

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

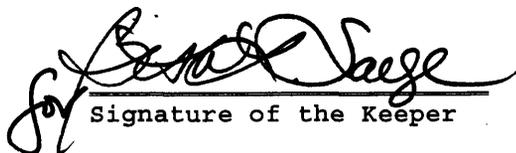
SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 05001045 Date Listed: 09/21/05

Willimantic Elks Club Windham CT
Property Name County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

9-21-05
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

Photographs

The photographs were processed in accordance with the March 2005 Photo Policy Expansion, specifically: Hewlett-Packard Premium Plus Glossy paper; HP Vivera tri-color ink, cartridge 97; HP photo-gray ink, cartridge 100; using an HP 6800 printer. Disc with images has also been transmitted.

This information has been confirmed with Matt Blood, National Register Coordinator, CTSHPO, and the nomination preparer, Bruce Clouette.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)

1045

AUG - 8 2005

**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 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 WILLIMANTIC ELKS CLUB
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 198 Pleasant Street not for publication
city or town Windham vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county Windham code 015 zip code 06226

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.)

Jennifer Aniskovich 7/29/05
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Jennifer Aniskovich, Executive Director, Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism
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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other, (explain): _____

[Signature] 9-21-05
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Willimantic Elks Club
Name of Property

Windham County, CT
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is 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: clubhouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Tudor Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Granite
 walls Terra Cotta
 Stucco
 roof Asphalt
 other Brick

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 an "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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, structure
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1925-1952

Significant Dates

1925

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Cudworth & Thompson, architect
Doyle & Murphy, builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

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 Building 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:

State Historic Preservation Office,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Willimantic Elks Club
Name of Property

Windham County, CT
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.1 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	731830	4621030	3		
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting Northing
2				4		

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 Bruce Clouette, Historian

organization Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc. date April 6, 2005

street & number P.O. Box 209 telephone 860-429-1723

city or town Storrs state CT zip code 06268

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

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

name Willimantic Elks Lodge #1311

street & number 198 Pleasant Street telephone 860-423-1311

city or town Willimantic state CT zip code 06226

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

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

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Willimantic Elks Club
Windham, Windham County, Connecticut

Description:

The clubhouse of the Willimantic Elks lodge is a large 2 ½-story Tudor Revival-style building with a stuccoed exterior and a multitude of half-timbered gables (Photographs 1-3). It is situated on a high knoll overlooking a mostly residential area in the Willimantic section of the town of Windham. Its architecture and siting, along with a high stone wall interrupted by formal gates, gives it the appearance of a mansion. It was, however, built specifically to house the lodge meeting and other activities of the Elks. Structurally, the building has a steel frame with architectural tiles forming the walls; because of the stuccoed exterior and plaster walls on the interior, the tiles are not visible. The corners of the building feature quoins of red tapestry brick.

The front or north elevation (Photograph 1), facing Pleasant Street, has a gabled projection at each end with a stone-pillared porch in between (Photograph 2). The entrance, surrounded by wide sidelights and an arched transom, is recessed within an arched opening. To either side is a large arched window with brick quoins and a keystone. The name of the organization appears on the face of a gable on the porch directly in front of the entrance. Flanking the porch are broad bay windows on the first story of the gabled projections, with double casement windows set within half-timbering on the second story. There is a broad terrace across the entire front of the north elevation, created by a low stone wall and iron railing; the terrace is paved with tiles.

The rear elevation (Photograph 3), which includes the entrance most used by members and guests, reveals a high stone basement story, with a central entrance within a small gable-roofed porch. The first-story windows on this elevation are round-arched in shape and are outlined by brick quoins; the arched heads have a keystone. The three-part sash consists of a fixed center pane between casements. The second story windows are double casement windows. This elevation also has gabled projections on the ends; a large brick chimney, partly projecting beyond the plane of the wall, rises up from the center of the area in between.

A stone porch runs along the east side of the building, and formerly there was one on the west as well. The latter, however, was removed when a large cinderblock addition to the club was made in 1957 (Photograph 4). Although extensive in floor area, the addition is practically invisible from the Pleasant Street side because of the slope of the land, at the rear the addition is decidedly outweighed by the mass of the original clubhouse. (In addition to Photograph 4, the addition can be seen on the left of Photograph 3, and it would appear in Photographs 1 and 5 were it not for the slope of the land completely concealing it.)

The front retaining wall repeats the stone masonry of the lodge's basement and porches (Photograph 5). Two walkways and a drive are defined by piers, between which are iron gates. Formerly the piers had lighting fixtures with large globes, but only a remnant survives on one pier

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Willimantic Elks Club
Windham, Windham County, Connecticut

The property also includes two plainly detailed ca.1950* cinderblock buildings: a small hip-roofed concession stand (Photograph 6) and a long single-story gable-roofed hall (Photograph 7) known as the Parker Building. The former provided toilet facilities for the annual Elks summer fair and other outdoor events at the property, and the latter accommodated inside activities for these events, a function it continues to serve as the Elks' Halloween haunted house. Although these two buildings lack architectural distinction, they are counted as contributing because of their historical association with social activities at the Elks Club. The area in between the buildings is paved and is currently rented for vehicle storage by a local public transportation agency (see Site Plan in Section 7).

The interior of the lodge building is highly ornate and original, especially the first-floor function room and the second-floor lodge room, both of which have deep cased beams along the ceilings and oak window and door surrounds. The rostrum, formal chairs, ballot boxes, organ pipes, ceremonial altar, members seating, and symbolic elements of the lodge room all date from the building's original construction (Photographs 8-10). The stippled painted plaster, plush drapes and upholstery, and floral carpeting are as installed. The lodge room is rich in special iconography and symbolic elements relating to the Elks, including a stained-glass star suspended over the altar and a clock set to the eleventh hour at the head of the room. The entrance door to the lodge room includes a knocker and peephole fixture (Photograph 11) that is embellished with an elk's head, star, and B.P.O.E., the initials of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, the organization's full name. Even much of the furniture outside the lodge room, including heavy oak Mission-style tables and rockers in a sitting room just outside, dates from the building's earliest years. The rockers (Photograph 12) have pressed and carved decoration in two motifs: scenes of the Middle East and medieval monks. At the head of the stairs on the second floor is the group's original memorial to members, a bronze tablet with a three-dimensional elk's head; folding leaves contain strips with members' names (Photograph 13).

The first-floor function room (Photograph 14) features paneled columns and prominent ceiling beams in oak and a large brick fireplace centered on the south wall. There is an enclosed serving facility and an office on this level, which leads onto the front outside terrace, but most of the first floor is open. The main stairway, with paneled oak newel posts and turned balusters, ascends to the lodge-room floor in three flights at the north end (Photograph 15). A bronze commemorative plaque listing the names of the building committee, architect, and contractor is mounted on the south wall of the stairway (Photograph 16).

*There is some inconsistency in the dating of the two structures. Both appear on a 1952 U.S. Department of Agriculture aerial photograph, but not on the 1948 update of the Sanborn insurance map. The town assessor records give their date as 1940.

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Willimantic Elks Club
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The basement formerly accommodated bowling alleys and other recreational activities, but when the addition was put on in 1957, the alleys were relocated to the newer part of the lodge and the basement converted to a bar for members.

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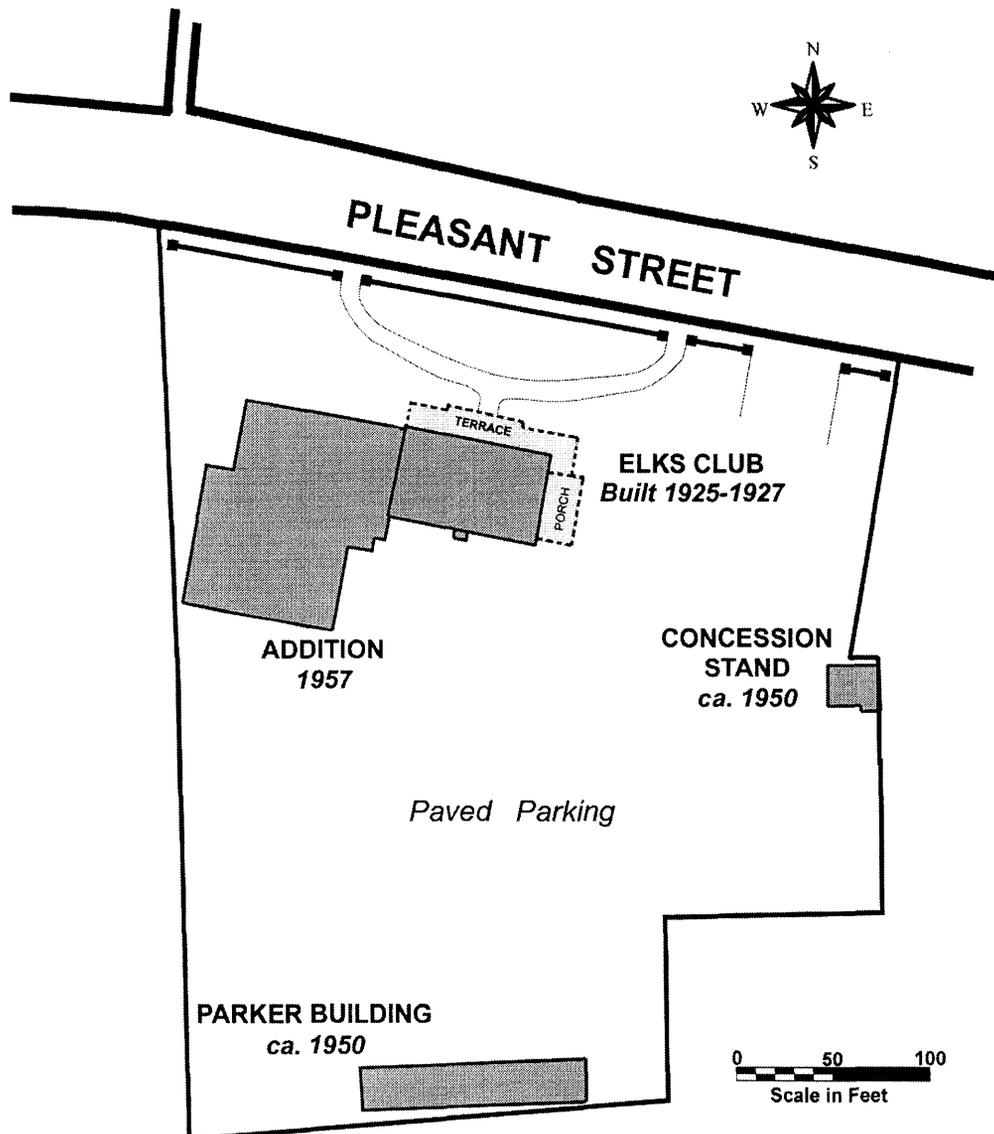
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Willimantic Elks Club
Windham, Windham County, Connecticut

Site plan, scale 1" = 100'

Source: Sanborn Insurance Map, 1963, Windham Assessor Records



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Willimantic Elks Club
Windham, Windham County, Connecticut

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Statement of Significance:

Summary

The Elks Club in Willimantic is significant because of the importance of fraternal organizations in the development of the state's urban communities (Criterion A) and because of its architectural significance as the largest and most fully developed example of Tudor Revival architecture in the greater Windham region (Criterion C). The early 20th-century was the heyday of fraternal lodges, involving hundreds of families in every large town and city in Connecticut in social and charitable activities. At the time of the building of this lodge the Elks had about 600 members in Willimantic. In addition to the lodge meetings, the Elks had social activities throughout the year, and in the summer the Elks sponsored a fair that was the largest event of its kind in the area, attended by thousands of people from Willimantic and the surrounding communities. The Willimantic Elks Club is especially notable because so much of the original architecture, interior features, and even furniture have survived. Because the 1950s expansion occupies only one corner at the rear of the building and is hidden from view from the street, the Elks Club continues to serve as a local landmark, appreciated both for its distinctive architectural qualities and as a symbol of one of the community's most active organizations.

Historical Background and Significance

Fraternal organizations became a fixture of urban life in late 19th and early-20th-century America. In addition to the Elks, any city or town the size of Willimantic would have had several Masonic organizations, clubs catering to specific ethnic and religious groups, and a variety of lodge-type organizations such as the Eagles, Red Men, Knights of Pythias, and Odd Fellows. As a replacement for the kinship-based social relationships of an earlier age, the fraternal associations knit together the community, especially the middle-class and the upper level of the working class who made up the bulk of the membership. These organizations also served a practical purpose: they typically offered, for modest dues, the only sickness and death benefits available in an age before government-sponsored social programs, a function reflected in the Elks' full name, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

Although they were generally similar in nature, the organizations all had unique rituals and symbology that made them distinctive; the rituals were limited to members and were usually secret, in whole or in part. The Willimantic club is said to have one of the most perfectly constructed Elks lodge rooms anywhere, its every dimension and feature exactly as prescribed in the rules of the organization. The altar, flag, Bible, clock, formal chairs, and other elements all figure into the lodge-meeting ritual, in which the members are reminded of the organization's key civic and moral

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Willimantic Elks Club
Windham, Windham County, Connecticut

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attributes. Many of the organizations also erected large, imposing halls for their meetings and other functions; in Willimantic, the Elks Club is the outstanding example.

The Elks were founded in New York City in 1866, and the Willimantic lodge came into existence in 1914, meeting in other halls in the downtown area before beginning construction on this building in 1925. The site of the new clubhouse, described as “an imposing monument to Elkdom” in the local paper, was a residential area on the south side of the Willimantic River. However, it had easy access to the more built-up part of the city, since it was situated directly across from the footbridge that spanned the intervening river and railroad tracks, and was midway between the two principal vehicular bridges over the river. Its elevation on a high knoll, spacious grounds, and architectural qualities were a source of pride to both its membership and the community at large.

Like other organizations of the period, the Elks originally did not consider nonwhites or women for membership (both restrictions no longer are in effect). However, the Elks were from the start among the most inclusive of the period’s voluntary organizations, bringing together not only the Yankee elite but also people of immigrant heritage who had risen into the middle and upper classes. The role of Willimantic Elks is replete with the names of Irish and French-Canadian names, principally professional and business men for whom lodge membership was both a social pleasure and a way of sustaining their status as town leaders.

The building’s plaque (Photograph 16) offers evidence of what the Elks were like in the 1920s. In addition to a thorough mixture of Yankee, Irish, and French-Canadian names, the building committee was a cross-section of the town’s civic and business leadership: two were insurance agents (one of whom was also a lawyer), two were automobile dealers, one was a manager at the American Thread Company mill, the town’s largest industry, and five operated retail stores or other small businesses. Reportedly, local politicians considered lodge membership part of what they needed to do to take the pulse of the community and maintain their visibility among the town’s citizens; one of the Building Committee members, Charles A. Gates, held the office of Sheriff of Windham County.

The annual Elks Fair was held on these grounds between 1914 and 1952 on Labor Day weekend. Carnival rides, food, games, music, and other entertainment made it the height of the summer for the residents of Willimantic and all the surrounding smaller towns. The Elks Club also served as Willimantic’s leading venue for non-Elk social events, a function it continues to this day. Churches, private parties, and other organizations rented the Elks’ function room for their events, and it would be unusual for a resident of the greater Willimantic area to not have attended at least one memorable function at the Elks Club.

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Willimantic Elks Club
Windham, Windham County, Connecticut

Architectural Significance

The Tudor Revival was one of several styles based on historical precedents that achieved popularity in the early 20th century. Throughout America, large houses for the well-to-do, and even small-scale commercial blocks, took on forms and detailing thought to reflect the architecture of Elizabethan-era English cottages and manor houses. The style had connotations of picturesqueness and domesticity, in contrast to the more imposing contemporary Neo-Classical and Colonial Revival styles, and so was well-suited for a fraternal organization's club house. The Willimantic Elks Club embodies many of the distinguishing characteristics of the Tudor Revival style, including such Late Medieval features as half-timbering, steep gables, casement windows, and the use of a variety of rough-textured materials such as stone, stucco, and brick. It is the largest and most richly detailed remaining example of the style in the Willimantic area.

The architect of the Elks Club was the firm of Cudworth and Thompson, earlier known as Cudworth, Woodworth, and Thompson and before that, Cudworth and Woodworth. The firm designed many of eastern Connecticut's most distinguished commercial and institutional buildings, including the Chelsea Saving Bank in Norwich, later additions to Norwich Free Academy, the Norwich State Hospital, for which the firm served as architect through the 1930s, and the Norwich Masonic Temple. Another distinguished design was Morningside Cottage in Plainfield, an eclectic country home combining Tudor and Japanese elements designed for George Weston, a well-known author of the early 20th century.

The builder was the Doyle & Murphy Company of Willimantic, a partnership of Thomas W. Doyle and Valentine L. Murphy. The firm, whose motto was "No Job Too Large, None Too Small, Service Always," did general building contracting, painting, and roofing. Murphy was a member of the Elks' building committee. The plumbing and heating also went to a local firm, Moriarty & Rafferty.

Period of Significance

The period of significance, 1925-1952, embraces the beginning of the building's construction to the last year of the Elk's summer fair, the organization's signature event.

Integrity Issues

Any evaluation of the impact of the 1957 addition on the Willimantic Elks Club's integrity of design and materials must consider not only their dimensions in plan (see Site Plan in Section 7) but also the relative volume of the two portions. Viewed from the parking lot on the south side of the

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Willimantic Elks Club
Windham, Windham County, Connecticut

building (the addition is not visible from the street; see Photographs 1 and 5), the original clubhouse appears as a 3 ½-story, gabled-roofed, elaborately detailed mass, whereas the addition is only two stories high and completely devoid of ornamentation. Moreover, because of the slope, the addition, which has recreational facilities adjoining the original basement on its main level and an additional meeting hall in its basement, is situated one full story below the main part of the club. As a consequence, the addition offers little visual competition for the older portion. Its main impact on the historic building was in requiring the removal of the west side porch, which was identical in detail with the existing east side porch.

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Willimantic Elks Club
Windham, Windham County, Connecticut

Bibliography:

Beardsley, Thomas R. "The Willimantic Elks," *Willimantic Chronicle*, October 10, 1998, October 17, 1998.

_____. *Willimantic, Industry and Community: the Rise and Decline of a Connecticut Textile City*. Willimantic: Windham Textile & History Museum, 1993.

Commercial Record, March 6, 1925, p. 33. Brief report under "Willimantic" on contracts for building the Elks Club.

Cudworth and Thompson. *Selections from the Work of Cudworth and Thompson*. Priv. pr., 1931.

Sanborn Map and Publishing Company. Insurance Maps of Willimantic, 1924-1963. Microfilm, Connecticut State Library, Hartford.

Willimantic, Windham, and Coventry Directory, 1926. New Haven: Price & Lee Co., 1926.

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Section number 10 Page 1

Willimantic Elks Club
Windham, Windham County, Connecticut

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is recorded in the Windham Assessor records as Parcel 13-5/158/2. It is described in a deed dated November 1, 1952, recorded in the Windham Land Records, Volume 162, page 431.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property includes the clubhouse, parking area, and grounds associated with the clubhouse and other buildings that are more than 50 years old. This historically was the extent of the Elks Club and Park. The nominated property excludes an adjacent .67-acre parcel (Parcel 13-5/158/1A) that was purchased later and thus was not part of the property during the period of significance.

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Willimantic Elks Club

Windham, Windham County, Connecticut

Section number Photographs Page 1

All Photographs:

1. Willimantic Elks Club
2. Windham, Windham County, Connecticut
3. PAST, Inc. Photo
4. March 2005

Captions:

- 1: North elevation, facing Pleasant Street camera facing south.
- 2: Detail of porch on north elevation, camera facing southeast.
- 3: Rear (south) elevation, camera facing north.
- 4: South elevation of addition, 1957, appended to west side, camera facing north.
- 5: Detail of wall and gates along Pleasant Street sidewalk, clubhouse visible in background, camera facing southeast.
- 6: Former concession building, now used for storage, camera facing northeast.
- 7: Parker Building, used for club's "Haunted House" event, camera facing west.
- 8: Interior, Lodge Room on second floor, camera facing southeast..
- 9: Detail of platform and lectern on west wall of Lodge Room, camera facing southwest.
- 10: Detail of original member's seating, north wall of Lodge Room, camera facing west.
- 11: Detail of door knocker/peephole, south door, interior of Lodge Room, camera facing east.
- 12: Oak rocking chairs, some of the club's original furnishings, sitting room, second floor, camera facing northeast.
- 13: First memorial to club members, second floor at top of stairs, camera facing west.

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Willimantic Elks Club
Windham, Windham County, Connecticut

- 14: Function room, first floor, camera facing west.
- 15: Main stairway, east end of function room, first floor, leading to Lodge Room anteroom above, camera facing east.
- 16: Building plaque mounted on wall in main stairway, camera facing south.