

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 any 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 Odd Fellows Building

Other names/site number 136 S. Wolcott Street, Independent Order of Odd Fellows Building

**2. Location**

Street & Number 136 S. Wolcott Street Not for Publication ☐

City or Town Casper Vicinity ☐

State Wyoming Code WY County Natrona Code 025

Zip Code 82601

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide X locally. ( ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary M. Hopkins 4/30/09  
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

☒ 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):

*Edson H. Beall*

6-18-09

**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

Contributing

Noncontributing

- |                          |                          |             |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | sites       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | structures  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | objects     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Total       |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: SOCIAL	Sub: Meeting Hall
COMMERCE	Specialty Store
COMMERCE	Business

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE	Sub: Specialty Store
COMMERCE	Restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Post World War II Commercial

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Concrete
roof	
walls	Brick
	Limestone
other	Steel
	Aluminum

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

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*Odd Fellows Building, Casper  
Natrona County, Wyoming*

## Description

The Odd Fellows Building is located at 136 S. Wolcott Street, on the west side of the street, in downtown Casper, Wyoming. The building is adjacent to an alley on the south and a one-story commercial building on the north. It is located just off Second Street, a main commercial corridor in Casper. This building is located immediately north of the one previously built and occupied by the Odd Fellows.

The Odd Fellows Building, 90 feet wide and 140 feet deep, is a three-story mixed-use building completed in 1952. The commercial space on the ground floor of the building is accessed both from the street and from the long internal shopping arcade corridor. The main entrance to the building is into an elevator lobby at the north side of the building. The second floor housed functions of the Odd Fellows Lodge, including a suite of offices that face the street on the east side of the building. A large recreation room with a pair of anterooms used as reading rooms occupies the southeast corner. A large ballroom and a kitchen are adjacent to the alley on the south side of the building. A lodge room occupies the northwest quadrant of the building. A row of rental offices faces S. Wolcott Street on the east side of the third floor. A suite of closets and service areas is positioned in the center of the building on this level adjacent to the lodge room gallery. The double height of the ballroom extends into the third floor and a suite of rooms is positioned above the kitchen. Storage areas for the retail spaces occupy a portion of the basement; much of the rest of the lower level space has been used as offices.

A steel frame, concrete floors, and masonry curtain walls comprise the structure of the building. Finely honed limestone and shades of gold and tan Roman brick enclose the façade and returning bays on the south side. Red common brick fronts the hollow clay tile walls of both side and rear walls. An unarticulated parapet conceals the roof of the building.

## Exterior

Kawneer brand extruded aluminum and glass storefront units set above limestone-faced kickplates form the façade storefronts. The storefront zone has a dynamic arrangement with nearly all of the glazed walls placed at angles to the building line. An angled wall on the north and a limestone pier that projects to the building line on the south flank the central entrance to the arcade hallway. Two angled walls on the south half of the façade are separated by a second projecting stone pier flanked by planters built-in below narrow windows. Wood sheathing covers some of the limestone exterior elements. Transoms appear only above the doors. Tie rods extending from the brick wall above hold up a horizontal aluminum canopy. Horizontal bands of contrasting masonry materials dominate the façade above the storefront. Wide vertically-scored limestone piers form the walls between widely-spaced windows. Bands of brick extend from the storefront lintel and window lintels to the sill of the window on the story above. Above the third story windows the brick extends to serve as a parapet without any articulation of a cornice or parapet cap. This pattern of cladding extends in a return along the south wall the depth of the storefront window and two window bays. The industrial steel sash has the common multi-light configuration with inward opening hopper sash set below a larger awning sash.

The entrance of the building is articulated as a pylon and its vertical emphasis balances the horizontal bands of the rest of the façade. The crisply punched door opening is flanked by two inset display windows edged with narrow aluminum frames. The pair of aluminum doors set under a transom is deeply recessed in the entrance and flanked by abstracted pilaster forms. The building is identified as the Casper Lodge No. 22 in applied aluminum block lettering. The Odd Fellow's three-link symbol is flanked by the dates 1894 and 1950 that acknowledge the date the Casper



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lodge was founded and the date the construction of the new building was begun. The framing of windows filled with sash identical to that of the rest of the façade includes a prominent mullion form, a two-story high limestone pier, and a spandrel panel with the Odd Fellows chain links placed vertically, elements that reinforce the vertical emphasis of this bay. The limestone extends to the top of the parapet wall. The signage on the façade is completed by the applied aluminum block letters, reading Odd Fellows Building, placed on the brick between the second- and third-story windows. A projecting modern internally-lighted sign projects from the building near the entrance bay.

A series of service doors and narrow windows punctuate the south red brick wall along the alley. The four large window openings of the ballroom dominate the upper wall. The openings are punched except for a projecting brick sill. These openings are also filled with industrial steel sash with a tripartite configuration with a hopper window at the bottom center. A fire escape is positioned on the bay west of the façade return.

The north side of the building is faced with common red brick. The limestone facing of the adjacent façade does not return. The elevator shaft rises above the parapet wall, finished with a clay tile coping. The west side of the building is also clad with red brick. A series of small windows on the second floor lights the kitchen and a smaller number of larger windows open into the suite of rooms on the third floor.

**Interior**

Terrazzo floors and additional extruded aluminum and glass storefront units establish the character of the circulation system on the ground floor. The brown terrazzo floors are completed with a contrasting darker green border that covers also the lower few inches of the walls as a curb in lieu of a baseboard. A wood partition and service window encloses the north side of the elevator lobby east of the elevator shaft. A window on the opposite side of the hallway provides views into the adjacent retail space. A non-historic red vinyl wallpaper covers the wall surrounding the elevator door, which has a curved metal frame. The doors and cab of the elevator are metal. Polished aluminum strips form a baseboard and chair-rail-like elements. The Odd Fellows three-link chain symbol decorates the elevator cab floor. The elevator lobby is the east end of a hallway that extends into the building to provide access to the main staircase and also a side hallway that connects with the main arcade corridor. A glazed door and window allow light from the stairhall to penetrate into the flanking hallway.

Storefronts with glazing that extends from the terrazzo curb to a transom height line the arcade corridor. Narrow extruded aluminum frames hold the glass and the storefronts have a sleek, modern aesthetic. The original glazed aluminum doors are in situ. Added wood framing elements highlight the location of the doors and similar elements have been added around the solid transom area above the window framing elements. The light fixtures in the arcade corridor have been replaced. The retail spaces that flank the corridor have various types of interior finishes. Staircases in these spaces connect to storage areas below in the basement, where the interior finishes have also been altered in many cases.

The second floor corridor that serves the elevator, street-facing offices, and recreation room has a checker-board linoleum floor of tan and green squares. The suite of three offices open onto each other, as well as to the hall. A large walk-in safe is located in the south office. The light-colored wood office doors have a glazed upper half filled with ribbed translucent glass and large vents in the lower portion. The light fixtures in this hall have been replaced, though distinctive units with circular metal reflectors hang in the offices. The entrance to the recreation room has a door fully glazed with ribbed glass set into a surround with a sidelight and transoms. The floor of the recreation room is the

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same color and pattern of linoleum as the hallway. A large panel in the floor features the three-chain symbol. The upper walls have aluminum strips for the display of photographs of lodge leaders. A small service window opens from the adjacent office into the recreation room. Wide wall openings connect the reading rooms with the larger recreation room. Fluorescent fixtures light the large game room; some of the distinctive metal fixtures found in the building hang in the reading rooms.

The ballroom on the second floor is a double-height space. A low platform occupies the southeast corner. Plaster walls rise above the parquet floor to the height of a band at the lower edge of a prominent cove that makes the transition from wall to ceiling. Lighting washes up onto the curve of the coving, concealed by the band. A special light fixture dominates the ballroom ceiling. Its centerpiece is a circular translucent panel suspended below red, white and blue (important Odd Fellows symbolic colors) circles of neon. The red velvet drapes and valances at the large windows with industrial steel sash do not appear to be original and the pink paint on the walls they compliment is likely not an original color. A pair of doors and a large service window connects the ballroom with the adjacent kitchen and rear service stairs. A third door provides access to an anteroom of the adjacent lodge room.

A second hallway extends from the elevator and stairhall to the lodge hall and service areas. This hall meets a transverse hall that separates the lodge room from the coatroom, bathrooms, storage closets, a staircase to the gallery of the lodge hall, and the main entrance to the ballroom. Small view windows in the ballroom door, as well as the lodge room door, allow for controlled access to these areas.

The lodge room is entered at its east end through a pair of entrances. This room has raised platforms for seating along its long north and south walls. A stage that spans the west end wall has stairs at both ends. Front and rear curtains hang on the stage and feature the three-link symbol. Seats and podiums for lodge officers are centered on the long walls, the stage front, and along the east wall. Two rows of upholstered metal seats occupy the side platforms. The original patterned wool carpet covers the floor. Lodge banners hang on the east wall above the doors. Stairs at both ends of the east wall rise to the gallery that encircles three sides of the room. Two types of wood chairs, thought to have been used in the earlier lodge building, provide seating in the gallery. A recessed lighting system in the ceiling is controlled from the gallery, where a colored spotlight is located. Utilitarian fluorescent lighting units hang from the ceiling.

The offices facing Walcott Street on the third floor have doors like those on the second floor. The hallway on this level has been carpeted. The staircase in the southwest corner of the building extends to the third floor to serve a suite of three rooms located north of the staircase. Though not outfitted for this purpose, the rooms were perhaps intended for a caretaker's apartment; they are used currently for storage.

A large portion of the basement was remodeled for use as an architect's office circa 1970. This project altered the character of the space with new forms and interior finishes.

### **Integrity**

Overall, the Odd Fellows Building has excellent historical integrity. The materials of the exterior of the building are unaltered, so the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship is excellent. A large sign added to the façade is the only change and can be easily removed.

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The integrity of the design, materials, and workmanship is excellent in many areas of the interior, especially the second floor, where the lodge facilities are located. The ballroom and lodge room have experienced some minor changes in paint color and furnishings. Yet, many original furnishings, fixtures, and finishes remain intact. The same condition exists on the third floor. The integrity of the interior of the arcade corridor is very good. Minor wood elements introduced into this space could be easily removed. Some changes have been introduced into the interior of the storefront units, including one used as a restaurant. The integrity of these spaces varies though they are not considered to be significant character-defining areas.

The integrity of setting, feeling, and association is also excellent, due to the lettering and symbolism incorporated into the exterior and interior finishes of the building. Though no longer used by the Odd Fellows Lodge, the building is still known in Casper by that name. The current owner has acquired and has permission to leave in place the Odd Fellows signage, banners, and symbols in the elevator cab, and lighting that have always been in the building. Consequently, the building will continue to express its original association with the Odd Fellows Lodge.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- |               |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>  X  </u>  | A | Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.                                                                                                                                                         |
| <u>      </u> | B | Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <u>  X  </u>  | 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. |
| <u>      </u> | 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.)

- |               |   |                                                                              |
|---------------|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>      </u> | A | owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.             |
| <u>      </u> | B | removed from its original location.                                          |
| <u>      </u> | C | a birthplace or a grave.                                                     |
| <u>      </u> | D | a cemetery.                                                                  |
| <u>      </u> | E | a reconstructed building, object, or structure.                              |
| <u>      </u> | F | a commemorative property.                                                    |
| <u>      </u> | G | less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years. |

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Community Development and Planning

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance

1952-1959

Significant Dates

1952

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Wilking, Jan

Goodrich & Wilking

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

See Continuation Sheets



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## Summary Paragraph

The Odd Fellows Building in Casper, Wyoming is historically significant at the local level in three areas and therefore eligible for listing in the NRHP. The property is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Social History. Completed in 1952, it is an important component of the post World War II building boom in downtown Casper at the time the city was developing as a major commercial center. The building also represents the resurgence of fraternal lodge life in small cities after World War II. It is also eligible under Criterion C as representative of modern style architecture and as an important work by a locally prominent firm, Goodrich & Wilking. It represents the moderate interpretation of modernistic design considered appropriate in Casper at the time.

## Historic Contexts

### The World War II and Aftermath Building Boom in Casper

Casper was founded as a railroad town on the Chicago & North Western railroad line in 1888. The town initially served the local ranching economy. The development of the nearby Salt Creek Oil Field during the 1910s ushered in the long-term reason for the city becoming a prominent commercial center in Wyoming: oil.

The World War II years brought a war economy to Casper based on local resources: oil, cattle, and wool, all of which were vital to the war effort. Casper earned the nickname "Oil Capitol of the Rockies" during this time. The airfield constructed for an army air base became the Natrona County Airport after the war. Casper was particularly well situated along transportation routes, since it was also served by two railroads and was on a main north/south highway in Wyoming, in addition to having an airport.<sup>1</sup>

The oil companies and their employees began to dominate Casper after World War II. Standard Oil of Indiana, the Texas Oil Co. (known as Texaco after 1959), and the Socony-Vacuum Oil Co. had major refinery operations in the vicinity and Casper became headquarters for some 200 oil-related businesses, including lease brokers, geological laboratories, bit dressers, and oil well suppliers. The city led the state with its civilian payroll, and became the center of the state's industrial, commercial, and social activity. Coal and uranium mining increased during the mid-1950s, as did the electrical energy sector. The construction of the Dave Johnston Power Plant near Glenrock led to Casper becoming a center for electrical transmission lines transporting power throughout Wyoming.<sup>2</sup>

A post-war building boom underway in Casper during the 1950s mirrored the increase in population and commerce. During the boom period, generally defined as the 1950s, the population of Casper increased by over 15,000. The building boom peaked in 1954 and 1959 was the last year that the collective amount spent on new buildings in Casper was above average. The *Casper Star-Tribune* boasted in February of 1954 that "Boom-bent but carefully braced against bubble-building, Casper and Natrona County forged ahead in 1953 and into 1954 to record a chapter of progress unparalleled in the past and unlimited in promise for the future." Property owners in the city of Casper spent an average of only \$3,500,000 on new construction for the ten years prior to 1952, while during the next ten years the average was \$8,300,000. The amount spent in 1952 seemed astonishing at over \$9,900,000 until that record was

<sup>1</sup> P. J. Rose, "100 Years of Solitude: the Elusive Quest for Diversity Goes Back to Casper's Early Economy," in *The Casper Century* (Casper: *Casper Star-Tribune*, 1989), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> Rose, p. 107; *Polk's Casper (Natrona County, Wyo.) City Directory* (R. L. Polk & Co., 1954), pp 12-16; *Wyoming State Directory of Business and Industry* (Rocky Mountain Directory Co., 1950), p. 127.

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broken in 1954 when the total was over \$12 million. 1959 was the third year that the total was significantly over the average, at over \$9,500,000.<sup>3</sup>

Buildings constructed during the boom years transformed downtown Casper. Approximately 40 non-residential buildings were erected in Casper each year during most of the 1950s, though residential construction changed the size and nature of the city as much with 4,500 new homes built between 1950 and 1960. The number of architectural firms in the city increased from four to eight during that same period, reflecting the demand for design documents. The 1949 Ohio Oil Building, though a late presentation of the Art Deco style, was an early component of the building boom downtown. This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).<sup>4</sup>

In 1950 Casper architect Jan Wilking predicted that there would be a definite trend toward the modern in design of downtown buildings in Casper, but nothing extreme or radical in appearance. A new Telephone Building, completed in 1951, had a modern appearance with no applied ornament. New storefronts and entrances were installed in older buildings, including the Kassis Department Store. Electronic doors welcomed guests at the "modern entrance to traditional hospitality" at the Gladstone Hotel. The lodge facilities in Casper were increased during this time. The Moose Lodge erected a new building in 1951 and the Eagles erected a building designed by Goodrich & Wilking.<sup>5</sup>

The new building erected by the Odd Fellows on S. Wolcott Street, completed in 1952, represents the modern – yet moderate – approach to style in Casper and a downtown building boom. Its location next to the corner of S. Wolcott Street and Second Street was considered by Earl G. Osborn, the Natrona County assessor, to be the prime real estate corner in Casper, if not Wyoming. Several other new buildings followed. The Superior Oil Co. Building was erected further north on Wolcott Street at East A Street in 1953. In 1954, non-residential building projects comprised nearly \$3.5 million of the \$12 million total. The projects that year included the Memorial Hospital annex, an addition to the new junior high school, and the new Casper Junior College, projects related to the influx of residents. St. Anthony's Convent and the Midwest Building annex were also noted projects of 1954. After the First Interstate Bank building burned in 1955, the bank completed a new building in 1958. Noted as bringing modern bank design to the city with its basement parking garage and the first escalator in Wyoming, the bank tower, at eight stories, was the tallest building in the state at the time. The contemporary six-story Petroleum Building featured glass, porcelain enamel panels and precast concrete on its exterior.<sup>6</sup>

The role of the downtown central business district in Casper changed somewhat during this building boom. The retail sector decentralized with the construction of the Westridge Village strip shopping center in 1949 and a second one on CY Avenue in 1950, as well as commercial development at the Sunrise and Hilltop centers. Though new buildings continued to be erected downtown, schools and commercial buildings near the new residential areas at the edges of the

<sup>3</sup> "Casper Reaches New Milestones in 1953," Annual Wyoming Edition, *Casper Tribune-Herald*, 14 February 1954; "1959 Third Biggest Building Year in Casper," Annual Wyoming Edition, *Casper Tribune-Herald*, 14 February 1960; "Building Construction Tops \$8 Million," Annual Wyoming Edition, *Casper Tribune-Herald*, 10 March 1963.

<sup>4</sup> *Wyoming State Directory of Business and Industry* (1950), p. 576; *Polk's Casper (Natrona County, Wyo.) City Directory* (1960), pp. xi, 90; Robert Rosenberg, *Ohio Oil Company Building National Register of Historic Places Nomination* (2001).

<sup>5</sup> "New Casper Business Buildings and Housing Additions Mark Year," Annual Wyoming Edition, *Casper Tribune-Herald*, 18 February 1951. The firm of Goodrich & Wilking designed the new entrance for the hotel.

<sup>6</sup> Irving Garbutt, *Casper Centennial, 1889-1999, Natrona County, Wyoming 1890-1990* (Dallas: Curtis Media Corp., 1990), pp. 52, 323, 328; "Construction Carried on at High Level," Annual Wyoming Edition, *Casper Tribune-Herald*, 14 February 1954; "Casper Experiences Biggest Building Boom," Annual Wyoming Edition, *Casper Tribune-Herald*, 13 February 1955; "Building Permits Third Highest on Record," Annual Wyoming Edition, *Casper Tribune-Herald*, 17 February 1957;

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city dominated new construction during the last half of the 1950s. Although no downtown office building projects were initiated in 1958, some smaller construction projects occurred in the downtown area. 1959 was the last year of notably above average construction, though building continued during the early 1960s at a pace closer to the average amount for the time.<sup>7</sup>

**Lodge Life and Buildings in Casper, Wyoming**

A large number of fraternal lodges and service organizations were active in Casper, as was common in the United States, for a period of nearly one-hundred years beginning in the 1890s. The Masonic Lodge in Casper was granted a charter in December 1893. Lodge No. 22 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) was formed in March 1894, less than a year later. The Casper lodge of the IOOF erected a building at what was then the outer edge of the business district, the corner of East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Wolcott Street, in 1896. Lodge rooms were located on the upper floor of the two-story building. The Elks Lodge, chartered in July 1918, was a third organization that had a large membership in Casper.<sup>8</sup>

During the early twentieth century boom period in Casper, the 1910s and 1920s, both the Masons and Elks erected buildings in downtown. The Masonic group completed its first building in 1914, after meeting for many years in the first IOOF building. The Masonic lodge, designed in a commercial style, relates to nearby buildings of that type, including the Hotel Townsend that it abutted. The Elks Lodge erected a building in 1922, a two-story building that exhibits elements of the Renaissance Revival style. Both of these lodge buildings, as well as the Hotel Townsend, have been listed in the NRHP.<sup>9</sup>

During the 1920s and 1930s, the male residents of Casper could spend many of their evenings in the fraternal lodge halls in downtown Casper. All of the lodges had memberships of several hundred in their heydays. Meeting nights were staggered so men could belong to more than one group. The lodges also had affiliated groups for women and teenagers and therefore provided social connections for the entire family.<sup>10</sup>

By the time that Lodge No. 22 was established in Casper in 1894, the IOOF had a strong hold in the United States and was independent from the English organization that had been the origins of the fraternal lodge. The IOOF was among the first fraternal lodges in the United States to offer its members benevolent services, such as relief to the sick, distressed, and orphans, as well as burial services. The IOOF confers three degrees beyond the initiatory degree. The degrees are represented by the three chain link symbol, Friendship, Love, and Truth. The IOOF had initiated over two million members by 1895 and had a membership of over three million in 1915. Wyoming had 32 lodges, which had a total of 2,197 members in 1903; at that time Casper's Lodge No. 22 with 69 members was a medium sized group in the state. Nation-wide, lodge membership peaked at over three million members in 1915. Lodge membership nationally was only 243,000 in 1978.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Rose, pp. 111, 113.

<sup>8</sup> "Odd Fellows Now Occupies Half-Million Dollar Structure," Odd Fellows Lodge No. 22 Special Edition, *Casper Star*, 20 June, 1952; Edson M. Sellers "Fraternal Organizations," Typescript No. 534, Group 1509, Works Progress Administration Collection, Wyoming State Library.

<sup>9</sup> Robert G. Rosenberg, *Elks Lodge No. 1353 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, 1996 and *Masonic Temple, Casper, Wyoming National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Interview, Fern Olson, July 28, 2008, Casper; Sellers, "Fraternal Organizations," and "Service Clubs," Typescript No. 533, Group 1510, Works Progress Administration Collection, Wyoming State Library.

<sup>11</sup> Alvin J. Schmidt, *Fraternal Organizations* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), pp. 243-245.



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The local Lodge No. 22 in Casper was affiliated with the Grand Lodge of Wyoming, as well as the national Sovereign Grand Lodge. Membership was open to adult white males 21 years of age (prior to the 1970s). Initially only female relatives of lodge members and the Odd Fellows could join the Rebekah groups; later other women of good character could become members. The first Rebekah Lodge in Casper was organized in 1901 and a second group was formed in 1915. The Odd Fellows organization in Casper included the Enterprise Encampment No. 9 and the Canton Casper Ladies Auxiliary No. 1. The Patriarchs Militant Encampment No. 6 was the parade unit. The Casper Odd Fellows supported a Boys Junior Order and Theta Rho Girls Club organizations. There were two branches of the social arm of the IOOF, the Ancient Mystic Order of the Samaritans.<sup>12</sup>

The active lodge-based male social life that was prevalent during the late nineteenth century throughout the United States declined during the early twentieth century and barely survived the economic depression of the 1930s. The Masons, Odd Fellows, and other national groups lost a combined membership of over one million members, but survived when many smaller lodge organizations did not. The decrease in membership was attributed to some degree to the limited offering of ceremonies and symbolism. The lodges evolved by offering more of the recreational and service programs made popular by the Rotary and Lions service organizations. At the same time, traditionalists promoted the value of ritual work.<sup>13</sup>

The lodge buildings in Wyoming towns and cities suggest that fraternal lodges had a second heyday during the post World War II years. Membership numbers increased after the war and through the 1950s. The construction of lodge buildings in Casper during this time included new Moose, Eagle, and Odd Fellows facilities. The Eagles erected new buildings in Sheridan in 1949 and in Cody in 1950. Some of these buildings, like that of the Odd Fellows in Casper, were multi-story buildings; others had the form of one-story banquet halls. The Elks lodge buildings in Cheyenne (1951) and Rawlins (c. 1950) received modernized facades. The size of these buildings, and particularly the provision of recreational and social spaces in the Casper Odd Fellows Building, suggest that both ritualistic and social aspects of the lodge were accommodated and encouraged.

### The New Odd Fellows Building

Lodge No. 22 members began planning for a new building during the early 1930s, but the building project was not initiated until 1949. R. W. Chase, a former leader of the lodge, served as chairman of both the Planning and Building Committee of nine members and the Board of Building Directors. The sale of the old Odd Fellows Building helped to fund the project and the various units of the Odd Fellows lodge family worked to raise the rest of the money needed. The \$414,000 cost of the building was often rounded up to a half million-dollar project, presumably to include furnishings. The 1952 building was designed to be an updated version of the older building and provide a lodge room, ballroom, and space for casual socializing above retail space on the ground floor. At the time the new building was completed, some 2,000 residents of Casper were involved in the various IOOF affiliated organizations.<sup>14</sup>

Lodge No. 22 engaged the local architectural firm of Goodrich & Wilking to design the new facility. The local newspaper's report on the new building emphasized its status as the most modernly styled and fireproof building in Casper. The façade, with bands of brick and limestone, was described as a "modernistic front" (see "Architect's Sketch" on page 13). The three-story building was designed so two additional stories could be added along the

<sup>12</sup> Schmidt, pp. 244-245; William J. Whalen, *Handbook of Secret Organizations* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1966), 117-125; Sellers, p. 29c.

<sup>13</sup> Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 151-152.

<sup>14</sup> Sellers, "Fraternal Organizations;" "Enrollment Runs High," Odd Fellows Lodge No. 22 Special Edition, *Casper Star*, 20 June 1952.



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Wolcott Street side. The building had the modern conveniences of hot-water baseboard heating and air conditioning.<sup>15</sup>

The Odd Fellows Building provided an undeniably modern setting for commercial activity in the ground floor arcade and shops. The idea of the arcade, "new to Wyoming" at the time, is credited to building trustee and barber, Emil Beyer who became a tenant in the building. The stores on the street and in the arcade had the new post-war aesthetic of glass and aluminum open storefronts. The tenants of the building boasted of their modern equipment, services, and products. The group initially included the Town House Café, Byron's Office Machines, Beyer's Barber Shop, Whitt's Jewelry, and Busch & Offerbach, optometrists. The Employment Security Commission of Wyoming occupied offices in the basement, and members of several professions related to the oil industry rented the offices on the third floor.<sup>16</sup>

Leon C. Goodrich had an architectural practice in Casper for many years. During the 1920s he was affiliated with William R. Dubois in the firm Dubois & Goodrich and then shared an office with Kark L. Krusmark. Jan Wilking joined Goodrich as a partner in the architectural firm of Goodrich & Wilking in 1936 after completing the study of architecture at the University of California at Los Angeles. He left Casper to serve in the Army during World War II from 1941 to 1945 and then returned. Goodrich and Wilking worked on projects throughout the state, including the Brinkerhoff residence on Jackson Lake and several schools, and served as Associate Architects for the War Memorial Stadium at the University of Wyoming. The firm's work in Casper included numerous schools and churches completed during the 1950s. It seems likely that Wilking, quoted in the *Casper Star* on the subject, was responsible for the modern design of the Odd Fellows Building.<sup>17</sup>

## Historical Significance

### Summary

The Odd Fellows Building in Casper, Wyoming is locally significant in several areas and therefore eligible for listing in the NRHP. The property is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Social History. It is also eligible under Criterion C as representative of modern style architecture and as an important work by a locally prominent firm, Goodrich & Wilking. Its period of significance extends from 1952, the time the building was completed, until 1959, a year that marked a tapering off of the post World War II building boom in Casper. 1959 was the last year that the collective amount spent on new buildings was significantly above average for the period. The building was used for its intended purpose for over fifty years until the Odd Fellows Lodge in Casper disbanded in 2007. However, the 1950s represents the heyday in lodge membership in Casper during the post World War II era. The excellent historical integrity of the Odd Fellows building enables it to convey its period of significance and several areas of significance.

### Criterion A

The Odd Fellows Building in Casper is eligible for listing under Criterion A as an important component of the post World War II building boom in downtown Casper at the time that the city was developing as a major commercial center. The building, incorporating offices, retail space, and lodge facilities, reflects the function of the Casper central business district at the time. Casper experienced a period of boom growth related to the oil industry, and its

<sup>15</sup> "Most Modern Design Used for Odd Fellow Building," Odd Fellows Lodge No. 22 Special Edition, *Casper Star*, 20 June 1952.

<sup>16</sup> Odd Fellows Lodge No. 22 Special Edition, *Casper Star* 20 June 1952; *Polk's Casper (Natrona County, Wyo.) City Directory* (1954), p. 528.

<sup>17</sup> "Casper Architect Dies in Colorado," *Casper Star-Tribune*, 11 February 1979; Inventory of Goodrich & Wilking Collection, Casper College Archives; *Wyoming State Directory* (1950); *Wyoming State Business Directory* (Denver: Gazetteer Publishing Co., 1923, 1941-42).

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Natrona County, Wyoming*

population increased significantly during this period. The building is locally significant in the area of Community Planning and Development as representative of the 1950s building boom in Casper.

The scale of the building is also representative of the large membership of the Odd Fellows lodge groups and the importance of fraternal lodge life in small cities during much of the twentieth century. Fraternal lodges and service clubs socialized the many new residents in Casper during the 1950s and allowed them to become affiliated with long-time residents. Lodge life was an important part of the male experience during most of the twentieth century, particularly in small cities such as Casper. Lodge affiliation provided regular social opportunities close to home and a connection to the state-wide group and a national organization.

Substantial and lovingly furnished lodge rooms were havens for male friendship in the clearly defined separate spheres of domestic life during the late nineteenth century, and this function continued into the twentieth century. Men created a "pseudo-domestic environment that offered relief from the competitiveness of public life" and a space where females were not dominant. The lodge rooms were places separate from both family and work and the lodge activities provided the emotional bonds of brotherhood and the opportunity to engage in community service.<sup>18</sup> As one of three new lodge facilities in Casper erected during the post World War II building boom, the Odd Fellows Building represents a mid-twentieth-century reinterpretation of the need for the lodge room based on friendships, social events, charity work, and the emotional bonds of lodge rituals. For these reasons, the Odd Fellows Building is locally significant in the area of Social History for its representation of fraternal lodge life during the mid-twentieth century.

**Criterion C**

The modern Odd Fellows Building was touted as contributing to and representative of Casper's progress in 1952 at the height of the post-World War II building boom in the city. The forward-looking design represents Jan Wilking's approach to mid-twentieth century building design in small western cities: modernity that was not extreme or radical. Masonry materials without the ornamentation of terra cotta or hand-carved stone comprise the façade of the building. Materials were carefully chosen and used to advantage for contrast in color and surface texture. The dynamic aluminum and glass exterior storefronts and gleaming arcade shops represented the up-to-date technology and aesthetic made popular by the extruded aluminum storefront components distributed by Kawneer throughout the United States. Industrial sash windows completed the new masonry and metal exterior envelope. The building is one of the few, if not only, examples of a building with an interior retail arcade in Wyoming. The building is locally significant as a design in a modern style by a prominent local firm, Goodrich & Wilking. It is also representative of modern, post World War II architectural presence and building boom era of lodge facilities and multi-use buildings in Wyoming communities.

<sup>18</sup> Barbara Franco, "The Ritualization of Male Friendship and Virtue in Nineteenth-Century Fraternal Organizations" in Katherine Martinez and Kenneth L. Ames, eds., *The Material Culture of Gender, The Gender of Material Culture* (Winterthur, DE: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1997), pp. 292-294.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

See Continuation Sheet

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 Buildings 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:

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	13	391798	4744939	3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

☐ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

See Continuation Sheet.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

See Continuation Sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title	<u>Betsy H. Bradley</u>	Date	<u>January 12, 2009</u>
Organization	<u>Wyoming SHPO</u>	Telephone	<u>307-777-8594</u>
Street & number	<u>2301 Central Avenue</u>	State	<u>WY</u> Zip code <u>82002</u>
City or town	<u>Cheyenne</u>		

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National Park Service

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Odd Fellows Building, Casper  
Natrona County, Wyoming

Major Bibliographic References

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- Whalen, William J. *Handbook of Secret Organizations*. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1966.
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National Park Service**

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Natrona County, Wyoming*

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary is the property the building occupies, Block 7, Lots 18 and the South ½ of 19, in the City of Casper.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encompasses all of the property historically associated with the Odd Fellows Building.

---

**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 the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

---

**Property Owner**

---

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

Name	Charles Walsh		
Organization	Walsh Enterprise Solutions	Telephone	397-267-8231
Street & number	136 S. Wolcott Street, Suite 203		
City or town	Casper, Wyoming	State	WY Zip code 82601

---

**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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

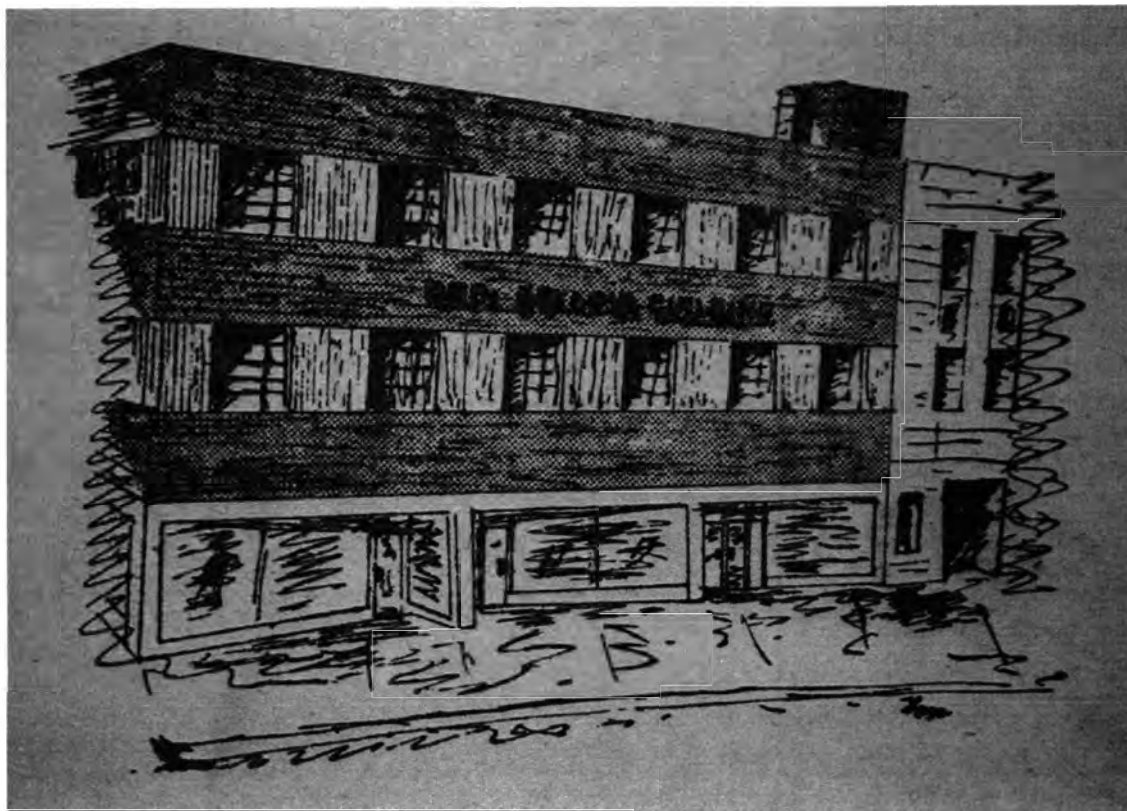
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Section Additional Page 13  
Documentation

*Odd Fellows Building, Casper  
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**Architect's sketch of the Odd Fellows Building**

*CASPER STAR, 20 JUNE 1952*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Odd Fellows Building  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: WYOMING, Natrona

DATE RECEIVED: 5/05/09 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/26/09  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/10/09 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/18/09  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 09000455

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 6.18.09 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

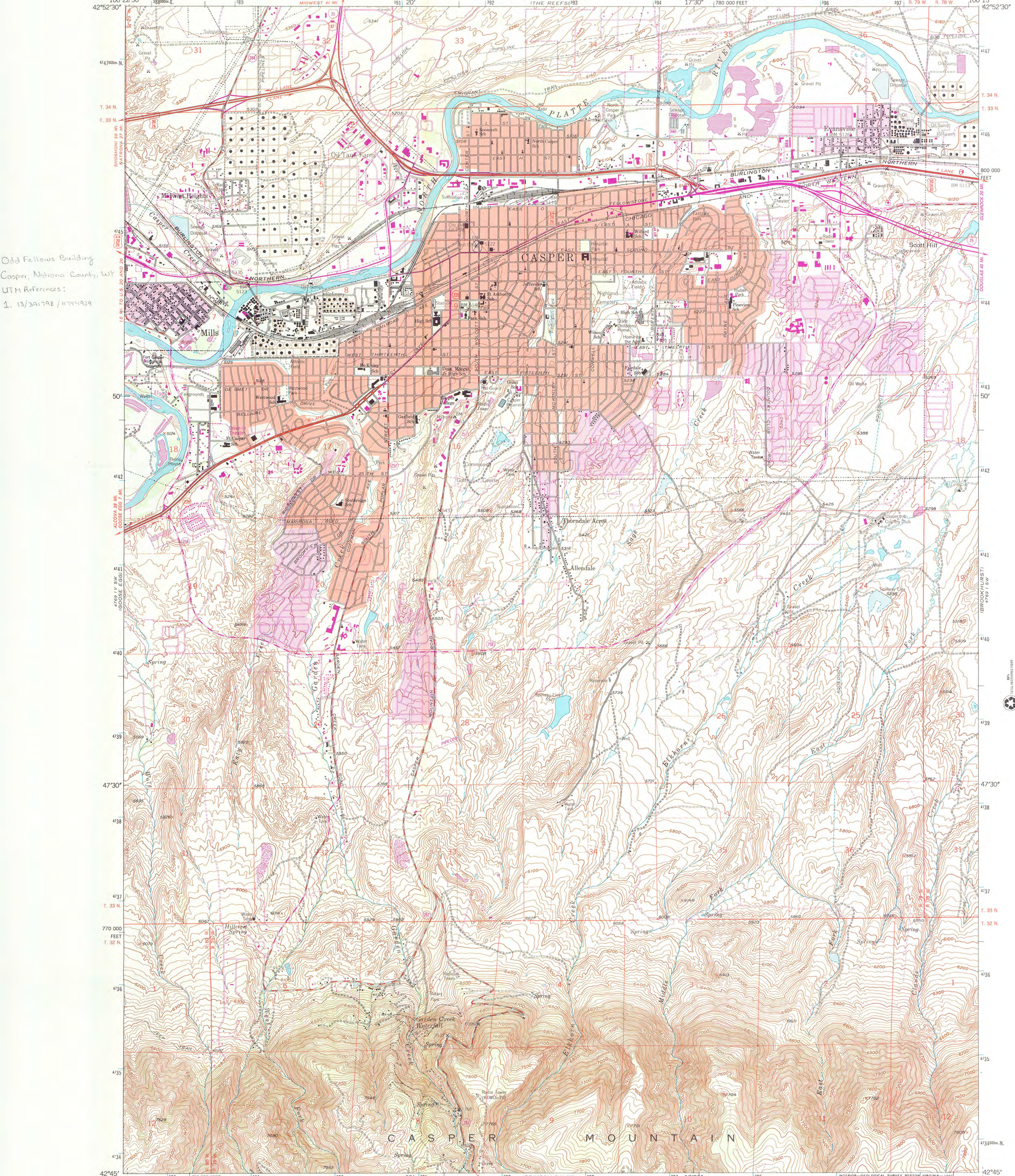
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Odd Fellows Building  
Casper, Natrona County, WY  
UTM References:  
1. 13/391798 / 47451939



Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
as part of the Department of the Interior program  
for the development of the Missouri River Basin

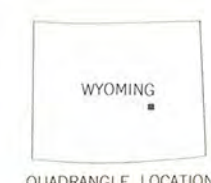
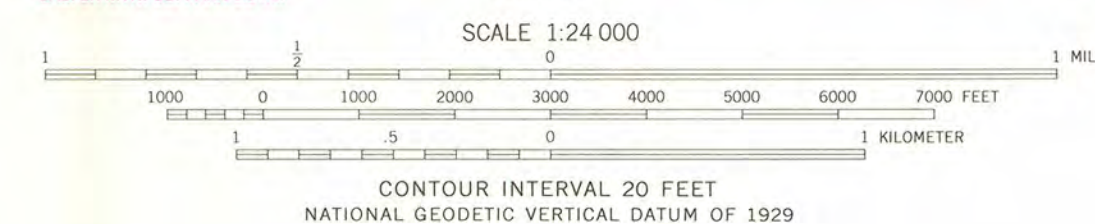
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1947 and planetable surveys 1951. Revised from aerial  
photographs taken 1960. Field checked 1961

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American Datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Wyoming coordinate system, east central zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 13, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
Dashed land lines indicate approximate locations

To place on the predicted North American  
Datum 1983 move the projection lines  
8 meters north and 50 meters east as  
shown by dashed corner ticks



ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Heavy duty	Light duty
Medium duty	Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

CASPER, WYO.  
42106-G3-TF-024

1961  
PHOTOREVISED 1984  
DMA 4781 IV SE-SERIES V874

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs  
taken 1980 and other source data. This information not  
field checked. Map edited 1984  
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas





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Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources

## State Historic Preservation Office

Barrett Building, 3rd Floor  
2301 Central Avenue  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
Phone: (307) 777-7697  
Fax: (307) 777-6421  
<http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us>

30 April 2009

Janet Matthews  
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye St., NW  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor (MS 2280)  
Washington, DC 20005



Re: Submission of the Sommers Ranch Headquarters Historic District and the Odd Fellows Building Nominations

Dear Ms. Matthews:

The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office is submitting the Sommers Ranch Headquarters Historic District and the Odd Fellows Building nominations for your review, which the State Review Board accepted and Mary Hopkins, the Wyoming Interim State Historic Preservation Officer, signed.

Please contact me at 307-777-7828 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kara Hahn".

Kara Hahn

National Register Program Coordinator  
Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office  
2301 Central Avenue  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
307-777-7828



Dave Freudenthal, Governor  
Milward Simpson, Director