of Elkhorn, Wisconsin (Elkhorn: Elkhorn Independent, 1977), 1.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

Growth in the community was slow because the settlement was not located on a water source and there was no industrial development. But, as county government grew, so did Elkhorn. The settlement also grew as commercial businesses came to the community to serve the farmers of the area. By 1850, the population was over 500 and by 1857, economic growth in southeastern Wisconsin was reflected in Elkhorn's population, which had risen to 1500.³

Unlike other communities in southeastern Wisconsin, Elkhorn was slow to establish village and city governments. For almost 50 years (1846-1892), Elkhorn was governed under town government. But, then things quickly changed. In 1892, the community received a village charter and only two years later received a city charter. Both village and city government met in a hall built in 1884.

The 1884 hall served the community until the city began to provide significantly more services, such as water and sewer service, upgraded streets, a mechanized fire department, and an electrical service. By 1930, these services were spread out in several locations and city government offices were in need of more space. In particular, the city's light and water department was booming, especially the light service as people were embracing more and more electrical appliances. While most communities had private electrical service, Elkhorn had, and still has, a public light service. And, like private companies at this time, this service included selling electrical appliances. Some of these were large, such as washing machines, stoves, and refrigerators. In fact, it was the needs of the light and water department that drove the issue of a new city hall.

At a community meeting in February of 1930, the inadequacies of the city's governmental service facilities were spelled out. The city attorney listed four important needs. The first was a fire department space large enough for two trucks sitting side by side. Second was a council room and vault to keep city records safe. The third need was for space for the light and water department, and the fourth need was for a public "rest room" or lounge with toilet facilities.⁵

What precipitated this meeting was the fact that the city began to build new quarters for its profitable light and water department, particularly for the retail end of the service. Many people felt that a larger building should be constructed for all city services, not just the water and light department. The project drew so much controversy, it was stopped and a community meeting was held. Most of the people at the meeting were in favor of a larger building that would include the light and water department. Some

³ Ibid, 1-5

¹ Ibid, 5.

^{5 &}quot;300 Citizens Gather for Mass Meeting on Building Project," Elkhorn Independent, February 6, 1930, 1.

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Section 8 Page 3

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

businessmen also expressed concern that the city-owned light and water department's retailing arm was competing against private businesses and should not have a separate retail-like setting. Some expressed the opinion that other city services were more important than the light and water services, even stating "the present city hall is disgrace." The result of this meeting was that a committee was formed to come up with the best solution to the problem.

By the following week, the local newspaper reported that the single committee appointed earlier had become three committees, but that all had decided that the city should build a multi-purpose municipal building, with room for city officials, the fire department, public restrooms, meeting rooms, and the light and water department. Sites for the new building were discussed at a follow-up meeting, along with plans to get input from the public and discussion of the cost and type of building desired.⁷

Looking at the push to construct a large municipal building from a historical perspective, it may seem unusual that such a large project would be so enthusiastically undertaken at the beginning of the Great Depression, the most devastating economic crisis of the twentieth century. But, in February of 1930, it was only four months since the stock market crash and most business people thought the economy would recover as it had in the past after financial panics or crashes. Optimism was high at this point and Elkhorn went optimistically ahead with plans for a large municipal building.

In late February of 1930, the Elkhorn city council passed a resolution to ask for a vote in April to issue \$40,000 in bonds to fund the new municipal building. The following week, the city council agreed to purchase a piece of downtown property known as the Sprague lot for the municipal building. On April 1, 1930 the citizens of Elkhorn overwhelmingly passed the bond issue. With this amount and other city funds, the building was expected to be constructed for a total cost of \$70,000.8

Planning for the municipal building project moved along in the summer of 1930. But, in August of 1930, work stopped for two reasons. One, there was a dispute with a neighbor over land use at the site, and, two, the city needed to ask for another referendum to borrow an additional \$25,000 to complete and equip the new building. The referendum was held in September, and voters approved the

[&]quot; Ibid.

^{7 &}quot;Committee Prefers Sprague Corner for Municipal Building," Elkhorn Independent, February 13, 1930, 1.

^{8 &}quot;May Issue Bonds for City Building," Elkhorn Independent, February 20, 1930, I; "City Buys Sprague Lot for Municipal Building Location," Elkhorn Independent, February 27, 1930, 1; "Bond Issue Gets 5-I Majority in voting Tuesday," Elkhorn Independent, April 3, 1930, 1.

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Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

additional loan for the building.9

The local newspaper reported on October 16, 1930 that work had begun on the building and that Krasin Brothers Construction Company of Marshfield, Wisconsin had been excavating the site. The contractor noted that with 40 workers on site, the building should be completed by mid-April of 1931. 10

The following week, the local newspaper described the new municipal building in detail, calling it an "architectural gem." For the first time the extensive details of the building were publicly revealed. What was most impressive about this description was the size of the building and how many services the building would hold. It was truly going to be a "municipal" building, not just a city hall. The article described the large basement that would house light and water department appliance display and storage, fire department facilities, and large restrooms with lounges. The first floor would house the offices of the light and water department and their retail show room, city offices, and a three-stall fire department garage. The second floor was to house an auditorium and a large club room with attached kitchen. Previous needs of the city had not included these amenities, but at some point they were added. The third floor would include the upper level of the auditorium, as well as a suite of rooms for use by the American Legion. 11

The newspaper article included a drawing or architect's rendering of the building that showed it to be a large modern building with Art Deco details. The architect, later revealed to be Madison architect Edward Tough, had designed, according to the newspaper, a building with the "perfect combination of modern architecture and practicability." ¹²

Work continued on the building through the winter, but at the end of March of 1931, a minor labor problem stopped construction for a short time. It was also revealed that the contractor, Krasin Brothers Company, was in default and that the new contractor would be a local company operated by William Morrissey. The new completion date was estimated to be mid-summer of 1931.¹³

^{9 &}quot;Will Condemn Sprague Alley for Public Use," Elkhorn Independent, August 7, 1930, 1.

^{10 &}quot;Start Work on Municipal Building Monday Morning," Elkhorn Independent, October 16, 1930, 1.

^{11 &}quot;New Municipal Building Will be Architectural Gem," Elkhorn Independent, October 23, 1930, 1.

¹² Ibid.

^{13 &}quot;Labor War Looms on the Municipal Building - Settled," Elkhorn Independent, March 26, 1931, 1.

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Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

The completion date was off by a few weeks, and in early September of 1931, it was reported that furniture and equipment had arrived and city offices were moving into the new building. The official dedication of the building took place on October 9, 1931. With the building completed, it became clear that it was much more than an old-fashioned city hall. Generous space was allotted to the Fire Department, including a club room, offices, a locker room, and the afore-mentioned garage. Office areas were also spacious and efficient for all aspects of city business. A convenient council room was attached to city offices for the Mayor, Treasurer, Attorney, and streets department. There was ample space for clerks and record storage, including a large vault. 14

But the highlights of the building were its more "public" spaces. Lauded in the local newspaper were the public restrooms in the basement, both "furnished in elegance." The men's lounge was furnished in oak, while the women's room lounge had wicker furniture. The auditorium could seat 600 and the stage was fully furnished with drapes, scenery, and dressing rooms. Across from the auditorium was the large meeting room suite that was now described as a ladies lounge furnished with sofas, chairs, and even a fireplace. An attached kitchen and bathrooms were also available. Elegantly appointed rooms for the American Legion were on the third floor. A club room with a fireplace, meeting room, and kitchen made up this suite of rooms. ¹⁵

Last, but not least, were the offices of the group that started it all, the Light and Water Commission. Profits from these utilities, including their retail services, had helped pay for the building and netted them expansive quarters. Several offices, display or show rooms, and storage space were given to the Light and Water Commission at the front of the building. They even had their own separate entrance. 16

The municipal building has remained a city government building over the years. However, some changes in specific uses have occurred. The Light and Water Commission, so important when the building was constructed, eventually dropped their retail business. The auditorium use was eventually phased out, and the fire station was moved out of the building into its own building to the south. The fire department space was remodeled into office space and, during the last part of the twentieth century, the old women's lounge area was converted into a larger council chamber. Some offices were used in the old light and water space of the basement and fire department space, but today, the basement is vacant.

¹⁴ "Offices Moved to Municipal Building," *Elkhorn Independent*, September 3, 1931, 1; "New Municipal Building Will be Dedicated in Ceremony Friday Eve;" *Elkhorn Independent*, October 8, 1931, 1.

^{15 &}quot;New Municipal Building."

¹⁶ Ibid.

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Section 8 Page 6

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

The Elkhorn Municipal Building has been the home to city government for 80 years and although it was used for other public purposes, the building's chief purpose has been to house important city government services. Specifically, during the period of significance, 1931-1961, the building was filled with city government offices and public spaces that benefited the citizens of Elkhorn.

Wisconsin's <u>Cultural Resources Management Plan</u> discusses the forms of local government, including city government. The state constitution allows for the incorporation of cities in Wisconsin. But, historically, the state's legislature strictly regulated their activities. The drive for home rule began at the turn of the twentieth century and was achieved in 1933. There are two types of city government in Wisconsin, Mayor-Council and Council-Manager. The Mayor-Council system is most prevalent and consists of a chief executive (Mayor) and a legislative branch (Council). Some communities have a dominant mayor, while others have a dominant council. In the council-manager system, a council is elected, and then selects a manager to be administrator to the city. Today, even in the Mayor-Council system, most cities have an administrator due to the complexities of government.¹⁷

Elkhorn has had a mayor-council form of government since it became a city. At that time, 1896, small cities in southeastern Wisconsin were starting to offer more services to the public, who were also demanding more services. It was the Progressive Era in the state, when citizens began to demand planning and zoning rules, water and sewer systems, paved streets and sidewalks, and public parks and playgrounds. Other important services, such as fire and police protection, grew and became mechanized. As a result, city governments needed better and larger facilities to house the personnel and equipment for these services.

For example, between the 1870s and the 1920s, most fire departments grew from one or two horse-pulled engines and hose carts to several mechanized fire trucks. Engines and hose carts could be stored in small buildings, but large fire trucks and equipment needed more substantial buildings. In Elkhorn, by 1930, there were three fire trucks, one a water truck for rural fires. It was reported that these trucks had to be parked behind each one another in an inadequate fire house, instead of side-by-side for quick departures.

Other areas of city services that grew included street maintenance and snow plowing. City administration grew and there was a need for larger spaces for the treasurer's office staffs and other officials like the city attorney and planning staff. But, most importantly, the largest increase in city services in Elkhorn was light (or power) and water. Elkhorn has had a municipal water and light

¹⁷ Barbara Wyatt, ed., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. 1 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986) Government, 9-4 to 9-9.

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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Section 8 Page 7

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

service since the turn of the twentieth century. While many communities began with privately funded water works, this service almost always quickly became a public service. Electric power was usually established by private companies as well and during the first part of the twentieth century, there were many small power companies in Wisconsin. As the century progressed, though, these small companies were purchased by and/or consolidated with larger power companies. By the later twentieth century, most of southern Wisconsin was fed with electric power by two large companies, Wisconsin Electric Power Company (WE Energies) and Wisconsin Power and Light Company. Elkhorn was, and still is, one of the few communities with a municipally owned local power company.

In the first half of the twentieth century, it was common for the private power companies to have retail stores that sold electrical appliances. These stores, often combined with offices, also had programs and demonstrations of these appliances. Cooking demonstrations on appliances that could be purchased from the power companies was one of the most popular programs and power company cookbooks were widely distributed.

In Elkhorn, the municipally-owned power service also had a retail component, a financially-successful enterprise. The retailing of electrical appliances by the electric service during the 1920s, when people had the money to spend and when new appliances were being introduced at a rapid pace, was a "cash cow" for the city that resulted in the desire to expand this business into a new store building in 1929. But, when the public took notice of this action, they determined that the municipal power service should not be given special space when all city services were in need of expansion. Hence, the drive for the new municipal building that would house all the city services that were important to Elkhorn's citizens. Of course, when the building was completed, the community received much more than it initially envisioned, a multi-purpose building that met many more needs in the city than offices.

The Elkhorn Municipal Building gives a fascinating look at what one community felt were important government services at the time. Of course, city council and local government offices and meeting spaces were a priority, along with adequate and updated space for the fire department. And, the water and light department received extensive space for their offices and retail operation. But, of interest are the additional amenities added to the building. First, a set of public rest rooms with lounges and toilet rooms, meant to be used for more than the convenience of people who had business at city offices. Second, a large two-room suite was added for the local American Legion post. Third, and most important, a beautifully decorated auditorium was added with a large lounge across the hall. These amenities were not discussed when the building was initially planned, but even in the uncertain economic times of 1930-1931, they were added because the citizens of Elkhorn felt their local government should provide them.

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Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

During the period of significance, the municipal building was used constantly for city government activities, including city council meetings, administrative duties, fire department activities, water and light department activities, and general community activities. The auditorium was a community center, used for events such as commencement exercises. Eventually, some of the community activities held in the building were dropped and the auditorium's use was discontinued. The adjoining lounge was also remodeled in the late twentieth century to make a larger council room. But, when the fire department moved out, this space was quickly converted to office space for the ever-expanding needs of modern administrative governmental activities. The building today is still an important center for local government.

Area of Significance - Architecture

The Elkhorn Municipal Building is locally significant for architecture as a fine example of the Art Deco style. As a small community, Elkhorn does not have a large collection of high-style buildings, particularly from the twentieth century, and this building is not only the city's only high-style example of the Art Deco style, it is the best example of any stylistic building constructed in Elkhorn during the pre-World-War II period.

According to Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan, the Art Deco style is seen in the state primarily between 1925 and 1945. It is a style that incorporated highly stylized historical details emphasizing machine precision that suggests futuristic or advanced technology. Elements of the style are executed to stress verticality, and common details include low-relief geometrical ornamentation such as fluted columns, chevrons, and stylized sunbursts, often executed in bronze or stone in larger buildings. In small communities, Art Deco forms are often seen in storefronts with carrara glass panels. ¹⁸

The Elkhorn Municipal Building is a fine example of the style because its design features most of the important elements described above. The stone veneer details of the building include well-executed and distinctive stylized classical motifs that also suggest verticality. For example, a dominant motif of the building is a fluted pilaster strip topped with a "capital" of stylized leaves. Not only is this a stylized historic detail typical of the style, it adds a strong vertical emphasis to the building. Another common detail of the building's decoration is a repeated lintel that features a geometric zig-zag pattern and stylized arrows. This is a good example of low-relief geometric ornamentation common to the Art Deco style.

¹⁸ Wyatt, Volume 2, Architecture, 2-34.

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Section 8 Page 9

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

Also helping to create vertical emphasis on the building are the alternating stone pilasters and shallow brick pilasters on the west elevation. This design element especially helps with the building's proportions, that may have been off had these details not been added. The added stone veneer panels of the main elevation and surrounding the original entrance on the west elevation also help make the building distinctive and are well-proportioned to its size.

The interior of the building has some extant Art Deco fixtures, but is not overly decorated in the style. Main features, such as the original staircases, have Art Deco influences. The bulk of the interior is decorated with high-quality materials meant to provide long-lasting service, such as terrazzo flooring, heavy wood panel doors, and substantial plain moldings. However, these details are well-executed and attractive where they are extant.

Madison architect Edward Tough designed the building. Tough was a native of Scotland, who was educated at the Technical College of Glasgow. He started practicing as an architect in 1901 and in 1911, he came to Madison to work as the State Architect for two years. In 1914, he began his private practice in Madison and continued it until 1946, when he was 68 years old. He lived until age 92, passing away in 1970. Tough worked predominantly in Madison and his known commissions range in style from the Prairie School to the Art Moderne. He designed many schools and churches, among them a building constructed right after this one: the University Presbyterian Church and Student Center, better known as Pres House. This building, in the neo-Gothic style, was built from 1931-1935 and is a notable landmark near the University of Wisconsin-Madison. 19

The Elkhorn Municipal Building building illustrates that Edward Tough was a fine architect. He, like many architects of the era, was versatile and knowledgeable practitioner in the various concurrently popular styles. He designed one building in the Art Deco style, while at the same time he was also practicing in the revival style seen in the Pres House in Madison. His design for the municipal building shows his ability to create a distinctive Art Deco exterior with a well-executed interior that illustrates his ability to use Art Deco motifs (staircases, interior trims) and Classical motifs (auditorium) in a manner that result in a harmonious and beautiful design.

The only other important building with stylistic details built at this time in Elkhorn was the Matheson Memorial Library, completed in the same year. It was a much smaller building with a stripped down Classical Revival style. It was determined eligible for the National Register in 1988, but it has since

¹⁹ Elizabeth Miller, City of Madison Landmarks Nomination Form for the University Presbyterian Church and Student Center, on file in the Department of Planning and Development, City of Madison, Madison, Wisconsin. The University Presbyterian Church and Student Center was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 16, 2002.

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Section 8 Page 10

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

been expanded and remodeled at least twice and it no longer has enough integrity to be eligible. The municipal building is the only distinctive high-style building constructed in Elkhorn during this period that retains most of its historic appearance.

Integrity

The municipal building has a good level of integrity. The exterior has almost all of its important historic details intact, including the Art Deco details that give the building its distinctive appearance. There has been some remodeling to the Walworth Street corner entrance and the old fire department garage entrances that lowers the exterior integrity a bit, but overall, these alterations do not overly detract from the historic appearance of the building. The same can be said for the modern windows. Although they were not appropriate historic-appearing choices, they fill original openings and are not irreversible. Some original windows are still intact and good photographs exist, so that in the future, more appropriate windows can be substituted.

The interior has also seen some remodeling, again most of the alterations are located in the old fire department spaces. But, a considerable amount of historic fabric is extant in the building, including original staircases, many original doors with decorative hardware, plaster walls with original trim around openings, original terrazzo floors, and some original light fixtures. Although no longer used, most of the original features of the auditorium, including decorative paint, are extant and could be restored. Also, the American Legion suite is almost completely extant. Again, enough materials and historic plans are extant, so that much of the building could be restored and the alterations, like those of the exterior, do not detract from the overall historic or architectural significance of the building.

Conclusion

Not only is the Elkhorn Municipal Building the result of the growth and development of local government in the community, it continued to be the center of local governmental activities during the period of significance. From the fire department to the water and light commission, between 1931 and 1961, few activities of local governmental importance took place outside of the municipal building. Therefore, the building is significant at the local level for government. The building is also significant for architecture at the local level as a fine example of the Art Deco style, an unusual style in the community. Its distinctive features, size, and scale, with a plan executed by a notable architect, make the building stand out as an important architectural landmark in the city.

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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

11. Form Prepared By

- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

X State Historic Preservation Office

- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

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name/title	Carol Lohry Cartwright, Const	ıltant				
organization	Prepared for the Elkhorn Histo	ric Preservation C	Commission	date	June 14, 2011	
street & number	W7646 Hackett Road			telephone	262-473-6820	
city or town	Whitewater	state	WI	zip code	53190	

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

References

- "300 Citizens Gather for Mass Meeting on Building Project," Elkhorn Independent, February 6, 1930, 1.
- "Bond Issue Gets 5-1 Majority in voting Tuesday," Elkhorn Independent, April 3, 1930, 1.
- "City Buys Sprague Lot for Municipal Building Location," Elkhorn Independent, February 27, 1930, 1.
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- Elkhorn History Club, History of Elkhorn, Wisconsin (Elkhorn: Elkhorn Independent, 1977).
- "Labor War Looms on the Municipal Building Settled," Elkhorn Independent, March 26, 1931, 1.
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- "New Municipal Building Will be Dedicated in Ceremony Friday Eve," *Elkhorn Independent*, October 8, 1931, 1.
- "Offices moved to Municipal Building," Elkhorn Independent, September 3, 1931, 1.
- "Start Work on Municipal Building Monday Morning," Elkhorn Independent, October 16, 1930, 1.
- "Will Condemn Sprague Alley for Public Use," Elkhorn Independent, August 7, 1930, 1.
- Wyatt, Barbara, ed. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. 1 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986).

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

Boundary Description

The boundary corresponds with the legal parcel: Original Plat, Block 26, all of Lot 3 and a strip of land in the north half of Lot 4 that borders on Lot 3 measuring 46 feet, 8 inches wide by 10 feet deep.

Boundary Justification

This is the parcel that was acquired for the construction of the building and is the parcel associated with the building today.

Elkhorn Municipal Building Walworth Wisconsin Name of Property County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title organization street & number

city or town

state

date telephone zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 1

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

Name of Property: Elkhorn Municipal Building

City or Vicinity: Elkhorn

County: Walworth County

State: WI

Name of Photographer: Carol Lohry Cartwright

Date of Photographs: August, 2011

Location of Original Digital Files: W7646 Hackett Rd., Whitewater, WI 53190

Photo #1 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0001) Site view, camera facing southeast

Photo #2 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0002) North (left) and west (right) elevations, camera facing southeast

Photo #3 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0003) North elevation, camera facing southeast

Photo #4 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0004) West elevation, close-up of original main entrance, camera facing east

Photo #5 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0005) Close-up of exterior detail

Photo #6 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0006) Close-up of exterior detail

Photo #7 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0007) South and east elevations, camera facing northwest

Photo #8 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0008) West elevation, camera facing northeast

Photo #9 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0009) Interior, first floor, main staircase

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 2

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

Photo #10 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0010) Interior, original entry foyer showing original light fixture

Photo #11 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0011) Interior, close-up of detail of main staircase

Photo #12 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0012) Interior, main staircase going to third floor

Photo #13 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0013) Interior, third floor showing original door hardware

Photo #14 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0014) Interior, third floor showing original doors

Photo #15 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0015) Interior, basement showing original entrance for light company offices

Photo #16 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0016)
Interior, basement, showing original entry doors for light company offices, then county offices

Photo #17 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0017) Interior, basement staircase from north entrance into light company offices

Photo #18 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0018) Interior, basement showing hallway in light offices area

Photo #19 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0019) Interior, basement showing area of light company offices

Photo #20 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0020) Interior, first floor, modern offices in fire department space

Photo #21 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0021) Interior, second floor showing auditorium

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 3

Elkhorn Municipal Building Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin

Photo #22 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0022) Interior, close-up of auditorium stage

Photo #23 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0023) Interior, close-up of wall decoration in auditorium

Photo #24 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0024) Interior, close-up of decorative panel in auditorium

Photo #25 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0025) Interior, original light fixture in auditorium

Photo #26 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0026) Interior, close-up of stage decoration

Photo #27 (WI_Walworth County_Elkhorn Municipal Building_0027) Interior, close-up of detail around entrance next to stage in auditorium

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Elkhorn Municipal Bu	uilding
MULTIPLE NAME:	
STATE & COUNTY: WISCONSIN, Wal	.worth
	DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/24/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/08/12
REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000491	
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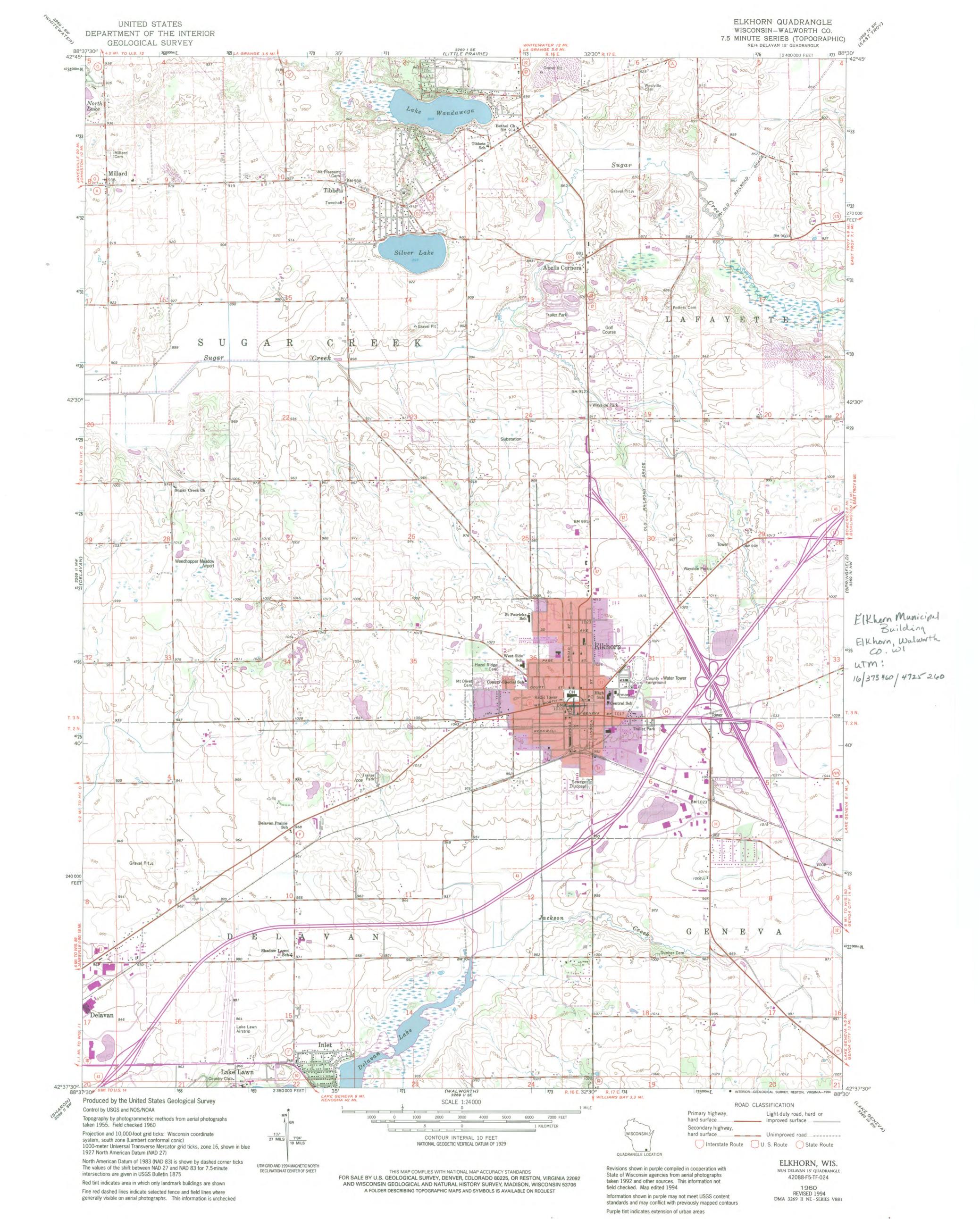
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National Register of Historic Places
National Register of Historic Flaces
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National Register Nomination
g materials are submitted on this <u>15th</u> day of <u>June 2012</u> , on of the <u>Elkhorn Municipal Building</u> to the National Register of ees:
Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
_ Multiple Property Nomination form
_ Photograph(s)
_ CD(s) with electronic images
_ Original USGS map(s)
_ Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)
_ Piece(s) of correspondence
_Other
S:
_ Please insure that this nomination is reviewed
_ This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
The enclosed owner objection(s) do do not constitute a majority of property owners. Other: