

Historic Property Elks Building
Inventory Report for 607 - 613 South Capitol Way Olympia, Thurston, 98501

LOCATION SECTION

Historic Name: Elks Building **Field Site No.:** 827
Common Name: (#34-720) **OAHP No.:**
Property Address: 607 - 613 South Capitol Way Olympia, Thurston, 98501
Comments: OLYMPIA

County **Township/Range/EW** **Section** **1/4 Sec** **1/4 1/4 Sec** **Quadrangle**
 T18R02W 14 SW TUMWATER

UTM Reference
Zone: 10 **Spatial Type:** Point **Acquisition Code:** TopoZone.com
Sequence: 0 **Easting:** 507580 **Northing:** 5209700

Tax No./Parcel No. **Plat/Block/Lot**
78500700300 Sylvester L 3 & 4 Blk 7

Supplemental Map(s) **Acreage**
City of Olympia Planning Department .20

IDENTIFICATION SECTION

Field Recorder: Shanna Stevenson/Tom C **Date Recorded:** 10/16/1985 **Survey Name:** OLYMPIA

Owner's Name: Tower Partners II **Owner Address:** 1424 4th Avenue Ste 804 **City/State/Zip:** Seattle, WA 98101, WA 98101

Classification: Building **Resource Status** **Comments**
Within a District? Yes Survey/Inventory
Contributing? Yes National Register
State Register
Local Register

National Register Nomination: ELKS BUILDING
Local District:
National Register District/Thematic Nomination Name: OLYMPIA DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

DESCRIPTION SECTION

Historic Use: Social - Meeting Hall
Current Use: Domestic - Multiple Family House

Plan: Rectangle **No. of Stories:** 3

Structural System: Concrete - Block

Changes to plan: Intact **Changes to interior:** Unknown
Changes to original cladding: Intact **Changes to other:**
Changes to windows: Moderate **Other (specify):**

Cladding Brick **Foundation** Concrete - Poured
Concrete
Terra Cotta

Style Commercial **Form/Type**
Roof Material Asphalt / Composition - Rolled **Roof Type** Unknown

NARRATIVE SECTION

Study Unit

Other

Date Of Construction: 1919-1920

Architecture/Landscape Architecture

Architect: Joseph Wohleb

Social Movements/Organizations

Builder:

Engineer:

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places:

No

Property is located in a historic district (National and/or local):

No

Property potentially contributes to a historic district (National and/or local):

Statement of Significance

Formed in 1891, the Elks Lodge has long been an influential group in Olympia. The group was the successor to other men's social clubs in Olympia, notably the Bachelor and O'Shanty Clubs. Actor Charles Vivian, founder of the national Elks movement, visited Olympia in 1872 and found fertile ground for his ideas in Olympia which was, according to one writer, the "center of culture on the Pacific Coast" at that time. The O'Shanty Club was organized after Vivian's visit and later all of its members joined in forming the Elks Lodge. Early membership was made up of state officials and Olympia businessmen, its organization following close on the heels of statehood in Washington with the location of the capital at Olympia in 1889. Because of political conditions resulting from a change in government in 1898, the group dissolved in 1899 and transferred to the Tacoma Lodge. They reorganized in 1902 in Olympia under the number 186, the same as their original designation. Activities in the early years of the lodge included baseball, orchestra and band concerts and legislative dances. The lodge met in the Woodruff Block between State and Fourth Avenue on Capitol Way. With enlarged membership, due in part to wartime shipbuilding and related industries locally, a new building, designed by Joseph Wohleb, local Olympia architect and an Elk member, was built in 1919. This new building reflected the increased role for the organization in philanthropic work.

The Elks were in the forefront on home efforts in World War I, helping to raise money for liberty bonds and providing concerts and community sings to boost morale. The lodge was closely associated with Camp Lewis and provided a haven for soldiers stationed there. The club was instrumental in reorganizing the Chamber of Commerce which had declined in importance and the group helped to bring about the construction of the Olympian Hotel.

Their shows and concerts helped provide funds for two major philanthropic efforts begun in the early 1920s. The Jingle Club which was joint effort of the Elks and early radio station begun at St. Martin's College, KGY, was a kind of telethon eliciting support mostly a Christmas time for the needy. In 1924, the Elks began their efforts for the relief of crippled children and sponsored big brother gatherings for local boys.

In 1928, original architect Joseph Wohleb, redesigned the first and second floor windows of the building creating the present asymmetrical window arrangement.

During the Depression years of the 1930s, the Jingle Club became even more important to the community and the Elks even provided a power saw to give wood for the unemployed and planted relief gardens. The Elks were also the official patrolling units during the March 1933 "Hunger March on the Capitol" staged by state disgruntled unemployed.

During the years of World War II, the Elks directed their efforts toward helping military men stationed at Fort Lewis and donated to a USO center in Olympia. The club was a haven for visiting military officials including a visit from Dwight David Eisenhower.

Throughout the years, the Elks have held a variety of fund raising events to benefit many different charities. The club vacated their historic building in 1958 when their new clubhouse was built on 4th Avenue in Olympia. That building was razed for Heritage Park and they are now located at 1818 4th Avenue E.

The historic Elks Building was renovated in 1988 and 1989 and now features 39 housing units as well as retail space. The renovation restored the distinctive glass pergola and entry on the front facade. The building is owned by Tower Partners II, LLC. Commercial tenants are Jin Jor Clothing and Capitale Restaurant. It is listed on the National, State and Olympia Registers of Historic Places.

Description of Physical Appearance

Major Bibliographic References

Fultz, Hollis, B., *Elkdom in Olympia -- a history*, Warren's Quickprint, Olympia, 1966.

PHOTOS



View of East Facade
taken 10/16/1985
Photography Neg. No. (Roll No./Frame No.):
26-34A
Comments: