

56-1815

NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 10024-0018

Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)



United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

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.

1. Name of Property

historic name Kenosha Elks Club

other names/site number Kenosha Elks Lodge No. 750

2. Location

street & number	5706 Eighth Avenue	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Kenosha	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Kenosha	code 059
			zip code 53140

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant _ nationally _ statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Diana J. Lenburner
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/25/2017
Date

State Historic Preservation Office - Wisconsin
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _ meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Kenosha Elks Club
Name of Property

Kenosha
County and State

Wisconsin

4. National Park Service Certification

I 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:)

Barbara Wyatt
Signature of the Keeper

11-13-17
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)
 private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)
 building(s)
district
structure
site
object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources
in the count)

contributing	noncontributing
1	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	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**
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
SOCIAL/meeting hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation CONCRETE

LATE 19TH CENTURY AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Colonial Revival

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

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

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.)

- 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.
- 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)

SOCIAL HISTORY (A)
 ARCHITECTURE (C)

Period of Significance

1919 – 1967

Significant Dates

1919

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Messmer, Robert A.

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

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
- 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
- Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.04 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>16T</u>	<u>432617.77</u>	<u>4714884.93</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	John Cramer	date	May 16, 2017
organization	MacRostie Historic Advisors LLC	telephone	(312) 786-1700
street & number	53 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 1142	zip code	60604-3619
city or town	Chicago	state	IL

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Section 7 Page 1

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Summary

The Kenosha Elks Club is located at 5706 Eighth Avenue in downtown Kenosha, Wisconsin. The building was constructed as Lodge Number 750 of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks fraternal organization. The four story-plus-basement Kenosha Elks Club was completed in 1919, and was designed by Milwaukee-based architect Robert A. Messmer in the Georgian Revival style.

Site and Setting

The Kenosha Elks Club occupies the eastern half of the urban city block of Eighth Avenue between 57th and 58th streets. The building and grounds are easily distinguished from the remainder of the block by its size, its distinct architecture, and its sweeping lawn. The Kenosha Elks Clubs is primarily accessed by car from a semi-circular drive off of 57th Avenue to the former north entrance, or by foot up one of two sidewalks from Eighth Avenue to the east portico; secondary paths lead from the east side walkways to the north drive and to a paved parking area at the western edge of the south lawn. Two large trees frame the building when viewed from Eighth Avenue.

Prior to 1922, the downtown area surrounding the Kenosha Elks Club was comprised of mixed commercial and residential properties, with the exception of the Daniel J. Burnham-designed Simmons Library and associated war memorial statue and park located three blocks to the south (NR #00000733). Beginning in 1922, Kenosha's downtown saw significant changes as Kenosha developed a Civic Center on the blocks adjacent (north and west) to the Elks Club. Today, many buildings on these blocks are contributing buildings in the Civic Center Historic District (NR #89000069). Some of these buildings include the three-story, Classical Revival style, Ruther Central High School building on the west side of Sheridan Road; Civic Center Park to the northwest; and the main post office. Kenosha's main downtown commercial district lies to the east along Sixth and Seventh avenues, with additional storefronts on the east side of Eighth Avenue, across from the Elks Club. To the south across 58th Street is a large parking lot. Four commercial storefronts stand behind the Elks club to the west along Sheridan Road.

Exterior

The Kenosha Elks Club is a predominantly rectangular building, standing four stories tall on a raised basement and concrete foundation. It was designed by Milwaukee-based architect Robert A. Messmer in the Georgian Revival style. The flat roof is not visible from the street because of a shallow parapet. The upper floors are U-shaped in plan and there is an addition to the southwest corner constructed between 1934 and 1945. The primary, or east-facing, elevation is set back approximately twenty feet from Eighth Avenue and is distinguished by a large, columned entry portico. The building exhibits a number of characteristics of the early-twentieth century Georgian Revival style including a tripartite composition, symmetrical walls of red brick, a flat roof, a raised entrance, and abundant use of

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Classical-inspired ornamentation including brick-quoins, limestone columns, window keystones, a water table, and molded belt courses above the first and third stories.

East (Front) Facade

The primary facade, like the remainder of the building, has a tripartite composition with a single-story base, a two-story middle section, and a fourth floor at the top; each part is separated by limestone banding and/or a cornice. The basement is separated from the upper four stories by a limestone water table. A molded belt course is located at the top of the first story, and a second belt course separates the third and fourth stories.

A three-story entrance portico extends across the central seven bays of the nine-bay primary elevation, which are slightly recessed from the matching end bays. These two bays have three centrally-placed, six-over-six light, double-hung wood windows on the first through fourth floors. The second and third story windows are inset slightly into the wall and capped with a decorative flat arch and limestone keystone. One third-floor window on the southern bay has been replaced with a metal vent. The basement windows on this elevation, like on other elevations of this building, have been infilled with glass block or masonry within the original openings.

Two sets of two-tired, limestone stairs with matching red brick cheek walls capped with simple limestone slabs located at either end of the portico allow access to the first-story porch in the central section of the building. Square brick piers separate the seven bays of the portico. The first and seventh bays hold entrance doors covered with tarpaper. The remaining central bays each have paired, six-over-six, double-hung windows. The wide portico floor is limestone and sits at the same height as the water table running around the building. Each window on the portico rests on a simple limestone still. Every fourth row of bricks on the piers is recessed creating an elegant pattern that mimics the quoins.

The upper section of the portico is a two-story colonnade with eight limestone Tuscan columns framing seven, double-height, round-arched openings. The central opening holds an eight-light double door. Above the door, and below the original arched fanlight, the six-light window has been in-filled with a modern ventilation unit. The remaining six bays have the original wood, six-over-six, double-hung windows with fanlight. Each window sits on a limestone sill and has a decorative limestone keystone.

The transition from the projecting entrance portico to the flanking bays is seamless. Here, the water table becomes the first floor porch of the portico. The second story belt course becomes the platform on which the columns rest. The architrave continues from the portico onto the flanking bays, as does the molded cornice, becoming the belt course between the third and fourth stories. The fourth story holds paired windows in the central seven bays. On each of the end bays, the fourth story has three, double-hung, six-over-six light, windows aligned with the similar windows on the floors below. A

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molded limestone belt course demarcates the division of the top story from the parapet, which includes a soldier course of brick and is capped by simple limestone copping. Also visible on the elevation are the paired windows of the small one-story projection on the southern side of the building.

North (Side) Façade

The building's north facade is composed of four regularly-fenestrated bays. The dominant element on this elevation is the three-story entrance pavilion that projects from the second bay. The entrance bay holds a double door, now boarded up, three steps above ground level. Two small fixed arched windows flank this door. Above the door and windows are the remnants of an iron canopy and supporting chains which originally sheltered the entrance. The second and third stories of the projecting bay hold a large opening with two sets of grouped, six-over-six and nine-over-nine, double-hung windows divided by spandrels. The entrance pavilion is topped with a limestone cornice and short limestone parapet. Above the entrance pavilion are paired six-over-six, double-hung wood windows at the fourth story. The first and third bays of the elevation each hold three openings at the basement level with non-historic glass block infill, three nine-over-nine double-hung wood windows on the first story and three six-over-six, double-hung wood windows on the second, third, and fourth stories. All limestone banding, the projecting cornice above the third floor, and the plain parapet continue along this façade. The fourth bay is slightly recessed and has single, six-over-six, double-hung windows at all four stories.

West (Rear) Facade

The building's west facade is slightly irregular in massing and fenestration. The second through fourth story center bays are recessed one structural bay, creating the U-shaped floor plan. The fourth story fenestration has paired four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows in the central bays and six-over-six, double-hung, wood windows in the projecting bays, however, the second and third stories house double-height round-arched windows in the central bays. These openings are boarded up with plywood; however the original wood windows are extant beneath the sheathing. The end bays are each fenestrated by three, nine-over-nine, double-hung, wood windows at the first story, and three slightly-inset six-over-six, double-hung, wood windows at the second and third stories. The limestone trim from the primary and secondary facades continue around the end bays. The parapet over the central recessed bays and the fourth-story windows rest on a plain limestone string course. A two-part, projecting, one-story-over a full raised basement level, flat-roofed addition, dating to the 1930s, completes this elevation. The first part fills the U-shaped recess and extends past the southwest corner of the building. This portion is seven bays wide with a set of two boarded windows per bay along the raised basement level; original windows remain behind the non-historic plywood. Along the first floor level, four of the bays feature groups of three, four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows; these bays are separated by non-fenestrated brick bays. Each bay at the first floor is separated by a shallow projecting brick pier with a limestone cap, which support projecting decorative exposed rafter tails. The second part extends from the first on the southernmost end and wraps around the south side of the

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Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

building. The basement walls rest on a partially exposed concrete foundation and are capped by a limestone water table. There is one boarded opening on the west elevation and three windows on the south elevation with non-historic glass block infill. The walls of the first floor feature rusticated brickwork with three raised courses and one recessed course. All elevations are minimally fenestrated with one, nine-over-nine, double-hung window and a non-historic steel door at the south end of the west elevation, and two similar windows on the south elevation. The addition is capped by a decorative limestone cap.

South (Side) Facade

The south facade, like the north, is divided into four bays. The first, second, and fourth bays each hold a single, six-over-six, double-hung wood windows on each floor, while the third bay has five, six-over-six, double-hung wood windows grouped together. The typical brick detailing and limestone trim continue from the east facade. The third bay also holds a one-story, flat-roofed projecting bay with a rounded, divided-light window. Historically the fenestration in the bay matched the rest of the building, and it is believed that the bay window was added during the 1930s as well. The 1930s addition, described previously, continues from the southeastern corner of the building around to the west side of the projection. The south elevation features two windows on the first floor level as previously described.

Interior

A 2011 fire damaged portions of the interior of the Elks Club. These damaged portions are primarily the original flooring of the second floor ballroom and the multiple themed first-floor dining rooms. Although fire-damaged, the Kenosha Elks Club's original spatial layout – with dining rooms and club rooms, a large second floor ballroom, and typical office spaces and sleeping quarters on the upper floors – remains intact.

Basement

The basement of the Elks Club is accessed from an interior staircase on the north side of the building, just inside the entrance, as well from an interior staircase in the south wing. Both the north and the south wings of the basement consist primarily of utility and storage rooms with concrete or plaster walls and exposed ceilings. The central portion of the building is divided into three distinct parts. The western third of the basement of the western addition, between the north and south wings, is the pool. The pool is clad in mosaic tile and the walls of the pool room are clad in two-toned square blue tile set in a vertical strip pattern. The ceiling is crossed by several deep beams, which are covered in an irregular plaster finish. The central third consists of auxiliary pool rooms including the original bath, shower, and locker facilities. The eastern-most third is separated from the pool spaces by a long bisecting central hallway, and features a large ballroom that has a dropped ceiling and a dividing row of columns; most finishes are severely damaged or missing.

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Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

First Floor

Upon entering the Elks Club building from the northern entrance there is a small vestibule, which opens onto the landing of the main staircase. The stairs lead down to the basement and up to the floors above. Beyond the entrance stair is a large central room with a beamed plaster ceiling and paneled walls. Doorways lead from this room into other spaces. To the west is a hallway that connects to the main dining room in the northwest corner of the building, and to a modern lounge and bar on the west side of the building. The lounge and bar has all non-historic finishes including dropped ceilings and modern bar. There is a small bathroom at the south end of the room. To the east of the central room is a vestibule and a main entrance on the east elevation. To the south of the central room is a second large lounge room, which was remodeled sometime during the mid-twentieth century into a lounge space with wood-veneered walls and a plastered chimney with a simple black fireplace surround. Part of the northwest corner of this room was partitioned and made into a separate room. Portions of the original beamed plaster ceiling are visible above a dropped ceiling. At the south end of this room is a double doorway that leads to an east-west corridor and connects to a large room in the southeast corner with a curving bay, and to kitchen rooms in the southwest corner. Most rooms have plaster walls, plain wood trim, and dropped ceilings in varying conditions. A large ballroom takes up the western third of the floor in the western addition. While there is circulation throughout the first floor, there is no central corridor. Many of the larger central lounges double as hallways. Just south of the first-floor ballroom is a second set of stairs that lead to the basement, as well as to the floors above. There was extensive fire and water damage on this floor in 2011; however, sufficient remnants exist to discern wall coverings and floor materials throughout the floor. Additionally, there are numerous decorative elements - such as interior door and window trim, tile, and crown molding, - still in-situ, making it possible to replicate or recreate many of the interior finishes if desired.

Second Floor

The primary north staircase opens into a main hall as it reaches the second floor. To the east and west of the stairs are small rooms and bathrooms that compose the north wing of the building. Directly across from the stairs are three large doorways that lead into the grand ballroom. This ballroom is approximately 74 feet long, 55 feet wide, and is a two-story space. The original arched windows, seen on the east and west exteriors, line the length of the room. There are five doorways in both the north and the south walls. At the north end of the ballroom, the three central doorways, each holding double, one-over-one, flat-panel wood doors, lead to the hall and the main stair. The flanking smaller doors lead to the auxiliary spaces in that wing. The southern doorways each hold a double door as well. With the exception of the easternmost door, which leads to a hallway, stairs and pantries, these doors all lead to the lounge. The lounge is a large space that takes up two-thirds of the southern wing, at the center of which sits an expansive bar. While the second floor suffered significant damage during the fire, there are still numerous decorative details that may be found. Plaster pilasters with simple raised molding forming a panel can be seen between each doorway. In addition, there are plaster medallions

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that depict a framed basket of flowers decorating the walls between most windows; there is also extant plaster crown molding.

Third Floor

The third floor is divided by the central second floor ballroom into north and south wings, which are accessed by separate stairs. The north wing consists of a single space with two smaller closet rooms. The south wall of the space has a series of openings that look out onto the ballroom below; original wood balustrades are damaged and/or missing. The walls appear to have been covered with wallpaper, and there is evidence of a drop ceiling in this area. The south wing of the third floor is accessed by a main stair at its western end. The stair landing opens into a hallway that leads to two office spaces and two bathrooms in the southwest corner of the floor. A second hallway leads from the first hallway and runs east to a large, faux-wood paneled room in the southeast corner with a dropped ceiling. To the north of this room is a narrow space containing air handling equipment and ductwork; this space was originally part of the large southeast room and features infilled opening along its north wall that historically looked out onto the ballroom below.

Fourth Floor

The fourth floor of the building houses the sleeping quarters for visiting Elks members. There are 24 rooms, most with a private bath, around a double-loaded, central corridor that bisects the floor from north to south. Large skylights provide natural lighting for the circulation spaces. The corridor and rooms are minimally decorated but the original, single, flat-panel, wood doors with transoms above remain. The corridor chair rail is still mostly intact on the heavily damaged plaster walls. Like the rest of the building the original wood window sashes, trim, and surrounds may still be seen. Floors in both the corridor and the rooms are hardwood, tongue and groove with a dark stain. Most ceilings are plaster or have a layer of drywall or acoustic tiles applied over the original plaster.

Integrity

The Kenosha Elks Club has a high degree of integrity despite the extensive damage of the 2011 fire. The exterior is still entirely intact. Many of the building's original wood windows remain, though the majority is in poor condition or are only fragments of original windows. In locations where the original door or window has been lost, the opening remains intact.

Overall, exterior finishes and cladding remain largely intact with only limited changes made after additions were completed in the 1930s. The two 1930s additions at the rear of the building were completed within the building's period of significance and are in keeping with the building's style. They were completed using red brick and limestone trim that matches the original building. Visually, the additions, especially the center rear porch, read as a single building. These significant spaces were designed for the Kenosha Elks club as needed extensions of club space. The center porch addition

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Kenosha Elks Club
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included a pool below and additional dining and/or event space on the first floor, while the southwestern addition provided expanded kitchen facilities to serve club dining spaces and events.

On the interior, the spatial layout remains the same as during the period of significance and many of the original details may still be seen throughout the building. The primary social spaces remain remarkably intact, most notably the second floor ballroom and lounge area, despite the damage to the finishes.

The 2011 fire and subsequent water damage from extinguishing the blaze has caused significant loss of finishes and extensive deterioration within the building on all floors, but especially on the first floor. The basement's labyrinth of small rooms and corridors remains intact in layout, but finishes, many of which had been replaced over time, are severely deteriorated due to water damage. The first floor retains many decorative finishes including trim and plaster details; enough of these finishes remain for replication of missing elements if necessary. The second floor and ballroom have limited fire damage, but significant water damage. Many smaller rooms on either side of the ballroom remain largely intact. The grand ballroom retains plaster finishes, but the wood floor is significantly damaged. On the third floor of the wings flanking the grand ballroom, more decorative finishes remain in the south wing than in the north wing. The fourth floor retains its room layout and most of its finishes.

Additional damage has occurred throughout the building, following the fire, due to water infiltration and vandalism.

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Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Summary

The Kenosha Elks Club in Kenosha, Wisconsin, is locally significant under National Register Criterion A, Social History, for its associations with “events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history,” namely as the home of Kenosha’s Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks for nearly eight decades. The building is also locally significant under Criterion C, Architecture, as a significant Kenosha example of the Georgian Revival style. Dedicated in 1919, the Kenosha Elks Club remains one of the city’s largest institutional buildings and served as a hub of Kenosha civic and social life until the building’s closure in the 1990s.

The Kenosha Elks Club’s period of significance spans from 1919, the building’s year of completion, to 1967 the fifty year cut-off for National Register nominations.

General History of Kenosha

In 1850 the Village of Southport, having been established some 17 years earlier, was incorporated as the City of Kenosha, Wisconsin. The population at the time was roughly 3,500. Tucked into the southeastern corner of the state of Wisconsin, Kenosha’s access to Lake Michigan from the harbor as well as its relative closeness to both Chicago and Milwaukee aided in the city’s success. The period of American industrialization had a significant impact on Kenosha. Its proximity to the rail lines connecting Chicago and Milwaukee, as well as those running to Green Bay, were integral to developing Kenosha’s role in the manufacturing industry beginning in 1911. Additionally, the city became the hub of manufacturing thanks in part to the large number of immigrants that settled in the area. The production of wagons, leather goods, brass furniture, and eventually automobiles became the mainstay of economic activity in Kenosha throughout the twentieth century. Kenosha saw the second highest factory gain in the state of Wisconsin in the early-twentieth century, surpassed only by Superior.

The twentieth century was also a time of increased civic engagement on the part of local businessmen. With the staggering increase of the urban population, born from the growth in manufacturing, came the increase of unrest among the working-class inhabitants of cities. In response to the unrest, urban planners, architects, and city officials adopted the philosophy that civic and moral virtue could be engendered in a population through the beautification of the city. This philosophy flourished in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, most notably in Chicago’s “White City” at the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893. This “City Beautiful Movement” had a lasting effect on the City of Kenosha. In 1900, Daniel Burnham designed the Gilbert M. Simmons Library, an imposing Neoclassical Revival-style building set within a landscape designed by Ossian Cole Simonds. Library

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Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Park, as it was later known, opened in 1900 and became the center of civic life in Kenosha. By 1905 the resounding success of Library Park, along with the increasing popularity of the City Beautiful Movement, lead civic leaders in Kenosha to encourage city officials to make Kenosha a “Beautiful Town.” In 1908 the city of Kenosha erected the Neoclassical Post Office on the southeast corner of 57th Street and 8th Avenue, across the street from the future site of the Elks Club. Elks members, who tended to be prominent citizens, were undoubtedly aware of the enthusiasm surrounding these new forms of civic engagement and the interest in creating a civic center within the city.

In anticipation of the construction the new Elks Club, a building site just north of the celebrated Library Square was chosen by the membership for its proximity to the heart of Kenosha’s expanding downtown. In response to the city’s explosive economic growth, which resulted in the near doubling of its population between 1910 and 1920, Kenosha’s planning department engaged Harland Bartholomew to prepare a comprehensive city plan. The final plan was presented to the city in 1925, but construction on the civic center had already begun. The location of the new Kenosha Elks Club put its members at the center of the city’s downtown - and of Kenosha’s booming prosperity.

History of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has as its origins a small group of actors, singers, musicians, and artists known as the “Jolly Corks.” In November of 1867, Charles Algernon Sidney Vivian with roughly 14 other gentleman, found themselves at a boarding house at 188 Elm Street in New York. The street on which the boarding house sat has since been renamed Elk Street in tribute to the first Elks lodge, despite the fact that the Elks never formally met there. The meetings soon moved to 17 Delancey Street, because the revelry of the group began to disrupt other tenants of the boarding house. It was here in December of 1867 that one member of the group suggested that the “Jolly Corks” become a “protective and benevolent organization.”

At a meeting held on February 2nd, 1868, and presided over by Vivian, there was an official motion to organize as a lodge in keeping with benevolent and fraternal precedents. There was much discussion of the name of the organization. Vivian, thinking of English organizations, suggested using the name Buffalos. However, a majority (the vote was 8 to 7) wanted a distinctly American name and preferred the Elks. At its inception, there were 15 original members of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (BPOE). On May 17th, the official ritual was adopted and the first election of officers completed. George W. Thompson was named as the first ‘Right Honorable Primo and Exalted Ruler’ (Vivian was out of town on that date). The group continued to meet at the Delancey Street address for roughly a month after the ritual was established. However, the membership grew rapidly and necessitated a transition to larger quarters at Military Hall, located at 193 Bowery. The first charter of the Grand Lodge (New York Lodge 1) was dated February 2, 1871. When the first Lodge was organized, the

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Kenosha Elks Club
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first official records of membership were kept. From an initial drinking club of 15, the Elks had grown into a membership of 243 by 1871.

By the time the Elks in Kenosha started contemplating building a new facility in 1916, the total nationwide membership of the order was up to more than 453,000 and comprised of a network of 1,284 lodges nationwide. Throughout its history, the BPOE has been a community service-oriented organization committed to charity and patriotism. As one of the oldest and largest fraternal organizations in the country, the Elks have distributed more than \$3.6 billion in cash donations, goods, and services to the nation's youth, veterans, disadvantaged and handicapped, and to individuals and groups in support of patriotic and civic programs. Currently there are still 1,960 active BPOE Lodges in the United States, 32 of which are in Wisconsin.

History of Kenosha's Elks Lodge No. 750

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, local Kenosha Lodge No. 750, was founded in January of 1902. The group met in various buildings around town, and began planning in 1916 for the construction of a spacious new headquarters that could accommodate the organization's growing membership. "[W]e feel that the movement for this new club house is the biggest movement ever started by a fraternal organization in Kenosha," the local Elks' building committee chairman Judge Clifford E. Randall told the Kenosha Evening News in June of 1916. "We want the Elks to build a club house which is going to meet demands of a real city like Kenosha and if we are going to do this we want every man who is an Elk and a member of the Kenosha lodge to have a part in the plans." The site chosen had been the Pettit Malting Co. plant until 1914 when the building was destroyed by fire. Its proximity to the growing civic center made the property ideal for an active and engaged organization seeking to play a vital role in the community. Milwaukee-based architect and fellow Elk member, Robert A. Messmer was collectively "elected" architect by the Kenosha Elks. Messmer attended several planning sessions with local Elks members before completing his designs for a large and modern club by the close of 1916.

The construction of the Kenosha Elks Club took over a year to complete and cost \$230,000. At the time of completion it was the largest fraternal building in Kenosha. The building's official dedication on January 20, 1919 was a significant local event attended by approximately two hundred dignitaries and Elks members from across the Midwest. The *Kenosha Evening News* observed that "[e]very train into Kenosha... brought visitors for the dedicatory ceremonies and the clubhouse was the mecca for men who wear the Elks badge from many parts of Wisconsin and from distant states and cities." The dedication ceremony held in the Club's upstairs ballroom was led by the Elks' national executive, Grand Exalted Leader Bruce A. Campbell of East Saint Louis, Illinois, who declared that the Kenosha lodge had "built a towering monument to yourselves and your brothers" worthy of the Elks' "one

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Kenosha Elks Club
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hallowed purpose, the winning of the war for Liberty and Truth.” This was extremely fitting, as the opening of the Kenosha Elks Club occurred only two months after the armistice that ended World War I. The millions in funds raised by Elks in the previous years for Liberty Bonds, the Red Cross, the YMCA, and the Salvation Army cemented, he said, the Elks’ belief “in a flag, beautiful in itself, but more beautiful in that for which it stands, the spirit of Washington, of Lincoln, of [President Woodrow] Wilson, and of General [John J.] Pershing, himself a magnificent Elk, fighting to establish the principles of justice, fidelity and brotherhood in every country under heaven.”

The Elks’ virtues of brotherhood and patriotism were reflected in the Georgian Revival exterior of Robert A. Messmer’s design for the Kenosha Elks’ Club. Built in the late 1910s during one of the style’s many popular resurgences, Messmer’s Kenosha Elks Club borrowed compositional and material elements from eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Neoclassical-style European architecture and from the Federal-style architecture of America’s early republic period. The Kenosha Elks Club’s four-story massing of red brick with its projecting three-story, east portico and tall round-arched windows referenced the works of several prominent early American architects, including Charles Bulfinch’s design for Boston’s Massachusetts State House (completed 1798). Set back from Eighth Avenue and fronted by a generous lawn, the site of the new club included one concession to modern twentieth-century life – an automobile parking lot to the southwest of the building.

Anticipating future membership numbers far larger than the 1916 roster of five hundred, Robert A. Messmer’s design for the Kenosha Elks Club’s interior was an elegant response to the lodge’s many functional demands for a spacious new headquarters. The lower floors included a basement swimming pool and first floor club rooms, billiard rooms, dining rooms, and a large kitchen (additional bar and dining spaces were later added along the west and south elevations). A large event space (alternately used as a ballroom, a lodge hall, and a banquet and dance hall) occupied nearly the entire second and third floors. The tall, arched openings on the east wall of the space provided access to the east portico’s second-floor porch facing onto busy Eighth Avenue. The building’s top floor housed small club rooms and sleeping quarters for overnight guests.

When completed, the Kenosha Elks Club was one of city’s largest institutional buildings, and until the 1980s, remained a hub of Kenosha civic and social life. Members and local students regularly used the Club’s basement swimming pool. Every week, hundreds of members and guests would visit the Club’s restaurant and bar. The second floor ballroom regularly hosted lodge meetings as well as dances, banquets, fundraisers, and other special events attended by up to 1,100 guests. Bands and entertainers from across the country performed at the Kenosha Elks Club, including the singer Mel Torme, who visited the Elks Club in the 1970s. While some local applicants were at first excluded from membership based on race and religion, the Kenosha Elks ended these discriminatory policies in the

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Kenosha Elks Club
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1960s. The building was designated a local historic structure by the Kenosha Historical Preservation Commission in 1979.

With membership dwindling in the 1980s, the local Elks lodge put their downtown Kenosha headquarters up for sale in November 1989 with plans to build a smaller clubhouse in the western part of the city. The club soon filed for bankruptcy protection, and the Kenosha Elks Club officially closed in 1990. The building was later sold to private owners who renamed it the Heritage House Inn and used the facility as an event space. The Heritage House Inn closed in the late 1990s, and the building became vacant. An attempt at a second revival came in the early 2000s when the building was used for a short time as a banquet facility until it once again fell into disuse. In October of 2011, a fire caused further damage to the building. The City of Kenosha issued a raze order in December of 2011, though the city's Historic Preservation Committee voted to defer the raze order for 120 days. Since then, efforts to find a developer interested in taking on the project have been a primary goal of city officials, citizens, and the "Preserve the Elks" group.

Fraternal Organizations in Kenosha

The Kenosha lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (BPOE, or more simply referred to as the "Elks") was one of Kenosha's oldest fraternal organizations. Along with other local fraternal groups (including the Freemasons, the Order of the Knights of Pythias, the Modern Woodmen, and the Fraternal Order of Eagles), the Elks played a large role in the social and economic development of the city. In its early years, the Kenosha Elks counted among its exclusively white male members some of the city's leading businessmen, who regularly gathered to organize local social events and fundraising for philanthropic efforts. Membership in fraternal organizations was usually a sign of high social and economic status, and the personal associations formed among the Kenosha Elks often led to influential local commercial affiliations as well.

Many of Kenosha's large fraternal organizations purchased and sometimes built dedicated meeting halls, recreational facilities, club houses, or other fraternal buildings within the city's downtown commercial district. These buildings often displayed elaborate architectural designs, including decorative motifs and signage that celebrated the organization. These organizational facilities were fully funded by membership dues and often contained small lodge halls, offices, libraries, classrooms for small assemblies, and ballrooms, auditoriums, gymnasiums, bars, and dining rooms for large public events. Kenosha's surviving fraternal halls include:

- Kenosha Elks Club at 5706 Eighth Avenue was completed in 1919, and designed by architect Robert A. Messmer.

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Section 8 Page 6

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

- Odd Fellows Salem Lodge at Fox River Road and 114th Street was built in 1878. This lodge occupied the upper floor of a two-story brick, gable front building with a ground floor storefront. Although the building has changed uses, a stone plaque set in the cream brick gable identifies the building's former lodge ties.
- Masonic Temple at 807 61st Street was completed in 1924. (Listed in the National Register #88002657). Architect Richard Schmid designed this three-story, limestone-clad Classical Revival style lodge. The building remains in use and has had few alterations.
- Old Moose Lodge at 1010 56th Street was completed in 1927. (Listed in the National Register #89000069) architect Joseph Lindl designed the Neo Classical style three-story building with ground floor retail. The building is occupied and has had little alteration, except for the replacement of windows. This building is three blocks from the subject building.
- Fraternal Order of Eagles Club at 302 58th Street was built in 1928 and designed by architect Joseph Lindl in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style. The Order continues to occupy and maintain the building.
- Knights of Pythias Hall at 702 57th Street was completed in 1929 in the Moderne style. The two-story building fronts on two streets and serves as a commercial building.

Of the fraternal organizations in Kenosha during the early-twentieth century, the Elks in particular took advantage of the changing urban landscape of Kenosha. At its completion in 1919, the Kenosha Elks Club was among the earliest and largest fraternal meeting halls in Kenosha. The building's design and setting with a great lawn and flanking trees is unique among fraternal buildings, which tended to be built either as attached buildings within a commercial district or as detached club buildings. Only the Masonic Temple has a form and setting that is similar to the Elks Club. Despite recent vacancy, the Elks Club remains among the most intact of Kenosha's surviving fraternal organization headquarters.

Georgian Revival Style Architecture

The Kenosha Elks Club is locally significant under National Register Criterion C as an excellent, intact example of early twentieth-century Georgian Revival-style architecture. The Georgian Revival style is one of a number of closely-related historic revival architectural styles that developed in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as a response to renewed interest in both ancient and Renaissance Classical design and in the early architectural materials and forms of colonial America and the early republic.

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Kenosha Elks Club
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The display of early American furniture and objects and historically-accurate, colonial-style buildings at Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition of 1876 ignited public curiosity in the country's early history and revealed to many visitors for the first time their own country's artistic and architectural heritage. The early American-inspired Georgian, or Colonial, Revival style soon gained traction in post-Civil War America as a building aesthetic both for residential design and for large public projects. The Georgian Revival style increased in popularity in the first decade of the twentieth century with McKim, Mead, & White's renovation of the White House in 1902, and then resurged again in the 1910s through World War I and the 1920s. The late 1920s restoration of Williamsburg, Virginia, by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and the architects led by William Graves Perry of Perry, Shaw, & Hepburn helped sustain the style through the 1940s, making the Georgian Revival a popular, conservative, and even patriotic aesthetic throughout the first half of the twentieth century, deemed universally appropriate for almost any building type or size.

The Kenosha Elks Club is the largest and most intact of the city's Georgian Revival style buildings. Though many of Kenosha's larger and grander public buildings display similar Classically-inspired massing and ornamentation, the Kenosha Elks Club is distinct in its eighteenth-century English- and American-inspired red brick cladding and simple and elegant use of Classical limestone decorative elements.

There are numerous residential examples of the Georgian Revival style in Kenosha. Houses built across the city employ the style and are easily identified by their symmetry, red brick, central pedimented doorways, and other references to the architecture of Classical Greece and Rome. Two non-residential buildings include:

- St. Mary's Catholic Church at 7300 39th Avenue, which was built in 1930 and designed by Lacroix & Memler. The building features brick quoins, a two-story pedimented portico, and an octagonal steeple set on a square base with decorative urns.
- The White Flash Gas Station at the corner of 60th Street and 22nd Avenue was built around 1920 and features large store windows and pilasters at the building's corners. It is currently a commercial or office space.

There are few other identified non-residential, Georgian Revival buildings in Kenosha, and there are no extant fraternal organizations or lodges executed in the style in Kenosha. The Kenosha Elks Club is a fine example of a style that not widely used outside of the designs for private residences.

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Kenosha Elks Club
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Architect Robert A. Messmer

Robert A. Messmer (1870-1943), the Milwaukee-based architect of the Kenosha Elks Club, was best-known for his large scale public institutional designs of the 1910s through 1930s. Messmer trained as a designer under the guidance of his father, the prominent Milwaukee architect Henry Messmer (1839-1899). Born in Rheinbeck, Switzerland, the elder Messmer immigrated to the United States in 1866, living in Madison, Wisconsin, and Chicago, Illinois, before settling with his wife Barbara and infant son Robert in Milwaukee in 1871. Henry Messmer was well-known for his designs for large brewery buildings, churches, and commercial and residential structures. Robert Messmer began his own architectural career as an apprentice in his father's firm, which came to be known as H. Messmer & Son. After Henry Messmer's death in 1899, Robert Messmer took charge of the firm, doing business with his younger brother John (1884-1971) as R.A. Messmer & Brother.

Robert A. Messmer's first widely-publicized work was the State of Wisconsin Building, a two-story Beaux Arts Classical Revival Style exhibition structure built in San Francisco for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition; Messmer's Wisconsin Building was one of the few structures to be retained after the Exposition's close and was planned to be relocated to Marin County to serve as a new facility for the Santa Venetia Club. After returning from San Francisco, Messmer received commissions from the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks for new Elks Clubs in Grand Rapids, Michigan (1915, condition unknown), in Kenosha (completed 1919, extant), and in Milwaukee (1920s, demolished).

The 1920s brought Messmer his largest and best-known Wisconsin commissions including numerous public school projects in West Allis, Hartford, Ripon, Shawano, Antigo, Park Falls, and Kewaunee; a master plan and building designs for Racine's Southern Colony for the Developmentally Disabled (originally the Southern Home for Feeble Minded and Epileptics, 1920s, extant, NR #91001394); and the Administration Building and School for the Milwaukee County Home for Dependent Children School (1920s, both extant, NR #98001587 and NR #98001535). In addition to his involvement with the American Institute of Architects, Messmer was a member of numerous fraternal organizations, including the Elks, Freemasons, Knights of Pythias, Modern Woodmen of America, and Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

Conclusion

The Kenosha Elks Club is significant at the local level under Criterion A, Social History, for its association with the fraternal organization of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, as well as for being a social and cultural center within the community of Kenosha. The building was designed and built for the express purposes of its membership and played a significant role in the development

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Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

of the city of Kenosha. The building was not only the base for one of the largest charitable organizations in Kenosha; it also hosted countless other social and cultural functions, thereby making it an integral part of Kenosha's history for nearly eight decades.

The Kenosha Elks Club is also locally significant under Criterion C, Architecture, as one of the few and largest examples of a non-residential, Georgian Revival style building in Kenosha. It is also the oldest extant and one of the best preserved fraternal organization buildings in Kenosha.

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Section 9 Page 1

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

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Section 10 Page 1

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated parcel (12-223-31-466-001) is irregularly shaped. The corresponding legal description is as follows:

SE 1/4 SEC 31 T 2 R 23 BLK 40
COM AT A PT 84 FT E OF SW COR
OF BLK & 16.5 FT N OF THE S LN
TH N 82.5 FT E 44 FT N 99 FT TH
E 4.1 FT N 99 FT E TO NE COR OF
BLK S 280.5 FT W 195.5 FT TO POB

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property consists of the entire lot that has been historically associated with the property since the original date of construction.

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Section photos Page 1

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Photo Log

Name of Property: Kenosha Elks Club

City or Vicinity: Kenosha

County: Kenosha **State:** Wisconsin

Photographer: John Cramer

Date Photographed: September 8, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: Wisconsin Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office,
Madison, WI

- Photo 1 of 12:** South and east elevations looking northwest
- Photo 2 of 12:** North elevation looking south
- Photo 3 of 12:** North elevation window detail looking south
- Photo 4 of 12:** West elevation looking southeast
- Photo 5 of 12:** South elevation looking north
- Photo 6 of 12:** First floor corridor looking west
- Photo 7 of 12:** First floor lounge looking north
- Photo 8 of 12:** West stair at first floor
- Photo 9 of 12:** Second floor ballroom looking northeast
- Photo 10 of 12:** Second floor ballroom looking south
- Photo 11 of 12:** Fourth floor corridor looking north
- Photo 12 of 12:** Fourth floor typical room

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Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 1: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1918, showing revision from 1945-1949.

Figure 2: Aerial view of Kenosha, c.1925. The Kenosha Elks Club can be seen in the bottom right corner.

Figure 3: The Kenosha Elks Lodge at their 611 58th Street headquarters in 1908.

Figure 4: Eighth Avenue view looking southwest, c.1920.

Figure 5: Eighth Avenue view looking northwest, c.1940.

Figure 6: Eighth Avenue view looking northwest, c.1940.

Figure 7: 57th Street view looking southeast, c.1940.

Figure 8: Basement Plan

Figure 9: First Floor Plan

Figure 10: Second Floor Plan

Figure 11: Third Floor Plan (North and South Wings)

Figure 12: Fourth Floor Plan

Figures 13: Site Plan and Photo key

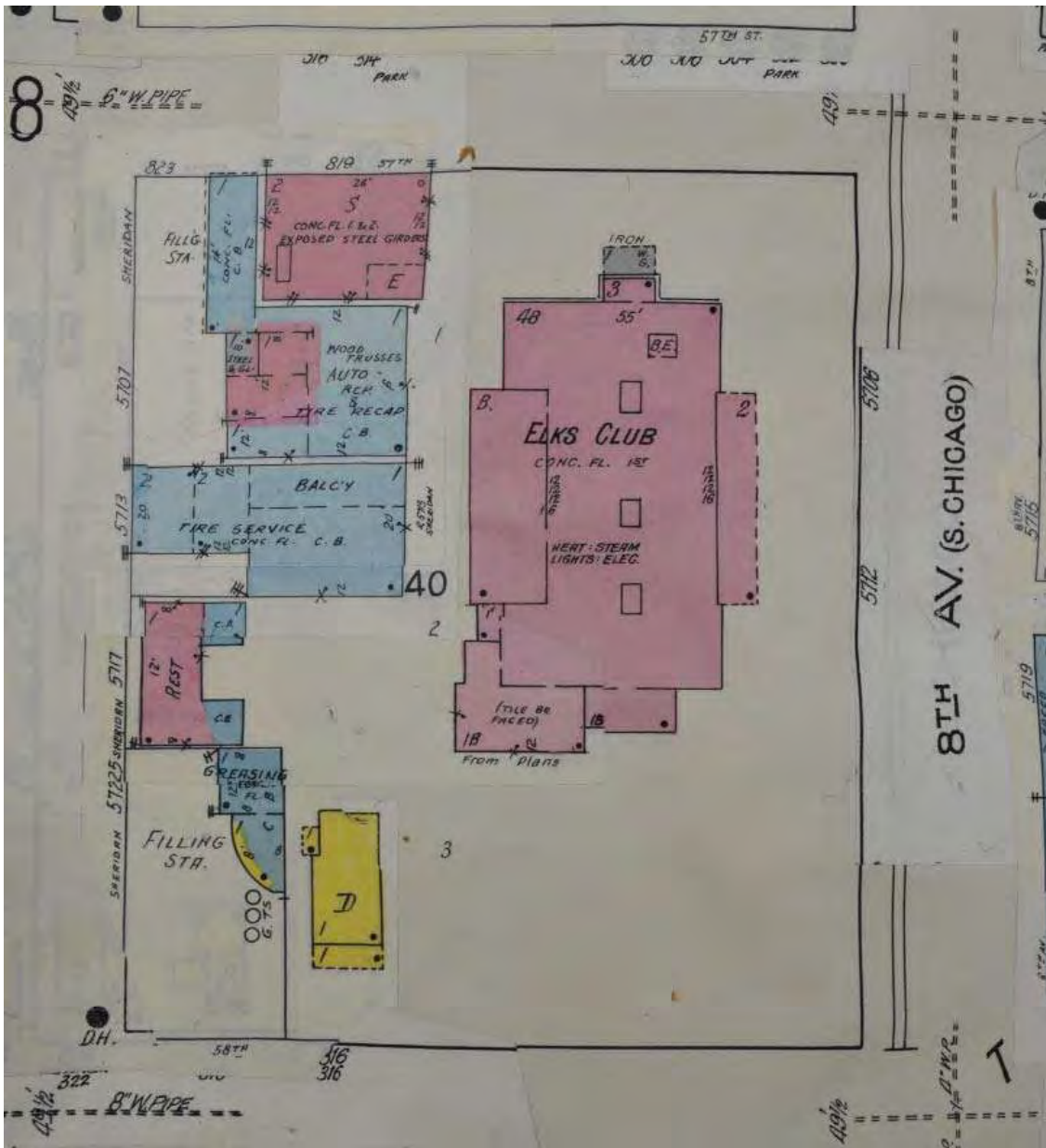
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Continuation Sheet

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Section figures Page 2

Figure 1: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1918, showing revision from 1945-1949.



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Section figures Page 3

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 2: Aerial view of Kenosha, c.1925. The Kenosha Elks Club can be seen in the bottom right corner.
Source: The State of Wisconsin Collection, University of Wisconsin Digital Collections



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Section figures Page 4

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 3: The Kenosha Elks Lodge at their 611 58th Street headquarters in 1908.
Source: The State of Wisconsin Collection, University of Wisconsin Digital Collections



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Section figures Page 5

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 4: Eighth Avenue view looking southwest, c.1920.
Source: Penny Postcards from Wisconsin, www.usgwarchives.net



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Section figures Page 6

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 5: Eighth Avenue view looking northwest, c.1940.
Source: The State of Wisconsin Collection, University of Wisconsin Digital Collections



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Kenosha Elks Club
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Figure 6: Eighth Avenue view looking northwest, c.1940.



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Section figures Page 8

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 7: 57th Street view looking southeast, c.1940.

Source: The State of Wisconsin Collection, University of Wisconsin Digital Collections



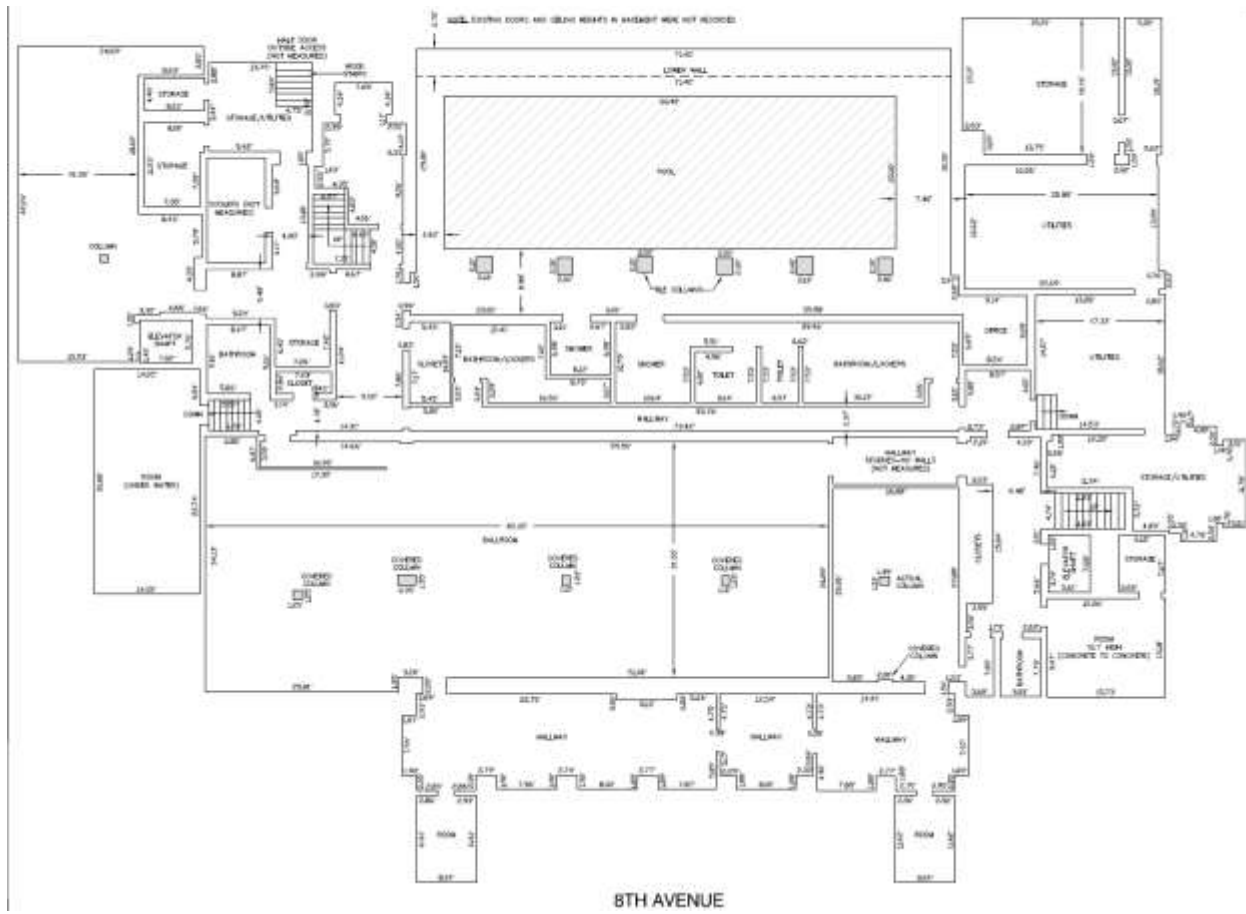
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Section figures Page 9

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 8: Basement Plan



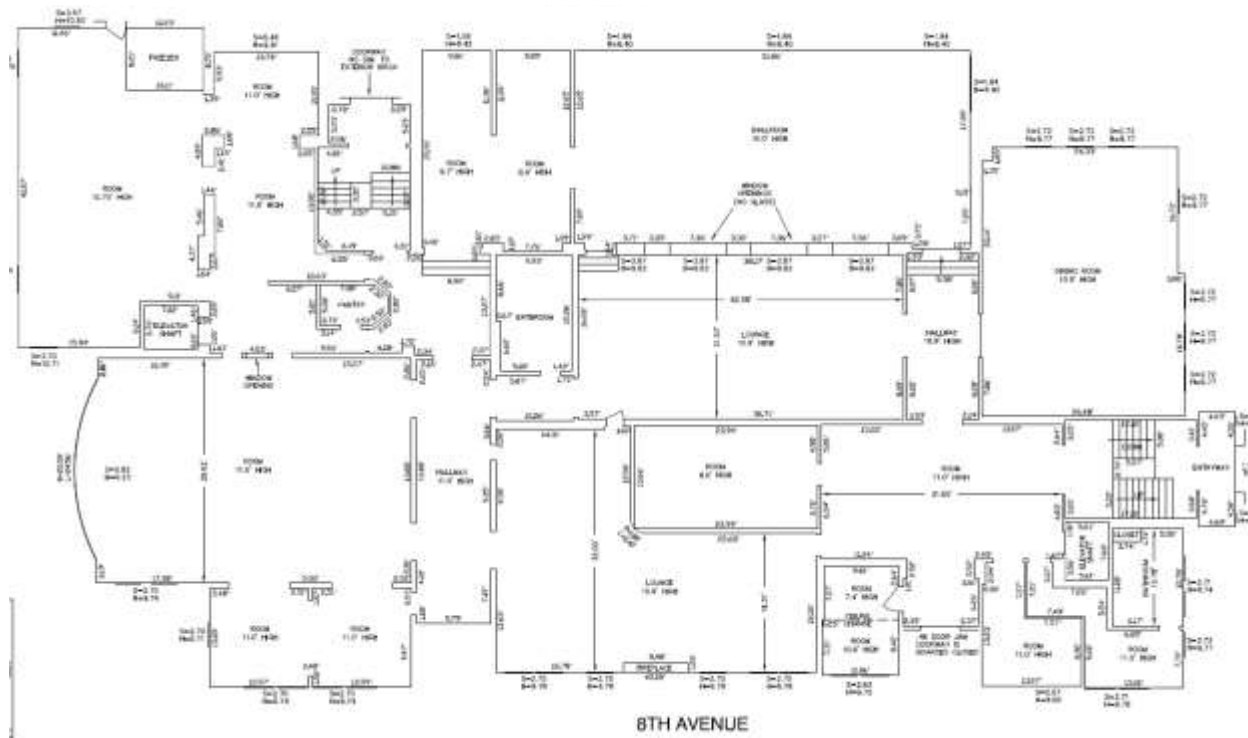
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**National Register of Historic Places
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Section figures Page 10

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 9: First Floor Plan



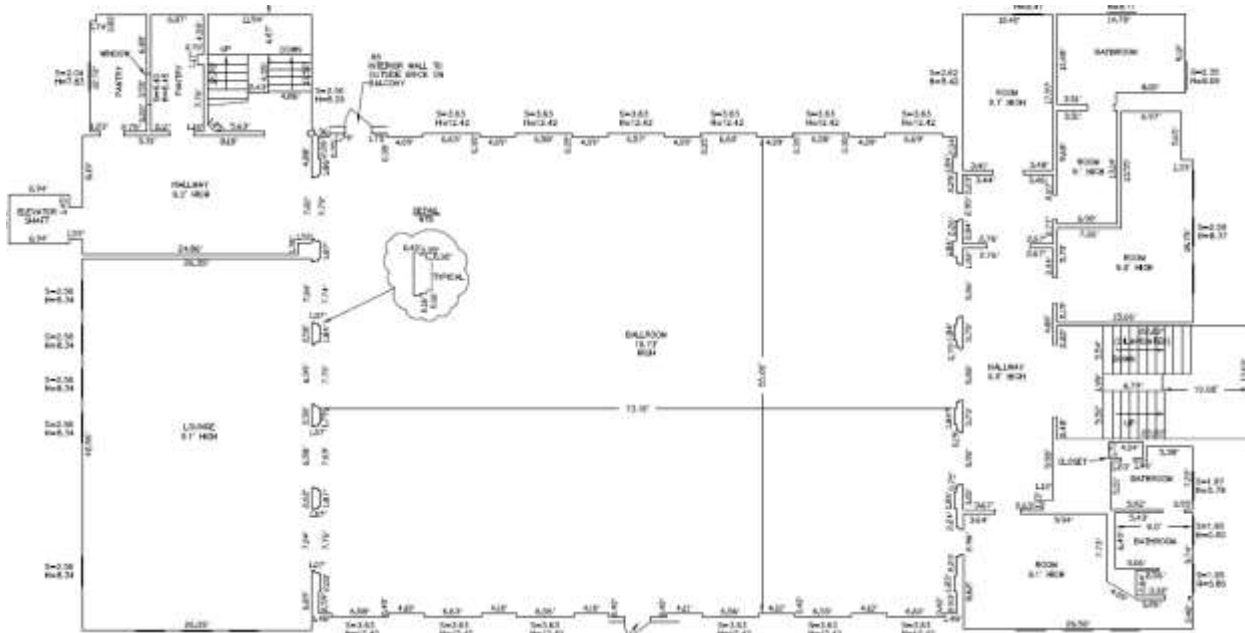
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Section figures Page 11

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 10: Second Floor Plan



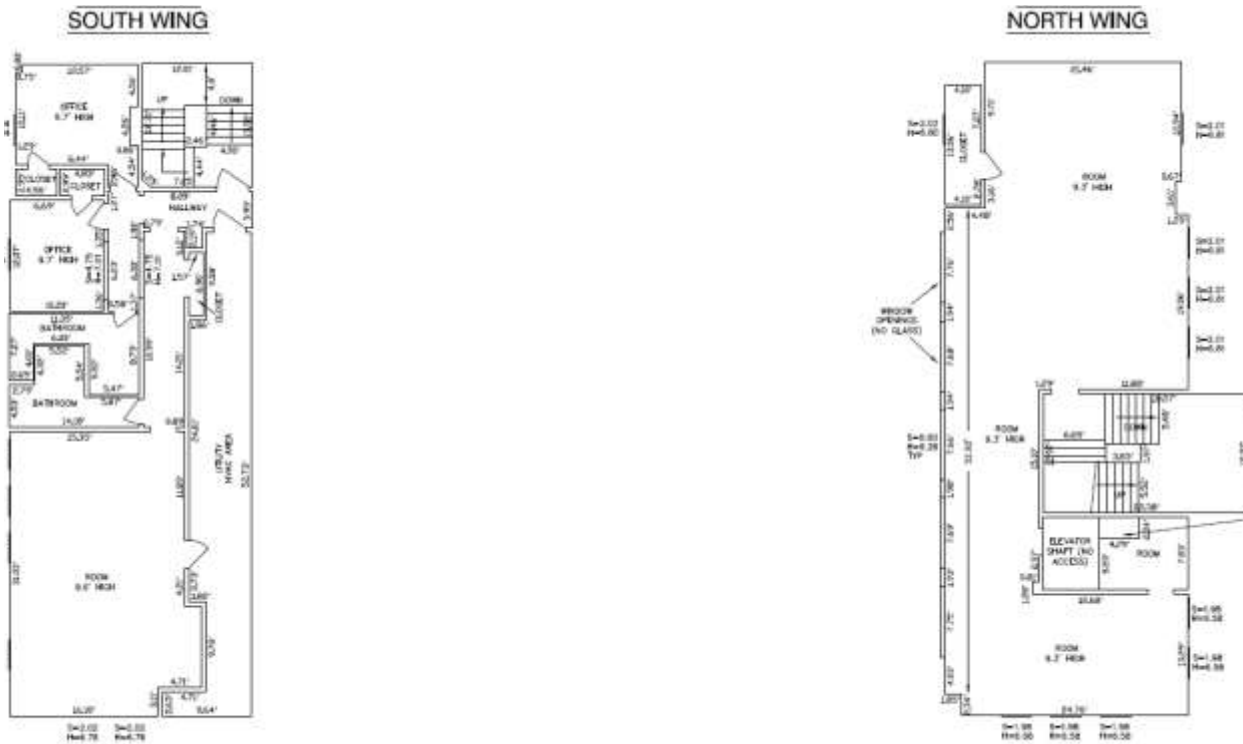
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Section figures Page 12

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 11: Third Floor Plan (North and South Wings)



8TH AVENUE

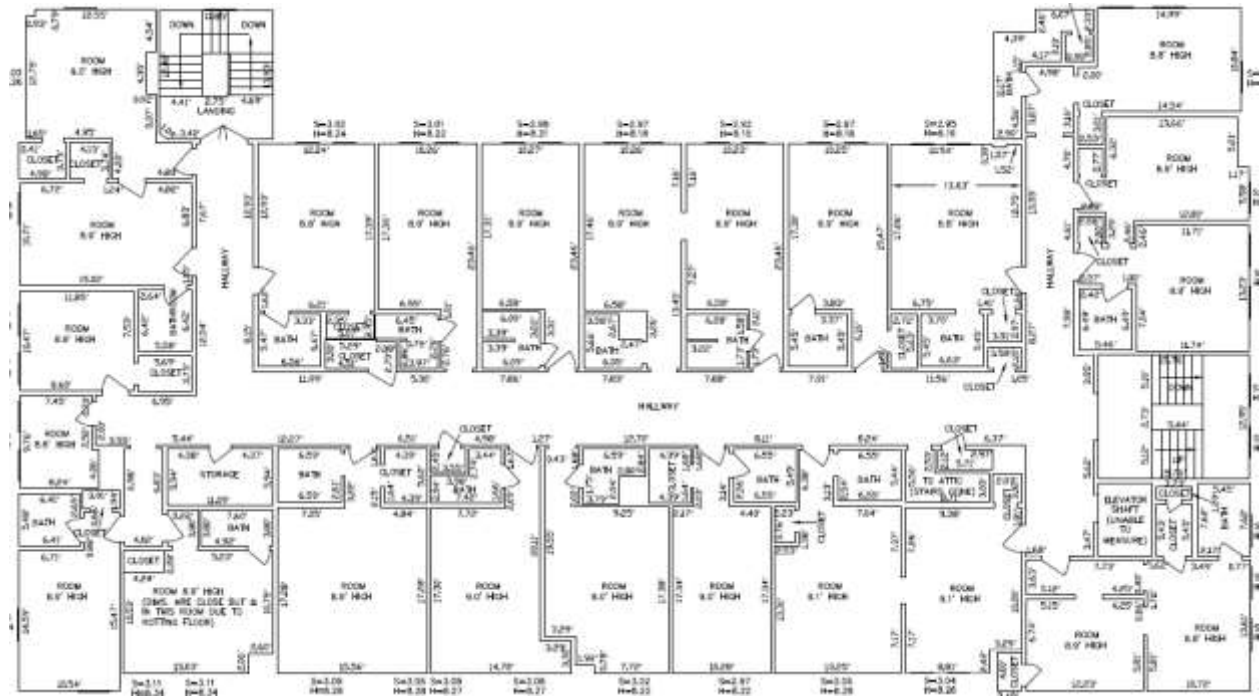
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Section figures Page 13

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 12: Fourth Floor Plan



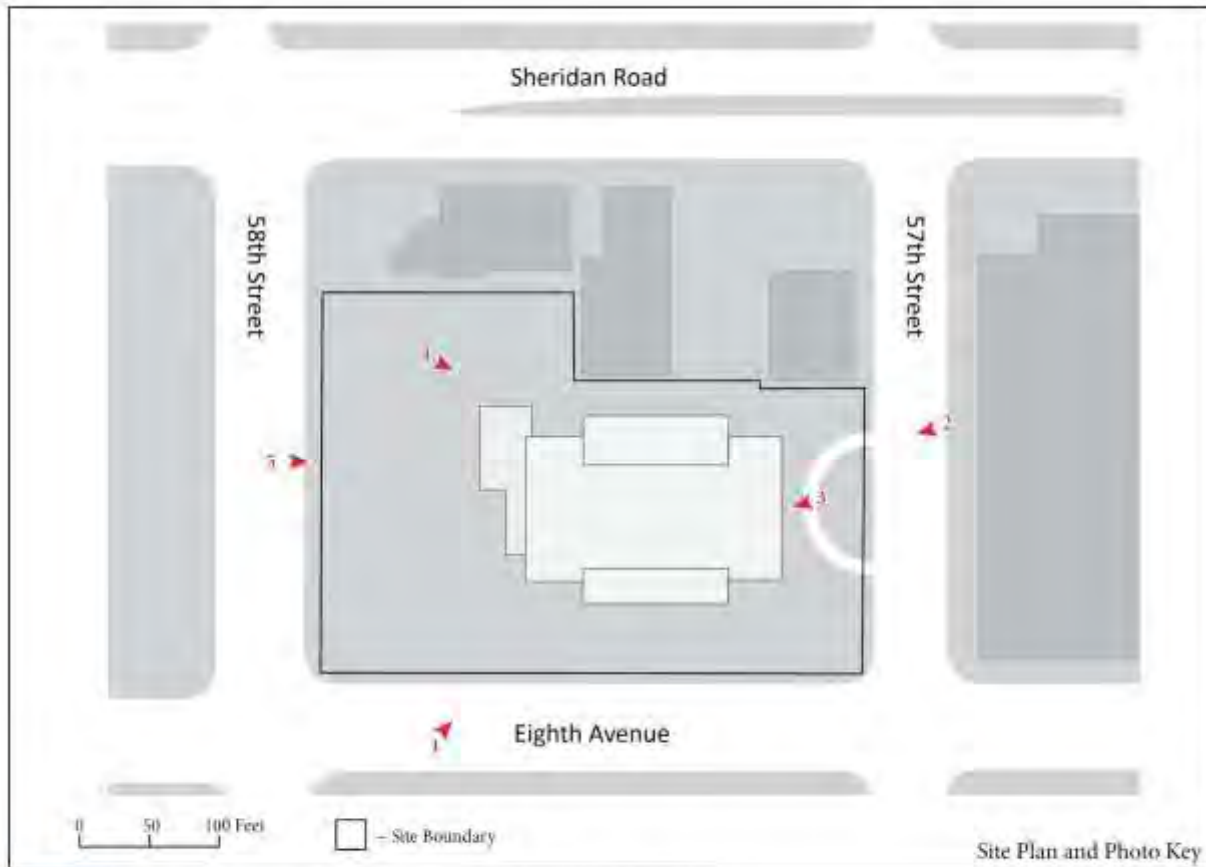
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Section figures Page 14

Kenosha Elks Club
Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Figure 13: Site plan and photo key



Kenosha Elks Club
5706 Eighth Avenue
Kenosha, Kenosha, Wisconsin

National Park Service
NR Photo Key



Kenosha Elks Club
 Kenosha, Kenosha County, WI
 16 T 42.583418 E -87.821151 N



NEW YORK
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INN























177
←
237
142
228
212

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 9/26/2017 Date of Pending List: 10/26/2017 Date of 16th Day: 11/13/2017 Date of 45th Day: 11/13/2017 Date of Weekly List: 11/16/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 11/13/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



TO: Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this Twenty-fifth day of September 2017, for the nomination of the Kenosha Elks Club to the National Register of Historic Places:

- 1 Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
- 1 CD with NRHP Nomination form PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination form
- 12 Photograph(s)
- 1 CD with image files
- 1 Map(s)
- 13 Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
- Piece(s) of correspondence
- Other:

COMMENTS:

- _____ Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed
- X This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- _____ The enclosed owner objection(s) do or do not constitute a majority of property owners
- _____ Other: