



5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- X private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
X district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows include buildings, sites, structures, objects, and 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)

Table with 2 columns: Cat, Sub. Lists various categories like DOMESTIC, AGRICULTURE, RECREATION, LANDSCAPE and their corresponding sub-categories.

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Table with 2 columns: Cat, Sub. Lists various categories like DOMESTIC, RECREATION, LANDSCAPE and their corresponding sub-categories.

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival; Mediterranean Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Concrete
roof Metal, Terra Cotta
walls Stucco, Wood, Metal, Concrete
other Stone

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

Elks National Home

Bedford City, Virginia

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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)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

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

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE; SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance** 1916-1958

**Significant Dates** 1916

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A

**Architect/Builder** Ottenheimer Stern & Reichert, Architects  
Clinton & Russell, Architects  
Clark & Crowe, Architects  
Moran, Patrick J. (builder)  
Sidonia, Tom (artist)

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

=====

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

=====

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

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

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**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- \_\_\_ State Historic Preservation Office
- \_\_\_ Other State agency
- \_\_\_ Federal agency
- \_\_\_ Local government
- \_\_\_ University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia SHPO

=====  
**10. Geographical Data**  
=====

**Acreage of Property** approximately 100 acres

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

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	629050	4	17	629830	3	17	630040	4	17	629860
4	133970	4134070	4	133550	4133220	5	17	629180	4	133410	

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

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

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

=====  
**11. Form Prepared By**  
=====

name/title J. Daniel Pezzoni  
organization Landmark Preservation Associates date December 11, 2007  
street & number 6 Houston Street telephone (540) 464-5315  
city or town Lexington state VA zip code 24450

=====  
**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 Elks National Home (contact: Dr. Ronald L. Plamondon, Executive Director)  
street & number 931 Ashland Ave. telephone (540) 425-9305  
city or town Bedford state VA zip code 24523

=====  
**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 average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions,

gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Elks National Home  
Bedford (City), Virginia

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### **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

#### **Summary**

The Elks National Home is a complex of thirty-three historic and non-historic resources located in the City of Bedford, Virginia. The resources can be divided into two basic groups: the Home proper, comprised mostly of residential and support buildings dating to the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, and a farm complex dating to the same period and later. The farm, which supported the operations of the Home, accounts for the largely agricultural character of the approximately 100-acre nominated area, which continues in its historic use for pasturage. The rolling topography lies mostly between 850 and 950 feet above sea level and is drained by a creek that flows into the Little Otter River, a tributary of the Staunton (Roanoke) River. The nominated area adjoins historic neighborhoods on its east and north sides, the tracks of the Norfolk Southern Railway on the south side, and farmland on the west side. On a rise to the west of the nominated area is the Elks National Home Cemetery, created in the early 1980s. The Peaks of Otter and other peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains are visible to the north.

The main building in the Home complex is the Administration Building, a two-story building of Classical Revival and Mediterranean Revival design completed in 1916. The main building connects via arcades to seven two- and three-story dormitories, known as Cottages A through G, forming a front range of buildings in a crescent-shaped arrangement that faces south and southeast. The main building and dormitories have Spanish tile roofs, stuccoed tile block construction, and wood-framed doors and windows. Other features of the main building include a monumental portico, dining, kitchen, and hospital wings, and a half-round sunroom pavilion with an enclosed pergola-style second-story porch. Behind (north of) the main building and its flanking cottages are a power house, a theater, and two additional cottages (H and I) with arcade-fronted courtyard plans. This rear range of buildings, which dates to the 1920s and 1930s, perpetuates the materials and Classical/Mediterranean styling of the original buildings. The farm buildings are grouped along a lane that extends westward from the Home complex. Chief among them is a stucco tile block dairy barn with a gambrel roof, double glazed tile block silos, and an advanced ventilation system. Cattle barns, garages, and other buildings of frame, cinder block, and metal construction complete the farm complex. Note: As most of the resources are introduced in the text of Section 7 they will be identified by their inventory number; for example, "Administration Building (1)."

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Elks National Home  
Bedford (City), Virginia

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### Inventory

1. Administration Building. 1916. Contributing building.
2. Cottage A. 1923. Contributing building.
3. Cottage B. 1916. Contributing building.
4. Cottage C. 1916. Contributing building.
5. Cottage D. 1916. Contributing building.
6. Cottage E. 1916. Contributing building.
7. Cottage F. 1916. Contributing building.
8. Cottage G. 1916. Contributing building.
9. Cottage H. 1926-27. Contributing building.
10. Cottage I. 1930-31. Contributing building.
11. Fred Harper Theatre. 1938. Contributing building.
12. Power house and laundry. 1926-27. Contributing building.
13. Peacock shed. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing building.
14. Garage no. 1. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing building.
15. Garage no. 2. 1<sup>st</sup> half 20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing building.
16. Garage no. 3. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing building.
17. Equipment shed. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing building.
18. Dairy barn. Ca. 1920. Contributing building.
19. Milk house. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing building.
20. Cattle barn. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing building.
21. Cattle barn. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing building.
22. Quonset hut. 1940s. Contributing building.
23. Chicken house. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing building.
24. Pond. Ca. 1920s. Contributing site.
25. Garden. 1<sup>st</sup> half 20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing site.
26. Harding monument. 1925. Contributing object.
27. Elk statue. Ca. 1938. Contributing object.
28. Golf course. 1<sup>st</sup> half 20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing site.
29. Gateway and fence. 1<sup>st</sup> half 20<sup>th</sup> c. Contributing structure.
30. Elevated corridor. 1985. Noncontributing building.
31. Game room. 1999. Noncontributing building.
32. Garage. Late 20<sup>th</sup> c. Noncontributing building.
33. Farm building. Late 20<sup>th</sup> c. Noncontributing building.

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### Detailed Description of Administration Building

The Administration Building (1), also referred to in the report as the “main building,” stands at the center of the arc of dormitories that comprise the original buildings of the Home. The irregular-plan building is dominated by a monumental hexastyle portico supported by smooth stucco columns. The six columns are basically Doric in style, although their capitals are ornamented with astragal moldings. The portico pediment has textured buff-colored stucco in its tympanum and entablature—the same stucco used throughout the complex as an exterior finish material—with the inscription “National Home BPO Of Elks” formed by tan terra-cotta letters in the entablature. At the center of the pediment is a clock dial, also of terra cotta, that has stylized numbers and an outer ring of hour indicators. The pediment has horizontal and raking modillion cornices. Behind the columns and in line with them are flat Doric pilasters with fenestration and a center entry in the spaces between the pilasters. The first-story entry and windows are square-headed replacements of original round-arch French doors. The five windows above have false balconies with decorative metal railings. In the deeply recessed coffers of the portico ceiling are globe lights.

To the right of the portico is the two-story dining room wing, which is surrounded by a one-story arcade that was originally glassed in, although the present windows are replacements. The arcade arches are elliptical, unlike the round-arch openings of the arcades that connect to the dormitories. Running along the top of the dining room arcade is a concrete parapet with oval openings. Above, under the eaves of the dining room roof, are elliptical clerestory windows. Below, at grade, are small windows that lighted what were originally basement-level bedrooms for staff. To the left of the portico is a two-story wing with large elliptical window openings like those of the dining room arcade but with their original wood-framed sashes and transoms. At the end of this west wing is a semi-circular projection with the same windows but with concrete cartouches over the arches. The second story of the projection is a porch—now enclosed with storm window-like sashes—with simple columns above a railing wall, cast concrete festoons in the railing below the columns, and a crown of decoratively shaped outriggers or false rafter ends that give the porch a pergola appearance. The porch belongs to the second-story director’s suite at this end of the building. In the gable above the porch roof is a round window with keyblocks and decorative muntins. A plain chimney rises from the interior of the director’s suite. Another chimney, with a bulbous terra-cotta or cast concrete cap, rises on the east gable end of the dining room wing.

The gable roof of the portico and center section of the building extends to the rear elevation where it features a pediment with an elliptical attic window. The rear elevation windows on the second story and the mezzanine level above are grouped vertically in frames with spandrels between them. At the center of the elevation is the half-round projection of a stair landing and beside that is a modern elevator shaft. To the right is a hip-roofed three-story wing that was used historically as a hospital. At the end of the wing is a three-story pavilion, the top story of which has the same column and pergola treatment as the porch on the building’s front side. A historic-period elevator tower with a hip roof rises above the wing at its connection to the main building. At the west end of the rear elevation is another, shorter three-story wing with a column



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and pergola treatment of the top story, the back of the director's suite. From the second story of this wing extends an elevated corridor (30) dating to 1985 that connects the main building to Cottage H. The corridor is raised on simple concrete pillars and crosses lawns and the service drive that passes behind the main building. (An elevated connector between Cottage H and the Administration Building was proposed as early as 1928.) At the east end of the main building's rear elevation is a one-story kitchen wing. This wing, which formerly contained a boiler room in the basement, originally had a smokestack which was removed after the present power house was built in 1926-27 (possibly long after completion).

The front portico entry opens through a small vestibule into the lobby, which has a wooden wainscot and textured stucco walls and ceiling. A row of heavy round pillars extends through the front part of the room. The stucco-like material that forms the shaft of the pillars was applied in 1999 to the original columns, which are square or rectangular in cross section. The columns are linked by segmental arches. Broader arches span the width of the lobby to connect to a row of heavy square pillars and pilasters at the back of the room, where a flight of stairs ascends to the second floor. In the northeast corner of the lobby is a pair of large bronze plaques associated with the 1903 and 1916 dedications of the original and present main buildings. In the northwest corner is a reception station and a doorway that leads to administrative offices, contained in a mid-twentieth century rear addition. At its east end the lobby connects to the dining room arcade, which looks into the dining room through elliptical arches with replacement windows. A tinted postcard from the 1910s or 1920s provides information on the lobby's original appearance. The pillars were paneled and had lozenge-shaped ornaments on their shafts. The lobby was furnished with spittoons, potted palms, and ornate suspended lights with gilded metalwork and milk glass bowls. From the postcard it appears some of the arches may have been altered, although this may be a trick of perspective. The walls are portrayed as light gray with white trim.

The dining room is spanned by elliptical ribbed vaults. The elliptical clerestory windows are set into deep arched recesses. A heavy cornice runs under the vaulting and rows of pilasters with cartouches on their capitals extend down the side walls of the room. The pilasters and walls are painted brick to a height of about seven feet and plaster above (originally the brickwork on the pilasters extended up to the level of the capitals). At the top of the doorway and window arches are diamond-shaped accents. The focal point of the room is the fireplace at the east end, which is flanked by pilasters like those on the side walls and is surmounted by a stylized broken pediment. At the center of the pediment is a segmental-arch element with a circular mount for a stuffed elk head. Below is a Georgian Revival overmantel panel painted in 1942 by Tom Sidonia with an elk and mountain scene and below that is a Georgian Revival bolection fireplace surround. At the opposite end of the room, cantilevered on heavy ornamented brackets, is a balcony occasionally used by singers to entertain the diners. The balcony railing has fluting and corner panels with octagonal bosses. In the rectangular sections of wall between the pilasters at this end of the room, above the brick, is a series of six murals, four of which were painted by Tom Sidonia (all or most were painted in 1942). From left to right the murals depict: 1) men in Grecian garb at the seashore and inscribing a monument; 2) the Elks National Memorial; 3) the Hotel Bedford, the original Elks Home building, painted by Ralph Rorrer in a primitive style in the

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late twentieth century; 4) the Elks virtues of Charity (a nurse assisting a child in a wheelchair) and Justice (Blind Justice in front of a building modeled on the Supreme Court) separated by the American flag, painted by Haywood Pinion in 1969; 5) the Elks virtue of Brotherly Love, illustrated by a wounded World War I soldier assisted by another soldier and a Saint Bernard dog; and 6) the Elks virtue of Fidelity, illustrated by a Patriot soldier with a town scene and what appears to be Fort Ticonderoga in the background.

At its west end the lobby connects to a hallway that is paralleled by the library, a long rectangular room. Originally the library was about half its present length, but later a reading and waiting room of similar finish was combined with it, extending it on its west end. The library has a high wainscot of natural-finish paneled wood with textured plaster above. Beams span the ceiling. At the library's east end is a wide round-arch brick fireplace. Over the mantel shelf, in a cross-shaped frame, is a 1942 painting by Tom Sidonia titled "On the Eve of Discovery" depicting Christopher Columbus's 1492 fleet. A historic tinted postcard view shows the cross panel without the painting, milk glass lights hanging from the ceiling, and gathered green curtains with yellow fringes. The library was furnished with Mission style chairs (some of which may remain in the room), tables, arm chairs, and sofa. The glass-fronted bookcases shown in the view still line the room's hallway wall.

On the opposite (north) side of the hallway are a barber shop and a secondary stair. The hallway ends at a large room that was historically a sunroom (the south end, partly in the half-round pavilion) and a billiard room, referred to as a recreation room in some records and now used principally as a game room and sitting area. In an account from ca. 1940 it was noted "tables for pool, billiards, checkers, cards and chess are always occupied" in the room. The two parts of the room are separated by a chimney with front and back fireplaces with jack-arch fireboxes in brick surrounds. Over the south-facing fireplace is an overmantel decorated with wide battens. Over the north-facing fireplace is a 1942 painting by Tom Sidonia depicting a wagon train and pioneers. The north end of the room, originally conceived as seating nooks, has modern partitions forming two cubicles, one "The Corner Shoppe" gift shop, the other an activities and recreation office. A stair with a wood and iron railing leads down to a small theater in the basement with a terrazzo floor and theater-style seats with Art Deco arm rest supports. This may be the television room referred to in a ca. 1950s account.

The principal functions on the second floor are the Elks National Home Lodge room and the director's suite. The lodge room, located behind the second-story windows under the portico, is a two-story rectangular space with ceiling beams, old ceiling-mounted half-globe lights and wall-mounted sconces (torches and down-directed lights), and walls decorated with panels defined by molding strips. On the inside wall of the room is a balcony with a bas relief star ornament on its solid railing. In early drawings this balcony included an organ keyboard. The floor is carpeted and has daises along the walls. The old wood bench seats have modern upholstery. At the center points of the four walls are throne-like seats with engaged columns, ball finials, and arched panels inscribed with the four Elks virtues (Charity, Brotherly Love, Justice, and Fidelity). The chief seat is the Fidelity seat, which has a wide three-part back instead of a one-part back. Over the Fidelity seat is a stuffed elk head. Columnar lecterns stand in front of each seat. At the

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center of the room is a table draped with a gold-fringed blue cloth with the Elks emblem. A blue glass star light is suspended over the table. The seats, lecterns, and table are all similar in form and finish and presumably date to ca. 1916. The director's suite originally contained a living room and two bedrooms. It has been enlarged by the enclosing of the front and back porches, the latter to create a kitchen. Also on the second floor are guest rooms for visiting Elks officers and trustees. The partially excavated basement includes a shop area with scored concrete floors and glazed doors.

### Detailed Description of Other Home Buildings

The Administration Building is flanked by the dormitories known as cottages. Originally these were six in number—three to each side of the main building—but in 1923 a seventh cottage was added to the southwest end. Beginning with Cottage A (the dormitory added in 1923), the range of cottages extends through Cottage G at the east end of the complex, not far from Ashland Avenue. Cottages E, F, and G are two stories in height and Cottages A through D are three stories in height, although their third stories are basement stories that are not visible from the front, giving them a two-story appearance. They are gable-fronted buildings of the same construction and finish as the main building with Spanish tile roofs, rough stucco exteriors, and tile block construction. At the centers of their front elevations are round-arch entries framed by half-round Doric-like pilasters that support pediment-like decorative gables. Flanking the entries are round-arch windows with concrete sills and modern tinted plate glass infill (the openings were originally unglazed). The square-headed second-story windows rest on and are linked at the top by concrete string courses. Over the center window pair of each cottage is a blind round arch and above that at the apex of the gable is a louvered round vent. Concrete steps with metal railings rise to each entry.

The side elevations of the cottages are varied according to the locations of the cottages. Cottage A has a filled-in entry on the southwest elevation with filled-in windows above. The former entry retains a surround of engaged Doric-like columns, surmounted by a false metal balcony with an elliptical motif at the center. An identical balcony projects below the third-story former window. The two-story east elevation of Cottage G has a similar entry surround and balcony, although the entry and window still exist. Other cottages have existing or filled in side entries along the same lines as those of Cottages A and G. On the rear elevations of each cottage are stucco stair/elevator towers of simple modern design. The elevator on Cottage C was added in 1991, those on Cottages E, F, and G in 1999, and those on Cottages A and B in 2005. On the roof slopes are barrel-vaulted ventilation dormers. The remodeled cottage interiors have double-loaded corridor plans. The one- and two-bedroom apartments have modern finishes such as carpeting, natural wood storage units, laminate kitchen cabinets, and added closets with louvered wood doors.

Linking the cottages and main building is a corridor that, in various permutations, runs continuously from southwest to east a distance of over 800 feet. The corridor is expressed as an arcade where it passes through the front ends of the cottages, runs between them, and extends at the two ends. The arcade has round-arch openings that are smaller at the cottages

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and larger at the linking sections and at the ends. Originally these openings were unglazed on the front and (in the linking sections and on the ends) at the back, but in the middle decades of the twentieth century the back openings were apparently glazed and in 1999 the front openings were glazed with aluminum-framed tinted-glass windows. The exception is the extension of the arcade at the east end, which remains open. The southwest extension, added in 1923, is enclosed as a sitting room known as the "Howdy Room." The arcades retain their rough-textured stucco wall finishes and concrete floors (carpeted in the enclosed sections). Window openings that looked onto the sections of arcade that cut through the fronts of the cottages have glass block infill. At the hinge point between Cottages E and F, where the axis of the arcade shifts from a northeast trend to east, is a two-story game room (31) added in 1999 that has a half-octagon bay front and a metal-sheathed pyramidal roof. A second story was added to the arcade between Cottages F and G at the same time

The Administration Building and Cottages A through G constitute a front range of buildings behind which a back range of buildings was developed in the 1920s and 1930s. The back range consists of two dormitories—Cottages H and I—the Fred Harper Theater, and the power house and laundry. Cottages H and I are very similar in form and finish, even though they were built several years apart. Both buildings have three principal stories (Cottage I has an additional two basement levels) and U-shaped courtyard plans with two-story arcades across the open south ends of the courtyards. The arcades have segmental-arch openings with trellises and recessed panels below the second-level openings. A similar two-story arcade was constructed ca. 1930 to link the two cottages. The first level of this linking arcade remains open but the second level has been glassed in and a third level with a flat roof and square-headed windows was added in recent decades. The second-story fronts of the cottages have segmental-arch openings that were originally unglazed, creating a continuous open-air veranda along the front second story. (Photographs of Cottage I under construction show that the arcade and the arcaded second-story front elevation of the cottages are poured concrete.) The gabled front elevations have cornice returns, round-arch attic windows, and entries with simple classical surrounds. Cottage I has similar entries and surrounds on the rear basement levels. Elevator/stair towers with flat or shed roofs were added to the gable fronts of Cottage I (in 1985) and Cottage H (presumably also in 1985). The inner corners of the courtyards are angled and have classical entries with transoms. Most of the windows retain the original six-over-one sashes and have slate sills. On the Spanish tile roofs are hipped dormers. At the centers of the courtyards are circular fountains and in front of the arcades are (or were) stone and concrete bird baths. A ca. 1940 account noted the "particularly beautiful . . . inner courts with fountains, pools, flowers and vines."

Like the front range of cottages, Cottages H and I have double-loaded corridor plans, although the corridors are wrapped around the U configuration. Both cottages have bathrooms near the bends of the U with relatively recent fixtures, tilework, and replacement frosted windows, but otherwise the two cottages have most of their original interior finishes. Cottage H has somewhat more alteration on account of its present use as a special care unit, whereas Cottage I has been mostly vacant for a number of years and is virtually unchanged from its original character. (Cottage I's third-story rooms are experiencing deterioration from roof leaks.) Typical interior features of both cottages include terrazzo corridor floors, wood room floors, plaster and lath or

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plaster on tile block walls and ceilings, molded door and window trim and baseboards (originally stained a rich reddish brown color, now mostly painted), and panel doors (which mostly retain the reddish brown color). Doors to closets and bathrooms have vertically louvered upper ventilation panels. The doors to the corner stairwells are glazed. (The Montague Manufacturing Company of Richmond provided doors for Cottage H, according to a final revision drawing dated April 4, 1927.) The stairs have molded wood railings, curved at the turnings, that are supported by narrow rectangular steel balusters. The rooms of the upper basement level of Cottage I have been mostly converted to craft and hobby rooms ("Hobby Shop Lane"), many with personalized painting on the doors. It is possible the basement rooms in Cottage I, and spaces in other buildings that may not have been intended for resident use, were used as resident bedrooms in the mid-1930s, as suggested below in section 8. One of the rear cottages, possibly Cottage I, was described as having a basement workroom for handicrafts during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Cottage I was described as "completed and ready for occupancy" in 1931.

The Fred Harper Theatre (11) stands between the back corners of Cottages H and I, its placement creating another courtyard fronted by the arcade that links the two cottages. The two-story theater is constructed of cinder block with stucco finish. The shed-roofed front section has an arcaded first story that was formerly open but was recently filled in with aluminum-framed tinted glass windows and doors. The pillars forming the arcade have decorative bracket-like tops. In the second story are four small narrow rectangular windows and a modern sign. Wooden trellises like those on Cottages H and I, but with a decorative rounded frame, formerly attached to the front. About 1940 it was noted that the theater had "new sound and projection equipment, is air-conditioned, and is furnished with comfortable seats. Motion pictures are shown here twice weekly." The theater, which was also used for meetings and annual memorial services, was the gift of Dr. Robert S. Barrett of Alexandria, Virginia, a Past Grand Esteemed Leading Knight of the Elks. Behind the theater is the two-story power house and laundry (12), which is connected to Cottage H by a semi-subterranean steam tunnel with a walkway for rolling laundry carts on its flat concrete roof. The power house has the Home's customary exterior finishes as well as a cylindrical smokestack of tan brick and large six-over-six windows on the upper laundry level.

### **Detailed Description: Farm Buildings and Landscape Features**

There are thirteen buildings in the farm complex, eleven of which appear to date to before 1959. The oldest buildings, such as the dairy barn, do not appear to be shown in a 1919 postcard of the Home and its surroundings, although the dairy barn is similar enough to the Administration Building in terms of its detail and construction that it probably dates no later than the 1920s. Some of the buildings are constructed of cinder block, suggesting construction in the 1940s or 1950s, although a late 1930s date is possible (the Fred Harper Theatre was built of cinder block in 1938). Except for one garage and a farm building, all the farm buildings appear on a 1960 survey. Some buildings shown on the 1960 survey are now missing, namely a bull shed, a turkey and chicken shed that adjoined the equipment shed, and a duck house that stood on the bank of the pond.

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The dairy barn (18) is a three-level building of frame and stuccoed masonry construction. The barn has a bank barn form with the first and second levels entered at grade. Its most visible feature is its roof, which is of gambrel construction sheathed with metal painted red. The roof has flared eaves, wide weatherboards under the eaves and in the ends of the upper-level hay mow, gabled dormers on the south side, and two hip-roofed louvered ventilators on the ridge. On the east end rise two glazed tile block silos of cylindrical form, capped with multi-sided metal roofs with arrow-form wind vanes (one vane incorporates letters spelling "Natco"). The silos differ slightly in detail, a clue to their different dates of construction (the left silo is original), although both have capacities of eighty tons of ensilage. Between the silos and the barn is a wide ventilation shaft topped by two metal ventilators and with a round window near its base. On the south side a large entryway with a sliding door of x-braced beaded tongue-and-groove construction opens into the second level. To each side of it are six-light windows and projecting ventilation shafts with rectangular vents at the top. On the west end is a full-height projection with tall hinged hay mow doors at the top, over which extends the end of a hay fork rail. On the north side's lower or basement level is the entry to the cow stalls and more ventilation shafts. The interior features stippled concrete floors, tongue-and-groove wainscots and ceilings, and chamfered wood posts. The basement level is constructed of poured concrete whereas the walls of the first and second levels appear to be constructed of tile block and cinder block, the latter possibly the result of repairs or infilling. The basement level, which is now used for Christmas decoration storage, retains the stanchions that were used to secure the cows during milking. Fallen ceiling plaster reveals the reinforced concrete beams and tile block construction of the second-level floor. The second level has an office partitioned off with tongue-and-groove, a water closet, and a winder stair to the hay mow. Part of the hay fork apparatus remains attached to the rail that runs under the ridge in the hay mow.

Across a farm lane on the north side of the dairy barn is the milk house (19), a one-story cinder block building with an asphalt-shingled gable roof, metal-framed windows, a metal ridge ventilator, and a concrete ramp that was used to load milk cans onto a truck. Off the east end of the dairy barn extends garage no. 2 (15), a weatherboarded frame building with a metal-sheathed front-gable roof, a poured concrete foundation, and original and later windows. Across a driveway to the south of the dairy barn is the long equipment shed (17), an open-fronted shed-roofed building of frame construction with vertical board siding and concrete footers. Next to it is garage no. 3 (16), a weatherboarded frame building with an asphalt-shingled front-gable roof and a cinder block foundation. Between these buildings and the Home buildings are two more garages and a peacock shed. Garage no. 1 (14) is a long cinder block building built in two phases and at two levels. It has an asphalt-shingled gable roof and metal-framed windows. To the east of garage no. 1 is another garage (32), built after 1960, with a long shed-roofed form. It also has two levels that appear to relate to two phases of construction, as well as multiple tongue-and-groove garage bay doors. At the east end of the complex is a small frame building identified as a peacock shed (13) on the 1960 map. It has a metal-sheathed shed roof, vertical board siding, and four-pane windows.

To the west of the dairy barn stand more farm buildings. Nearest to the dairy barn is a cattle barn (20) built in two sections connected by a cinder block hyphen: a two-story frame section

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with wide weatherboard siding and a metal-sheathed gambrel roof with flared eaves, and a one-story cinder block section with a metal-sheathed gable roof. Beyond the cattle barn is a two-level farm building (33) of unknown original function, although a drive-in bay on the lower level with a hopper set into the ceiling above suggests the loading of grain or corn into a truck bed. The building is built into a bank so that the poured concrete lower level and frame upper level could both be entered at grade. Other exterior features include wide weatherboard siding, a metal-sheathed gable roof, screened vents on the north and south walls, and roof ventilators. Inside is a small entry foyer with plywood Dutch doors and a sheathing of slats extending part way up the exposed wall studs (the slats suggest the building functioned at least in part as a corn crib). On the north side of the farm lane is a three-level (perhaps split level) cattle barn (21) with a metal-sheathed gambrel roof with flared eaves and hipped and louvered ridge ventilators. The barn has a poured concrete lower level and wide weatherboards on frame above. There are a variety of doors including a sliding tongue-and-groove door on the side, a hay mow door on the north end, and double-leaf doors on the south end with x-braced tongue-and-groove panels and glazing. Extending from a back corner is a cow shed with vertical board siding and a low-pitched metal-sheathed gable roof, near which is a circular concrete foundation that may represent the base of a former silo or cylindrical corncrib. A chicken shed, now demolished, extended to the rear of the cow shed in 1960. Behind and downhill from the cattle barn are a Quonset hut (22) and a chicken house (23). The Quonset hut, which was purchased as Army surplus after World War II and used for agricultural storage, has the characteristic curved form with corrugated metal siding/roofing, sliding doors, and a poured concrete foundation. The cinder block chicken house has a metal-sheathed shed roof with a front pent and large south-facing windows covered with mesh. An addition formerly extended to its rear.

Landscape features and smaller-scale structures and permanent objects are scattered around the grounds. In the swale to the north of the dairy barn is a pond (24; referred to as a duck pond in 1960) with an earthen dam on its downstream west end and growths of willows and other trees and shrubs on its banks. The pond probably existed as early as 1931 when it was apparently described as a fish pond. A small cinder block pump house stands on the south bank. To the west side of Cottage H is a garden (25) planted with rose bushes and boxwood rows and with brick-paved walkways and seating areas. An informal border of hemlocks and rhododendrons gives the garden a shady deep-woods character. A bronze armillary sphere provides a focal point. A ca. 1920s post card shows brand new plantings of flowering trees in the vicinity of this garden as well as board fences lining adjacent farm and service lanes. A small swimming pool, in existence in the 1940s, was filled in to form the core area of the garden later in the century. About 1940 the site was described as a "beautiful pool and garden built down a slight slope in the midst of a grove of towering old oaks." A photograph from the same period shows a brick walkway, a rose-covered arbor-entryway, and a sign reading "This is your garden, walk in." Between the garden and Cottage H stands a granite monument (26) topped by a bronze bust of President Warren G. Harding. A bronze plaque notes that the memorial was erected by the Maryland, Delaware, and District of Columbia State Association B.P.O. Elks in 1925.

The bronze statue of an elk (27) was placed at the center of the circular turn-around in front of

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the Administration Building on December 9, 1937 (whether it stood elsewhere earlier is unknown). The 1,950-pound statue was cast at the studios of the Gorham Manufacturing Company. The name "Harvey" is embossed on a hoof. The statue stands on a base of gray Georgia granite carved to simulate a mountain ledge, a commonly used base material and form for elk statues erected by the Elks. The circle around the elk statue is named the Circle of Flags, dedicated in 2001. The lawn area beyond features an executive golf course (28) that has been in existence since at least 1931, when it was described as having nine holes, although in a ca. 1950s account it was described as a "six hole chip and putt golf course." The course is known to have been modified in the 1970s. A flag pole in the midst of the golf course flies the United States, Virginia, and Prisoner of War flags. At the entry to the grounds on Ashland Avenue is a gateway (29) comprised of two stucco masonry pillars of square form with Spanish tile gabled caps and small cornice returns. Bronze plaques identify the Elks National Home and welcome visitors. From the gate pillars extends a decorative iron fence.



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### **NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **Summary Statement of Significance**

Since its inception in 1903, the Elks National Home has figured as one of the principal institutions of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, today the largest fraternal organization in the nation. The Home at first occupied the Hotel Bedford, an 1890 Queen Anne building located on a picturesque site in Bedford, Virginia. In 1914-16 the hotel was replaced by an impressive complex of Classical and Mediterranean Revival buildings to provide an up-to-date retirement home for elderly and indigent Elks. The porticoed Administration Building and flanking cottages (dormitories), which are linked by a continuous corridor/arcade over 800 feet in length, were designed by the Chicago firm of Ottenheimer Stern and Reichert and built by Salt Lake City contractor Patrick J. Moran. More cottages, a theater, and a power house were erected behind the main building group in the 1920s and 1930s and a farm with a large gambrel dairy barn was developed to raise food for the residents. The Administration Building interior includes a pillared lobby, a dining room spanned by an elliptical vault, and a two-story lodge room. Throughout the interior are murals painted by former resident and circus artist Tom Sidonia. The Elks National Home continues to function as a retirement community for the Elks membership, including, since 1999, female Elks members.

The Elks National Home is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the social history area of significance as the principal Virginia facility of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, a leading national fraternal organization founded in 1868. The historic district, which includes twenty-nine contributing resources and four non-contributing resources, is also significant under Criterion C in the architecture area of significance for the quality and sophistication of its Classical/Mediterranean Revival design, innovative layout, and interiors. The period of significance begins with the completion of the principal and oldest buildings in the district in 1916 and extends to 1958, embracing forty-two years of the Home's operation. The Elks National Home is eligible at the state level of significance under Criterion A and at the local level of significance under Criterion C.

#### **Acknowledgements**

A number of individuals assisted the preparation and review of this nomination, foremost among them the administrative staff of the Home: Executive Director Dr. Ronald L. Plamondon; Controller Kim J. Snow; Director of Admissions and Marketing Counselor, Nellie Martin; and Security Guard Barry Schubert. Assistance was also provided by Home resident Sheridan Besosa, City of Bedford Commissioner of Revenue Valerie N. Wilson, architectural historian Betty Gereau, Bedford attorney William W. Berry IV, and John R. Kern, Michael Pulice, Jean McRae, Kelly Spradley-Kurowski, and Marc Wagner of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

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### Statement of Significance (continued)

#### Historical Background

Charity, Brotherly Love, Justice, and Fidelity, the guiding principles of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, lie at the core of the Elks' commitment to provide security for indigent elderly members. These motivations inspired the creation of the fraternal organization in 1867. In November 1867 a young English comic singer and dancer named Charles A. S. Vivian arrived in New York to further his career. According to one account, "Vivian's charming wit and personality quickly endeared him to a close-knit group of actors and entertainers in the city." The friends enjoyed food and spirits but found themselves inconvenienced by New York's blue laws, which closed saloons and other establishments where drinks were served on Sundays, the one day of the week entertainers had off. To get around the restrictions and to manage the growing size of the gatherings, Vivian suggested the creation of an informal organization, the Jolly Corks. Shortly before Christmas 1867, a member of the group died, leaving his family without support. This misfortune prompted the group to reorganize as a benevolent society for the aid of its members and their families. At a meeting on February 16, 1868, the Jolly Corks adopted the name Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks—the mascot said to have been inspired by an elk's head mounted in New York's Barnum Museum—and the organization was soon chartered by the State of New York. "Elks traveling to other cities in pursuit of their professions spread word of the Order, and soon there came requests for Elks Lodges elsewhere than in New York." The organization grew slowly during its first decade of its existence but by 1900 the B.P.O.E. had achieved a national presence with 75,000 members in 600 subordinate lodges.<sup>1</sup>

At the Grand Lodge session of 1898 the Elks adopted resolutions to "establish a home for the aged and needy members of the order." A search for a suitable location concluded on June 16, 1902, with the purchase of the Hotel Bedford on the western outskirts of Bedford, Virginia. The rambling Queen Anne style hotel was constructed in 1890 at the height of the development boom that Bedford and other cities and towns of western Virginia experienced during the 1880s and early 1890s. The original owner, the Bedford City Land and Improvement Company, built the hotel as the centerpiece of a large residential addition to Bedford, with a circular drive (Crescent Avenue) around the hotel, radiating streets, and hundreds of building lots. The scheme was poorly timed; the regional development bubble burst by the end of 1893 and few if any lots were built upon. The hotel passed through several owners before it was purchased by Frank and Lillian Ziegler of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, who sold it to the Elks. Over a number of years the Elks acquired additional lots surrounding the hotel. The Hotel Bedford probably appealed to the Elks for a number of reasons, chief among them its availability while the Elks were searching for a facility of the requisite size. Also, Bedford possessed good railroad connections, and the hotel stood just uphill from the location of the Norfolk and Western station at the time. What a period promotional brochure touted as Bedford's "delightful and healthful climate" was undoubtedly an added inducement in an era of unhealthy cities, malarial lowlands, and an absence of air conditioning.<sup>2</sup>

The Hotel Bedford was a sophisticated building, the work of an accomplished although as yet

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unidentified architect. The 200-foot-long three-story hotel had many of the hallmarks of the Queen Anne style, the style of choice for the grand railroad and resort hotels of the era. Above a stone first story rose a wood-shingled second level and an attic story that bristled with turrets, dormers in a variety of shapes and sizes, and elaborate brick chimneys. The dominant feature was a five-story observation tower of gradated cylindrical form. The rounded form was repeated by a corner veranda gazebo with columns and latticework. Interior photographs show decorative beaded tongue and groove wall finishes and mantels with ornate corbelling. In a photograph taken at the Home's dedication on May 21, 1903, the hotel building appears to be in good condition, although the Elks devoted \$30,000 to interior renovations during the year that followed the 1902 purchase. By 1909, however, the Elks leadership had come to the conclusion that the hotel was inadequate. "As elegant as the former hotel was," wrote one historian, "it lacked the modern conveniences and safety considered necessary to a properly run establishment for older gentlemen." Various committees considered options such as remodeling the hotel or moving to a new location, but in 1911 it was decided to replace the hotel with a new facility on the same site. Members in lodges nationwide were assessed twenty-five cents in 1911 and 1912 to cover construction costs and by March 1912 the Chicago architectural firm Ottenheimer Stern and Reichert was selected to develop conceptual plans for the new Home.<sup>3</sup>

The work of demolishing the hotel began in 1913 and the residents were moved to temporary lodgings in the Jeter Institute, a former college building located a short distance to the east. In September 1915 the cornerstone was laid for the new facility. The *Bedford Bulletin* reported that construction was further along than customary for a cornerstone ceremony due to unspecified "circumstances," and in fact a panoramic front views shows that the exterior was essentially finished by the end of 1915. The *Bulletin* article credited Elks leader Fred Harper with being largely responsible for keeping the Home in Bedford. Harper, who lived in Lynchburg, served as the Order's Grand Exalted Ruler in 1917-18. The new Home was dedicated on July 8, 1916, with Governor Henry C. Stuart as the featured speaker. Another event of note occurred in 1920 when President Elect Warren Harding, who was an Elk, was invited to visit the Home by a resident and old acquaintance. Harding had lunch at the facility and addressed a crowd out front of what the *New York Times* called an "imposing, white-pillared building set down among the Blue Ridge Mountains." The Home was estimated to have "100 or more" residents at the time. In 1921 the resident population was 135 and three years later it was 174.<sup>4</sup>

The Elks National Home was a prototype of the retirement homes that would become more common in America during the second half of the twentieth century. Prior to the development of such facilities, options were limited for elderly individuals in need of institutionalized care—or a simple roof over their heads and regular meals. As the authors of "The Evolution of Nursing Home Care in the United States" describe the situation in the early twentieth century, "Without a federal assistance program to help pay for the care of [the] elderly or disabled, most states sent their impoverished citizens to 'poor farms' or 'almshouses.' The homes were known for their dilapidated facilities and inadequate care, and states appeared to encourage the stigma as a motivating factor to keep people from relying on them." In addition to traditional "county homes," which varied in the quality of care and facilities, retirement homes existed for segments of the

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population such as veterans. The United States Naval Home in Philadelphia, opened in 1831 as the first federally supported home for disabled veterans, was followed by other major veteran facilities around the country. Various immigrant groups also established societies for the provision of care to elderly members. The Elks National Home continued these developments, and it proved especially necessary during the Great Depression when the ability of aid agencies to assist the indigent elderly was strained nationwide. The Elks National Home addressed the crisis among its membership by providing for over 400 residents, the largest enrollment in the history of the institution.<sup>5</sup>

Over the years various commentators have recorded their impressions of the Elks Home. In 1931 Ralph Hagan, a former chairman of the Board of Grand Trustees, remarked to the Elks' national convention, "You have an administration building there which contains a large sun parlor, for the guests, and a billiard hall and card room, library, and the general offices. You have then eleven other buildings known as 'Base Units,' housing about forty guests each [elsewhere Hagan states the total resident population as 365], and in each one of these units, every three or four doors, you have showers and baths . . . We have many features there to entertain our guests, such as a nine-hole golf course, a fishing pond and a croquet green." Hagan also commented on the Home farm, noting that a large percentage of the property's 123 acres were under cultivation. "I am happy to say that this year we have had large crops and are going to be able to take care of our dairy herd, and raise many commodities for the table." Hagan concluded by stating, "The Home was founded as a home, in all that that word implies, for worthy, aged, and indigent Elks. The welfare of our Brothers in their declining days is a solemn obligation."<sup>6</sup>

In an Elks promotional booklet published in the mid-twentieth century, possibly ca. 1940, Mildred Masters provided a detailed account of daily life at the Home and the functions of its various buildings. Masters was among the first to emphasize the resort-like character of the Home, while acknowledging the necessarily relaxed pace of the activities. "This magnificent resort is a top-notch residential club . . . Some of the guests are playing a round of golf on the nine-hole course stretching out across the front lawns; others are resting on the benches and swings under the big trees, and many are nodding contentedly as they sit in the warm sunshine on the front veranda." Masters referred to the lobby as the "main lounge . . . cheerfully decorated with growing plants . . . a fine place to congregate." The Administration Building basement contained "dining and rest rooms for the help, as well as the tailor's shop, carpenter's shop and clothing rooms." In the library, "Every morning one of the men reads aloud to all those whose eyesight is not quite up to the fine newspaper print." The hospital contained "laboratory apparatus, physio-therapy machinery, and X-ray equipment" as well as a "special dining room, with a diet kitchen" for residents in the wards.<sup>7</sup>

A venerable aspect of life at the Home is the Elks National Home Lodge. The lodge was organized through the efforts of Frank H. Ritter, who came to live at the Home in 1913, and its first recorded minutes date to October 1914 when the residents were lodged temporarily at the Jeter Institute. (Interestingly, the 1912 conceptual design for the Administration Building

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prominently featured a lodge room, so it appears that the Elks leadership assumed a Home Lodge would be instituted, or one already existed for which there is apparently no other record.) One of the chief activities of the lodge was coordinating entertainment for the Home. According to Home Lodge historian Gilbert Fitzgerald, entertainment during the early years featured “musical sessions and variety shows, billiards, cribbage, pinochle and other recreation room tournaments. Sometimes people came from Bedford, Roanoke and Lynchburg to assist.” Membership in the Home Lodge tracks the resident population through the decades, for it appears that most residents belonged to the lodge. (In 1931 approximately 85 percent of residents were apparently lodge members.) From 76 members in 1914 the membership rose steadily to 112 in 1917 and 301 in 1930. The largest increase was between 1931 and 1932 when membership jumped from 308 to 388. Increased capacity at the Home during the late 1910s and 1920s explains some of the growth, but the 1931-32 increase points to a wave of new residents, probably Elks who were made destitute by the worsening economic depression of the early 1930s. It is not known exactly how or where the extra residents were housed. From a peak of 412 lodge members in 1934—the year before Social Security went into effect—the membership slowly declined. About 1940 it was stated that the residents of the Home numbered 285, “although 420 can be taken care of without crowding.” The resident population stood at 235 in 1964.<sup>8</sup>

Also important in the yearly doings of the Home is the Christmas Display. During the hotel years the Superintendent’s wife managed floral decorations in the dining room and lodges around the country sent boxes of cigars and other presents to the residents. In 1953 the Home began to decorate with electric lights along the roof line and a sleigh and reindeer out front. The new approach was the inspiration of George H. Buck, the Home’s maintenance engineer, who added features through the 1950s. Buck was assisted by resident artist Tom Sidonia and local sign painter D. H. Pinion (presumably this was the Haywood Pinion who painted a mural in the dining room). “By 1955, large crowds were coming from Bedford and the surrounding areas to view the displays,” writes the Home’s Executive Director, Dr. Ronald L. Plamondon. A “complete rearrangement” was made in 1965 when religious scenes illustrating the Christmas story in sequence were added. The display garnered national attention. During the 1972 illumination over 22,000 vehicles drove through the grounds to view the “yule-time brightening.” In 2004 an estimated 100,000 people in 27,000 vehicles viewed the display.<sup>9</sup>

The Home opened its doors to younger guests during World War II. In the early phases of the war the Elks leadership offered members who lived in American territories that were or were thought to be at risk, such as Hawaii, the Canal Zone, and Puerto Rico, the opportunity to send their children to the Home where they would be boarded for free during the hostilities. Eight Puerto Rican kids were housed in Cottage I, among them present resident Sheridan Besosa, who recalls swimming in the pool formerly located in the garden and attending movies in the Fred Harper Theatre. Besosa recalls the formality of meals in the dining room, which were served by black waiters wearing white coats and black ties. Other guests of the Home during the war were four Royal Navy sailors whose boat was being repaired at the Norfolk shipyards.<sup>10</sup>

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The decline in membership that began in the mid-twentieth century continued into the twenty-first century, although recent changes in the program will likely result in future increases. From 235 residents in 1975 the Home's population had decreased to 117 residents in November 2007. (The present licensing capacity is 230 residents.) One important recent development was the decision in 1995 to admit women to the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, reflected in the admission of female Elks members and Elk couples to the Home beginning in 1999. "You can imagine," writes Elks Home Director of Admissions Nellie Martin, "that the addition of women as residents made many of the 'old time' residents apprehensive, but it has proven to be one of the most beneficial changes of all. The ladies are a positive influence on all aspects of life at the Home and they are taking an active part in the Home and Home Lodge activities." The indigence requirement was dropped in the second half of the twentieth century and members with financial means have been encouraged to apply to the Home. Many residents remain participants in the activities of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, which today numbers over a million members in over two thousand lodges, making it the largest fraternal organization in the nation. The Elks continue their tradition of philanthropy, contributing to health-related causes and scholarships (the Elks rank second only to the federal government in the awarding of grants to students). At present the Elks National Home is studying options for converting additional rooms to the "independent style of living" that was introduced by renovations in the 1980s and given added impetus by the admission of women in 1999. Rehabilitation tax credits are being considered as a means to facilitate the conversions.<sup>11</sup>

### Architectural Discussion

For the architect of the Elks National Home the Elks retained the Chicago firm of Ottenheimer Stern and Reichert, headed by Henry L. Ottenheimer (1868-1919). The firm was listed as the architect for the Home in the September 11, 1913, issue of *Manufacturers' Record*. Ottenheimer had earlier designed what appears in sources as the "Elks Club of Chicago," probably a prominent lodge or administration building in a city that was a capital of Elkdom. For the Home project the Elks and Ottenheimer had formed a relationship well before September 1913 and not long after the national organization decided to build a new facility at the Bedford location in 1911. A set of well-developed Ottenheimer Stern and Reichert drawings dated March 1912 shows a scheme with many of the elements that would be completed in 1916. The Home's builder was Patrick J. Moran, a Salt Lake City contractor and asphalt plant owner. As an interesting footnote to the original design, in 1914 a young Viennese architect named Rudolph Michael Schindler (1887-1953) went to work for Ottenheimer's firm. Schindler had studied under the famous Viennese architect Otto Wagner from 1910 to 1913, and soon after arriving in Chicago he contacted the dean of modern American architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright, who eventually hired him, therefore Schindler's time at Ottenheimer Stern and Reichert was brief. After working in Wright's firm for several years, Schindler established a Los Angeles-based practice as one of America's foremost modernist architects of the twentieth century. Schindler's association with the Ottenheimer firm occurred after the majority of the design work had been completed for the Elks National Home, but it is conceivable that he played a small role in the project.<sup>12</sup>

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### Statement of Significance (continued)

The original Ottenheimer Stern and Reichert design of 1912 established the form and basic interior layout of the Administration Building. The monumental Classical Revival portico, for example, was built with only minor departures from the 1912 design, such as the substitution of a clock for a terra-cotta cartouche in the pediment. Otherwise, the 1912 design had a stronger Mediterranean character and more elaborate detail than the final version. In the dining room, for instance, the fireplace wall featured a projecting brick and terra-cotta reredos-like element of scalloped and rounded Mission style form. The lobby was fitted with a wall-mounted terra-cotta fountain and a stairway with scrolling terra-cotta baluster panels. The lodge room, by contrast, was more sober and classical in its appointments, with fluted pilasters and paneled walls. Art Nouveau influence is seen in some details, such as the sinuous ogee surround of the doors to the dining room balcony. As the Ottenheimer design evolved, more reserved classical elements were substituted for the highly elaborated and overtly Mission style features. The dining room reredos, for example, was replaced by a composition of similar size but more classical design. Likewise, the lobby was shorn of gratuitous ornament and the dining room balcony doors given a simple rectangular surround. The Mediterranean-Baroque-Art Nouveau flavor was preserved, however, in forms and finishes such as Spanish tile roofs, stucco walls, and the elliptical vaulting of the dining room. The buildings constructed in the 1920s and 1930s perpetuated the Mediterranean theme. An Elks promotional publication from about 1940 described the Home as “a beautiful structure, most effectively combining classic and Spanish mission features of architecture.”<sup>13</sup>

Site planning also evolved during the period. An early Ottenheimer site plan shows the Administration Building with essentially its present form but situated closer to the intersection of Ashland Avenue and College Street, near the hotel location. The concept of the dormitory ranges had been established, but rather than having the present crescent arrangement the ranges and main building defined three sides of a large rectangular space open on the south side. A section drawing shows that the enclosed space had a rolling, valley-like topography with the main building and dormitories overlooking it from higher ground. A driveway approached from the rear, entered the rectangular space through an arched underpass, and curved around to an elevated forecourt in front of the main building portico. Adding to the drama of topography and approach was to be an intermittent stream that flowed southward to a pond at the foot of the hill, near the Norfolk and Western Station. Instead of this picturesque arrangement the complex was shifted northward so that the elevated hotel site became—presumably with extensive regrading—a level and spacious lawn. Rather than coming from the rear the driveway approached at an angle from the front. The new location sloped on the north side rather than the south side so that the views from the dormitory rooms were directed to the farmland and mountains to the north.<sup>14</sup>

The original and final designs of the Elks Home, both of which feature ranges of buildings connected by arcades and focused on a central porticoed main building, call to mind the plan of the University of Virginia. The solution of engaging the arcades in the ends of the cottages also evokes the University of Virginia plan, specifically the form of pavilions such as Pavilion VII.

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### Statement of Significance (continued)

These similarities seem too strong to be coincidental and suggest the architects involved with the project were familiar with Jefferson's campus. Other aspects of the Home's plan derive from functional and constructional logic. The concept of multiple dormitories, rather than a single large consolidated building, allowed for incremental construction according to need and finances—theory put into practice with the construction of Cottage A in 1923. The multi-building approach may also have been motivated by health and safety concerns. Multiple smaller buildings permitted resident rooms to have ample light and natural ventilation, and, in addition to the masonry and stucco construction, helped limit the threat of devastating fire. (The Elks leadership had worried about fire when the Home was housed in the mostly frame Hotel Bedford.) Circulation was solved by the arcaded walkways. Period accounts emphasized the fact that the floors of the arcades were on the same level as the communal spaces of the main building, an important consideration since many of the residents used canes or crutches. It may be that shifting the buildings to the most level part of the site during the design development phase reflected in part the need for one-level circulation. The openness of the arcades is consistent with the premium placed on fresh outdoor air for respiratory health, a feature of the sanitariums and summer resorts of the era. The south-facing orientation of the arcades made them suitable for sunning by elderly residents. The arcades also provided shaded outdoor sitting areas during warm weather.<sup>15</sup>

In November 1926 the New York firm of Clinton and Russell was listed as the architect of a major addition to the Home, the building now known as Cottage H. Clinton and Russell drawings from June 1926 show the emergence of the arcade-fronted courtyard dormitory form, although the original design was for a building of fewer rooms and a shallower form. A site plan from the same period shows an ambitious campus expansion with rows of arcade-linked rectangular dormitories to either side of Cottage H that echoed the arrangement of the front buildings. As it happened only one other dormitory was built, Cottage I, and it replicated the courtyard form of Building H. Lynchburg architects Clark and Crowe, comprised of Pendleton Scott Clark (1895-1975) and Walter R. Crowe, were listed as the architects of another addition to the complex (Cottage I) in October 1930. A colored pencil presentation drawing by Clark and Crowe, which hangs in the Administration Building, shows Cottages H and I. Clark and Crowe dissolved in 1936, but Clark went on to establish the firm formerly known as Clark Nexsen Owen, then Clark Nexsen Owen Barbieri and Gibson, and now known as Clark Nexsen Architecture and Engineering, headquartered in Norfolk.<sup>16</sup>

The sculptor of the Elk that stands in front of the Administration Building was Ohio-born artist Eli Harvey (1860-1957). Harvey was known for his animal art, which included ornaments for the lion house at the New York Zoological Park and the brown bear that is the mascot of Brown University. In 1904 he was commissioned to produce a sculpture of an elk by the Order of Elks. The Elks Home elk was cast by the Gorham Manufacturing Company of Providence, Rhode Island, apparently the source for many of the Elks statues around the country. Another artist who contributed work to the Home was resident Tom Sidonia, who had worked as an artist for the Barnum and Bailey Circus. While a resident of the Home he also took on projects in the community, painting murals in Greens Drug Store in Bedford, and he also illustrated a ca. 1941



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scrapbook, presented to a retiring Home employee, that survives in the Home's collections.<sup>17</sup>

In the early 1980s the Home planned a series of renovations. The work triggered a state regulation that required enclosed walkways between resident rooms and dining and sitting areas. An administrator at the Home (presumably the director) sought an exemption, noting that the open-fronted arcades that linked the dormitories were "enjoyed during the spring, summer, and fall (at least 10 months of the year) by the residents of the Home who congregate to view the lawn and mountains, watch the trains go by, and just enjoy the picturesque settings. We feel it would take away from the atmosphere to enclose the area and I know the residents would object to this change." Nevertheless, the arcades were subsequently enclosed, except for the small section that projects at the east end. Cottage A was renovated to provide private bathrooms and central air conditioning in 1985 and Cottages B and C were likewise renovated in 1987 and 1991, respectively. The reception of female Elks in 1999 led to another renovation campaign. According to a 2003 centennial history, "The project involved converting four buildings into apartments for independent living, a complete renovation of the lobby, a dramatic redecoration of the dining room and sun porch, and enclosing the verandahs that connect the buildings at the front of the Home." The total Home property was valued at \$30 million in 2003.<sup>18</sup>

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## Statement of Significance (continued)

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1. "BPO Elks—How it began and how it grew;" "The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks."
2. *The Elks National Home Program; Bedford Connection* (October-November-December 1994), 3; Bedford City Land and Improvement Company plat; Bedford County Deed Book 83, 26; Bedford County grantee indexes; Viemeister, *Historical Diary of Bedford*, 37-38.
3. *The Elks National Home Program*, 1, 3, 25, 41; *Bedford Connection* (October-November-December 1994), 3, 12.
4. *Bedford Connection* (October-November-December 1994), 12; *Bedford Bulletin*, September 16, 23, 30, 1915; *New York Times*, December 6, 1920; Hagan remarks on Elks National Home.
5. "The Evolution of Nursing Home Care in the United States;" Fitzgerald, "A History: The Elks National Home Lodge."
6. Hagan remarks on Elks National Home.
7. Masters, "The Elks' National Home."
8. Fitzgerald, "A History: The Elks National Home Lodge;" Masters, "The Elks' National Home."
9. Gaenger, "Christmas at the National Elks' Home;" Jackson, "Elks Home Engineer Retires;" "History of the Elks National Home Christmas Display;" Plamondon, "Welcome to the Elks National Home!"
10. Sheridan Besosa personal communication; Viemeister, *Historical Diary of Bedford*, 73.
11. Personal communication with Kim Snow; *Elks Magazine* (June 1975), 27; *Elks National Home 1903-2003 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*, 1-2; Plamondon, "Welcome to the Elks National Home!"
12. Wells and Dalton. *The Virginia Architects*, 336; Shettleworth, "Brief Biographies of American Architects;" Utah History Research Center website; Darling, "Architecture of R. M. Schindler;" De Michelis, "Rudolf M. Schindler."
13. Ottenheimer Stern and Reichert drawings; "Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks."
14. Ottenheimer Stern and Reichert drawings.
15. *Elks Magazine*, March 1928 and July 1938; Hagan remarks on Elks National Home.

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16. Wells and Dalton. *The Virginia Architects*, 87-88, 90; Clinton and Russell drawings; Chambers, *Lynchburg*, 432.

17. Nellie Martin personal communication; Clinton County Historical Society Museum website; Smithsonian Institution Research Information System website; "History of the Elks National Home Christmas Display."

18. Fauber Garbee cover documentation; Martin, "First Hundred Years," 1; *Elks National Home 1903-2003 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*, 1, 11.

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### **GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

#### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries of the nominated area define the core area of the Home property and constitute the majority of City of Bedford Tax Parcel 172-A-1. The west end of the tax parcel, located west of the line indicated on the 1:200-scale map that accompanies the nomination, is excluded from the nominated area.

#### **Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the nominated area include the historic resources associated with the Elks National Home, its farm, and its grounds. The west end of the tax parcel, as shown on the scaled map attached, is a 1980s cemetery that crosses into another parcel owned by the City, and is therefore excluded from the nominated area.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

All photographs are of: ELKS NATIONAL HOME, Bedford (City), Virginia  
DHR file no. 141-0060, J. Daniel Pezzoni, Photographer, November 2007  
Negatives are stored at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond, Virginia.

VIEW OF: Administration Building (front elevation) and Elk statue. View facing northwest.  
PHOTO 1 OF 7; NEG. NO.: 23715.14A

VIEW OF: Administration Building (rear elevation) with hospital wing on left and elevated corridor on right. View facing south.  
PHOTO 2 OF 7; NEG. NO.: 23715.30A

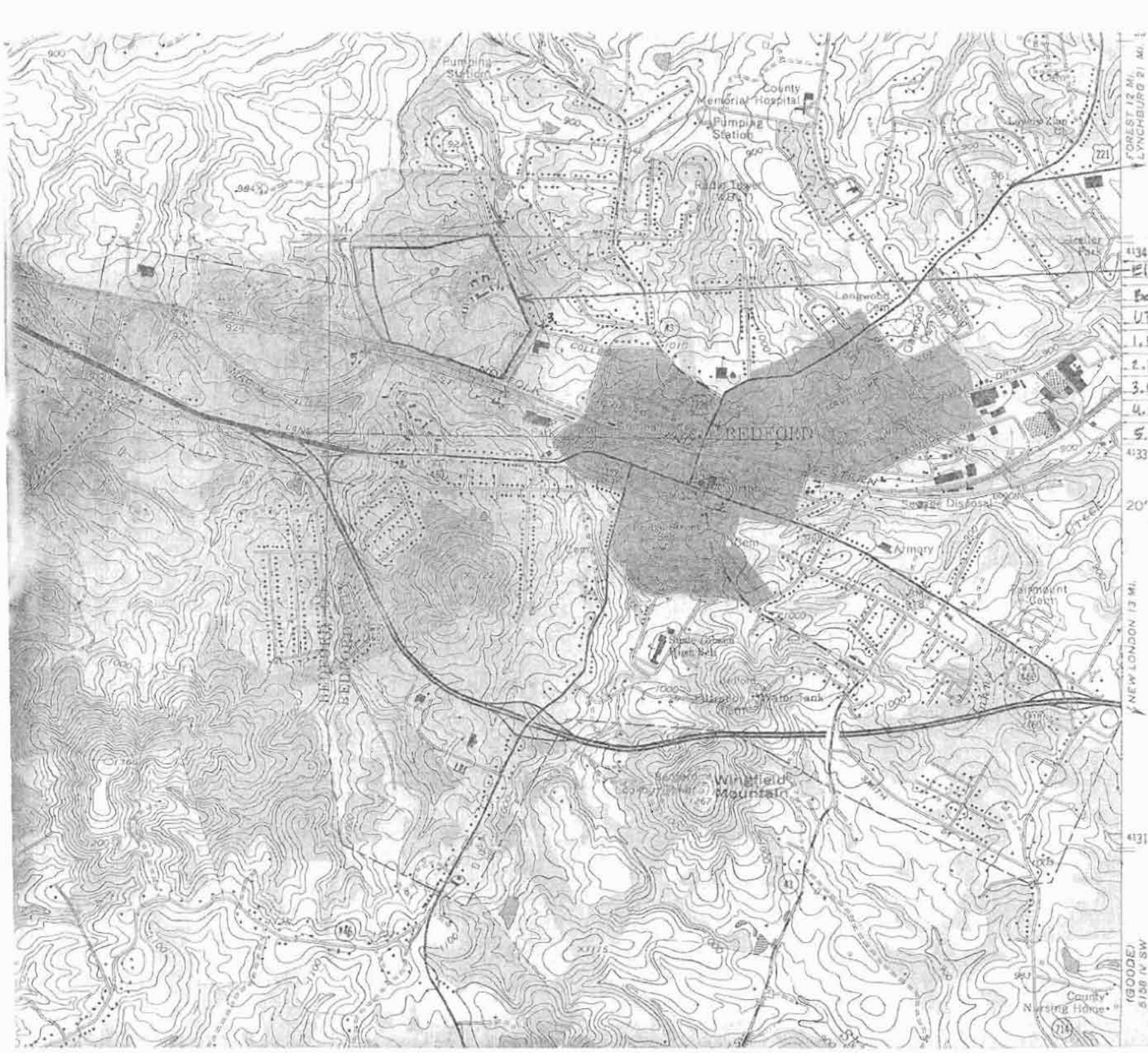
VIEW OF: Dining room.  
PHOTO 3 OF 7; NEG. NO.: 23715.0A

VIEW OF: Lodge room.  
PHOTO 4 OF 7; NEG. NO.: 23715.11A

VIEW OF: Game room (left), Cottage F (middle), and Cottage G (right). View facing northeast.  
PHOTO 5 OF 7; NEG. NO.: 23715.34A

VIEW OF: Cottage I. View facing northeast.  
PHOTO 6 OF 7; NEG. NO.: 23715.32A

VIEW OF: Part of farm complex with dairy barn. View facing north.  
PHOTO 7 OF 7; NEG. NO.: 23715.21A



FOREST 12 MI. LYNCHBURG 21 MI. E  
 1134  
 4133  
 20'  
 NEW LONDON MI. E  
 1131  
 (GOODE) 5158 N SW

Elks National Home  
 Bedford (City), Va.  
 UTM ref.: zone 17  
 1. E629050 N4133970  
 2. E629830 N4134070  
 3. E630040 N4133550  
 4. E629860 N4133220  
 5. E629180 N4133410