

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Elk's Lodge BPOE #2

and/or common Philadelphia Athletic Club

2. Location

street & number 306-20 N. Broad Street

not for publication

city, town Philadelphia

vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42

county Philadelphia

code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	n/a being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: club

4. Owner of Property

name Agreement of Sale: Historic Landmarks for Living

street & number 30 S. Front Street

city, town Philadelphia

vicinity of

state PA

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Philadelphia City Hall

street & number Broad and Market Streets

city, town Philadelphia

state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

North Philadelphia Historic

title Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date in progress, Spring 1984

federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau for Historic Preservation, William Penn Museum

city, town Harrisburg

state PA

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Philadelphia Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks stands on Broad Street, Philadelphia's great civic avenue, at the head of a line of social and cultural institutions. Across the street is the Roman Catholic High School; to the south, across Vine, is Hahnemann Hospital and Medical College. The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Masonic Temple maintain their original uses as well. With the Iron Man's Hall, the Odd Fellows' Hall (both converted to offices), and the now demolished Scottish Rite Temple, these buildings formed a nearly continuous row of monumental buildings from Penn Square to Vine Street that mark one of the consequences of the movement of City Hall to Broad and Market Streets.

The Elk Lodge was among the last of these buildings to be erected on Broad Street, though its previous building at 1320 Arch Street had been in the same vicinity. It was designed in the Regency style that was fashionable in Philadelphia in the 1920s, no doubt because of the affinity of that style to contemporary streamlined Art Deco. As built, the Elk headquarters occupied its entire site for its first five stories, with a residential tower rising above to the full 13-story height. The lower five stories are distinguished by large window openings that describe the location of the meeting rooms, restaurants, ballrooms and auditoria, while the upper stories show the conventional pairing of double-hung small-paned windows that mark the guest chambers. Against that broad subdivision by fenestration of the facade is the secondary architectural articulation of belt courses, window trim and cornices that give scale and organization.

The main facade develops above a limestone base which is still visible on the side but has been resheathed in brick on the Broad Street front. That base contains plain, square-headed shop windows with central doors that mark the conventional commercial use of the ground story. In the center of the main facade is a giant two-story arched portal framed in limestone and capped by a giant keystone. It is flanked on either side by the round-headed, limestone framed windows which lighted the two principal lodge rooms; those giant round-headed openings across the main story create a monumental, urban scale base that gives the building a significant presence on the street. The third floor meeting rooms are lighted by smaller windows, given three-dimensional interest by small balconies, while swag panels, carved by Joseph Bass, emphasize the central vertical axis. The brick walls of the lower stories are of a pink-red with a subtle diaperwork pattern zigzagging below the massive third floor belt course which marks the extent of the main Elk rooms below the third floor. The remaining three stories of the base contain additional meeting rooms, dining rooms and the auditorium, and are indicated on the exterior by limestone framed windows

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with projecting heads carried on deep consoles on the fourth floor, and by the similarly scaled but simpler fifth story windows that form a transition to the upper residential levels. A blind or windowless story in between contained the kitchens and services for the fourth and fifth floors which were intended for rental to the public. Flagpoles projecting from the fourth and seventh floors added to the civic ornamentation of the building.

The upper seven stories and attic continue the color scheme, but with shorter floor heights and smaller paired windows that mark the guest rooms. The building is capped by a cornice at the thirteenth story, which projects very slightly from the wall plane. Above, the attic story is accented by swag panels that line up with the windows below. A limestone coping completes the facade.

If the exterior is a handsome period piece, it is the interior that gives the building its distinction. Behind the ground floor shops, the lower level contained a swimming pool, gymnasium and other paraphernalia of a men's club. Those uses still continue in the present building. The lobby leading into the Athletic Club has been modernized and its original marble wall surfaces have been covered in a wood grained formica.

On axis with the main door and up a short flight of stairs is the first of the principal public spaces, a great, two-story barrel vaulted chapter room. Its limestone piers carry a plaster vault, painted in imitation of Robert Adam's version of Pompeian ornamentation, with gilt detail adding brilliance to the space. A shallow apse at the end, approached by a short flight of stairs forms the ceremonial focus of the room and is obviously intended to recall Adam's great halls as well as ecclesiastical spaces. The latter reference is furthered by the side aisles, screened by the piers of the "nave", that provide for circulation paralleling the major space and recalling the plan of Vignola's baroque "Il Gesu" in Rome. Original wrought iron lamps hang from the center of the ceiling.

Flanking the stairs up to the chapter room are a return flight that leads to the "Memorial Hall" that overlooks the hall and in turn opens into the flanking lodge rooms, a classically detailed library on one side and a lounge on the other. The Memorial Hall is octagonal in plan with spherical pendentives making a transition to the shallow dome. The pendentives are decorated with gilt mosaic-like panels, framed in laurel leaf borders around emblematic panels, while the lunettes above the doors into the library and lounge were frescoed by Maurice Molarsky. They depict classically garbed figures enacting the Elk motto, "The Faults of Our Brothers We Write

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Upon the Sand", and across the hall "Their Virtues Upon Tablets of Love and Memory". With views out onto Broad Street at one side and down into the vaulted entrance lobby, the Memorial Hall is one of the most impressive spaces of its day in the city. Patterned mosaic floors here and at the auditorium survive intact and further enrich the building.

The secondary rooms retain the scale of the building's public spaces but are less elaborately ornamented. The lounge (on the south) retains its handsome fireplace which terminates a barrel vaulted room hung with great chandeliers, while the library, though subdivided, retains its original vaulted ceiling. Other rooms are of utmost simplicity, with the principal exception of the ballroom/auditorium, which fills most of the rear of the building. That room is preceded by a small lobby, which leads to a grand balcony stair on the north side. The auditorium seated 2500 and is another impressive space. Because it also served as a ballroom and convention facility, it has a flat floor and no permanent seating. The west wall is dominated by a large stage which is framed by a molded plaster surround. Overhead, the ceiling is organized by broad beams that span the room and abut the curved planes of the coved edge of the ceiling. At the corners and in the center are handsome, elaborate glass chandeliers that repeat the Neo-Adam detail of the lower rooms. A balcony on three sides, fronted with elaborate pressed plaster panels, completes this vast hall.

The upper seven stories, containing the guest rooms, are devoid of architectural interest, and follow the conventions of moderately priced hotel design. Double loaded corridors open into moderately sized chambers.

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 checked="" 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 1922-1925 **Builder/Architect** Andrew J. Sauer

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

When it was opened on the 25th of February, 1925, no other Philadelphia club could boast the facilities of the new Elk Lodge at Broad and Wood Streets. That splendor was appropriate, for with 7000 members, the Elks were the city's largest society, and one of the largest chapters in one of the nation's most important fraternal organizations. The Philadelphia chapter inaugurated the idea of building its own facility, rather than merely leasing hall space. This, their third building, was the largest and most impressive of all of the nation's Elk Lodges. As such, it was a significant monument to the fraternal movement which so shaped middle America at the end of the 19th century. The Elk Lodge has further significance as an architectural landmark on Broad Street marking its continued role as the avenue of civic institutions. As could be expected from its social and its physical prominence, the club chose to build in an architecturally imposing fashion, creating in its Neo-Adam building a fusion of institutional grandeur with the city's taste for the traditional late 18th century architectural styles. Finally, the club is of special note for it retains the major public rooms that gave it such recognition when it was opened and which now are among the last to survive into our age. Those rooms were designed by club member Andrew Sauer, later architect of the principal public building of the Sesquicentennial, the "Palace of Fashion," as well as the designer for the slender Art Deco building for Cunningham Piano on Chestnut Street and the Royal Theater on South Street. The interior of the Lodge was decorated by another member, portrait painter Maurice Molarsky, who created the handsome gilt fresco cycle in the Hall of Memory. It joins the Masonic Temple of the previous century, City Hall and the Academy of Music as one of the principal interiors of Philadelphia.

It is as a monument to fraternalism that the Elk Lodge has its greatest importance. As noted earlier, it was the Philadelphia chapter that had built the first specialized clubhouse for the society, in the vicinity of the theater district. That location was appropriate because the Elks had been founded by actor Charles Vivian, and had developed many of its customs around the needs of the acting profession. Their second clubhouse at 1320 Arch Street remained in the vicinity of the theaters and indeed many of its members came from that business, including the Chairman of the Building Committee for the present building, Frank Buhler, Vice President of the Stanley Theater Company. At the end of the century, the Club decided to broaden its membership base, and the Arch Street location was chosen because it was closer to the business center of the city. Prominent Philadelphia

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businessmen such as traction magnate and North Broad Street resident Charles Ellis, city official Charles Grakelaw, banker Charles Martin of the Kensington Trust Company, and John K. Tener, Governor of Pennsylvania, were among the members in the early part of the century who assisted in the planning of the new building. It is worth noting that these men were members not because of heredity, but because of their success in the world of politics and business, making the clubhouse one of the centers of Philadelphia power in the years after World War I. The position of the clubhouse, on North Broad Street near the automobile industry, the newspapers, theaters, and other business-related clubs, and its membership of upwardly mobile citizens of North Philadelphia made the choice of the Broad and Wood site an accurate description of the social position of the club.

The prominence of the Lodge was reflected in its dignified Neo-Adam exterior, and in the ambitious program of its interior spaces. Interestingly, the style, as well as the materials, were chosen as part of an extended tribute to Philadelphia and the nation's heritage. It was announced in 1922 that "the new home of Philadelphia Lodge of Elks will be of a strictly Philadelphia product and one in which the entire city may well take pride. Every nail, every sliver of steel, every bit of tapestry, of woodwork, of furniture -- in fact everything with the possible exception of the stone -- will be obtained here, and when the structure is completed we can truthfully say: 'This is what Philadelphia has done'". The question of whether the style of the building was intended as an acknowledgement of the coming Sesquicentennial is less clear, but the role that the fraternity played in "boosting Philadelphia and arousing interest in the Sesquicentennial" were regularly noted in the press. Certainly with the local interest in the Sesquicentennial, it cannot be purely coincidence that the Neo-Adam/Federal Revival became so popular in the Quaker City with numerous urban landmarks including 1900 Rittenhouse, the Mayfair Apartments, the Royal Theater, and the YM and YWHA on South Broad Street to name a few of the National Register buildings in the style in Philadelphia.

The architect of the building, Andrew J. Sauer, won the project in competition with fifteen of his peers, establishing him as one of the principal architects of the city. Despite his having designed the Sesquicentennial "Palace of Fashion", several tall buildings and South Street's Royal Theater, his career remains largely unstudied. He lived his early years in North Philadelphia, where his circle of acquaintance was largely upwardly mobile middle class. In 1899 he joined the T-Square Club, the radical architectural organization shaped by Cope and Stewardson, Wilson Eyre and the Price brothers, and from then on regularly exhibited and took part in

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the juried competitions. In 1905 Sauer won the prestigious Walter Cope Prize for a "Recreation Pier and Park along the Delaware River". Interestingly, in 1901 he listed himself as residing in New York, but the following year he had returned to Philadelphia. After his 1905 award, Sauer joined with Frank Hahn to form the partnership of Sauer and Hahn. Hahn had been the engineer for the Trussed Concrete Steel Company, designing the structure of Price and McLanahan's Blenheim Hotel, which suggested that Sauer was the design partner in their office. Through Hahn's social background, the office became one of the first to serve the emergent Jewish community, designing synagogues and places of business for the most adventurous portion of Philadelphia society. With this background, it was not coincidental that Sauer won the competition for the clubhouse of one of the few major clubs that did not discriminate against Jews.

The clubhouse that Sauer designed tells much about the social structure of Philadelphia after World War I and the position of the Elks in the city. Its location on North Broad Street contrasted with the central business district sites of most other important clubs, and made it apparent that the Elks expected the central business district to grow toward the north, incorporating the new types of business along Broad Street, notably the auto related industry. If their judgement about the city's future was flawed, the style of the building marked the general intention of the club members to merge with the established city by choosing a modern version of a traditional style and palette of materials. At the same time, the splendor of the interior places the Elk Lodge firmly in the tradition of the upwardly mobile middle class clubs, including the Masons, the Odd Fellows, and the Iron Men, all of which had built north of City Hall.

Remarkably, despite the bankruptcy of the Elks in the 1930s, the principal interiors remain in excellent condition. Presumably their splendor added to the charms of the Broadwood Hotel, and protected them from later alterations. According to newspaper stories, the decorative cycle was the work of Philadelphia portrait artist Maurice Molarsky. He attended both the Philadelphia Museum School (now the Philadelphia College of Art) and later the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where he won the Cresson Traveling Fellowship. In 1913 he exhibited at the Panama-Pacific where his portrait work won a silver medal. Those credentials were sufficient for his work to be reviewed in Thieme-Becker, Kunst Lexikon v.25 p.29, and in Mantle Fielding's Dictionary of American Painters (p. 244) and probably help indicate why he was chosen to decorate the Elk Lodge. Molarsky probably was principally responsible for the murals of Elk Virtue, which he signed, and may have helped lay out the remainder of the decoration. His work shows the

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influence of such decorative artists as Puvis de Chavannes in its planar form and primary colors, linking the Elk Lodge to the design tradition of public spaces that reaches back to the Boston Public Library. With the exception of Edwin Blashfield's work in churches, notably the Church of the Saviour, few other similar decorative cycles from the period survive in Philadelphia.

Finally, contemporary accounts of the opening of the Elk Lodge in the week of January 12, 1925, made clear its significance to the city. It was described as "the most modern clubhouse in America", and was held to be building that fully met the Elk slogan, "A Cause for Civic Pride, Philadelphia Must Always Lead." Its director Charles Grakelaw commented on its architectural styling and linked it to regional considerations. "Philadelphia has every reason to be proud of this splendid Temple to Americanism...It is fitting that this memorial of American ideas should be erected in this historic city." The Elk Lodge thus represented the aspirations and values of an important American fraternal order at the height of its strength, in a style that linked their building to the traditions of their region and their nation. As such it recalls the man and the organization who built the Lodge and documents the Philadelphia choice of reviving its own past as its regional architectural style.

The Club ownership of the building was, unfortunately, short lived. Construction of the Broad Street Subway reduced the rentals of the public rooms, and made the building inaccessible even to its members. By 1929, the club was forced to attempt to reorganize its debt obligations. Four years later, in 1933, the upper levels were being run as the Broadwood Hotel, with the Elks joining other organizations in renting the lodge rooms which it had built for itself a decade before. In 1934 the Elks decided to move to the neighborhood of its membership and leased the great John MacArthur designed mansion of the Disston family at 1530 N. 16th Street. After a decade removed from the business center, the lodge discovered that its second building at 1320 Arch Street was available, with the bronze Elk head still on the front wall. The membership voted to return to the business center of the city, and in 1944 they reopened the Arch Street building.

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Philadelphia Record 8 October 1922; 11 January 1925

Journal of the T-Square Club of Philadelphia, 1925, pp.246, 274

Meade Detweiler, An Account of the Origin and Early History of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the U.S.A., New York, 1897

Thieme-Becker, Kunst Lexikon, v. 28, p. 29

Mantle Fielding, Dictionary of American Painters, p. 244

C.E. Ellis, Authentic History of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, 1910

Charles Harris Wesley, History of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World, 1898-1954, Washington D.C.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1955,

The Elks National Memorial, authorized by the Grand Lodge, Chicago, 1931

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and then east 197.11' to a point on the west side of Broad Street and the place of beginning.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Philadelphia Deed 3N1-292
Philadelphia Evening Ledger 25 February 1925, 12 May 1934
Philadelphia Public Ledger 8 August 1930

(continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3/4

Quadrangle name Philadelphia Quad

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	8	6	1	0	0	4	4	2	2	9	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification Starting at a point on the west side of Broad Street, 66' north of Vine Street, then proceeding north, along Broad Street, 163.3' to the southwest corner of Broad and Wood Streets. Then proceeding west along the south side of Wood Street 197.11' to a point, then south of that point 163.3' (continued)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Philadelphia code 101

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George E. Thomas, Ph.D.

organization Clio Group, Inc.

date April 23, 1984

street & number 3961 Baltimore Avenue

telephone (215) 386-6276

city or town Philadelphia

state PA

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____

date _____

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

Elk's Lodge BPOE #2
Philadelphia Quad, Zone 18
E. 486 100 N. 4422 940

