



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE

Masonic Temple is typical of the Federation Academic Classical style of architecture common throughout the goldfields during the gold boom. The building with its moulded exterior enhanced by its central porch makes a contribution to the streetscape. Its streetscape value has been diminished by its front boundary fence. (Criterion 1.1)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

The construction of *Masonic Temple* is closely associated with the rapid population growth in the eastern goldfields at the turn-of-the-century. (Criterion 2.2)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

From the day of its opening the place has been held in high regard by the local Masonic fraternity.

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12. 1. RARITY

12. 2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Masonic Temple is representative of the Federation Academic Classical style built for modest sized public architecture. (Criterion 6.1)

12. 3 CONDITION

With the exception of rising damp which has cause some cracking to the exterior walls, *Masonic Temple* is in good condition.

12. 4 INTEGRITY

Masonic Temple has a high degree of integrity.

12. 5 AUTHENTICITY

Recent additions to the rear of *Masonic Temple* are reversible. and do not diminish the original fabric of the place. *Masonic Temple* has a very high degree of authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Julia Ball, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Kelly Aris, Conservation Architect.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Masonic Temple is a one-storey brick and iron building, constructed in 1901-02 to provide meeting facilities for the growing number of Freemasons in the Boulder area.

On 27 February 1900, the Grand Lodge of Western Australia was "regularly formed, assembled and properly dedicated to the work of the Ancient, Free and Accepted Masonry ...".¹ The formation of a Grand Lodge, local and supreme, marked the attainment of autonomous government in matters Masonic. The first Lodge in Western Australia had been established in 1843. Growth was slow, until the 1880s when progress started to become more rapid. The increase in the number of lodges reflects the more prosperous conditions prevailing in the colony. The first impact of the gold discoveries boom also hastened the movement to establish lodges in the older settled areas.

By October 1899, there were 35 lodges in existence, owing allegiance to the Grand Lodge of England. Both the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Lodges were formed in 1897.²

On Wednesday, 11 December 1901, the foundation stone for *Masonic Temple* was laid. Mr M. McKay Hopkins was the architect and Mr J.V. Miles the builder. The *Western Argus* noted the event:

On Wednesday December 11 1901, the foundation stone was laid by the Boulder Masonic Lodge. Visiting brethren from many centres were present in considerable numbers.

The Most Worshipful, the Grand Master, the Hon. J.W. Hackett arrived from Perth and a procession was formed to march to the site. Unaffiliated brethren followed with the architect, Bro. M.M. Hopkins, next carrying plans of the hall.

On arrival at the site the procession opened and allowed the Grand Lodge Officers to march between the files to the dais. ...Before lowering the [memorial] stone the Grand Secretary read the inscription. "This stone was laid on December 11 A.L. 5901, by the Hon. J.W. Hackett, M.L.C., M.W.K.M., W.A. Freemasons. Frank Mitchell W.M.; Tobert Hay Sect; M.McKay Hopkins, Architect; J.V. Miles, Builder.

A phial containing a list of officials, copies of the Kalgoorlie Miner and Evening Star and coins of the realm were placed underneath the stone which was lowered and declared to be truly laid. Corn, wine and oil were then poured over it and the building was solemnly consecrated by the Grand Chaplain. The architect, Bro. Hopkins, presented his plans, and the M.W.G.M., after inspecting them, ordered him to proceed with the construction of the building without loss of time.³

¹ The Grand Lodge of Western Australia of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, *Golden Jubilee History 1900 - 1950*, (Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1950), p. 5. (It should be noted that publication of *The W.A. Freemasons' Magazine* was suspended between September 1900 and May 1903.)

² The Grand Lodge of Western Australia of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, *Golden Jubilee History 1900 - 1950*, (Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1950), p. 7.

³ *Western Argus* 17 December 1901, p. 18.

In 1996, although membership is decreasing, *Masonic Temple* continues to be used for its original purpose.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Masonic Temple is a medium-sized building in the Federation Academic Classical style set back from the street alignment.⁴ This style was used to express community wealth and prominence and is common throughout the goldfields which grew and prospered following the discovery of gold in the early 1890s.

The front elevation is framed by two established date palms and the building is surrounded by gravel. The exterior walls are constructed of red fair-faced bricks laid in Flemish bond on a small rendered plinth. The building has a projecting facade bay and a central porch which is a feature of the exterior.

The building is symmetrical about a well proportioned porch. Although enclosed, the porch is reminiscent of a classical temple front with Tuscan columns at its front corners that sit on a rendered platform, and a Doric entablature with a triglyph and metope frieze. The porch is crowned with a triangular pediment featuring a painted set square and dividers, the emblem of the masons, set against a rendered background.

Either side of the porch, the breakfront has rectangular windows, the panes of which are now painted over. The roof is hipped and covered with corrugated iron with metal roof vents and timber bracketed eaves. The height of the walls is broken by a rendered sill and string course. The sill course extends to the main wall. The main wall features an 'in-wall' venting system that helps cool the structure.

This projecting bay stands in front of the wall to the temple room. The wall is built in matching brickwork and is embellished with rendered decorative treatment. The wall has end pilasters, blind windows and a rendered parapet with an Italianate balustrade. The parapet conceals a hipped roof with vented gables and two small ventilators. The blind windows have a semi-circular arched head, with decorative infill, supported on pilasters.

A sheet metal fence added across the front boundary restricts visibility of the facade diminishing its streetscape value.

The interior of the porch features tessellated floor tiles, four leaded and stained glass windows with centre motifs, and a pressed metal ceiling. The timber panelled door is an addition.

The interior of the building comprises a central hall with two ante-rooms on the west, and an ante-room and store room on the east. The hall leads to the main temple room, and a supper room behind.

Entrance to the hall is through a doorway with a semi-circular fanlight, for which the glazing is now missing. The hall features an archway supported by square pilasters with a pronounced keystone and a moulded soffit, tall skirting boards, ceiling roses, and painted walls in blue hues to represent the blue lodgeship. Pressed metal ceilings and roses have been used to decorate the ante-rooms. The timber floorboards have been covered with carpet.

⁴ Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present* (Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1994) pp. 100-103.

The interior treatment of the temple room is highly elaborate. The metal ceiling is multi-coloured and heavily embossed with an ornate cornice and four large roses. Three pendant lights illuminate the central space which is covered by a patterned carpet. The centre pendant features the letter 'G' for God. The south wall is strengthened with brick piers with a double-hung sash window and awning fanlight between each pier. The windows are now boarded over and furnished with red velvet curtains. At the centre of the east wall is a small archway supported by square pilasters with capitals. The archway has been enclosed. A raised podium extends across the east wall. The podium is covered with a large black and white chequered patterned linoleum. An organ and carved timber furniture in a grand style for the master, past master, immediate post master, deacons, secretary, treasurer, wardens and inner guard add to the grandeur of the interior.

The original entrance to the temple room was through double-doors at the end of the hall. The doors have been fixed shut and the new entrance is through an existing door in the ante-room on the west side of the hall.

The walls of the supper room are also strengthened with engaged piers with a window in between, but lack the ornamentation of the temple room. All window panes have been covered.

A storeroom has been added behind the temple room⁵ and c.1990, a kitchen was added to the supper room. The timber framed additions are externally clad in corrugated iron and the kitchen is internally clad with fibro-cement linings. The additions are at a lower level to the original building.

With the exception of rising damp, the building is in good condition. An apron of blue metal has been placed around the building against the exterior walls in an attempt to increase moisture soakage.⁶ Vandals have damaged the windows on the west elevation.

At the rear of the site is a timber framed ripple-iron clad, single-storey caretaker's quarters. The building, which is in very poor condition, does not form part of this assessment.

13.3 REFERENCES

National Trust Assessment Exposition, n.d.

⁵ Date of the addition is unknown.

⁶ Discussion with Master Keith Edwards, 1 March 1996.