

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

 NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS
1 NAME

HISTORIC

Topeka B.P.O.E. Lodge No. 204

AND/OR COMMON

Elks' Club

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

122 West Seventh Street

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

Kansas

CODE

20

COUNTY

Shawnee

CODE

177

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___ DISTRICT

 BUILDING(S)

___ STRUCTURE

___ SITE

___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___ PUBLIC

 PRIVATE

___ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___ IN PROCESS

___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

___ OCCUPIED

 UNOCCUPIED

___ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

 YES: RESTRICTED

___ YES: UNRESTRICTED

___ NO

PRESENT USE

___ AGRICULTURE

___ COMMERCIAL

___ EDUCATIONAL

___ ENTERTAINMENT

___ GOVERNMENT

___ INDUSTRIAL

___ MILITARY

___ MUSEUM

___ PARK

___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___ RELIGIOUS

___ SCIENTIFIC

___ TRANSPORTATION

___ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

B & A Development Company, Inc., A Kansas Corporation Nominee
B.B. Andersen, Robert Brock

STREET & NUMBER

627 College

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Kansas

66606

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Shawnee County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas

66603

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Kansas Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The two-story club building of the Topeka B.P.O.E. Lodge No. 204, located at the northeast corner of Seventh and Jackson streets, is 69 feet wide at the south elevation by 89 feet deep along the west elevation. The main entrance is in the center of the south facade which faces Seventh Street. Above this entrance are inscribed the order's initials, "B.P.O.E." (Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks).

Structurally, the red brick-and-limestone building, which also has a full finished basement, has changed slightly since it was built. Its floor area comprises 19,000 square feet.

The exterior of the Elks' Club was designed in a "free eclectic" manner. It depicts some elements of early Italian architectural influence, particularly at the second level of the front (south elevation) and at the west elevation, where the windows represent the "Palladian" motif (a group of three adjoining windows, of which a characteristic is an accent on the center window).

The exterior also incorporates classical features, such as the frieze that wraps around the south and west facades, which consists of a motif of lions' heads placed at regular intervals.

Originally, the building was designed with double-hung windows at all three levels.

Cut limestone was utilized for the quoins at each of the building's four corners. The exterior at the basement level was faced with limestone, as well.

The entry staircase is faced with marble wainscoting. A window on the west wall of the staircase allowed the lodge's hierarchy to observe the flow of traffic from the private office on the other side.

Undated historic photographs indicate that the original interior decoration was executed in a manner similar to that of the Victorian style. There was an abundance of patterned wallpaper throughout the rooms; elaborate hardwood molding at the windows, doorways, ceilings, and wainscoting; and hardwood floors covered by intricately patterned and richly colored area rugs.

ALTERATIONS:

In 1951, the Elks' building underwent its only exterior and interior renovation.

Structural alterations to the exterior included the removal of the west elevation's entrance columns and pediment. In addition, all of the double-hung windows were replaced by fixed windows. Those windows on the south and the west elevations were sealed with glass blocks.

Interior motifs were reexecuted in verdant hues of dark green and brown.

In several of the interior private rooms, the original windows were painted over with historic illustrations.

The floors of the public areas were treated either with vinyl asbestos floor tile or with linoleum tile.

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#7 DESCRIPTION--ALTERATIONS (continued):

The dining room, a feature of the building, was remodeled extensively, including wall covering, draperies, furnishings, and a "recessed ceiling of cream acoustical squares with indirect lighting," reported The Topeka State Journal of May 19, 1951.

The kitchen adjoining the dining room was renovated, and all stainless steel appliances were installed.

Opposite the dining room on the main floor are an office, checkroom for wraps, a women's lounge, and a men's library.

A mezzanine lounge area is adjacent to the lodge meeting room on the second floor.

The basement area consists of a recreation and card room, as well as an area for billiards.

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#8 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued):

By 1918, the Elks had invested more than \$1,000,000 in war bonds (The Topeka Daily Capital, May 10, 1918).

As former Topeka mayor and lifetime Elk, Jay E. House, proclaimed in 1919, shortly after the end of World War I: "The B.P.O.E. is the one real democracy I know anything about. It is the one place where one man is exactly as good as another and not better. It is the one place I know where every man is permitted to follow the dictates of his own conscience, to shape his own course in life and to express his opinions freely without penalty."

After the conclusion of each of the two world wars, the B.P.O.E. provided additional rehabilitative and vocational education assistance to veterans returning home from combat.

When the United States had recuperated from those long war years, the Elks expanded their charitable services to include providing food baskets to needy families at Thanksgiving and at Christmas; furnishing eyeglasses for underprivileged children; making monetary contributions to the Girl Scouts and to the Boy Scouts; and providing college scholarships to deserving students.

Since 1960, the Topeka lodge also has supported a state school for the rehabilitation of retarded students at Wichita.

The Elks were prosperous during their beginnings, having witnessed a steady growth in membership.

By 1905, membership and services within the Topeka order had developed to such a degree that plans for a new building were considered. (Prior to 1905, the Elks' lodge had been located in the old Masonic lodge building at 621 Jackson Street.)

"At the regular meeting of the Elks on Wednesday night, it was decided to either build or buy a home for the order in a central location in the city. A committee was appointed to look into the matter and make an early report...", according to an account in the November 9, 1905 edition of The Topeka State Journal.

"I do not know whether it would be best to build or to buy. We must first look over the situation very carefully and see what locations we can get. That will decide the question," commented then Mayor W.H. Davis, a committee member, in the above-referenced article.

This same article also reported, "L.M. Penwell, the exalted ruler of the local lodge, favors the construction of a new building."

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#8 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued):

After nearly two years of planning, the Kansas City architectural partnership of William Sayler and Herbert Seddon was commissioned to design the plans for the new lodge building.

A prominent firm in the Kansas-Missouri area at the turn of the century, Sayler and Seddon also were distinguished for the design of several residences in Atchison and many schools, including Manhattan, Atchison and Hill City high schools, according to information provided by the Landmarks Commission, Kansas City.

It is thought that construction of the Elks' building commenced in the fall of 1907, because the building permit was issued August 29 of that year; the cornerstone also was laid in 1907.

By April 1, 1908, B.P.O.E. Lodge No. 204 did, indeed, have a new home. Total cost of the building was \$50,000.

In addition to its primary function of serving the needs of the less privileged, the Topeka Elks' Club was the center of many social gatherings for its steadily growing membership. The order's activities traditionally included such festivities as the annual spring party, convention banquets and balls, as well as various special celebrations. According to the February 15, 1968 edition of The Topeka State Journal: "Local Elks also were invited to a week-long centennial observance at the Manhattan Lodge No. 1185, including a tea and dance, beer and pretzel party, picnic dinner and sweetheart ball."

In 1926, when the Hotel Jayhawk opened across the street, the area of Seventh and Jackson streets became a lively gathering place for staging diverse social, cultural, and educational programs.

An article that appeared in the January 4, 1974 edition of The Topeka Daily Capital, described one of the Elks-sponsored educational programs. "Delegates from eight midwestern states are expected to attend an Elks Midwest Regional Education Workshop here Friday through Sunday at the Jayhawk Hotel."

In 1951, however, the lodge building was in need of major renovation to its inner spaces in order to accommodate continued growth in membership and services.

"One of the finest lodge buildings in the Midwest--at least in the opinion of those who have had a chance to view many of them--was being opened this week-end(sic) by Topeka Elks' Lodge No. 204," according to an article in the May 19, 1951 edition of The Topeka State Journal.

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#8 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued):

"Work, which started 10 months ago, has resulted in a complete change in the interior of the building at Seventh and Jackson, and furnishings of ultra modern design have been installed. The building had been closed to lodge members for a week, and on Friday an open house for local members was held.

"The Saturday schedule was for an open house for visiting Elks and guests of local Elks, and at 4:00 p.m. the building was closed for the annual spring party to be held in the municipal auditorium. More than 1,000 persons are expected to attend.

"Dedication will be Sunday at 2:30 p.m., when Governor (Edward F.) Arn, a member of the Topeka lodge, will give the dedicatory address..."

The Elks continued to bask in their prosperity through the decade of the 50s. According to a current trustee of the order, membership in the Elks jumped to more than 1,000 after World War II and through the 50's. However, during the last 20 years, membership gradually has dwindled to its current number of about 400.

Because of its declining membership and of rising utility and maintenance costs, the Elks abandoned its home at Seventh and Jackson streets in 1979; subsequently, it moved across the street into the Senate Room of the Hotel Jayhawk until alternative accommodations could be sought. After an extensive search, the order tentatively has planned to relocate to a rural country club by December, 1980.

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- 'Buyers Study Plan to Remodel Elks Building," The Topeka Capital-Journal, June 1, 1980.
- 'B.P.O.E.," by J.E. House, The Topeka Daily Capital, February 27, 1919.
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- 'Elk Forecasts Organization's Desegregation," The Topeka Daily Capital, May 8, 1972.
- 'Elks Inaugurate Plan to Aid Wounded Men," The Topeka Daily Capital, April 27, 1919.
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- 'Men and Money Gift of Elks in Nation's Crisis," The Topeka Daily Capital, May 10, 1918.
- 'New Manager Hired," The Topeka Daily Capital, June 21, 1970.
- 'New Manager Named," The Topeka Daily Capital, February 25, 1979.
- 'Topeka Elks Hear Flag Day Address," The Topeka Daily Capital, June 11, 1970.
- 'Topeka Elks Join Celebration," The Topeka Daily Capital, January 7, 1968.
- 'Lending a Hand to the Handicapped," The Topeka State Journal, December 15, 1969.
- 'A Home for Elks," The Topeka State Journal, November 9, 1905.
- 'Elks Honor 2 Topekans," The Wichita M. Eagle, May 4, 1957.
- 'Elks Award Presented to Hummer," The Topeka State Journal, March 26, 1970.
- 'Elks' Choice," The Topeka State Journal, March 27, 1958.
- 'Elks Lodges Observing Anniversary," The Topeka State Journal, February 15, 1968.
- 'Elks Plan Memorial," The Topeka State Journal, December 3, 1969.
- 'Governor to Speak at Rites Climaxing 10-month Project," The Topeka State Journal, May 19, 1951.
- 'Stories About Town: 'After the Ballet,' a Tale of the Elks," The Topeka State Journal, April 30, 1895.
- 'Biographical data about William Sayler and Herbert Seddon provided by the Landmarks Commission, Kansas City.

Inventory Number Elks Club Building

REGISTER OF HISTORIC KANSAS PLACES---COVER SHEET

Name of Property Elks Club Building

Location 122 West Seventh Street
(street and number)

Topeka
(city, town, or vicinity location)

(legal description)

Shawnee
(county)

Owner of Property B & A Development Company, Inc.

627 College
(street and number)

Topeka, KS. 66606
(city, town, county)

National Register status:

date approved for nomination to the National Register by Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review _____

date entered in National Register _____

Description: The Elks Club Building is a two-story brick building with limestone basement designed in a classically-oriented, "free eclectic" manner. It measures 69'x 89' and sits on the northeast corner of Seventh and Jackson. Extensive alterations were made in 1951, but the stone detailing of the exterior remains substantially intact.


177-5400-107

Register of Historic Kansas Places

Significance The 1908 Elks Club Building is significant for its association with
an important Topeka civic club and for the manner in which it evidences the local
design tastes of the early twentieth century. The first lodge of the B.P.O.E. in
Kansas was established in Topeka in 1891--the construction of this club house in 1908
evidences the growth and prosperity of this organization which was routinely involved
in many charitable projects. The building was designed by the firm of William Sayler
and Herbert Seddin.

Form prepared by Julie A. Wortman date 12-16-80

This property was approved for listing in the Register of Historic Kansas Places by
the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review on 12-10-80
I hereby certify that this property is included in the Register of Historic Kansas
Places.



State Historic Preservation Officer

Dec 16, 1980
Date

