

EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

For NPS use only

received NOV 27 1984

date entered

DEC 27 1984

**1. Name**

historic Buhl IOOF Building

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 1014-16 Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Buhl N/A vicinity of congressional district

state Idaho code 016 county Twin Falls code 083

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Diamond Hill Investment Company

street & number 2480 West Twenty-sixth Avenue, Suite 260B

city, town Denver N/A vicinity of state Colorado 80211

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Twin Falls County Courthouse

street & number Shoshone Avenue

city, town Twin Falls state Idaho 83301

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Idaho State Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1982 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Idaho State Historical Society

city, town Boise state Idaho

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Buhl IOOF building is a three-story masonry building made of local basalt. Located on Buhl's Main Street, it is designed in the Commercial Style with a straight front and level skyline broken only by two corner piers. The rectangular facade consists of commercial storefronts and entrances on the first level topped by a horizontal concrete band forming the lintels for the second-level windows. Fenestration is in a regular pattern with one-over-one-light sashes on the second and third floors, topped with transoms on the third floor. Large concrete lintels extend over the second-level windows and form a decorative rectangular band above the third-floor windows. This band has vertical lines crossing the rectangle at each pier; and located above the center of the border is the inscription IOOF. Two air vents with concrete lintels and sills also penetrate the upper facade, providing ventilation to the attic space. A simple concrete cornice terminates the facade, with cross patterns at the tops of the piers flanking the building.

The lava rock facade is dressed stone, a rare treatment because of the difficulty of cutting basalt and the traditional regional preference for brick veneer facades on stone buildings. The side and back walls are random rubble. The lava rock is local; much of it came from the building's ten-foot basement excavation.

Completed in 1920, the fifty-foot-wide by 120-foot-deep Odd Fellows building originally had two storefronts on the first floor leased to Estensen Variety Store and Starr Grocery. The rear half of the second floor contained a 50x60-foot lodge hall. The high-ceiling room features three decorative plaster arches and is supported by large wooden trusses that shape the peaked roof on the back half of the building. The front half of the second floor was divided into leased offices and a lodge reception and reading room. The third floor, which has one-third of the floor area of the other floors, originally consisted of the IOOF banquet hall on one side, while the other side was leased to labor unions for a labor temple. A number of air shafts covered by skylights penetrate the rooms; motor-driven fans provided ventilation. The building's electric switchboard, which was made of shale marble, allowed each room to be lighted from a separate switch and was said to be one of the largest and most complicated in Idaho at the time.

In the early 1940's the Odd Fellows sold the building and its upper two floors were converted into twenty-one apartments. The large hall spaces were subdivided into smaller units with lowered false ceilings. During the 1950's, the two storefronts were made into one space and the storefront was altered and covered with a contemporary surface.

With the exception of the alteration of the first-floor commercial storefront, the building's exterior remains intact. The only original interior features remaining include the building's staircase and the arched ceiling plaster of the second-floor lodge hall, which is concealed by a lowered false ceiling.

## 8. Significance

| Period                                    | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |                                                 |                                                 |                                             |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric      | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499        | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900– | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation     |
|                                           |                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)    |

**Specific dates** 1919–1920 **Builder/Architect** architect; B. Morgan Nisbet

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Buhl IOOF Building is architecturally significant as a good local example of lava rock construction. The building, designed by noted Idaho architect B. Morgan Nisbet in the Commercial Style, possesses a dressed basalt facade—a rare treatment in south central Idaho. Relatively few lava rock buildings exist in the area in and around Buhl, and the Buhl IOOF Building represents one of the largest in the Commercial Style. The building is closely associated with the Odd Fellows fraternal organization and is representative of the group's efforts to assist in the needs of a young community. The building also reflects the rapid growth of Buhl following World War I.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Buhl

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

### UMT References

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nomination includes the Buhl IOOF Building and the property on which it stands, block 99, lots 28 and 29, Buhl Townsite.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Bertram, City Planner

organization Planmakers

date July 23, 1984

street & number 417 South Thirteenth Street

telephone (208) 336-1438

city or town Boise

state Idaho 83702

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Merle Wells*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 8 November 1984

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 12-27-84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Buhl IOOF Building

Continuation sheet

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The Buhl IOOF Building's basalt masonry structure documents skilled stone masonry using basalt as a building stone in designed commercial architecture. The building is one of a finite group of structures in the region. Few remaining masons are skilled with this hard stone, and basalt is no longer popularly considered a building material in Idaho. The building reflects the architectural ideas of the period and the homogeneous character of downtown Buhl.

Architect B. Morgan Nisbet designed the building. Nisbet worked on numerous buildings in Boise, including the state capitol. He moved his practice to Twin Falls in 1914 and was also the architect for Buhl's city hall, high school, and Methodist church.

The building is closely associated with Buhl's IOOF Lodge No. 122, which built the structure in 1919 and 1920 with the labor of local members of the lodge. J. W. Eustis was superintendent of the construction. The Buhl Odd Fellows Lodge was formed in 1906, the same year the city was founded. The Odd Fellows' organization in Buhl and throughout Idaho and the nation was active in the struggle of settling the western frontier. Lodges were formed to bring people together to overcome the obstacles of early development: for social purposes and for giving their members assistance in obtaining employment. The International Order of Odd Fellows' symbol of three links stands for friendship, love, and truth.

Buhl's Lodge #122 consisted of 300 members during its most active period in the twenties. The building's lodge hall was often used for community events and activities. The third-floor labor temple room was utilized by such groups as the Modern Woodmen and Carpenters' Union. Over time, though, the need for helping one another through fraternal organizations changed as individuals became more independent and self-sufficient. The Buhl Lodge was disbanded in 1981.

Buhl is important as a service center for the western part of the Twin Falls Carey Act irrigated tract in which Frank W. Buhl, a prominent Pittsburgh capitalist, invested extensively to get the project under way. The IOOF building reflects the confidence of a prosperous farm community that experienced rapid growth just after World War I, when farmers were getting good prices for wheat and farm produce was in demand. The years 1919 and 1920 saw numerous building projects undertaken in Buhl as the city grew and established itself.

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Continuation sheet

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Bryne, Lloyd E. Buhl As It Was, Boise, Idaho: Syms-York Company, 1976.

Morrow, Waletta S. Idaho's Century of Triple Links: A History of Idaho's 100 Years of Odd Fellowship, Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1963.

Wright, Patricia. Twin Falls Country: A Look at Idaho Architecture, Boise, Idaho: State Historical Society Preservation Office, c1979.

(Buhl, Idaho) Buhl Herald, January 15, 1920, p. 1, c. 5; p. 10, c. 4.

Lava Rock Structures in South Central Idaho (thematic group), Jerome and Lincoln counties; National Register 8 September, 1983.

Interview with Burt Womack, Buhl, Idaho, July 5, 1984. Notes on file at Planmakers, Boise, Idaho.



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PARKING  
2:00 PM  
TO 4:00 PM  
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Buhl IOOF Building  
1014-16 Main Street  
Buhl, Twin Falls County, Idaho

Photograph by John Bertram  
July 5, 1984

Negative on file at Planmakers, 417 South Thirteenth  
Street, Boise, Idaho

View from south

Photograph 1 of 1