



# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Medford Elks Building is a restrained, but suitably monumental example of architecture in the tradition of Beaux Arts Classicism. Sited at the NE corner of Central Avenue and 5th Street, the three-story building is square in plan, with frontages of 85' on either street. The formally-organized street facades are nearly identical and were initially distinguished by central double piazzas with colossal columns of the Greek Corinthian order. The most distinctive feature of the exterior, however, is the bowed entrance bay and portico at the corner with colossal columns and shadow pilasters, bowed steps, and crowning wreath-framed clock.

The ground story--a high basement--is a continuation of a smooth finished, reinforced concrete foundation. The upper two stories are faced with grey pressed brick laid in common bond with white mortar. Also of brick, the attic parapet rises above a classical entablature which wraps around either street facade and the corner bow. Around 1949 the double piazza on the south (5th Street) facade was enclosed to accommodate post-war growth in membership and the resulting need for more floor space at the main story level.\* The exterior of the addition was faced with grey pressed brick identical to the brick used in the original structure. Less evocative of original treatment, however, are the addition's small square windows in the south wall which are unlike the generously proportioned openings of the main building. The latter range from French doors with multi-paned top lights to multi-paned double-hung sash.

The portico is reached by bowed concrete steps 25 feet wide. The portico's terrazzo floor bears the lodge's name and number. The bowed entrance is recessed behind a colossal column screen of Greek Corinthian columns and shadow pilasters which are flush with the outer wall plane of either street facade. Grilled railings are similar to the lower railings of the double piazzas. The metal ceiling of the portico is coffered. Centered above the portico, against the attic parapet, is a crested and wreath-framed clock.

Fenestration of the Elks Building is essentially regular. Double-hung, wooden window sashes are employed with variation. Main floor openings have eight-pane top lights. In the south facade, windows which light the interior of the main stairway are stacked, multiple fixed panes with side lights. French doors opening from the main floor onto the piazzas are also multi-paned and employ multi-paned transoms. The lintels and sills of each window are created with the same grey pressed brick used in the surrounding wall construction, but laid vertically.

The non-street facades, north and east, are finished in common red brick laid in common bond. The grey pressed brick and entablature of the two street elevations wrap around the outer corners of the building. The grey pressed brick is laid to simulate staggered quoins at the outer corners. Fenestration of the rear elevations is irregular and not meant to be viewed as part of the symmetrical organization of the facades.

Extending from the east side of the north elevation is an early addition to the main structure. Erected sometime during the 1920s, this 1½-story, poured reinforced concrete structure is L-shaped in plan and flat roofed. The base of the "L" is attached to the main structure and the rear wall is flush with the outer wall of the east elevation fronting the alley. The fenestration of this addition is compatible with that of the main building. A series of tall, round-arched openings with multi-paned double hung window sash give the suggestion of an arcade, but window membering has the feeling of the windows of the main block. This early addition--an expansion of the lodge's dining and kitchen facilities--is believed to have been designed by the main building's architect, Frank C. Clark.

\*The piazza was enclosed to create a members' lounge.

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Many of the original interior spaces of the Medford Elks Building remain unchanged or have minor, easily reversible alterations. At the entry, an oval-shaped vestibule with tile floor and marble wainscoting contains more Greek Corinthian columns. Unlike the exterior columns, however, these are produced in wood. Two wooden Corinthian columns flank the entry to the main stair hall. Wooden Corinthian pilasters are found on each interior side of the main entrance. The large double-doors leading to the main stair hall contain large beveled plate glass.

The main stair hall has an oak floor and a ceiling 13'5" in height. The main stairs, done in maple with turned balusters and paneled wood wainscoting, are brilliantly lit by the stacked, multi-paned windows in the south elevation. The stairs turn at a broad landing at the base of these windows and continue up to the third floor Lodge Room. The large clear-span room with maple floor and 18' high ceiling is intact, although, inside the grid of principal beams, the metal coffers of the ceiling have been covered with acoustic tile. The larger intersecting boxed beams are still exposed to view. The original ceiling lighting fixtures were removed when the acoustic tiles were applied, but have been recently found stored in the building's attic.

The Ladies' Parlor has been converted to office space for the lodge manager. The Billiard Room is essentially unchanged. Its boxed beams have been covered by an acoustic tile ceiling.

The Medford Elks are now involved in the rehabilitation of their building. They wish to refurbish the structure and restore what they can of the original design and details. The Elks have recently completed a major re-roofing project which will arrest the damage done to plaster walls and ceiling by leaks in the long-weathered original tin roof. Some painting has also been done recently to the rear facades. The stained and partially painted red brick walls have now been treated with a uniform coat of off-white paint in an attempt to tie them with the color of the grey pressed brick facades. The Medford Elks are taking renewed pride in their building, and this application for National Register status is but an essential step in the rehabilitation plan.

# 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1915                      **Builder/Architect** Frank Chamberlain Clark, Architect

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

The Medford Elks Building, completed for BPOE Lodge No. 1168 in 1915, is significant as the most distinctive example of monumental architecture in the tradition of Beaux Arts Classicism in Medford's downtown core. The prominent landmark situated on one of the city's main thoroughfares was designed by leading local architect Frank C. Clark, who was himself a charter member of the lodge organized in 1909. The circumstances of the lodge's formation 71 years ago were held to be unique in that each of 43 original members had been initiated in lodges elsewhere in the country. The building's planning and construction were taken as a signal development as Medford emerged as the new urban center of the Rogue River Valley. In the prevailing booster spirit of the day, the Medford Mail Tribune hailed the dedication of the new fraternal lodge building on September 23, 1915:

*Never in the history of Medford has the city been more elaborately or tastily decorated than for the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks on the occasion of the dedication of their magnificent \$60,000 temple -- a tribute to the pride of the community in the enterprise of the lodge and the good will cherished towards the organization.<sup>2</sup>*

According to Robert J. Keeney, Medford architect who worked with Clark from 1932-1941, Frank Chamberlain Clark (1872-1957) was a "genius in working out a problem in design with classical detail." Not much is recorded as yet about Clark's origin and background. He is said to have been the student of a New Jersey architect named Dayone, from whom he learned the classical vocabulary. Clark eventually came to the West Coast, where he worked with the Greene brothers on residences in the Los Angeles area and with the McDougal brothers in San Francisco. Clark was sent to Oregon by the McDougal firm to supervise a project in Ashland in 1902. He is said to have been impressed by the Rogue River Valley and its potential for development, and he decided to relocate there to practice independently.

Frank Clark is credited with being the first professionally trained architect to come to the Rogue River Valley. He was certainly the most au courant. His extraordinary output over 40 years of practice in the Rogue Valley demonstrates his facility with eclectic styles as well as genuine revival styles and those based on historic periods. Among his works are the shingle-clad, George Taverner House (1904) in Ashland, a National Register property; the Colonial Revival Chappel-Swedenburg House (1904), Ashland; the now-demolished Mission Style Ashland Senior High School (1912); the Ralph Bardwell "Bungalow" (1912), Medford, the Modernistic Fluhrer Bakery Building (1922), Medford, as well as the Medford Elks Building, a restrained but suitably monumental example of Beaux Arts Classicism. Clark also brought new building technology to the Valley. His Mission Style Elks Building (1909) in Ashland is believed to be the earliest reinforced concrete building in Southern Oregon.

Clark's Elks Building in Medford was described admiringly upon its completion by the now defunct Medford Sun:

*The building is of Greek Corinthian architecture, particularly appropriate for a men's club building... Massive, substantial and magnificent, the building is a credit to the artistic yet practical ideas of the architect, Brother Frank C. Clark, of Medford Lodge.<sup>4</sup>*

The dedication of the Medford Elks' new lodge was duly celebrated by the city which had reached a peak of social and economic development and exulted in the major projects of rapid upbuilding. On September 23, 1915, the Medford Sun devoted one entire special



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"Elks Edition" to commemorate the event. The culminating gala was attended by over 1,500 Elks at a time when Medford's population was approximately 9,000. The Medford Mail Tribune reported:

*Main Avenue was a blaze of color and light Wednesday night from the street decorations of the lodge. The roof of the new home was decorated with flags and the lodge colors, and two searchlights played in the sky over the city. The scene was brilliant!*<sup>5</sup>

*Medford Elks Friday night closed the most successful lodge event in the history of southern Oregon, with the largest attended banquet in the history of of southern Oregon... The lodge is now established in its new \$60,000 home, which is rated as the finest exclusive Elks building in the state, and stands as a credit to the city and the Rogue River Valley.*<sup>6</sup>

The Medford Elks Building is in close proximity and visually tied to the terra cotta trimmed Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company Building and the Front Street Transportation District, which includes the Southern Pacific Railroad Station and Grand Hotel. It is a pivotal building of that portion of the central business district lying east of the railroad tracks. Medford's Downtown Revitalization Program has been bolstered significantly by the Elks' recent decision to remain in the downtown core and rehabilitate their historic headquarters rather than build a new lodge in the suburbs.

1 Medford Sun, September 23, 1915.

2 Medford Mail Tribune, September 24, 1915.

3 Personal interview with Robert Keeney, October 30, 1979. Robert Keeney was an associate of Frank C. Clark, joining his architectural firm in 1938.

4 Medford Sun, September 23, 1915.

5 Medford Mail Tribune, September 23, 1915.

6 Ibid.