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 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic name</th>
<th>Earl H. Ellis VFW Post #1362</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other name/site number</td>
<td>151-4550-0022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 buildings</td>
<td>1 buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 structures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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)

**Social:** MEETING HALL

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Foundation - Concrete
- Walls - Stone
- Roof - Synthetic
- 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 National Register)

☒ 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 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)

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance
1939-1955

Significant Dates
1939

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Architect Unknown; H.V. Crull-contractor

9. Major Bibliographical 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): Primary location of additional data:
☐ 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 # 

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Name of repository:
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

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

1

Zone 4

Easting

4 1 6 6 2 9 0

Northing

Zone 4

Easting

Northing

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 V. Black (edited by Brenda R. Spencer, Preservation Planning & Design 785-456-9857)

Organization

Earl H. Ellis VFW Post #1362

Date

7-15-05

Street & number

306 S. Oak Street

Telephone

620-672-5671

City or town

Pratt

State

Kansas

Zip code

67124

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

name

Veterans of Foreign War Post #1362

street & number

701 E. 1st Street

telephone

state

KS

zip code

67124

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.
entrance is flanked by a double-hung window on each side. Although they vary in size, all of the windows are 2/2 horizontal light, double-hung wood windows with concrete sills. Aluminum storms have been installed.

The east and west facades are similar but not identical. Each has five bays; the front entry bay and the rear porch being the end bays. The main building is divided into three bays by stone pilasters with a concrete cap that terminate two foot below the roof line. Metal scuppers and downspouts are in place aside the pilasters on each side of the central bay. On the west facade, there is a set of three windows on the upper level of each bay. The grade slopes from north to south, exposing lower windows on the central and south bay. There are two small, individual windows in the center bay. The window opening has been infilled with wood on the south bay; it appears to have been a set of three small windows. A narrow concrete window well is in place at the central and south bays.

The primary distinction between the east and west facades is the center bay. The center bay projects slightly on the east facade, beyond the stone pilasters and is distinguished by a large square chimney rising above the roofline in the center of the bay. There are no openings on the upper facade of the center bay. There is a single door on the south end of the central bay, slightly below grade and accessed by concrete steps in an area well. North of the door, a small window with exhaust vents in the upper sash is in place. The door and window opening are slightly recessed from the exterior face of the building and the area well includes the existing window opening. A small projecting sign is in place over the entrance. Like the west facade, there are sets of three windows on the upper level of the south and north bays. A set of three windows is also in place on ground level of the north bay. There is one small single window on the lower level of the south bay.

The southeast facade is the rear of the building but was designed as a second primary facade. The rear of the building was originally comprised of a two-level screened-in porch overlooking the city park to the south. A central entrance provides direct access into the post meeting room on the lower level. The rear facade has been modified but the original components are intact. The 2nd floor porch has clap board wood siding with a band of window openings, now infilled. These openings were originally the screen panels and spanned the south, east and west sides of the porch. A metal shallow shed roof has been installed on the porch. At ground level, there is a concrete foundation extant with plywood infill above where screen panels were originally. A gable extension denotes the central entrance which is at grade.

Interior
Like the exterior of the building, the interior of the VFW Post is largely intact clearly portraying the original design and character of the building. The native stone is a distinguishing feature of the interior as well as the exterior; it is exposed on the interior walls of the upper level. Although the building has experienced some alteration in its seventy-five year history, the interior configuration is intact as are most distinguishing features and finishes.

Upon entering the building from the main, northwest entry, the foyer provides direct access to the lower level through an enclosed stairway on the west. The wood stairs have a simple wood post railing, rock walls with plaster wainscot and an applied acoustic panel ceiling. Stone walls are exposed in the entry foyer and the auditorium. A pair of large paneled wood doors provides access into the auditorium, from the entry foyer. In near-original condition, the auditorium is the building's most outstanding interior space; it is one large room, measuring 40' x 50 and can seat more than one hundred for a banquet. A raised platform on the south end serves as a stage. The sets of three windows provide an abundance of natural light in the room. The floor is wood with a wood base and the ceiling is applied acoustic panels. Emphasizing the 11' ceiling height, steel trusses encased in plaster support the roof and span to the pilasters along the east and west walls that are encased in wood paneling. A focal point on the east wall of the auditorium is the fireplace, constructed of a variety of types of stones that were reportedly contributed by members and friends of the post. The fireplace features a petrified wood surrounding the hearth opening; the wood was secured in Barber County, Kansas and one piece measures more than three feet in length. Framed by a paneled wood surround, the fireplace has a simple concrete hearth with "VFW" inlaid and a simple dressed stone mantel with stone brackets. The exposed stone walls and fireplace, and knotty wood paneling maintain the rustic feel of the exterior in this major interior space.
A second stairway to the lower level is extant at the southeast corner of the auditorium. There are two openings on the south wall of the auditorium, to the former rear porch. A former window has been infilled with wood but the wood door with three light sidelights is intact. The rear porch was enclosed after World War II, now housing a bar and rest rooms.

The lower level is comprised of three primary spaces. Entrances on the south and east sides of the building provide direct access into the Post Meeting Room, a 20’ x 36’ space with a bar on the west end. This room has been remodeled and now has contemporary paneling, carpet and acoustic tile ceilings. North of the meeting room are the kitchen and rest rooms. The Ladies Auxiliary Room is located on the north end of the lower level; it has plaster walls, and applied acoustic panel ceilings.

The interior has undergone some modification, namely the enclosing of the rear porch and the remodeling of the meeting room. However, most primary spaces retain significant original fabric including exposed stone or plaster walls, wood or linoleum tile floors, applied acoustic panel ceilings, and wood trim including the paneling in the auditorium, the two stairways, and five-panel wood doors throughout. The light fixtures are contemporary replacements in most areas and HVAC upgrades are evident with surface mounted units on the ceiling of the auditorium and meeting room.

With relatively minor alterations on the interior and exterior, the Earl H. Ellis VFW Post in Pratt clearly reflects its original design and function. The building continues to serve as the local VFW Post #1362 and stands as a good example of a late Art Deco structure featuring native stone construction.
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet  

Section: 8  Page: 4  
Earl H. Ellis VFW Post #1362  
Pratt, Pratt County, Kansas  

Statement of Significance

The Earl H. Ellis VFW Post #1362 in Pratt is significant under National Register Criterion A and C. The building was constructed as, and has continually served as, home to the local Veterans of Foreign Wars and was named after local Marine, Lt. Col. Earl Hancock Ellis. The building has a rich history not only as the home to the local VFW, but as a setting for community social activities such as banquets, bingo games, private parties and dances. The facility was used for entertainment of the troops stationed at Pratt Army Airfield in World War II. It has played a significant civic and social role in the Pratt community and reflects the community’s dedication to its veterans. The VFW Post was constructed primarily by members of the local post, built of native stone acquired near Bucklin in Kiowa County west of Pratt. Reflecting influences of the Art Deco style, the building's form with its stepped arched parapet and articulated entry bay are distinguishing features of the building. Although not constructed through the Work Projects Administration itself, the VFW building is characteristic of WPA structures of this era. The use of native stone in a random rubble style, gave the building a rustic, almost vernacular feel. The building is significant as an intact example of a late Art Deco structure and for its reflection of the growth and development of the town of Pratt in southwest Kansas.

The Earl H. Ellis VFW Post #1362  
In October of 1937, the Earl H. Ellis Post #1362 of the Veterans of Foreign War in Pratt, Kansas purchased a tract of ground 150' x 115' located on East First Street in Pratt. By the fall of 1939, construction was underway on the Post's new home. H.V. Crull was the building inspector/contractor in charge of the building. Wm. Fausler was in charge ofstonework. Post member Ira F. Carter was in charge of the finances and provided the following documentation: the total building cost was $3,660.67; $2,067.78 was paid to Pratt firms and $1,592.89 was paid for labor. The building was built with local labor by members of the VFW and hired day laborers. No documentation has been found as to the architect or designer of the building.

The building clearly reflects Art Deco stylistic influences. Defined by Cyril M. Harris as "A decorative style simulated by the Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Decorates et Industrieles Modernes of 1925, widely used in the architecture of the 1930s ...." Art Deco represented the Modern Movement in architecture reflecting simplified building forms, flat roofs and subtle ornament often achieved through articulation of the building form and/or facade rather than applied decoration. In their Guide to Kansas Architecture, Sachs and Ehrlich note that, "With the prosperity of the late 1920’s, Kansas seemed finally ready to accept a modest and evolutionary form of Modernism. Art Deco ornament graced commercial buildings springing up across the state .... Projects done under federal relief programs introduced the state to a simplified form of ornament that evolved into the Streamlined Moderne."

The VFW Post in Pratt was not constructed through the Works Projects Administration; however, it is similar in appearance to WPA structures due in large part to its simplified building form and use of native stone as the primary building material. Like WPA projects distinguished by their materials and workmanship, the post was built with local labor and used available local materials. The use of the native stone in a random rubble pattern on the exterior walls gave the building a rustic appearance that is carried through to the interior with the exposed stone walls and elaborate fireplace in the auditorium. Despite its rustic appearance, the VFW Post does reflect tenants of the Art Deco style as evidenced by the building form with its stepped and arch parapet and articulated bays. The flat roof with stylized parapet is characteristic of the Modern Movement. The building does lack the geometric forms typical of many Art Deco designs but the use of concrete for contrasting detail and the articulation of the building facade and roofline are characteristic of the style. The stone pilasters with concrete detailing and the one-story entry bay on the front of the building are examples of the form articulation that distinguish Modern structures from their Progressive Era predecessors.

The use of available native stone and local labor gives the building a rustic appearance that reflects the thrift of Kansans in the wake of the Depression. The Earl H. Ellis VFW Post #1362 is significant as a local landmark that combines Art Deco stylistic influences with vernacular flavor typical of the era in which it was constructed.
The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was organized in Columbus Ohio in 1899. The purpose of the organization is fraternal, patriotic, historical, and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of their dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism; to maintain and extend the institutions of American Freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies, whomsoever. The requirement for eligibility to membership is honorable service in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard, of the United States on foreign soil, or in hostile waters, during any war or campaign for which a campaign medal is awarded.

The VFW Post #1362 in Pratt was formed in 1917 and by 1940, had 124 members. The building was constructed in 1939 by the local VFW Post to serve as their new home and it has served that function since. The formal opening and building dedication was held on September 22, 1940. Col. Charles H. Browne, the Horton editor and veteran of two wars, spoke at the dedication of the building, shortly before he left with the 137th All Kansas Regiment of the 35th National Guard Division for training at Camp Robinson, Arkansas. He praised the building as being one of the finest buildings he had seen. Built of substantial rock, he predicted that it would endure far beyond the life span of the present members of the post. It represented, he said, the cooperative services of the men who served outside the continental United States and was a definite asset to the community. Among those present at the dedication were James E. Fisher, VFW Commander for Kansas who commended the local post's endeavors noting that they were one of the most active posts in the state. The dedication included the raising of the flag in front of the new home.

The building was dedicated to honor Lt. Col. Earl H. Ellis, a native of Pratt County, Kansas. Earl Hancock Ellis, known at Pete, was born December 12, 1880 in Pratt County, Kansas. He attended Golden Valley School, a rural grade school and later, Pratt High School. During his sophomore year, the Spanish-American War broke out. On September 3, 1900, he enlisted in the Marines. From there, he rose through the ranks to become an officer and ultimately a Lieutenant Colonel.

Lt. Col. Ellis disappeared while on an undercover mission in 1923. Records indicate that he was on a mission to expose Japanese fortifications in Micronesia. He was found dead in Palaua, Caroline Islands. Ellis was a recipient of the Navy Cross and the French Croix Le Guerre for his role in planning the last major victory in France in World War I; he is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. A Personal Award Recommendation nominating Earl Ellis for a Congressional Medal of Honor was developed by Cletis Miller in 2001.

According to Dirk A. Ballendorf and Merrill A. Barrett, authors of the book Pete Ellis Amphibious Prophet, Few men have had more impact on the Marine Corps than Earl Hancock “Pete” Ellis and more controversial, sometimes called the Father of Amphibious Warfare. Acclaimed for his genius as a military planner, Ellis had problems with alcohol and depression. In an effort to reignite his career, Ellis set off on an ill-fated undercover mission to expose rumored Japanese fortifications in Micronesia. He also intended to gather intelligence to support his plan for an island-hopping campaign in the Pacific - a plan that became the framework for the US Navy Offensive in the Pacific in WWII. But, on May 12, 1923, he was found dead on Palaua in the Carolinas.

There are conflicting accounts of Ellis’s activities and accomplishments. Recently released military records appear to confirm Ellis’ military contributions. Despite questions regarding details of his service and his death, there seems to be consensus regarding his legacy. Ellis is widely recognized as the originator of marine amphibious strategy. He was one of the first to recognize that the Japanese were fortifying islands in the Pacific and recommended an amphibious strategy as the only means to counter their efforts. His extensive mapping of the Pacific Area was used by the Marines during WWII and his early amphibious strategies are still taught at Quantico today. A building at Quantico is named Ellis Hall in his honor and features a bronze bust in recognition of his contributions. This past Memorial Day (2005), Pratt dedicated a new all-veterans memorial at the old Pratt Army Airfield (Pratt was one of the first B-29 training bases in the U.S.). The memorial includes a display featuring Ellis’ military service and accomplishments. The day was proclaimed “Earl Ellis Day” and festivities were coordinated by the local VFW. Earl H. Ellis continues to be recognized locally as a military hero and VFW Post #1362 proudly bears his name.
Summary
The Earl H. Ellis VFW Post #1362 is a community landmark. It is not only an intact example of a late Art Deco structure with vernacular flavor, but also a building that reflects an important component of the social history of the community of Pratt. The building not only served as the home to the local VFW Post but was a center of social activity for troops stationed at Pratt Army Airfield in WWII. The structure has a rich history of social activity in the community as the location of functions ranging from banquets to bingo games. With its prominent location on Highway 54 (E. 1st Street), one of the city’s main thoroughfares, the building stands as a statement of the community’s commitment to its veterans. The building reflects the period in which it was constructed, representing the Modern Movement in architecture coupled with local influence; its rustic appearance a result of being constructed of native stone by local labor. The Earl H. Ellis VFW Post #1362 is significant architecturally and socially as a reflection of the history of the community of Pratt.

1 Pratt Union, November 9, 1939.
4 Souvenir Card – Formal Opening of the V.F. W.’s New Home, September 22, 1940, Pratt, Kansas.
5 Pratt Tribune, September 27, 1940.
7 Cletis M. Miller, Personal Award Recommendation nominating Earl H. Ellis for the Congressional Medal of Honor, June, 2001 (nomination form and letters of support).
8 Ibid.
9 Phone interview with Earl Getz of Pratt (nephew of Earl H. Ellis) September 27, 2005.
Bibliography


Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description -

A tract of ground 100 feet by 115 feet located and being a part of the tract originally platted as Rochester Street and Lots Nine (9) and Ten (10) in Block One (1), Haskell’s Addition to the City of Pratt, Pratt County, Kansas, described by metes and bounds as follows:

Beginning at a point on the S line of Lot 9, Block One (1), Haskell’s Addition, 75’ E of the SW corner of said Lot 9 as a place of Beginning, thence N 100’ to the N line of Lot 10, Block One, Haskell’s Addition, thence W 115’, thence S 100’, thence E 115’ to the POB, together with the East half of vacated Rochester Street, as originally platted, lying adjacent thereto; and

A tract of land 67 feet by 100 feet located and being part of the tract originally platted as Lots Nine (9) and Ten (10) in Block One (1), Haskell’s Addition to the City of Pratt, Pratt County, Kansas, being described by metes and bounds as follows:

Beginning as a point on the S line of Lot 9, Block One, Haskell’s Addition, 75’ E of the SW corner of said Lot 9 as a place of beginning, thence E 67’, thence N 100’ to the N line of Lot 10, Block One, Haskell’s Addition, thence W 67’, thence S 100’ to the POB, together with the West half of the alley originally platted as a part of said Block One, lying adjacent thereto; and

The West 55 feet of Lots Eleven (11) and Twelve (12), Block One (1), Haskell’s Addition to the City of Pratt, Pratt County, Kansas, together with the East One-half (E/2) of vacated Rochester Street (as originally platted) lying adjacent thereto; and

The East 90 feet of Lots Three (3), Four (4), Five (5), and Six (6), Block Two (2), Haskell’s Addition to the City of Pratt, Pratt County, Kansas, together with the West One-half (W/2) of vacated Rochester Street (as originally platted) lying adjacent thereto; and

Block One (1), Lots Seven (7) and Eight (8), plus vacated alley, minus road and tract in SE/4 of Lot 7, and vacated street between Blocks One (1) and Two (2), 80’W of Lots 7-12 in Block 1 or 80’ E of Lots 1-6 in Block 2, Haskell’s Addition, City of Pratt, Pratt County, Kansas.
Boundary Justification – Boundary reflects original tract purchased by VFW to construct new home in 1937. Site is bordered on the north by E. 1st Street and on the south by E. 2nd Street with adjoining commercial properties on the east and west.

Photographs
Photos were taken by Brenda Spencer September 10, 2005.

#  Description of View [direction of camera]
1  Building and site from northeast corner of site on E. 1st Street [southwest]
2  Building and site from northwest corner of site on E. 1st Street [southeast]
3  Front (northwest) facade [southeast]
4  East Facade [southeast]
5  Rear (Southeast) and East Facades [west]
6  West Facade [northeast]
7  Detail of upper and lower windows on west facade [northeast]
8  Entry Foyer on northwest [northwest]
9  Front Stairwell from entry foyer on upper level [southwest]
10  Auditorium on upper level [southeast]
11  Fireplace on east wall of auditorium, upper level [northeast]
12  Detail of set of three upper windows, west side of auditorium [southwest]
13  Detail of original rear door from porch [north]
14  Post Meeting Room, lower level [southwest]
15  Kitchen, lower level [northwest]
16  Ladies’ Auxiliary Room, lower level [southwest]

Additional Documentation
USGS Quad Map attached
Aerial Photo/site plan attached
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USCGS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1965. Field checked 1968

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Kansas coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 14, shown in blue

Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fences and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

UTM GRID AND 1968 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

CONTOUR IN

UNITED STATES

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER
AND BY THE STATE GEOLOGICAL
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MA