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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 The Sentinel
other names/site number N/A

2. Location Washington Park

street & number bounded by Main, Pearl, Locust, & Silver not for publication
city, town Centralia vicinity
state Washington code WA county Lewis code 041 zip code 98531

3. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing:
Centralia Armistice Day, 1919

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.

James E. Johnson 10-28-91
Date
Signature of certifying official
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. Autawette / hcc 12/17/91
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____
Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Culture:Commemorative Monument

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Culture:Commemorative Monument

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation granitewalls graniteroof N/Aother cast bronze

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Sentinel is a statue of bronze on a granite base created by Alonzo Victor Lewis as a memorial to the four legionnaires slain in the Centralia Armistice Day Riot of 1919. The statue consists of two parts: a cast bronze soldier approximately eight feet tall and a four-sided stone pedestal eight feet in height that is adorned with text. The statue is technically a cenotaph, a monument erected to honor the dead whose remains lie elsewhere.

The figure itself depicts an American infantryman from the world war, standing vigilantly in helmet and great coat, his rifle at the ready.

Pearl Street Side: The figure faces toward Pearl Street (and Tower Avenue, one block away). Carved in the stone pedestal under the feet of the soldier is the following inscription:

*THE SENTINEL
It was their destiny --
rather it was their
duty -- the highest of us
is but a sentry
at his post.*

Locust Street Side: Bas-relief bronze portraits of Centralia legionnaires Arthur McElfresh and Warren Grimm are attached to the pedestal along this side. Below the portraits and an American Legion insignia is the inscription:

*We should count time by heart-throbs
He most lives who thinks most,
Feels the noblest, acts the best.
-- Philip James Bailey*

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)

Social History

Art

Period of Significance

1924

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Alonzo Victor Lewis, sculptor

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

The Sentinel is significant as a piece of political sculpture. It represents an effort to present -- in bronze and stone -- an official version of the Armistice Day Riot. It is also significant as a work of art associated with an important northwestern sculptor, Alonzo Victor Lewis. The property meets the registration requirements established in the Centralia Armistice Day 1919 multiple property documentation form. The associated historic context is "The legacy of the Centralia Armistice Day, 1919" The associated property type is "Commemorative Sites and Objects." These requirements address the criteria consideration for listing commemorative sites. *The Sentinel* meets these considerations because of its significant symbolic and ideological value in American labor history, and is a work of a master sculptor.

This National Register nomination does not seek to extend ratification to the historical explanation offered by the memorial. Rather, it seeks to identify *The Sentinel* as a political symbol with its own unique role in the history of Armistice Day events. *The Sentinel* has never been simply a World War I memorial, like those found in countless city squares throughout North American and Europe. Instead, it is ideological architecture. The circumstances of its creation and dedication, as well as its prominence on the urban geography and the content of its various inscriptions, all make clear the ultimate political purposes of the memorial.

That a monument to the slain veterans was to be a political statement was never in doubt. Shortly after the conclusion of the Wobblies' trial in 1920, prominent Centralia citizens began discussing what form a memorial should take and who should bear the costs. The national convention of the American Legion endorsed the idea of a monument to their fallen comrades in Centralia, causing one local journalist to boast that the city would "go down in history as the shrine of the American Legion." Eventually in 1922, the Centralia Memorial Association, Inc. was organized to raise a quarter of a million dollars to erect a statue of truly imposing dimensions. Headed by a Seattle publisher and the lieutenant governor of the state, the Association embarked on a massive state-wide fund-raising campaign. But the campaign never lived up to expectations. Only \$16,000 was committed before the professional fund-raiser resigned and the Association became the target of a lawsuit brought by a disgruntled creditor. Most revealing of all, the Association encountered resistance not just from citizens who had become familiar with the Wobbly side of the story by 1922 but also from American Legion posts elsewhere in the country. Legion posts in Spokane and Yakima refused to contribute to the memorial, and the commander of one Montana posts criticized the entire effort since, in his view, the Wobblies had acted in self-defense after an unprovoked attack.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Chehalis Bee-Nugget, 7 November 1924: "To Unveil Monument to Murdered Veterans."
Historic Property Inventory Form for Washington Park, Centralia, in the files of the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Olympia.
Interview with William G. Craig, Centralia Monument Company, 4 April 1991.
McClelland, John, Jr., *Wobbly Way: The Centralia Story* (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1987).
Obituaries of Alonzo Victor Lewis, *Seattle Times*, 8 November 1946; *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, 9 November 1946.
Woodbridge, Sally B. and Roger Montgomery, *A Guide to Architecture in Washington State Seattle*: University of Washington Press, 1980).

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

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>503420</u> | <u>5173420</u> |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| C | Zone | Easting | Northing |

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| B | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| D | Zone | Easting | Northing |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is a 25 square foot of land located in Washington Park in Centralia, with *The Sentinel* at its center. See map for exact boundaries. Map drawn to scale of 1 inch = 80 feet.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel includes *The Sentinel* and a small surrounding lawn, but does not include the remainder of Washington Park, which is unrelated to the events of Armistice Day, 1919.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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Silver Street Side: Carved in the stone pedestal at the rear of the statue is the following inscription:

To the memory of

*Ben Casagrande
Warren O. Grimm
Earnest Dale Hubbard
Arthur McElfresh*

*Slain on the streets of
Centralia, Washington
Armistice Day Nov. 11, 1919
while on peaceful parade
wearing the uniform of
the country they loyally
and faithfully served.*

Main Street Side: Bas-relief bronze portraits of legionnaires Earnest Dale Hubbard and Ben Casagrande are attached to the pedestal along this side. Below the portraits and an American Legion insignia in the inscription:

*We live in deeds not years;
In thoughts not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.*

The Sentinel is located in a place of prominence, in the middle of Centralia's city square. A portion of Washington Park, as the landscaped square is known, provides the setting for a Carnegie Public Library (erected 1913, remodeled 1977), as well as an octagonal wooden bandstand. The square is surrounded today by the post office and assorted commercial buildings. The square was set aside as a public space when the second addition to the city was platted in 1881. It was a gift of, and was subsequently named for, George Washington (1817-1905), the venerable black founder of Centralia and former slave who had immigrated to the Oregon Territory in the 1850s. Only the statue is nominated.

In appearance, the statue has remained unmodified since its dedication on the site in 1924. Although it is defaced from time to time with slogans proclaiming "Wesley Everest Lives," these graffiti are routinely removed from the monument. Not too long after the memorial was dedicated in 1924, one investigator of the Armistice Day events predicted that the anonymous figure of *The Sentinel* would

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eventually assume the likeness of the slain Wobbly Wesley Everest. Outwardly, at least, this process of transmutation is not yet discernable, although a number of Centralia citizens profess to see the transformation underway.

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The failure of the financial strategy necessitated a statue less grand than anticipated, but the Centralia Memorial Association persevered and obtained the services of a talented Seattle sculptor, Alonzo Victor Lewis (1888-1946). Lewis worked on the project for two years, prior to its dedication in 1924, at which time one local newspaper boasted that it was "the finest piece of statuary in the Northwest." Alonzo Victor Lewis is today regarded as an important Washington sculptor. By the time of his death in 1946, he had created most of the memorial architecture in the state, an achievement recognized by the Legislature in 1939, when it named him Washington's sculptor laureate. Lewis was a native of Utah who studied at art schools in Chicago before settling permanently in Seattle. His best known work in Seattle is a war memorial statue dedicated to the "American Doughboy Bringing Home Victory." Initially, "The Doughboy" was quite controversial, until the sculptor agreed to remove a German helmet trophy on the soldier's back.¹

The new statue was dedicated in 1924 with all the pomp and symbolism appropriate for a monument that would set the record straight once and for all. It was clear from the schedule of events and the content of the various dedication speeches that more than just the lives of four young men were being memorialized. The official version of the community's history was being recognized, and important public officials were on hand to endorse the effort.

The date for the unveiling of *The Sentinel* was selected with deliberation: Armistice Day 1924, the fifth anniversary of the tragedy. The President of the United States was invited to send a telegram, the governor and a retired general were asked to speak, and the American Legion convened its annual convention in Centralia, for the occasion. Before the formal unveiling of the monument, participants marked Armistice Day with a march up Tower Avenue that followed the same route as the 1919 parade, this time without incident even as they walked past the new Centralia I.W.W. hall. Several thousand people then gathered in Washington Park for what one local newspaper predicted would be "the biggest celebration in the city's history." They heard a leading citizen proclaim that the four legionnaires had "sacrificed their lives in time of peace for the same principles and ideals that impelled us as free people to enter the World War." The governor predicted that "this memorial will be handed down from generation to generation as a shining emblem of the love of freedom, liberty, and justice." President Coolidge sent his thoughts by telegram:

¹Originally, the statue was placed in front of the Civic Auditorium, but construction for the World's Fair of 1962 relegated the monument to a less prominent location. "The Doughboy" can now be found on the south side of the municipal opera house (the remodeled Civic Auditorium), between Exhibition Hall and Veteran Hall at Seattle Center.

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When on Armistice Day you unveil in memory of the four veterans of the World War who were murdered on Armistice Day 1919, I wish to be among those who will join the expression of profound sorrow for the loss of those heroic lives and of gratitude that their memory is thus to be perpetuated.

In the symbolism of the dedication day ceremonies, just as in the “text” of *The Sentinel* itself, city fathers offered an historical interpretation of the Armistice Day events that they hoped would withstand the test of time.

From the perspective of today, the statue survives as a monument to something quite different than what was intended by its makers. The Centralia cenotaph resembles the art and sculpture erected after World War II in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to commemorate the war dead and sing the praises of the Soviet advocates of official art and the proponents of the Centralia monument shared a common interest in conscripting the memories of the dead for ideological service in the present. As political architecture and an effort at revisionist history, the Centralia cenotaph testifies today to a fear that the past has power.



Dedication of *The Sentinel* honoring the Legionnaires killed in Centralia, 1919.

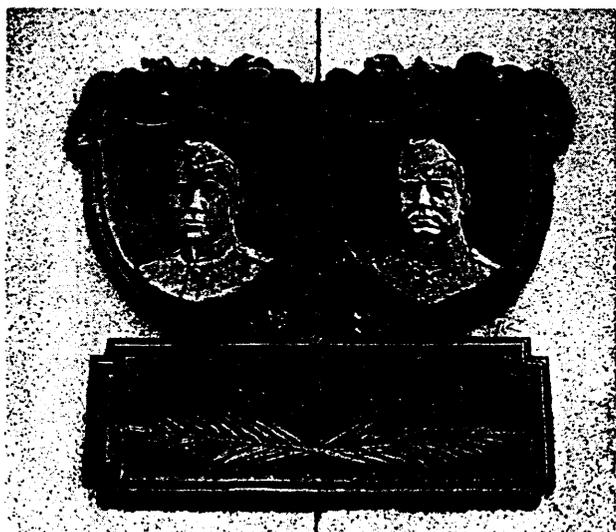
Dedication of The Sentinel in Centralia's Washington Park on Armistice Day 1924, the fifth anniversary of the riot.

Source: Ron Breckenridge and Joe Flink, Centralia Tragedy Remembered (1987), p. 5.



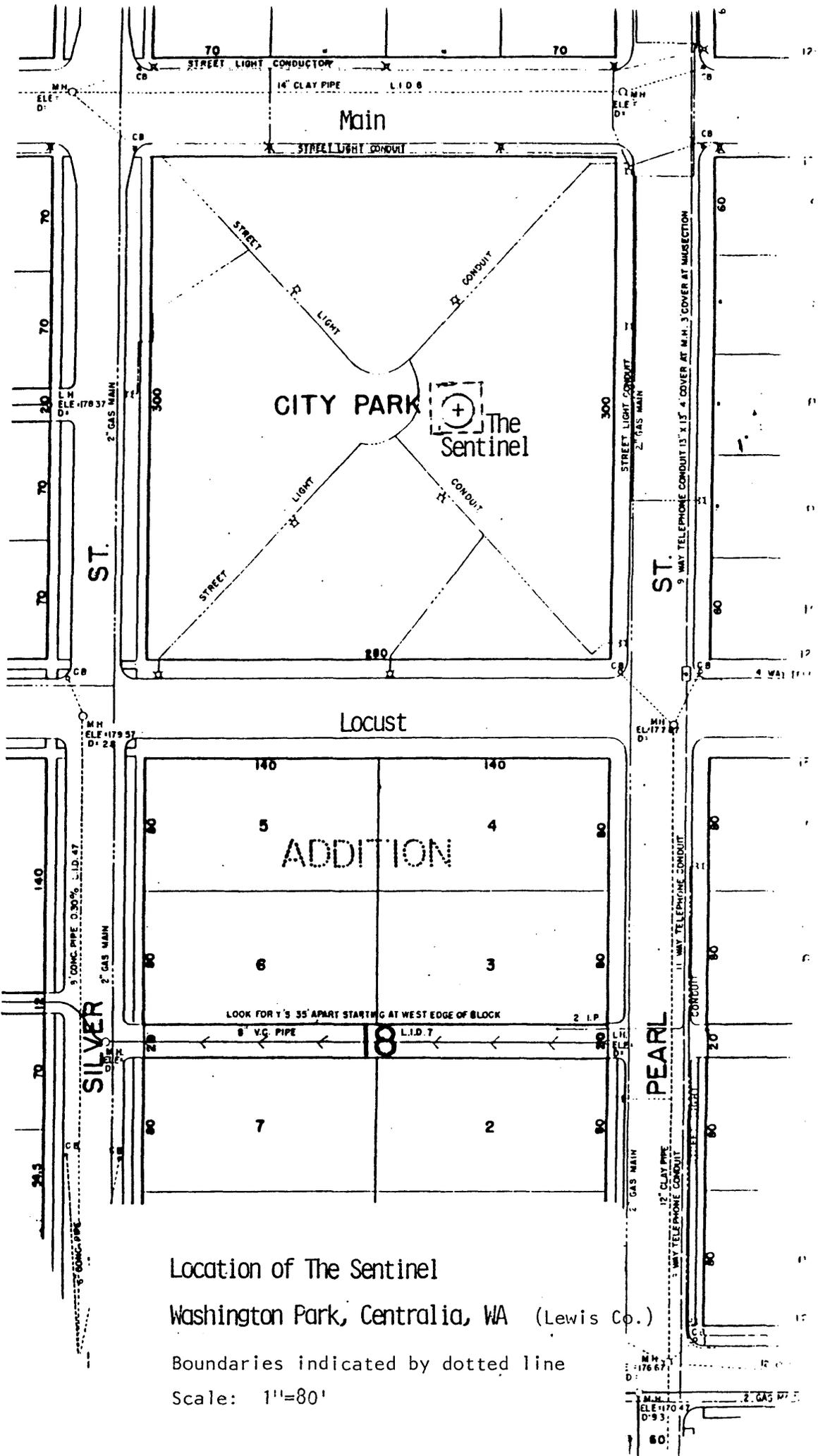
TO THE MEMORY OF
 BEN CASAGRANDA
 WARREN O. GRIMM
 EARNEST DALE HUBBARD
 ARTHUR MC ELFRESH
 SLAIN ON THE STREETS OF
 CENTRALIA, WASHINGTON,
 ARMISTICE DAY NOV. 11, 1919
 WHILE ON PEACEFUL PARADE
 WEARING THE UNIFORM OF
 THE COUNTRY THEY LOYALLY
 AND FAITHFULLY SERVED.

A statue memorializing the four ex-servicemen slain on Armistice Day 1919 was erected in the park behind the Centralia Library. On one side are bas-relief portraits of Warren Grimm and Arthur McElfresh; on the other side, Dale Hubbard and Ben Casagranda.



The Sentinel, showing the eight-foot high infantryman and the four panels of the stone pedestal.

Source: John McClelland, Jr., Wobbly War: The Centralia Story (1987), p. 193.



Location of The Sentinel
 Washington Park, Centralia, WA (Lewis Co.)

Boundaries indicated by dotted line

Scale: 1"=80'

