

Odd Fellows Lodge

112 E. Commonwealth Avenue

1927

Brick Commercial

**Status: Local Landmark;
Listed on the National Register**



A fine example of early 20th century commercial architecture, the Fullerton Odd Fellows Lodge was constructed in 1927-28 for one of the city's oldest fraternal organizations, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Lodge Number 103. Oliver S. Compton, a local builder, a long-time member and Fullerton resident, was called upon to design and build the three-story brick structure.

In the design the building, the Odd Fellows came up with the creative idea of having the lodge serve as both meeting hall and a profit-making facility. Lodge members reserved the second floor for their secret and exclusive use while leasing and renting out the first floor as office and retail space and the third floor to other local patriotic, fraternal, and women's organizations.

The building's legacy to the community lies in its use as a community meeting facility. With its substantial size, prominent location and room availability, the lodge became the natural place to hold any type of gathering, and until the 1970s the building was a major center of social and recreational activities in Fullerton.

The Odd Fellows occupied the upper levels of the building until 1949. In the 1950s the Williams Family became the owner of the property, and the Williams Company (a clothing store) occupied the entire ground level. The Williams Family's continuous, long-standing ownership of the building has been a contributing factor toward the building's preservation.

The imposing exterior of the three-story brick building is enhanced by pale pink and blue terra-cotta tiles, seemingly in imitation of marble, and the three small copper turbans or onion-shaped domes that cap the piers rising at the end and in the center of the parapet on the main façade. A series of arched windows on the upper level of the west wall is also a key design feature. It is the interior, however, that gives the building its architectural significance. The upper level spaces are divided so as to provide assembly areas

for both large and small gatherings, each with adjacent dining and kitchen facilities. There is a two-story high, 3,400-square-foot auditorium with stage and built-in seating along the walls. There is also a smaller, 2000-square foot space, situated on a third level across the front of the building.

This building was extensively rehabilitated in 1994, and its front façade was completely restored. The work included seismic retrofitting, where a steel framework was placed on the outside to brace the west wall. This alternative was chosen, because its placement was considered to have the least impact on the building's most important feature: its interior appearance. In 2002, more improvements, including the construction of an enclosed staircase along the building's south side, were completed to allow for an adaptive reuse of the upper floors as a ballroom and dance studio. In 2011 the front façade was modified; the fixed windows were removed to open the ground floor, much like the original design of the building.



Odd Fellows Lodge, 1950