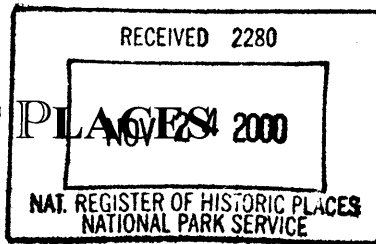


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



1566

1. Name of Property

historic name: Masonic Temple

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 821 Central Ave

not for publication: na
vicinity: na

city/town: Great Falls

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Cascade

code: 013

zip code: 59401

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency or bureau

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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 see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register see continuation sheet

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Oliver Nelson H. Beall 12/29/00

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: n/a

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u> building(s)
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

SOCIAL/meeting hall

Current Functions:

SOCIAL/meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late 19th – Early 20th Century Revivals/Tudor Revival

Materials:

foundation: stone
 walls: brick
 roof: asphalt
 other: n/a

Narrative Description

The Masonic Temple of Great Falls is an eclectic building constructed in 1914, influenced by English medieval design of the Tudor and Gothic periods with subtle Moorish influences. Standing three stories in height, it is a massive, brown brick building, basically symmetrical in its design. The mass sets on a stone foundation, and stone veneer carries midway upward from the base into the first story. Walls are of common bond brick, with polychrome details. On the primary and secondary facades, the roofline is enriched by gabled towers tying into a continuous flat parapet of contrasting blond brick. The parapet is trimmed with checkerboard polychrome brickwork beneath a dark row of brick coping across the top.

The primary façade faces south onto Central Avenue, where a massive full height, gabled entry tower dominates the design and divides this elevation into two equal halves. Groups of 6-paned windows with quoined sides fenestrate the tower; they are prominently banded together on each story in pairs and triplets. Set off visually by sandstone surrounds, the windows are a primary element of the design and add much texture to building. The base of the tower is accentuated by flanking entrances set under round, brick arches with sandstone keystones. A pair of double wooden doors with a round-arched transom is recessed under each archway. Stepped, polychrome brickwork trims the top gable, and frames a central terra cotta medallion bearing the diamond-shaped Masonic emblem.

On each outer side of the south façade, the central tower is echoed by raised, gabled bays which enframe windows and balconies on the second and third stories. Polychrome brickwork, similar to that on the center gable, repeats on these secondary gables. Each features a balconet on the second floor, with French doors, a multi-pane transom, and an iron rail supported on console brackets. On the third story, each bay includes a pair of windows under a heavy sandstone lintel with matching sill. The inner bay to either side of the entry tower features paired 8-pane casement windows with multi-pane transoms on the first and second stories; and a triad of double-hung 9-over-1 windows on the third story. Common lintels and sills of heavy sandstone span grouped windows. Checked polychrome brick fills the spandrels between second and third stories; while light terra cotta squares ornament piers between third story windows and the area above the uppermost lintels.

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On the temple's east elevation, the building features an engaged side tower, having two gable-capped piers which enframe a large first story arched window opening, and tiered windows on the second and third stories. These openings are now infilled with brickwork, but the original four-centered arch with sandstone keystone and springblocks, and the segmental arched third story openings are still visible. Second and third story window openings are defined by sandstone pilasters, spandrels, sills and lintels. Third story windows were originally casement units with transoms to fit the arches. The remainder of the east wall includes a secondary pedestrian entrance like those on the south side, with double doors and a round arch opening. Upper story windows match those on the primary façade - they are 4-over-4 lite casement units on the second level, 9-over-1 double hung on the third story. The decorative blond brick parapet wraps the upper story.

The west elevation of the Masonic Temple is partially obscured by the building next door, however, there is a space between the two buildings of several feet. A careful look does allow a view of the entire façade. A broad brick arch with sandstone keystone similar to that on the east tower helps define the lower wall. This arch and a sandstone sill enframe an area of brick relieved by raised brick pilasters that divide the arch space into a tripartate pattern. North wall fenestration is characterized by double-hung window units, brick segmental arches and sandstone sills. On the second floor, windows near the front include double-hung 1-over-1 and small square fixed units; paired window openings toward the rear are now bricked in. The five openings on the third floor are all bricked in. Along the west side of the rear extension, the two original window openings are now blocked in. A metal fire escape descends from the upper floors to ground level along the north wall and west side of the rear extension.

The north elevation faces to the rear and an alley. Here the design includes a three-story planar wall of salmon colored brick with a one-story appendage, and on the upper stories, short, segmental window openings under brick arches. The single story mass is rectangular, and flat-roofed. It has a round, brick-arched recessed entrance at each end of the north wall and original, double, paneled wooden doors. The area between the doorways includes four segmental windows; they are now infilled with brick.

On the interior, the building encompasses a full three floors and a basement. The primary entrance to the building is from the south, a pair of vestibules access a front hall and stairwell with elevator. The temple still retains its original Otis elevator, complete with brass handle and metal screen. Double doors on each floor lead into a secondary hall/lobby. This hall/lobby opens beyond into the meeting or auditorium chamber; and to either side, accesses offices and parlors for activities such as card playing. As originally drawn and constructed, the first floor chamber held an auditorium/dance floor overlooked by balconies on a mezzanine level. The north wall opened at center into a one-story area housing a stage flanked by dressing rooms. (The first floor was converted in 1958 to a meeting room for related sororities and the general public. The auditorium now holds a stage in the east end, and is furnished with cushioned turquoise metal theatre seats, blonde woodwork and late 1950s period lighting.)

The second and third floors are relatively the same in design, each having a large lodge meeting hall with 18-foot ceilings. These lodge rooms are entered through anterooms under a balcony on the west end. Large windows in the east wall illuminate these spaces and overlook the seating for lodge leaders. Presently, it is the third floor that most reflects the original design and style of finish. Walls are painted in tones of rose, tan and turquoise with gilded lodge emblems adorning the walls. The original red and gray floral carpeting is still in place. Mahogany woodwork enriches these spaces. The rooms are furnished with upholstered walnut furniture, and antique hanging light fixtures yet illuminate these floors.

The basement was designed to be actively used by lodge members and included a banquet hall and kitchen, billiard room and dining room, in addition to boiler room, coal bin and storage. Vaults for safe keeping of lodge archives and a caretaker's apartment were also located on this level. Thick masonry walls separate these spaces; in the boiler room the stone foundation is exposed.

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Integrity

The Masonic Temple is a commanding building on the streetscape of urban Great Falls, helping to anchor the Central Avenue corridor which forms the city's main historic artery. The temple retains a very high degree of integrity, inside and out. On the exterior, alteration of the original Van Teylingen design is limited to infill of windows on secondary elevations, in all other respects the historic design is intact. The building continues to serve its intended function and on the interior, the historic spaces are as Van Teylingen conceived them, with the exception of the dance floor on the first story that was redesigned in later years. Elsewhere, the building remains remarkably unchanged, including wall treatments, flooring, floor coverings, and furnishings. The key elements of integrity are all clearly represented, and in design and use, the building has changed little over the past eight decades.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Areas of Significance: Social History, Architecture

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1914-1949

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1914

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Johannes VanTeylingen, architect
Alex Mowbray

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Masonic Temple of Great Falls is a prominent building on the edge of that city’s historic core, significant for its local associations with freemasonry and early fraternal orders in Montana. An early example of the design work of pioneering Great Falls architect Johannes Van Teylingen, the building aptly references the architecture of medieval Europe, where the order of the Ancient Free & Accepted Masons originated. The Masonic Temple of Great Falls has served as the headquarters of several locally prominent fraternal societies through most of the 20th century. Active in Great Falls business and politics, the Masons were involved with many aspects of town activities that shaped the history of the “Electric City”. For these reasons, the building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places according to Criteria A & C.

Historical Background and Significance

Freemasonry has had a long and significant history in the state of Montana, dating to the first known visit by a member of the order of Ancient Free & Accepted Masons, when Meriwether Lewis traversed the country in 1805-1806.¹ In 1862, three Masons set their place in the state’s Masonic history when they held the first “communication” atop what later became Mullan Pass.² A fraternal order believed to date to medieval stonemason guilds, the Masons became a well-established secular order by the end of the 16th century in England. There, by 1730, the society had institutionalized, with a sanctioned list of affiliated lodges and a charitable philosophy. That vision and the socio-political mechanics of the group were carried across the Atlantic to North America by European immigrants, and the fraternity enjoyed growing membership in the United States as the country grew and the Euro-American population spread.

In the West, the Masons played an often-influential role, providing a framework for early social structure in nascent settlements. In Montana, the Masons were prominent leaders of the 1860s vigilance movements on the mining frontiers, and as Territorial governance emerged, the Masons often occupied positions of political influence and power.³ Masonic lodges were established early in Bannack, Virginia City and Helena, in fact the Masonic emblem emblazoned on a lodge building became a hallmark of settlement in the young towns in the territory. During an era when social programs were non-existent, fraternal orders such as the Masons played a crucial charitable role -- helping members and their families in times of need. They were particularly known for assisting with funerals of their membership, laying of cornerstones, charities for children, and homes for the aged and infirm.

The City of Great Falls was born in 1882, when Paris Gibson purchased land along the Missouri River with the intention of designing and building a townsite there. The following year, the town’s first house was erected, and in 1884, the Great Falls settlement became official when a post office opened headed by Gibson himself as the first postmaster. (Gibson was a Mason of long standing, having been a charter and life member of the Khurum Lodge of Minneapolis prior to his move west)⁴.

History of Cascade Lodge No. 34 AF & AM⁵

Cascade Lodge No. 34 AF & AM, was formed early in the city’s history. In 1886, several Masons in the new town gathered to discuss the founding of a new lodge there, among them Herbert P. Rolfe the surveyor who assisted Paris Gibson when the Great Falls townsite was platted in 1883-84. Eleven members petitioned the Grand Lodge of Montana for authorization to begin a new chapter of the Masonic fraternity, and in January 1887, their request was granted. The petitioners were authorized “to assemble at the town of

¹ Miller, Robert “The Hands of the Workmen, p. 3. Lewis’ masonic apron is displayed in Montana’s Grand Masonic Lodge, in Helena.

² From the Address of N.P. Langford to the R.W. Master, Oct. 8, 1867 as quoted in Miller, p. 256.

³ Malone, Roeder & Lang Montana: A History of Two Centuries, pp. 80 and 89.

⁴ Hults, Traber, et al Centennial History of Cascade Lodge No 34, AF & AM, p.20

⁵ *ibid*. The historical narrative for this section is drawn from pp. 7-20.

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Great Falls as a Lodge under dispensation" and Cascade Lodge No. 34, U.D. was created. The first official meeting convened on January 29, 1887, and the chapter received its official charter on October 7, 1887.

The first meetings were held on the second floor of a two-story building on Park Drive, under the direction of H. P. Rolfe, the chapter's first "Worshipful Master". On September 22, 1887, after completion of the Phelps Building at 319 Central Avenue, the Cascade Lodge took up quarters on the second floor. The Masonic crest and founding date of 1887 crowned the pedimented parapet on the building's front.

H.P. Rolfe, interestingly, was the fiscal agent, and perhaps part-owner of Phelps real estate, collecting the lease payments when due. When the lease expired in 1890, the Cascade Lodge moved to a new home, on the second story of the just-completed Rolfe Building at 317 Central Avenue. Beginning in January 1891, the Lodge furnished and outfitted the new hall, which soon housed meetings of other societies as well. At the same time, Rolfe's *Great Falls Leader* newspaper, founded in 1888, operated on the basement level.

When H.P. Rolfe died on March 8, 1895 of typhoid fever at the age of 45, leadership of Cascade Lodge No. 34 changed, and three years later, in February 1898, the lodge relocated to the Kingsbury Block at 313-315 Central Avenue where they leased the second floor. They held forth in that building for the next 16 years.

As early as January 1908, members of the Masonic orders in Great Falls began to discuss the construction of a Grand Lodge that would accommodate several chapters of local fraternal organizations. James W. Freeman was appointed to explore the question with representatives of the other Masonic orders in Great Falls, and to "unite with the several Masonic Bodies of Great Falls to form a Masonic Temple Association". That June, Lodge No. 34, with Freeman as the first Trustee, appropriated \$1500 for the fund. By February 1909 the Masons had purchased a lot on Central Avenue and Ninth Street, and announced plans for erection of "a three-story building". Cascade Lodge No 34 and Euclid Lodge No. 58, AF & AM, together with the Great Falls Chapter 9 Royal Arch Masons, and Black Eagle Commandery No 8 Knights Templar incorporated the Masonic Temple Association and anticipated raising \$60,000.00 to fund the new temple.

Lodge members Alex Mowbray and Johannes Van Teylingen, were selected to design the temple building and in June the Great Falls Tribune announced that construction would soon begin: "The Temple will be 96 x 120 feet in dimensions and three stories in height.... The building will be used exclusively by the Masonic bodies and will be...a fraternal building second to none in the North west." Befittingly, the Masons held a ceremonial cornerstone laying on June 8, 1914, placing the stone at the northeast corner of the building. Entombed in the stone was a copper box holding commemorative documents and coins.

By year's end the building was well along, and the cost of completion had risen to \$100,000.00. The various societies moved into the building during the first part of 1915; the first communication there by Lodge No. 34 took place on January 12, 1915 and the Temple was officially dedicated on September 15, 1915.

Architectural Significance

Johannes Van Teylingen was an important architect in Great Falls through the first half of the 20th century. A native of the Netherlands, Van Teylingen was born in Rotterdam and educated at the Royal Academy in Harlem. He emigrated to the United States, and resided in Great Falls where he was a practicing architect from 1914 until his death in 1956. Van Teylingen entered into an architectural partnership with George Bird, an engineer and one of the original surveyors of the Great Falls townsite. Together they designed and oversaw construction of many public buildings in the city and the state, especially in communities on the state's northern tier. Their commissions included the State Hospital at Warm Springs, the Petroleum Laboratory at the School of Mines in Butte and three Great Falls churches: first Baptist, St. John's Lutheran and Christian Church. Their work also included numerous school buildings, most notably Butte and Great Falls High Schools, and Lowell, Largent and Roosevelt Schools in

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Great Falls. Van Teylingen also collaborated with prominent Great Falls architect George Shanley on design of the Great Falls Civic Center, the city's largest civic building, constructed 1938-40.⁶

Design of the Masonic Temple of Great Falls in 1914 fell into the early part of Van Teylingen's career and is a significant representation of his work. For this building, Van Teylingen eclectically combined aspects of Tudor, Elizabethan and Gothic designs with subtle Moorish polychrome patterning that aptly expressed the medieval European origins and ritualism of the Masonic order. The projecting gabled entry tower and frontal bays, the predominant square side tower with its broad four-centered arch, and the multiple windows accentuated with stone surrounds give reference to the early architecture of medieval Europe. Revival of English medievalism can be linked to the influence of American designer and landscapist Andrew Jackson Downing and his contemporaries in the mid 19th century. While buildings of the Elizabethan period architecture were disavowed as florid, none the less builders of the 19th century embraced the simpler aspects of the style as "quaint" or "picturesque" and well suited for country homes. Revival of medieval styles progressed through the latter 19th century, and by the turn of the century the Tudor and "Jacobethan" forms were adopted widely, particularly on academic and collegiate buildings.⁷ The Masonic Temple reflects this revived popularity.

⁶ Montana SHPO, Architect Biographic Files

⁷ Whiffen American Architecture since 1780, pp. 178-182.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG

Photograph Number

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1. South elevation | Brad Clark, photograph | February 16, 1996 |
| negs: | Great Falls/Cascade County Historic Preservation Office | |
| 2. East elevation | Brad Clark, photograph | February 16, 1996 |
| negs: | Great Falls/Cascade County Historic Preservation Office | |
| 3. North elevation | Brad Clark, photograph | February 16, 1996 |
| negs: | Great Falls/Cascade County Historic Preservation Office | |
| 4. West elevation | Chere Jiusto, photograph | October 6, 2000 |
| negs: | Montana State Historic Preservation Office | |
| 5. Cornerstone, northeast corner | Chere Jiusto, photograph | October 6, 2000 |
| negs: | Montana State Historic Preservation Office | |

(Staff of Montana SHPO verified accuracy of 1996 photographs prior to submission of nomination in October 2000. The views of the building are unchanged over that four year duration.)

Masonic Temple
Name of Property

Cascade County, Montana
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic 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:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
12 477991 5261360

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): W 1/2 Section 29, Township 1 North, Range 7 East, M.P.M.

Verbal Boundary Description

The Masonic Temple of Great Falls is located on lots 6, 7, 8 and 9 of Block 319, of the Original Great Falls Townsite.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn, based on legally recorded boundary lines, to include the land surrounding the Masonic Temple that has been historically associated with the building since the time of its construction.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Donald D. Gross, secretary
organization: Cascade Lodge #34, A.F. & A.M.
street & number: 733 34th Ave NE
city or town: Great Falls

state: MT

with Chere Jiusto, MT SHPO staff
date: June 1996
telephone: 406-453-1775
zip code: 59404

Property Owner

name/title: [same]
street & number: telephone:
city or town: state: zip code:

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- Whiffen, Marcus American Architecture since 1780: A Guide to the Styles. MIT Press, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969.