

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (1)

Name of Building or Site

Common

Madison Masonic Temple

Historic (if applicable)

Madison Masonic Temple

Location

Street Address

301 Wisconsin Avenue

Aldermanic District

Fourth

Classification

Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)

building

Zoning District

PUD SIP

Present Use

fraternal lodge

Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)

Name (s)

Madison Masonic Center Foundation

Street Address

301 Wisconsin Avenue
Madison, WI 53703

Telephone Number

Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)

Parcel Number

0709-144-1309-5

Legal Description

Lots 3, 4, 5, Block 92, Original Plat

Condition of Property

Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins)

good

Altered or Unaltered?

altered

Moved or Original Site?

original site

Wall Construction

limestone

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Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.

The Madison Masonic Temple is a large Neo-Classical Revival fraternal hall that was built between 1923 and 1925 to house the Masonic organizations of Madison. Appropriately grand in size and scale, the Masonic Temple sits on the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and East Johnson Street in downtown Madison, Wisconsin.

The three-story Masonic Temple fronts on Wisconsin Avenue but also has an entrance on East Johnson Street. The large building takes up almost all of the lots it occupies and there are only some small lawn areas and bushes decorating the building's site. The main foliage comes from medium-sized trees that the City has planted in the street right-of-way that, during the summer, block the view of the front facade of the building. At the rear of the building is a newly constructed parking lot.

A large set of stairs leads to the main entrance of the building on Wisconsin Avenue. While this is the main entrance to the first floor of the Temple, the building is built on a raised foundation and because the lot slopes gently down toward the rear of the building, the raised foundation becomes an additional story, or, as it is called in the Temple, the ground floor. A separate entrance to this ground floor is on the East Johnson Street facade of the building.

The Masonic Temple was built in two sections. The front section of the building is slightly smaller and contains the reception lobby, club room, library, lodge rooms, and offices of the Temple. The rear section is slightly larger and taller than the front section and primarily houses the Temple's large auditorium. Under the auditorium is the Temple's large banquet room. There is also a small attic above the auditorium that is used for storage. A large skylight lights this attic. Under the ground floor is a basement that houses the boiler and other maintenance equipment.

The exterior of the building is faced with Indiana Bedford limestone except for the rear wall which is constructed of tan bricks. The width of the front facade is 112 feet and the length of the building 182 feet. The building has a plain parapet roof that becomes the attic story of the rear section. There are small, narrow openings that punctuate the attic story on the south facade. There is also a small cornice line that defines a parapet roof over the attic. Engraved on the main parapet on the front facade of the building are the words "Temple of Freemasonry" and "Let There Be Light" in the architrave. Otherwise, the parapet is unadorned.

The parapet is defined by a prominent cornice line with mutules that runs around the front and south facades of the building. Under this cornice line is a wide frieze that is defined by a narrow stone architrave molding that is interrupted by sets of triglyphs. Evenly spaced in every other triglyph along this frieze on the front and south side facades of the building are carved stone medallions, each depicting a Masonic or Masonic-related symbol. Dominating the front facade of the building is a large but shallow projecting entry pavilion. The entry pavilion features four colossal fluted Doric columns in antis. Flanking

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the columns and framing the sides of the entry pavilion are two large, shallow pilasters.

The three main entrances to the building are set back from but are not obscured by the four colossal columns. These entrances are made up of double sets of wood and glass doors, each with a transom split by transom bars. The glazing of the doors is made up of eight individual panes of glass with muntins set in a criss-cross pattern. The doors have architrave style frontispieces topped with elaborate stone carved architrave moldings. Engraved in the architrave atop each door are three separate phrases; "Our Faith is in God," "Our hope is in Immortality," and "Our Love is Toward All Mankind." Above these phrases are elaborate cornices featuring a classical molding, scrolls, and anthemions.

Flanking the entrances are sets of double casement windows with transoms. Above these windows and extending to and between the entrances is a carved stone fret band. Above the entrance level are the windows of the second and third stories. They are simple one-over-one, double-hung sashes separated by metal spandrels. The massive staircase leading to the front entrances completes the front facade. It has two wide, low stone balustrades that are topped with large classically-appointed urns.

The south side facade of the front section of the building features five recessed panels that contain paired double-hung sashes on the first floor level. At the second and third floor levels only the first recess has window units. According to historic depictions of the building, this facade was originally built in this manner. The raised foundation, or ground floor openings in this part of the building are also simple sets of two double-hung sashes.

The south side facade of the rear section of the building has five recessed panels, separated with simple pilasters. The first and the fifth recessed panel is filled in at the top with a square spandrel featuring a carved eagle and a carved shield. The first floor recesses have sets of two double-hung sashes. The raised foundation or ground floor has three entrances made up of double wood and glass doors flanked by very narrow single-light openings.

The rear facade of the building, although not stone-faced, is similar to the front and side facades in that it features recessed panels and double-hung sashes in the raised foundation. The north side facade of the building is faced with stone and decorated in a similar manner to the south side facade. Drawings from the era the building was completed show that the exterior of the building retains virtually all of its original detail.

There are three main floors inside the Temple: the ground floor contains kitchen and banquet facilities; the first floor contains the lobby, public, and club rooms; and the second floor contains offices and the two lodge meeting rooms. At the rear of the first and second floors is the auditorium. The third floor is actually a mezzanine floor that contains a small group of offices and the upper levels of the auditorium. There is a small storage attic above the auditorium and a

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basement under the ground floor that contains maintenance equipment.

The building is classically appointed throughout. The main entrance doors off of Wisconsin Avenue open into a vestibule; then three sets of wood and glass french doors with transoms open into the main lobby or foyer. Both the vestibule and foyer are clad with polished tan marble. The walls are interrupted frequently by marble pilasters. The floor is made up of terrazzo laid in a geometric pattern with a circular design at the center of the foyer. Original brass light fixtures sit over wood and glass-encased announcement boards. Oval globe lights hang over these boards, while brass arms of the same fixture support candle-style electric lights above. The coffered ceiling of the foyer has three recessed areas from which original crystal chandeliers hang. These ceiling areas are defined by plain marble moldings that are decorated with gold-painted wooden moldings in the leaf-and-tongue and egg-and-dart patterns.

To the right of the foyer is a staircase with a delicate wrought-iron balustrade that leads to Lodge Room #1 on the second floor or downstairs to the kitchen and banquet halls. A small office and a ladies lounge and bathroom are also off of this side of the foyer. To the left of the foyer is an identical staircase that leads to Lodge Room #2 on the second floor or to the downstairs kitchen-banquet rooms. To the left of the staircase is the building's elevator.

Directly ahead of the foyer is the main first floor hallway that leads to the auditorium, but also provides access to the club room and the library. This hallway has a barrel-vault ceiling and plaster walls. There are several sets of wood and glass french doors that sit in arched reveals along the hallway. Two brass light fixtures hanging from the ceiling have oval opaque glass globes. Most of the doors of this floor are french-type doors. Other doors are simple single-paneled wooden doors. All doors have simple dark wood moldings surrounding them.

To the left of the main hallway and through more sets of french doors is the club room or former billiard table-card room. This simply decorated room features plaster walls with a chair rail and large Neo-Classical brackets supporting the ceiling beams. The room is carpeted and still functions as a billiard table-card room today.

To the right of the main hallway is the more elaborately decorated library or, as it was originally called, the lounge. The room features plaster walls and a painted beamed ceiling. The terrazzo floor is covered with fine oriental rugs and furnished with traditional upholstered chairs and sofas. One of the highlights of the room is a large table made of 6,000 pieces of 38 different types of wood found in Wisconsin. On the far wall of the library is a grey stone fireplace with a rectangular opening and mantel. The mantel is decorated with swags in the entablature and is supported by pilasters that flank the opening. Also on this side of the room is a large arched opening filled with french doors that leads to the auditorium. On the opposite wall are three large bookcase units that take up most of the wall space. Like the openings of this room, they sit under arched reveals.

The second floor has a small office, cloak rooms, and two lodge rooms.

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The lodge rooms are entered through sets of wood paneled doors that lead to vestibules. Additional sets of wood paneled doors lead directly into the lodge rooms. Both lodge rooms are carpeted and have plaster walls and ceilings. They are also decorated in classical motifs and both lodge rooms have similar plans. In each room there is a large open center area, a small stage or podium at the front of the room, and tiered upholstered auditorium-style seats along each of the walls.

The classical motifs of the lodge rooms are seen primarily in the podium area. One of the lodge rooms has six large, but simple pilasters separating panels of polished grey marble. The other lodge room features a recessed podium flanked by two colossal fluted Doric columns. The side walls of this room also have an upper tier of large painted panels. Both rooms have original decorative brass and opaque glass globe hanging lights and classical moldings.

The third floor of the Temple is called the mezzanine level and has only a small set of offices that have lowered ceilings and carpeting. The bulk of the third floor and much of the first and second floors is taken up by the 1200-plus seat auditorium. Again, here in the auditorium, little appears to have changed from the original interior except for the installation of modern carpeting (carpeting was original to the auditorium). Directly outside of the auditorium on the first floor of the building is an original cork floor, installed to keep the noise level down from hallway traffic.

The stage area features most of the interior design of the auditorium. It has its original dark red velvet curtain and flanking classical appointments. Among the most prominent of these appointments are the colossal corinthian pilasters that flank the stage. Above the stage is a rinceau of foliated scrolls. In the center of the rinceau is a panel with a "G" within an oval molding.

On either side of the stage are, on the left, the organ balcony, and on the right, a faux balcony. These balconies have balustrades of square posts and small square panels with the same criss-cross pattern that is seen on the entry doors of the building. This same pattern of squares also make up the large screens that cover the mechanical elements of the grand organ in the auditorium. Above these screens are classically-decorated panels. Another set of colossal corinthian pilasters flank the two boxes. Other classical details in the auditorium include moldings with classical motifs such as dentils, acanthus leaves, and wheat ears.

Seating in the large auditorium consists of the main set of seats that rise two stories in height from the first floor of the building. There is a large balcony over this set of seats, and at the very rear of the balcony more seats steeply rise to the ceiling of the auditorium. There are two large and four smaller lantern-like chandeliers that hang from the ceiling of the auditorium. They feature brass fixtures, oval opaque glass globes, and applied metal decoration in classical motifs. The auditorium is well-designed and its size has lent itself well to recent uses for the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra and the Madison Boy Choir.

Entering the Temple through the East Johnson Street entrances leads to

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the large banquet hall on the ground floor. While this entrance is not as elaborate as the main lobby, it displays the classical elegance found in the rest of the Temple's interior. The entry doors open into a vestibule and three sets of french doors open to a hallway with plastered and wood paneled walls. A staircase with the same kind of delicate wrought-iron balustrade as seen in the lobby leads to the first floor auditorium entrance, while additional french doors open to the large banquet hall of the ground floor. At the entrance to the banquet hall there is a staircase with more wrought iron balustrades. The room is simply decorated with plaster walls and a terrazzo floor. An original 1920s-style revolving mirrored ball and stage are elements that suggest this room was used for dances as well as large banquets. Also on this floor are a smaller dining room, offices, service and storage rooms, and a well-appointed large kitchen facility.

Throughout the interior there has been little, if any, modernization of the Temple's original facilities. Wall surfaces, doors, floors, windows, and classical appointments have been little touched except for the occasional addition of modern carpeting. Taking a walk through the interior of the Temple is like taking a walk back to a more elegant time, when craftsmanship and high quality materials were blended together into an exclusive private facility for one of Madison's most prominent fraternal organizations. And, today, as the Temple increasingly opens its facilities to more public uses, more and more area residents are able to see the interior of what is one of Madison's truly elegant historic buildings.

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Original Owner Masonic Union	Original Use fraternal lodge
Architect or Builder Law and Law	Architectural Style neo-classical revival
Date of Construction 1923-1925	Indigenous Materials Used not applicable

List of Bibliographical References Used

Architect's files of the Preservation Planner for the City of Madison, Municipal Building, Madison, Wisconsin.

Blumenson, John J.-G. Identifying American Architecture. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1981.

Langdon Street Historic District nomination form, on file at the Historic Preservation Office, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

"Madison Masons to Lay New Temple Cornerstone After Parade Wednesday." The Wisconsin State Journal, 30 October, 1992.

"Masonic Temple at \$500,000 to Start in Spring." The Wisconsin State Journal, 19 November 1922.

"Masons Ready for Dedication." The Wisconsin State Journal, 29 September 1925.

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Form Prepared By:

Name and Title

Carol Lohry Cartwright and Katherine Rankin

Organization Represented (if any)

City of Madison

Address

P. O. Box 2985
Madison, WI 53701-2985

Telephone Number

266-6552

Date Nomination Form Was Prepared

March 2, 1993

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List of Bibliographical References Continued

"Masons Will Dedicate New \$650,000 Temple Wednesday, Sept. 30." The Wisconsin State Journal, 27 September 1925.

"New \$500,000 Masonic Temple Nearly Finished." The Wisconsin State Journal, 4 January 1925.

"New Masonic Temple May Be Ready Ahead of Time." The Wisconsin State Journal, 13 April 1924.

"New Temple Planned and Financed by Masons of Madison." The Wisconsin State Journal, 30 September 1925.

Rankin, Katherine H., unpublished thematic study of fraternal groups in Madison, Wisconsin. On file at the Preservation Planner's Office for the City of Madison, Municipal Building, Madison, Wisconsin.

"Thousands Aid in Ceremonies at Artistic Building." The Wisconsin State Journal, 30 September 1925.

Wyatt, Barbara, ed. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. II and III. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

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Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:

The Masonic Temple is the best remaining example of a fraternal clubhouse in Madison and the Masonic organizations were one of the most prominent, if not the most prominent of the fraternal groups in Madison. Fraternal groups are important to the social history of the United States because they helped define social groups in the country and made important contributions to their communities throughout their history. The Temple is an elegant and fine example of Neo-Classical architecture, designed by one of Madison's best and most prestigious architectural firms, Law and Law. In fact, the Masonic Temple belongs to a small and elite group of outstanding Neo-Classical buildings in downtown Madison. And, the Masonic Temple far outshines other buildings in downtown Madison that have some Neo-Classical Revival features, but do not have the Temple's grandeur or style.

Historical Background

The completion in 1925 of the Madison Masonic Temple was the culmination of over 80 years of Masonic activity in Madison. Early Yankee settlers established the first Masonic lodge in 1844 and between that time and 1891, this group and a second lodge organized in 1854, met in so many buildings in Madison, they are too numerous to mention. In 1891, the Masons acquired this site with an old frame Presbyterian Church that they remodeled and made into their formal Masonic Temple. But, these quarters soon became much too small for the growing Masonic lodges and their related auxiliary groups so that as early as 1915, the Masons had James and Edward Law, Masons themselves, draw up plans for a new Masonic Temple. (1)

World War I interrupted the Masons' plans for a new temple, but after the war, the Law brothers drew up new plans for an even bigger temple for the Masons. In November of 1922, the Masons announced their plans to build a new Masonic Temple that would cost at least \$500,000. They stated that they expected to break ground for the new building in the spring of 1923 and that the plans by the architectural firm of Law and Law were completed. (2)

In May of 1923 the Masons broke ground for the new temple. It was pointed out in newspaper articles at the time that the building would be completed in about two years and that it would be constructed in an unusual manner. Because the Masons needed to use their old facility (the old Presbyterian Church they had altered) for as long as possible for their activities, the rear section of the building would be constructed first. Then the walls of the front section would be constructed around the old temple. The old temple was to be demolished right before the last phase of construction of the front section of the new temple. Local contractor John H. Findorff and Son was the general contractor for the building. (3)

In April of 1924, it was reported that the project was on schedule and that the rear section of the new building would be completed within six months. At this time, it was also reported that the old temple would soon be demolished so extensive work on the front section of the new

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building could be started. It took almost another 18 months to complete the new temple and it was dedicated in a four-day ceremony at the very end of September of 1925. the final cost of the new temple and its furnishings exceeded \$540,000 and the two and one-half years of construction resulted in a building that received praise from Masonic organizations across the country. When the building was completed, the Masons appropriately boasted in their Masonic publication that their temple was ". . . by far the most beautiful and costly Masonic structure in Wisconsin and, so far as can be ascertained, has no equal in any city anywhere near the size of Madison in the country." (4)

The new temple was enough to house all of the existing Masonic organizations in Madison and to house the youth and the women's auxiliary Masonic organizations. It was also to be a regional center for Scottish Rite Masonry, a group that encompassed the lodges of the higher degrees of Masonry. The actual ownership of the temple fell to a board of trustees of the Masonic Union. The Masonic Union included the six main Masonic organizations in Madison: the Madison Lodge #5, the Hiram Lodge #50, the Commonwealth Lodge #325, the Madison Chapter #4 Royal Arch Masons, the Robert McCoy Commandery #3, the Knights Teplar; along with the Madison Consistory. In addition to the above groups, the following auxiliary groups were affiliated with and met at the temple at the time of its completion: DeMolay (a youth group), Eastern Star, White Shrine, and Wimodaughsis. With the addition of the Scottish Rite organization, altogether 11 different groups used the facilities of the new temple. (5)

The four-day dedication of the new temple was as elaborate as the building itself. It included one day for strictly Masonic activities, one day of activities for members of other fraternal and civic organizations in Madison, one day for an open house for all Madison residents to view the new temple, including all the tradesmen who worked on the building and their families. The most elaborate day was the day set aside for Masonic activities. Thousands of Masons from throughout the state came to Madison to help formally dedicate the new temple. Activities included a parade around the Capitol Square that included three Masonic bands, dedication exercises in the new auditorium with speakers and music, and an evening banquet followed by dancing. (6)

Since 1925, the temple has served as the headquarters for all Masonic organizations as well as their auxiliary groups. At the time the temple was opened in 1925, there were 2,450 Masons in the various lodges. Today, the Masonic organizations that use the temple regularly number around 4,500. The temple is also the center for the 4,800-plus members of Scottish Rite masonry in the area.

In the past, private Masonic activities filled the temple to capacity. But, today, due to changes in membership and the financial needs in maintaining a large, historic building, the Masons have opened up their temple to many community or convention type activities. Their auditorium is well-suited as a rehearsal hall for such groups as the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, the Madison Opera, and the Madison Boy Choir. In fact, the Boy Choir keeps its office in the temple, as well. Many public concerts and meetings are also held at the temple. One unusual combination of events held in the temple in 1987 illustrates the

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scope of activities the facility can accommodate. While the Madison Opera was rehearsing its production of "Tosca" in one part of the temple, a state-wide body building contest was being held in another part of the temple.

Along with opening the temple to the public for non-Masonic activities, the Madison Masons are currently involved in a fund drive for the maintenance and renovation of their historic building. As part of this fund drive, the Madison Masons are establishing a tax-exempt Madison Masonic Center Foundation which would hold title to the temple and operate a public Masonic Museum and Library. This move will not only make the temple building fund attractive for contributors, but would result in the financial security to maintain this fine historic building. Rather than taking the step of abandoning this building for a cheaper, modern structure suited only for Masonic activities, the Madison Masons are engaged in a plan that would maintain their historic temple as a first-class private club facility for the Madison Masons, and a first-class historic public building.

Architecture

The Madison Masonic Temple is significant for architecture because it is an outstanding example of the Neo-Classical Revival style. There are several outstanding examples of the Neo-Classical Revival style in downtown Madison, including the Beaux Arts State Capitol, the Neo-Classical Madison Municipal Building, and the old Christian Science Church (right next to the Masonic Temple). The State Capitol and the old Christian Science Church have been listed in the National Register.

The Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture was popular in Wisconsin between 1895 and 1935. The style was spurred on in the United States by the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago that featured the famous "white city" of white buildings all executed in classical forms using classical details. Because the style stressed large, conservative classical details, it became an ideal form for public and institutional buildings throughout the United States. Neo-Classical details also appeared frequently on commercial buildings of the era, but fully developed examples of the style in commercial buildings were frequently limited to banks. (7)

Neo-Classical buildings are primarily symmetrically arranged buildings of large proportions. They are most often built or faced with smooth ashlar stone finishes. Colossal columns in porticos or in front of recessed entrances are very common. Windows are generally single-light sashes. Attic stories and parapet roofs are common. Unlike the related Beaux Arts classical style, statuary, arches, and enriched moldings are not frequently seen. (8)

The Masonic Temple is a fine example of the Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture because it has almost all of the features described above and because these features are all executed with a high level of skill in both design and construction. The temple was built toward the later period that the style was popular in the United States, but not particularly late for Wisconsin. As a clubhouse for a prominent fraternal group, it functions as an institutional building, so the style

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is particularly appropriate. It is symmetrically arranged with large proportions and is faced with smooth Indiana Bedford limestone on all but the rear facade. Its main entrance with the colossal columns in antis is a popular Neo-Classical entrance and the large columns, reportedly weighing 50 tons each, are a fine and monumental element of the building's design. The building also has the parapet roof, classical cornice, and other classical details that add to its style, yet it is not overwhelmingly decorative, making it distinctive from the beautiful Beaux Arts State Capitol, for example.

The interior of the Temple is as finely crafted as the exterior. The marble-walled lobby with its elegant chandeliers, stone staircases with wrought-iron balustrades, and the terrazzo floor makes an elegant statement about the purpose of the building one has just entered. The library details, with its fine stone fireplace and wall of bookcases is also an elegant, yet comfortable room. The two lodge rooms of the second floor could have been constructed identically in a less inspired interior plan, but their distinctively different classical details make them each an important individual entity of the temple. The classically appointed auditorium, with most of its original features intact, is, perhaps, the highlight of the building and makes a grand statement about its occupants.

But, more importantly, the Madison Masonic Temple is significant not just because it contains all the typical elements of the Neo-Classical Revival style but because these classical elements are executed on the building so well. The result is a well-proportioned building made up of the finest materials by the best craftsmanship available. This factor in the significance of the building can probably be attributed to the architectural firms practicing in the City at the time this building was constructed.

Law and Law, and later Law, Law, and Potter, was one of the most respected and prolific architectural firms in Madison between 1920 and 1930. James R. Law, a Madison native, worked for noted architects Claude and Starck and the state architect Arthur Peabody until beginning his own firm in 1914. His brother, Edward J. Law, joined the firm within the year. Ellis Potter was the senior draftsman for the brothers, and was made a partner in 1925. The Law Brothers and Ellis Potter practiced adeptly in all of the early twentieth century styles, including the Neo-Classical Revival style. They were responsible for some of the most outstanding office and commercial buildings in Madison, such as the Tenney Building, the Holstein and Friesian Association of America building and the Manchester's Department Store (demolished). (9)

The firm also designed eight fraternity-sorority houses in the Langdon Street Historic District and showed their versatility by not only designing fine large Greek houses in period revival styles including the Colonial Revival, Mediterranean Revival, and Tudor Revival styles, but by making each building a special work that reflected the individuality of each Greek organization. The firm also designed a number of noted smaller period revival residences throughout Madison. (10)

There were other fine architectural firms in Madison that could have designed an impressive Neo-Classical Masonic Temple for the Madison

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Masons, but Masonic members James and Edward Law created an elegant interpretation of the style for their brother Masons. This fine design may have been a product of their personal interest in the temple, but a look at their other major designs in Madison indicate that whether they were Masons or not, they were a talented firm that created one of the outstanding Neo-Classical buildings in Madison. And, the Madison Masonic Temple has to be included in the prestigious list of their most important designs in the City.

Adding to the architectural significance of the Masonic Temple is its very high level of integrity. Almost all of its exterior and interior details are intact and well-maintained down to the original light fixtures. The Masons are justifiably proud of their historic building, as evidenced by their maintenance of its historic exterior and interior and their commitment to the facility as a continuing and future home for Madison Masonic organizations.

Social History

The Madison Masonic Temple is significant for social history because it was home to the most important fraternal organization in the City. The Masonic Temple is the only historic fraternal clubhouse still extant in Madison. The size, scale, and design of the Madison Masonic Temple suggests that the Masons were men and women of prominence and social standing in the community. In fact much of the social significance of Masonry in Madison probably lies in who belonged to the Masonic lodges. These people were, in large part, important leaders in industry, commerce, and the professions in Madison. Because they chose to gather socially under the auspices of Masonry probably had significant overtones for the development of Madison both economically and politically.

The origins of Masonry date back to medieval stonemasons who formed craft guilds to protect and pass on the secrets of their trade. In the 1600s, in England, these guilds began to accept honorary masons who were prominent men in the community, but not actual stonemasons. Known as "accepted masons," they eventually formed their own society known as Freemasonry. Freemasons believe in a strong family, religion, community, moral values, and democratic government. Of the five million Masons worldwide, at least three and one-half million live in the United States. (11)

Masonic lodge organization is complex and based on 33 degrees of achievement within the society. The first three degrees are known as Symbolic or Blue Lodge Masonry. A Third Degree Mason is also known as a Master Mason and this is considered the highest Masonic degree. But, after achieving Master Mason status, a Mason may then join one of two other branches of Masonry to attain the fourth through the 33rd degrees that enhance the member's understanding of Masonic principles. One branch is the York Rite which consists of Royal Arch Masons, Royal and Select Masters, and Knights Templar. The other branch is the Scottish Rite and consists of the Lodge of Perfection, the Council of Princes of Jerusalem, the Chapter of the Rose Croix, and the Consistory. The individual lodges within each branch are hierarchical and represent a member's achievement of higher degrees of Masonry. (12)

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Fraternal groups identify one type of social order in American society and perform many important social and charitable activities in American communities. There are two types of fraternal groups. The first is the social club that emphasizes fellowship and secrecy. The second is the benevolent or insurance-providing society, emphasizing financial planning or insurance to their members. The Masons are the oldest of the social fraternal groups in Wisconsin. Their first lodge was established at Green Bay in 1823 and by 1843, there were three more lodges at Platteville, Mineral Point, and Milwaukee. By 1865 there were about 150 Masonic lodges in the state. Other fraternal groups popular in Wisconsin include the Odd Fellows, Good Templars, Shriners, Eagles, and Elks. Between 1866 and 1910, fraternal activity peaked. Female auxiliaries were founded; the most well-known being the Order of the Eastern Star, the Masonic auxiliary. After 1910, fraternal groups ended their rapid growth and the social changes of the late twentieth century have diminished the importance of lodges. But most communities in the state still have at least one or two active fraternal groups, and larger cities have larger, more numerous, and more active groups. (13)

The Masons and the International Order of Odd Fellows are the oldest and largest social fraternal societies in Madison. Madison Masonic Lodge #5 was founded in 1844 and the Hope Lodge #17 of the Odd Fellows was formed in 1847. Both groups grew rapidly in the nineteenth century, and by 1902, the Masons had 350 members and the Odd Fellows had 85 members. While the Odd Fellows had only 85 members, they were considered some of the most important business and professional men in Madison. The Masons held some of the earliest social gatherings in Madison and their activities were preeminent in the community. (14)

Other fraternal groups formed in Madison were both social and insurance-providing organizations. Of the social groups, the Elks, Eagles, and Moose all established fraternal lodges prior to 1930. Insurance groups formed in Madison included the Madison Relief Association, founded in 1866; the American Order of United Woodmen, founded in 1879; and the Fraternal Benefit Society, founded in Dane County in 1902. The Fraternal Benefit Society was the most important benevolent group in Madison and eventually became the Beaver National Mutual Benefit Company, a large fraternal insurance group with its home office in Madison. Other social groups founded in Madison concentrated on civic improvement and fall into a different category than the Masons or the Odd Fellows, or even the Fraternal Benefit Society. These groups included the Kiwanis, Rotary, and Optimists. Several other ethnic-related social groups existed in Madison in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, but they were short-lived or were of little importance to the broader community. (15)

Early in Madison's history, fraternal groups met in the upstairs halls of many commercial blocks in downtown Madison that are now demolished. At the end of the nineteenth century, the larger groups established their own lodge buildings. The Masons were the first to do so when they acquired the old Presbyterian Church in 1891. The other major fraternal groups also acquired their own lodge buildings. The Elks built a clubhouse in 1901; the Eagles established a clubhouse prior to 1910; the Odd Fellows built a clubhouse in 1906; and the Moose acquired their

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lodge prior to 1929. Of the insurance-providing fraternal groups, the Beaver National Mutual Benefit organization built a fine office and lodge hall in downtown Madison. The only historic lodges of social or benevolent fraternal groups still extant today are the Beaver office building and the current Masonic Temple. (16)

Of the other buildings constructed for social or fraternal purposes in Madison, only two are still extant today. And, they were built for groups that had and still have a different purpose than groups such as the Masons. These buildings include the Madison Club, founded as a business development club; and the YWCA, a nationally-affiliated service organization for women. All the important social fraternal halls have been demolished, along with most of the business blocks that housed these groups prior to the establishment of their own clubhouses. This makes the Madison Masonic Temple a unique structure in the community as the only extant historic building related to a social fraternal group in the City.

The Masonic Temple is not only important because it is the only remaining historic building related to Madison's most significant social fraternal societies. It is also significant because these societies were important in developing the social structure of Madison during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and because such organizations' memberships often consisted of some of the most important "movers and shakers" in a community. And, while the gathering together of important people in the community in a social or fraternal setting may not, in and of itself, be significant, it is well known that important business and political connections were made between the members of fraternal lodges, and that these connections often had an indirect, if not direct, effect on the growth and development of a community. There are no written records that establish the Madison Masonic Temple as a place where such connections were made. But, since the Masons were considered one of the most prominent, if not the most prominent social fraternal group in Madison, there is a great probability that such connections were made and that these connections were of importance to the City of Madison.

In more recent years, the Madison Masons have been more directly involved in many charitable and civic activities. Masons support the Wisconsin Masonic Home near Dousman, Wisconsin for retired Masons and their families. They support a diagnostic health care facility at Deaconess Hospital in Milwaukee. The Wisconsin Masonic Foundation supports scholarships for college students. The Royal Arch Masons support research aimed at helping children with learning disabilities. The Council of Royal and Select Masters supports Cerebral Palsy research. The Knights Templar supports eye research, college scholarships, and hearing aid assistance. The Knights of the York Cross of Honour supports funds to find a cure for leukemia. The Scottish Rite Masons support research on the nature and causes of schizophrenia; and they support college scholarships, and a national heritage museum. Auxiliary groups also support many charitable activities, particularly in the area of college scholarships. These charitable and civic activities illustrate participate in activities that try to better society as a whole.

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Because the Masons were a prominent and long-time social fraternal group in Madison and because such social fraternal groups made both direct and indirect contributions to the growth and development of social service in Madison, the Madison Masonic Temple, the culmination of the Masons' prominence in the community, is significant for local history. Also, as the last extant historic facility associated with an important social fraternal group in Madison, the Masonic Temple is a significant landmark in the community.

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Notes to Significance Section:

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.; "Masonic Temple at \$500,000 to Start in Spring," The Wisconsin State Journal, 19 November 1922.

(3) "Masonic Temple at \$500,000; " "New \$500,000 Masonic Temple Nearly Finished," The Wisconsin State Journal, 4 January 1925.

(4) "New Masonic Temple May be Ready Ahead of Time," The Wisconsin State Journal, 13 April 1924; "Masons Ready for Dedication;" "Masons Will Dedicate New \$650,000 Temple Wednesday."

(5) "Masons Will Dedicate New \$650,000 Temple Wednesday."

(6) Ibid.; "Masons Ready for Dedication;" "Thousands Aid in Ceremonies at Artistic Building," The Wisconsin State Journal, 30 September 1925.

(7) Barbara Wyatt, ed., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. II, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Architecture, p. 2-18.

(8) John J.-G. Blumenson, Identifying American Architecture, New York; W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1981, p. 69.

(9) Information on Law and Law and Law, Law, and Potter is from the architect's files of the Preservation Planner for the City of Madison, Municipal Building, Madison, Wisconsin.

(10) Langdon Street Historic District nomination form, on file at the Historic Preservation Office, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

(11) Information from the Madison Masonic Organizations, Madison Masonic Temple, Madison, Wisconsin.

(12) Ibid.

(13) Barbara Wyatt, ed., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. III, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Social and Political Movements, pp. 5-1--5-6.

(14) Katherine H. Rankin, unpublished thematic study of fraternal groups in Madison, Wisconsin. On file at the Preservation Planner's Office for the City of Madison, Municipal Building, Madison, Wisconsin.

(15) Ibid.

(16) Ibid.