

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Young Women's Christian Association  
other names/site number Elkhart Y.W.C.A., Lexington House

### 2. Location

street & number 120 West Lexington Avenue N/A not for publication  
city, town Elkhart N/A vicinity  
state IN code IN county Elkhart code 039 zip code 46514

### 3. Classification

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

J. T. Kottke 1-18-91  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

J. T. Kottke  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: clubhouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone

walls BRICK

STONE: limestone

roof OTHER: composition

other TERRA COTTA

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance  
1919-1940  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates  
1919  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder  
Turnock, Enoch Hill  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References

A 

1	6
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5	8	5	4	0	0
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4	6	1	5	2	4	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The eastern 40 feet of lots 35 and 36 of the Original Plat of Elkhart, Indiana.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This is the historic and existing boundary of the property

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Laura Thayer, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date April 20, 1990

street & number 3905 N. 500 W. telephone 812/372-6806

city or town Columbus state IN zip code 47201

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Section No. 7 Page 1 Young Women's Christian Association

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The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) is located in downtown Elkhart on the north side of W. Lexington Avenue between Second and Main Streets (photo 1). The building is in an area which was identified as an historic district by the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory. There are currently no plans to apply to have the district listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The YWCA is a three story brick building with a raised basement. The main facade, which faces south on W. Lexington Avenue, is four bays wide. The building is approximately 40 feet wide (east-west) by 150 feet long (north-south). The main facade is faced in a decorative dark brown brick with a raised pattern. The roof is a flat, composition roof. The main entry is in the second bay from the west on the main facade. It has a round arched opening with a heavy wooden door frame. The arch has stone impostes, a stone keystone, and a band of bricks following the arch between these. There is a stone stoop with four steps and an iron railing at this entry (photo 3).

The windows of the first floor (photo 2) are arched like this entry. At the bottoms of the windows is a stone band which runs the width of the facade and wraps around the corners of the building. Rectangular basement windows, with stone lintels, are located directly under first story windows. There is a stone water table at the base of the building. Upper story windows are slightly inset, which effectively divides the facade into four sections. Second and third story windows are paired, double hung with six lights in each sash, except for the windows of the two center bays on the second story. These are multi-paned casement windows which open onto a small balcony. The balcony has a wrought iron railing above, and a stone, egg-and-dart band below.

At the ends of the top of this facade are two square chimneys with stone banding. Between these is a pent roof with pantiles, supported by large, paired brackets.

The composition of the east, west, and north facades is less formal, and there is little decoration on these facades, since they are not highly visible. The brick work and stone banding of the main facade does wrap around to the first bay of the east and west facades. The remainder of the exterior is common, non-decorative brick.

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Windows on the east, north, and west facades are the original double hung windows with one light in each sash, unless otherwise stated. All windows have stone sills.

On the east facade, the three southernmost bays on the first floor have large, round arched windows similar to those on the first floor of the facade (photo 4). These are in the cafeteria, in the southeast corner of the building. To the north of these are a single window, a set of three windows, and another single window. In the next bay to the north, which contains a stairway, is a single window, positioned between large, round arched windows, similar in design to, but taller than, those on the first floor of the main facade. These four windows can also be seen in photo 10 of the two story gymnasium. On the second floor of the east facade, there are paired windows in the three southernmost bays, followed by a single window, and a set of three windows. In the next bay to the north, is a window, in the stairway, between the second and third floors. On the third floor, there are paired windows in the two northernmost bays, and 11 single windows.

On the north facade (photo 5), there is a door in the first bay from the east, and a window in the second bay. There is one window in each of the two westernmost bays. On the second floor, there is a transomed door in each of the end bays. These open onto a metal balcony that extends the width of the building. On the third floor, there is a door in the center of the building, with a metal stairway leading down to the east end of the balcony. On each side of this doorway are two windows.

On the first floor of the west facade (photo 6), in each of the three southernmost bays, is a single window. The next bay to the north is on a stairway and is located between the first and second floors. This window has been blocked up. To the north are four more single windows. In the next bay is a door which opens off the south end of the gymnasium. A ramp from this door extends along the west side of the building towards the south. The next three windows are large, round arched windows like those on the three northernmost bays of the opposite facade. The two southernmost bays of the second floor have small, paired windows. These are followed by a single window. The next bay contains the stairway. The window opening in this bay, located between the second and third floors, is blocked up. This is followed by five single windows on



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the second floor. On the third floor, in each of the two northernmost bays, are paired windows. To the south on this floor are 13 single windows.

The interior of the building reflects the Arts and Crafts period through its detailing. The interior has a high degree of integrity, both in configuration and materials. There have been a few alterations, most of which took place while the building was occupied by Oaklawn in the 1970s and 1980s.

The first floor of the building has a lobby in the southwest corner (photo 8), and a cafeteria in the southeast corner (photo 9). To the rear of the cafeteria is a kitchen. A north-south corridor running off the lobby accesses three small rooms on the west side of the building, the middle of which is a restroom. On the east side of the corridor is a stairwell. To the rear of the building is a large, two story gymnasium (photo 9). This configuration is shown on floor plans, attached. Detailing typical of the period includes heavy oak doors, encased beams on the ceiling, crown and base moldings, square columns, a chair rail, and oak floors. Also typical of the period are segmental arched interior openings like those in the lobby, the cafeteria, and of the stage in the gymnasium (photo 10).

Alterations to the lobby include the addition of a glass and aluminum door in the south entry to the room, the enclosure of the stair at the rear of the space, the replacement of the mantel of the fireplace on the west wall (after a fire damaged the original), and the addition of an elevator. There are built-in benches on each side of an alcove at the front of the lobby.

Other first floor changes include installation of new restrooms, the addition of a fire door to the stairwell on the east side of the building, and the installation of an acoustical tile ceiling in the cafeteria (photo 9).

On the second floor, there is a library above the lobby (photo 12). Notable features in this room include built-in bookshelves and a dull green ceramic tile fireplace surround. A corridor (photo 11) running off the second floor lobby to the north accesses rooms on the east and west sides, and opens onto a balcony above the gymnasium. The character of the corridor, otherwise in its original condition, has been diminished by the

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addition of an acoustical tile ceiling. There are four small rooms on the west side of the corridor north of the stairs. The southernmost of these has been converted to restrooms.

In the southeast corner of this floor, above the cafeteria, is a suite of offices, the result of a remodeling inconsistent with the character of the building. This area has new partitions, carpeting, and an acoustical tile ceiling. This area was originally one large room, the ball room. Between this area and the east stairwell is a room which was once a private dining room with an attached kitchen. On the corridor side of the dining room are square windows placed at the top of the wall. The character of this floor is like that of the first floor, with oak woodwork and floors.

The third floor consists of sleeping rooms (photo 14) and restrooms. Original terrazzo floors, fixtures, and wood partitions are intact in restrooms on this floor. Other character defining features include built-in cupboards and skylights, visible in photo 13, of the corridor. This is the least altered of the floors, suffering only from the enclosure of the stairways, the addition of the elevator, and the installation of a fire door midway in the corridor.

The basement has offices, storage space, work areas, and activity rooms. This floor is not architecturally distinctive. A typical space is shown in photo 7. A room near the south end of the building on the west side has a fireplace similar to the one in the main lobby. Also in this room, a large, segmental arched opening has been closed up.



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The Elkhart Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Building is significant under criterion A, in the area of Social History, for its association with an important Elkhart women's organization; and under criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as the work of E. Hill Turnock, the leading local architect of the early 20th century.

The Elkhart YWCA was founded in 1907 by Nellie Frank Smith. The purpose of the YWCA was to serve young working women in the city. The YWCA was a "place where they could meet people, form new friendships and seek entertainment and companionship."<sup>1</sup> Later, the YWCA provided housing for young, single women new to the city, and held classes in subjects such as literature, German, and sewing.

Forerunners of the YWCA, The Prayer Union and the General Female Training Institute, were formed in England in 1855. These groups provided support for the increasing number of young women working outside the home because of the combined demands of the Crimean War and the industrial revolution. In the United States, it was the Civil War, along with increased industrialization, that led to a rapid growth of the number of women in the work force. Women's support groups, like the Ladies Christian Association, established in New York in 1858, were formed here as well. The first YWCA was started in Boston in 1866. By 1868, branches had been established in half a dozen major U.S. cities. The first national meeting of the organization was held in Hartford Connecticut, in 1871.

The first YWCAs in Indiana were affiliated with colleges and universities. A state-wide association was started with a meeting at Greencastle in 1885. Early city YWCAs were started in Ft. Wayne (1894), Indianapolis (1895), and Terre Haute (1902).

The Elkhart YWCA met in various rented locations throughout the downtown area, until 1919, when the Lexington Avenue building was constructed. During the years of World War I, the significance of women in the work force increased again. This was because of the fewer number of men in the work force, and because of increased demand for military equipment and supplies, as well as consumer goods. A large number of young women moved to cities to take jobs left vacant by men. This created an awareness of the lack of respectable sleeping quarters for young, unmarried women on their own, a situation which

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undoubtedly precipitated the construction of the YWCA Building. The need which was felt for the building is illustrated by the fact that the money for construction was raised, entirely by donations, during the years of the war. The new building provided meeting rooms, offices, a library, a cafeteria, and a gymnasium, in addition to sleeping rooms, for its 1,104 members.

The YWCA is important to the social history of Elkhart. It represents an organization that fulfilled a need among women in the early years of the 20th century. Prior to World War I, the social activities and employment opportunities for women were restricted. The YWCA promoted the independence of women by offering classes and social gatherings, and by providing an acceptable place to live. It also introduced an opportunity for personal and professional growth by bringing together the young working women of Elkhart.

Although there were no women's organizations in Elkhart exactly like the YWCA, there were a number of other groups that served similar social purposes. Women's clubs first became popular in the late 19th century, when a number of literary clubs were established. Clubs such as the Elkhart Reading Circle and the Thursday Club met in member's homes. In the early part of the 20th century, men's organizations outnumbered those of women. The 1912 Elkhart city directory lists two women's clubs, the YWCA (then located in a building at 319 W. Marion), and the Elkhart Woman's Club (no address given). The same directory lists 12 men's clubs and professional organizations.

The directory also lists a number of secret and benevolent societies, 23 of which are men's groups, and 11 of which are women's branches of the men's groups. For example, Eastern Star was a women's branch of the Masons, a men's society. The women's group met in the Masonic Building at 112 S. Second Street (extant). The Pythian Sisters was a branch of the Knights of Pythias, and met in that society's building at 401 S. Main Street (demolished). The remaining nine women's societies met in four different buildings in downtown Elkhart. There are 127 S. Main (demolished), and 112, 214, and 516 S. Main (extant).

After World War I, new men's groups tended to be interested in business and civic activities. Among these were Kiwanis, the Lions' Club, and Rotary, which all met

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in a building at 504 S. Main (demolished). The Elkhart Business and Professional Women's Club, chartered in 1920, was the female counterpart to these new men's groups. No specific building associated with this club has been identified.

While many men's organizations owned their own buildings, women's groups, for the most part, met in public buildings, residences, or in men's buildings. The YWCA was a notable exception to this, and the building on Lexington Avenue appears to be the best representation in downtown Elkhart of an important women's organization.

The YWCA is important for architectural, as well as social reasons. The Arts and Crafts style building was designed by E. Hill Turnock, a prominent Elkhart architect of the early 20th century. Turnock, a native of England, came Elkhart with his family in 1872 at the age of 15. In about 1884, he moved to Chicago, where he attended the Chicago Art Institute, and worked as a draftsman for William LeBaron Jenney. In 1890, he opened his own practice. Many of his commissions were residences and churches in western suburbs of Chicago. His best known Chicago building is The Brewster Apartments, originally called Lincoln Park Palace, built in 1893. This building, now a Chicago Landmark, is an eight story steel frame structure faced in rough-faced stone.

Turnock returned to Elkhart in 1907 for reasons of health. He became the city's leading architect, securing commissions for most of the major public buildings, factories, and homes of prominent citizens. He was the first president of the Indiana Society of Architects, formed in 1915, and was named a fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1926. He died in Ft. Wayne, at the age of 70, in 1926.

Turnock's Elkhart works include residences, churches, institutional and government buildings, apartment houses, factories, and commercial buildings. His designs represent a variety of early 20th century architectural styles, including Neo-classic, Mission Revival, Prairie, and Arts and Crafts. Turnock was fond of Craftsman detailing. This is evident in most of his buildings, regardless of the main style. Charles F. Wiley, an architect who studied Turnock's work in recent years, found Turnock's style to be "based on such basic elements as red tile roofs, rough dark brown brick set in dark

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mortar, wide overhangs with brackets, limestone accents, casement windows with muntin patterns, and heavy wooden trim."2 The YWCA, one of Turnock's later commissions, incorporates all these features, and may be the best extant representation, in a commercial setting, of his fully developed style. Interior features of the building include heavy oak woodwork, hardwood floors, and ceramic tile fireplace surrounds. The structure is significant for its high degree of integrity, both on the exterior and interior.

The Elkhart Water Works Building at 130 S. Main Street is another example of the Arts and Crafts style designed by Turnock. (This building is visible at the far right in photo 1.) Constructed around 1910, the building has a pantile roof, tapestry brick facade, and stone accents, all characteristic of the style. A two story building with a two bay facade and a hip roof, it is similar to the YWCA in detailing. The Arts and Crafts W.H. Knickerbocker House, located at 529 S. Second Street, is said to have been Turnock's favorite residential commission. Both of these buildings have a high degree of integrity.

The building which may be Turnock's most elaborate and best-known Elkhart work is a complete departure from the Craftsman genre. This is Ruthmere, the former mansion of A.R. Beardsley, located at 302 E. Beardsley Avenue. The Neo-classic style residence was designed in 1908. It is a museum today.

Turnock's other known Elkhart works include:

C.G. Conn Factory, 1101 E. Beardsley Avenue, Mission Revival, c. 1910

House, 1906 E. Jackson Boulevard, Bungalow, c. 1920

Ziesel Brothers Building, 327 Main Street, Chicago Style

Equity Building, 421-31 S. Second Street, Neo-classic

St. Paul's Methodist Church Parsonage, W. Beardsley and Edwardsburg Avenues, Arts and Crafts

Municipal Building, 229 S. Second Street, Neo-classic, 1915



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H.A. Compton House, 901 Strong Avenue, Mission Revival,  
c. 1915

Herman Compton House, 900 W. Lexington Avenue, Arts and  
Crafts

Jerrold F. Walton House, 760 N. Riverside Drive, Mission  
Revival

First Church of Christ, Scientist, 200 S. Second Street,  
Neo-classic, 1916

Chester Lickey House, 2324 E. Jackson Boulevard, Colonial  
Revival, c. 1910

Fred Gampher House, 414 Vistula Street, Prairie Style,  
1917

W.H. Foster House, 9 St. Joseph Manor, Neo-classic, c.  
1925

Charles Colbert House, 2002 E. Jackson Boulevard,  
Bungalow, 1926

B.C. Godfrey House, 1501 E. Jackson Boulevard, Prairie,  
1927

Elkhart Armory, 200 N. Main Street, Art Moderne

Eimel Kuespert House, 149 Division Street, Mission  
Revival, 1921

Demolished buildings include Elkhart High School, First  
Presbyterian Church, Truth Publishing Company, Willowdale  
School, Borneman Hardware Building, and Elkhart Public  
Library.

No Arts and Crafts style commercial buildings, other than  
those designed by Turnock, were identified in Elkhart.

The YWCA Building was in use as a YWCA until 1973, when it  
was purchased by Oaklawn, a mental health facility.  
During the years it was owned by Oaklawn, it was known as  
"Lexington House." It was recently purchased, and current  
plans call for converting it to office space.

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Footnotes

1. Higby, Pat, "Look to the Future," 1958 (speech given on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of affiliation with State YWCA).
2. Stephenson, Tom, "Ode of Praise to E. Hill Turnock, Elkhart Truth, 22 July, 1972.



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Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks, "The Brewster Apartments," 1982.

Elkhart Public Schools, "Living in Elkhart," Elkhart, Indiana, 1944.

Higby, Pat, "Look to the Future," 1958 (speech given on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of affiliation with State YWCA).

Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, "Elkhart County Interim Report," 1978.

McGuire, John V., Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the YWCA Blue Triangle Residence Hall, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1988.

Polk, R.L. and Company. Polk's Elkhart City Directory. Detroit: R.L. Polk and Company, 1912.

Polk, R.L. and Company. Polk's Elkhart City Directory. Indianapolis: R.L. Polk and Company, 1942.

State Executive Committee, Indiana Young Women's Christian Association. 17th Annual Report of Indiana Young Women's Christian Association and Proceedings of State Convention. Indianapolis: State Executive Committee, Indiana Young Women's Christian Association, 1903.

Stephenson, Tom. "Ode of Praise to E. Hill Turnock," Elkhart Truth, Elkhart, Indiana, 22 July, 1972.

Wiley, Charles Fredrick, AIA, "Enoch Hill Turnock, AIA (Feb. 27, 1857-July 8, 1926)," Elkhart, Indiana, January 12, 1972.

Previous documentation on file: PDIL approved 1/16/90 file #10600IN

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National Park Service

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Section number Photos Page 1

The following information is the same for all photos:

1. Young Womens' Christian Association
2. Elkhart, Indiana
3. Laura Thayer
4. August 1989
5. 3905 N. 500 West Rd.  
Columbus, IN 47201

Other information for individual photos is:

Photo 1  
6. camera facing northeast  
7. 1 of 14

Photo 10  
6. camera facing north  
7. 10 of 14

Photo 2  
6. camera facing northwest  
7. 2 of 14

Photo 11  
6. camera facing south  
7. 11 of 14

Photo 3  
6. camera facing northwest  
7. 3 of 14

Photo 12  
6. camera facing southeast  
7. 12 of 14

Photo 4  
6. camera facing northwest  
7. 4 of 14

Photo 13  
6. camera facing north  
7. 13 of 14

Photo 5  
6. camera facing south  
7. 5 of 14

Photo 14  
6. camera facing east  
7. 14 of 14

Photo 6  
6. camera facing northeast  
7. 6 of 14

Photo 7  
6. camera facing southeast  
7. 7 of 14

Photo 8  
6. camera facing north  
7. 8 of 14

Photo 9  
6. camera facing northwest  
7. 9 of 14



ELKHART YWCA  
120 W, LEXINGTON ST.  
ELKHART (ELKHART  
CO), IN  
16 585 400 4615 240



