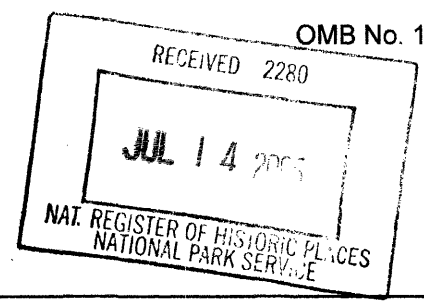


NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Masonic Temple
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 105 North Center Street not for publication N/A
city or town Casper vicinity N/A
state Wyoming code 56 county Natrona code 025 zip code 82601

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Claudia Nissley _____ July 8, 2005
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Social Sub: meeting hall

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Social Sub: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Sub: Commercial Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation poured concrete

roof built up tar and gravel

walls brick and stone

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance 1914 to 1954

Significant Dates August 26, 1914 (cornerstone laid)
January 27, 1915 (grand opening)

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Homer F. Shaffer, Architect
Gus A. Ukensky, Contractor and Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository: Casper College Library Special Collections

See Continuation sheets for continued bibliography

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .2 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>13</u>	<u>391800</u>	<u>4744820</u>

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert G. Rosenberg, Historian
organization Rosenberg Historical Consultants
street & number 739 Crow Creek Road
city or town Cheyenne state WY

date February 1, 2005
telephone (307) 632-1144
zip code 82009

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Masonic Temple Association of Casper, Inc.
street & number 105 North Center Street
city or town Casper
state Wyoming
zip code 82601
telephone (307)234-7724

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Masonic Temple
Natrona County, Wyoming

7. Description

The Masonic Temple, constructed in 1914, is located at 105 North Center Street, in the northern portion of Downtown Casper. It was designed by a local architect, Homer F. Shaffer, during a period of unprecedented city growth precipitated by the Salt Creek oil boom. It is a brick masonry building with a raised basement level, one of the most imposing edifices in downtown Casper. It occupies the northeast corner of North Center Street and East First Street. It shares a common wall on the north side with the Townsend Hotel, a slightly taller dark red brick commercial building constructed in 1923 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. A vacant lot, parking, and a modern motorbank occupy the remainder of the block. The America Theater (119 South Center) and the First Interstate Bank are located immediately south of East First Street; the first is an early twentieth century historic building, the second is a modern multi-story commercial building. The view immediately west (west side of North Center Street) consists of a parking lot, a modern multi-story masonry commercial building (100 North Center Street), the First American Title Company (120 North Center Street), and two smaller early twentieth century commercial buildings to the north (128 and 140 North Center Street).

Exterior

The Masonic Temple is rectangular (63' north-south by 103' east-west) and rests on a poured concrete foundation. Although exterior views of the building indicate a three and one-half or four-story structure, the interior consists of two main floors and the basement level. The first floor has a mezzanine area located in the west side, and the second floor has a balcony area, also located in the west side. Some of the original high ceilings are still found in the second floor lodge room and banquet hall; others have been modified with dropped ceilings.

An arched entrance is centered on the facade or west side facing North Center Street. The foundation walls extend well above grade and consist of tan brick mottled with charcoal below the water table. Two paired narrow one over one-light double-hung windows furnish light to the basement on the west side. A rough ashlar water table delineates the separation between the foundation and the first story. The piers and frame are also finished in a darker shade of brick with contrasting decorative elements; a lighter tan brick is used in three vertical bay areas and the cornice. Each bay is inset by means of three steps in the brick courses. The main entrance is located in the central bay and has a segmented round rusticated stone arch surrounding a slightly inset paired two-panel door with one light. The keystone of the arch is engraved with a set of letters, which form a symbol bearing Masonic significance. The stone to the right bears a star, the left stone bears a cross in a crown. An attractive fanlight occupies the arched area above the door. An elongated metal sign is suspended from brackets above the entrance that was refurbished in the summer of 2004. It consists of seven

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**Masonic Temple
Natrona County, Wyoming**

vertical square white panels bearing colored inscriptions of Masonic symbols. The southeast corner of the building contains a cornerstone located directly above the water table. The west side of the stone is inscribed "Erected A.D. 1914 by Masonic Temple Association of Casper." The south side of the stone is inscribed "Laid by the Grand Lodge of Wyoming A.F.&A.M. August 26, A.D. 1914."

Windows in the building are vertically aligned from floor to floor, and the north and south bay areas in the facade or west side contain paired one over one-light double-hung windows in the first three horizontal rows, and paired single-pane fixed windows in the fourth row. The center bay contains a single double-hung window in the second and third horizontal rows and a single pane window in the top story. All windows have stone lintels and sills. All of the original windows have been replaced with modern vinyl-framed units, but they retain a similar configuration, i.e., one over one-light double-hung units of the same size.

The cornice is a simple continuous block of light brick with a centered sandstone tablet on the west side bearing the inscription: "MASONIC TEMPLE" over the center bay area. The cornice is crowned with a crenelated brick parapet capped with the same stone that is used in the lintels, sills, and water table. The roof of the building is sloped gently to the east for drainage, and a rectangular brick chimney is located at the southeast corner.

The overall configuration of the facade is repeated in the south side, which fronts on East First Street, with the exception that there are seven contrasting bays, each with single one over one-light double-hung windows that are also vertically aligned from the basement level through the top story.

The east side or the rear of the building is finished in red brick and is devoid of the ornamentation and architectural detailing featured on the west and south sides. A one-story, flat-roofed, cement block covered entrance to the basement level was added to the building at an unknown date. It contains two twelve-light windows with metal frames. The three lights on the north and south sides of each window are hinged and open outward. A single pedestrian entrance with a metal fire door is located at the north end of this addition. Inside, concrete steps lead down to the basement. The east side of the building also has a steel fire escape with railings that accesses a first and second floor steel fire door. A one over one-light double-hung window is located in the second story next to the fire escape, and two short one over one-light double-hung windows are located in the upper portion of the second story, one aligned above the fire door, the other aligned above the large double-hung window.

The north side of the building did not contain any windows, and when the Townsend Hotel was constructed adjacent to the Masonic Temple in 1923, it completely covered this side. Otherwise, few changes have been made to the exterior of the building since construction.

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Masonic Temple
Natrona County, Wyoming

Interior

The original architectural plans designate the interior floors as basement, first floor (ballroom, etc.), upper ballroom, second floor (lodge and banquet rooms, etc.), and second floor balcony. The basement is entered through the enclosed, flat-roofed addition on the east side (rear) of the building. Interior stairs lead to the basement level. An unfinished sunken room for the boiler is located in the southeast corner. The boiler no longer functions and has been replaced with a forced-air system. The remainder of the basement area is finished. The north side consists of an elongated card room that has been renovated with a dropped acoustic tile ceiling, fluorescent lighting, and carpeting. The walls are finished in drywall with wood panel wainscoting below. This area formerly housed a two-lane bowling alley. The pin setting area was located at the east end, and a portion of the original floor has been left uncovered just north of the entry door on the east side. The north wall of the card room contains three built-in display cases with glass doors that contain memorabilia from the history of the Masons in Wyoming and Casper. The west end of the card room has an original one-light wood panel door leading to the stairs to the vestibule and the first floor. At the foot of the stairs, there is a walk-in safe. The wide wooden stairway has wooden railings on each side, and a motorized incline with seat has been installed on the south side of the stairs for handicapped members and visitors. South of the cardroom, the basement also contains a long east-west hallway with a number of small storage rooms turning off on the north and south sides. These small storage rooms are used by members. The basement originally housed a live-in caretaker, whose apartment was located immediately west of the boiler room. The kitchen area for this apartment was located north of the boiler room. The apartment area has not been occupied since the mid-1980s. The remainder of the basement west of the apartment is occupied by a dining room and full kitchen. The dining room has a dropped acoustic tile ceiling, fluorescent lighting, and a linoleum tile floor covering the original wood floor. The walls are painted plaster with the original wood floor moldings and trim painted over. The full kitchen is located at the east end of the dining room and is set up cafeteria style with an intervening counter for serving. It has a full complement of modern appliances including stove, refrigerator, and sink. There is also a separate pantry room built onto the north side of the dining room that has an original wood panel door and concrete floor.

The main entrance on the west side (North Center Street) opens onto a vestibule. The floor of the vestibule features patterned colored tile. A flight of stairs ascends to the lodge room on the first floor, and a flight of stairs descends to the basement. The first floor was originally occupied by a ballroom with a maple floor laid in a geometric pattern. In 1964, the Casper firm of Goodrich and Wilking designed renovations for some of the interior rooms. The first floor ballroom was converted to a lodge room. Changes included a dropped plaster ceiling with fluorescent light panels, and drywall plaster walls with wood panel wainscoting and interspersed with wood panel-covered columns. There is a raised stage on the east end with a mock wooden pediment and columns of the Ionic Order and a podium. The floor is carpeted. Rows of tiered cushioned

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**Masonic Temple
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folding chairs are located along the north and south walls. Originally, there was a raised orchestra stage on the west end, but it has been enclosed. There is also a small raised platform on the west end with a podium and one throne-like chair. Entries located to the north and south of this platform provide access into the lodge room. The west third of this floor is occupied by a men's card room or lounge in the southwest corner and a ladies' cloak room or lounge in the northwest corner. The ladies' lounge has been refurbished with a tile ceiling (not dropped), carpeting, and Masonite paneling covered with fabric on the walls. Full-length mirrors occupy the east wall. An original framed mirror was removed from this location and now hangs on the north wall. The men's card room has remained essentially original.

The second main floor is occupied by a lodge room in the north and a banquet room and kitchen on the south side. The lodge room remains essentially as it was built. It has a plaster ceiling that is nearly one and one-half stories high. The east end of the lodge room contains the one over one-light double-hung windows and the single-pane windows that are visible on the exterior as the uppermost two stories of windows. Glass light fixtures hang from chains anchored to the ceiling. There are round, recessed areas in the ceiling for ventilation fans. The walls are plaster painted in a light cream color with dark wood trim and moldings. The floor is covered with carpeting. The east end of the room has a small raised stage area. There are two rows of cushioned chairs with folding seats arranged along the north and south walls. The west end of the room has a small raised stage with podium and two large throne-like chairs. Extra wide wood panel doors set on either side of the stage serve as the entrances to the lodge room. At the west end of the lodge room, stairs ascend to a balcony that contains several rows of original cushioned chairs that fold up like those in a theater. The only natural light for the lodge room is provided by the windows in the east wall, but they are covered with dark drapes.

The dining room is located south of the lodge room. It remains essentially original with plaster ceiling and walls accented with dark wood trim. The ceiling is nearly one and one-half stories high. Natural light comes from windows set in the south wall. They are full-length one over one-light units with one-light fixed units above. There is a mezzanine level, located between the first and second main floors, which occupies the part of the interior that does not contain the tall lodge rooms and dining room. The mezzanine is comprised mostly of small storage rooms, exposed steel girders, and access to the roof. Original wood panel doors and ornately carved banisters remain throughout much of the interior. The mezzanine is designated on the original architectural plans as "Upper Part of Ballroom" (sheet 3), and "Balcony, storage room, and chair platform" (Sheet 5). Glass light fixtures are suspended from the ceiling of the dining room. The floor is covered with linoleum tile. The east end of the dining room has built-in wooden cabinets and cupboards with counter space. The kitchen is separated from the dining room by a partition and has a wide entry without a door.

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Masonic Temple
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The northwest corner of the second floor is occupied by a large office with a tile ceiling and fluorescent lighting. There is also a restroom. It occupies the space formerly designated on the original plans as the men's coat room.

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Masonic Temple
Natrona County, Wyoming

8. Significance

Constructed in 1914, the Masonic Temple is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, as it represents the early twentieth century growth of the City of Casper during the oil boom of the 1910s and early 1920s. Built with permanence in mind, the temple reflects the confidence of its citizens in the future of their city. Many of the important buildings in the commercial district were constructed during this time period, and the Masonic Temple was among the finest built. While downtown Casper has lost many of these buildings through urban renewal, the Masonic Temple remains along with its attached counterpart, the Townsend Building, which is already enrolled on the National Register of Historic Places. The Masonic Temple also represents the importance of the Masons to the Casper community, as its membership during the period of significance was composed of many of the leading professionals, civic leaders, and businessmen of Casper. Local architect and Mason member, Homer F. Shaffer, designed the building, and Gus A. Ukenesky acted as the contractor and builder. The building is also a fine example of early twentieth century commercial architecture designed specifically to house the various functions of the Mason organization. As such, it has a unique interior layout with large high-ceilinged lodge rooms, ballroom, banquet rooms, and other smaller rooms that served specific lodge functions. Although portions of the interior have been remodeled, the exterior of the building remains largely intact with only minimal changes. It retains several notable architectural embellishments, including the rusticated stone arched entrance with radiating voussoirs and keystone and a crenelated brick parapet capped with stone. Due to its size and corner location, the Masonic Temple is one of the key components of the remaining commercial district of Casper.

Freemasonry in America

The exact origins of the Masonic Fraternity are not well documented, but it is widely accepted that its roots can be traced to stonemasons' guilds during the Middle Ages. The language and symbols used in its rituals are derived from this era. The oldest document referencing the Masons is the Regius Poem printed in 1390, which was a copy of an earlier work. In 1717, four lodges in London formed the first Grand Lodge of England.

Over the next thirty years, the fraternity spread throughout Europe and the American colonies. George Washington was a freemason as was Benjamin Franklin, Paul Revere, John Hancock, John Paul Jones, and Chief Justice John Marshall. George Washington, as Grand Master Pro Tem of the Grand Lodge of Maryland and while President of the United States, laid the cornerstone of the nation's Capitol on September 18, 1793.

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**Masonic Temple
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According to the Masonic Service Association of North America, as Freemasonry evolved over the centuries, the worldwide fraternity emphasized "...personal study, self-improvement, and social betterment via individual involvement and philanthropy. During the late 1700s it was one of the organizations most responsible for spreading the ideals of the Enlightenment; the dignity of man and the liberty of the individual, the right of all persons to worship as they choose, the formation of democratic governments, and the importance of public education."

The basic organizational unit of the Freemason fraternity is the lodge. Each lodge is headed by an officer called the "Worshipful Master." The term "Worshipful" means "highly respected or honored" and comes from the judicial system of England; it has no religious implications. Each officer of a lodge has a title that is derived from the Middle Ages. Until 1717, each lodge of Masons was autonomous. On June 24, 1717, four of the lodges in London met to form the first Grand Lodge of England. It became the first administrative or policy-making body of Freemasonry. Masonic lodges still retain independence over their finances, activities, officer election, fund raising, and joining ceremonies. However, each state has a Grand Lodge that coordinates activities, serves as a central source of record keeping, and performs other administrative and policy functions for the fraternity. The state president is called the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge and has broad powers in overseeing the progress of the fraternity.

According to its basic principles, Freemasonry is not a religion, or a substitute for religion. Membership in the Masons requires only that the petitioner must be "a man of legal age, good reputation, and possess a belief in God." A lodge is not permitted to accept or exclude a candidate on the basis of his race or national origin.

As Freemasonry grew during the 1800s and early 1900s, the Masonic tradition of charitable and philanthropic activity often provided the only "safety net" many people knew prior to government welfare programs. Today in North America, the Masonic Fraternity contributes nearly 1.5 million dollars each day to causes supporting medical research, gerontology, blood banks, youth programs, military rehabilitation, scholarship programs, extensive research into the causes and cure of childhood aphasia, schizophrenia, eye foundation and hospitals for crippled and burned children. As Masons excel, they may become Shriners who sponsor twenty Orthopedic Hospitals and two burn centers in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Freemasonry in Wyoming and Casper

The first recorded Masonic meeting in what was to become Wyoming was held on July 4, 1862, at Independence Rock by a small group of emigrants on the Oregon Trail led by Asa L. Brown. The original bible and other items used in the first ceremony were later transferred to the library in the Masonic Temple in

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Cheyenne. Soon after Wyoming became a Territory on July 25, 1868, Cheyenne Lodge No. 16 became the first Masonic lodge in the territory. It was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Colorado on October 6, 1868. Others soon followed, including the Wyoming Lodge No. 28 at South Pass City, chartered on June 23, 1870; the Laramie Lodge No. 18, chartered by the Grand Lodge of Colorado on September 28, 1870; and the Evanston Lodge No. 24, chartered by the Grand Lodge of Colorado on September 30, 1874. These four lodges met in a convention held in Laramie on December 15, 1874, and organized a Grand Lodge for Wyoming by adopting a constitution and electing and installing Grand Officers. The combined lodges had a membership of 250. The lodges in Wyoming were then renumbered by date of inclusion starting with the number one, and that system has been followed into the present. From 1874 to 1924, the number of lodges grew to forty-four with a total membership of 7,207.

Casper had its roots as a railroad town. It was first laid out in 1888 when the Chicago and North Western Railroad extended its line westward from Nebraska, laying its tracks up the North Platte River Valley through Douglas and Glenrock. Casper was surrounded by ranching country, and it served as a commercial center for the far-flung ranches and as a major rail shipping point for livestock and agricultural products. At first the town grew slowly, and by 1900 the population was less than nine hundred. However, the commercial production of oil in the area, starting in the 1910s and 1920s, quickly changed the character of the Casper community. The great Salt Creek Oil Field, located about fifty miles north of Casper, was extensively developed after 1910. Casper was strategically located as the nearest railhead to the field, and it became the major shipping point for oil products. Refineries and tanks farms were built at Casper, and a system of pipelines was laid connecting them to the field. The Midwest Refining Company and Standard Oil Company of Indiana invested heavily in the field and assured a bright future for Salt Creek. As a result of these developments, Casper experienced an oil boom period that began in 1913-14 and continued well into the next decade. The major oil concerns established their headquarters in Casper, providing employment and injecting capital into the local economy. The population multiplied to 2,639 in 1910 and nearly doubled in the next five years to 4,040. The new prosperity accelerated community expansion and the construction of buildings.

In the summer of 1893, E.H. Kimball brought together a varied group of Casper businessmen, professionals, and laborers to explore the possibility of establishing a Masonic Lodge in Casper. This group petitioned to the Grand Master of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Wyoming and received a dispensation for the formation of the Casper lodge issued on August 26, 1893. A charter was granted by Grand Master DeForest Richards on December 5, 1893, for Casper Lodge Number 15, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (A.F. & A.M.). On December 27, 1893, Grand Master Edward F. Stahle constituted the Lodge and publicly installed the officers. Notable charter members included Charles H. Townsend, owner of Townsend Mercantile and President of Stockmen's National Bank; E. H. Kimball, attorney and drug store owner; J.K. Calkins, newspaper editor; Bryant B. Brooks, rancher and Governor of Wyoming from 1904 to 1910; Peter C. Nicolaysen,

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**Masonic Temple
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lumberyard owner; J.J. Hurt and Kenneth McDonald, stockmen; William Hines, railroad man; and George Devenport, Methodist minister.

Casper Masonic Temple

At first, the Masons met in a room above D.A. Robertson's saloon. The Casper Lodge moved to the newly completed Odd Fellows building (134-136 East 2nd Street) in 1896, and remained there until the current Masonic Temple was completed in 1914. Bryant Brooks served as Master of the Lodge from 1896 to 1903. The *Natrona County Tribune* reported on April 3, 1912, that the Casper Lodge wanted to build a Masonic Temple building and had appointed a committee composed of S.W. Conwell, Marion P. Wheeler, and Alfred J. Mokler to confer with other Masonic lodges and choose a location. Two years later, actual construction began on Lot 7, Block Ten of the Original Town plat at the corner of East First Street and North Center Street.

Stages of construction of the new Masonic Temple were followed closely in the local newspapers. On June 9, 1914, the *Casper Record* reported that the basement for the building had been nearly completed by R.D. Smith; architect Homer F. Shaffer had finished the plans for the Temple; and the contract for the remainder of the construction would be let in the next thirty days. At the same time the Temple was under construction, the paper noted that eight commercial buildings and over one hundred residences were also being built, illustrating the boom times in Casper.

On July 16, 1914, the *Natrona County Tribune* reported that the contract for the construction of the remainder of the building had been let to local contractor G.A. Ukenesky for \$21,300. Most of his contract involved the brickwork. Except for the steelwork, all of the remaining contracts were let to local businesses.

Ferguson and Helsey were the carpenter contractors; William Lloyd and Son furnished and cut the stone; W.F. Henning installed the heating and plumbing; and John Jorgenson contracted for the decorating and painting. The final cost of the completed temple was estimated at \$40,000.

The *Natrona County Tribune* also reported the laying of the cornerstone for the new temple on August 26, 1914. Masons from neighboring towns were invited to the ceremony. Over one hundred Masons marched from their old headquarters to lay the cornerstone. Past Grand Master Harold Banner gave a short address, then Homer Shaffer, the architect and a lodge member, directed the actual laying of the cornerstone. B.B. Brooks also spoke at the gathering, reviewing the history of the Casper Masons. As part of the ceremony, important records and papers relating to the Masons were deposited in a box placed in the cornerstone. They included the original sketch of the Masonic Temple and panoramic views of the City of Casper taken in August 1914, as well as current copies of three Casper newspapers.

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**Masonic Temple
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On December 21, 1914, the Masons moved into their new , almost-finished building and held their first meeting on December 23. The paper gave a detailed description of the new building, which required sixty tons of structural steel. The basement contained a twenty-six-foot square reading room with book cases, writing desks, easy chairs and library tables, a thirty-foot square billiard hall, a sixteen by one hundred-foot bowling alley, a large bath and shower rooms, as well as the janitor's quarters and boiler room.

The first floor was rented out by the Masons for public gatherings and private parties. It contained a sixty by sixty-eight-foot ballroom with an eight-cornered hard maple dance floor without obstructive columns or supports. It also contained eighteen by thirty-foot separate cloakrooms for men and women with bathrooms, and a twenty-six-foot square lounging room with a massive colonnade. The new ballroom was leased out to W.R. Sample, who held public dances there on Wednesdays and Saturdays and hired the Iris Theater Orchestra.

The Masons also rented out the banquet hall on the south side of the second floor, which seated 150 at tables and featured a modern kitchenette and an eight-cornered hardwood maple floor. The remainder of the building was reserved for use by Masons and included the main lodge room with gallery that seated 180.

On New Year's Eve, 1915, the Masons placed a powerful light atop a twenty-foot high flagpole on the roof of the new building. The Wyoming Electric Company, along with Homer Shaffer, designed and installed a state-of-the-art electrical system. Unsightly wires from light poles were eliminated by running them underground to a main control box in the new building. All electrical wiring was encased in enameled iron conduits and all control switches and fuses for lights and electrical apparatus were enclosed in fireproof cabinet boxes assembled in the main distribution room.

The Masonic Temple was formally opened on January 27, 1915, with four hundred Masons and their families in attendance. Following a short lodge session, the members toured the new facilities and gathered in the ballroom for a night of dancing. At midnight a lunch was served in the banquet room.

By 1924, the Masonic Lodge had a membership of 533 persons. Alfred J. Mokler was an early member of the Casper Lodge and became its official historian when he wrote *The History of Freemasonry in Wyoming*, which was published in 1924. He was also the publisher of the *Natrona County Tribune* from 1897 to 1914.

Masonic and Masonic-affiliated groups continue to use the Masonic Temple in Casper. These groups include three Masonic Lodges, often called Blue Lodges; Casper Lodge No. 15, Pathfinder Lodge No. 42, and Independence Rock Lodge No. 56, all under Charter from the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free, and Accepted Masons of Wyoming. In addition, three York Rite Bodies are active here: Capitol Chapter No. 8, Royal Arch

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**Masonic Temple
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Masons; Wyoming Council No. 1, Cryptic Masons; and Apollo Commandery No. 8, Knights Templar, all under the auspices of the appropriate Grand York Rite Bodies of Wyoming. Casper Assembly No. 70, Social Order of the Beauceant, whose members are wives, widows, mothers, sisters, and daughters of the Knights Templar, is also active. Other adult organizations include Fort Casper [sic] Chapter No. 4 and Rainbow Chapter No. 44, Order of the Eastern Star, the largest fraternal organization for both men and women worldwide. The Fort Casper Chapter began at the same time as Casper Lodge No. 15 (1893). All of the organizations support educational and/or charitable causes. There are some Appendant and Concordant Honorary Bodies of the York Rite, which have regional or statewide meetings here during the year. Occasionally, the Scottish Rite also holds meetings here. However, more often, the Scottish Rite Masons and Shrine Masons meet at the Casper Shrine Club on 39th Street.

Four youth groups also hold meetings and activities in the building, one for young men and three for young women. The Order of DeMolay was established in 1919 for young men between the ages of twelve and twenty-one. A Masonic relative is not required for membership. DeMolay, founded in Kansas City, Missouri, is now international in scope; chapters generally meet in the Masonic Lodge. This Order was named for Jacques DeMolay, the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar, martyred in the Middle Ages. Members of the Darius Chapter, and all other Chapters, are encouraged to practice the virtues of reverence, love of parents, comradeship, patriotism, courtesy, cleanliness, and fidelity.

Similarly, members of the International Order of Job's Daughters are young women between the ages of ten and twenty. Job's Daughters was established in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1920. Membership requires a Masonic relative. Bethel Nos. 9, 28, and 40 (local organizations), as do all other Bethels, emphasize citizenship, respect for parents and guardians, and leadership development. Job's Daughters is the only youth group, internationally, with its own philanthropy — H.I.K.E., which stands for Hearing Impaired Kids Endowment. This charity provides hearing aids to children of families who cannot otherwise afford them.

Masons are noted for laying cornerstones on many of the major buildings in America's towns and cities. Probably the first cornerstone laid by the Masons in Wyoming was on the new Union Pacific Railroad passenger depot in Cheyenne on June 19, 1886. The symbolism of the cornerstone of Masonic, religious and public buildings, when duly laid with Masonic Rites, is rich in significance in reference to its form, situation and consecration. The ceremony of placing materials, such as newspapers, public documents and other mementos in a box sealed in the cornerstone, is a substitute for an older form of ceremony. By 1972, the Grand Lodge had laid 166 cornerstones for buildings in Wyoming that included public schools, city and municipal buildings, county buildings, Masonic temples, churches, hospitals, college and university buildings, and state buildings.

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**Masonic Temple
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The architect: Homer Shaffer

Homer F. Shaffer, the architect, was born in Illinois on January 27, 1880, to Washington Frank Shaffer and Lavier C. Beldon Shaffer. He came to Casper as early as 1906, when he was manager of the telephone company. He served in that capacity until 1909. Shaffer was a practicing architect in Casper from about 1912 to about 1915. He began advertising his services in the local papers in 1912 and was listed in the *Wyoming State Business Directory*. In 1912-1913, he was also listed as a contractor and builder. In 1912, Shaffer designed several private residences in the Park Addition, including W.R. Johnson's home on Lot 1, Block 70, described as a modern five-room bungalow costing \$2,500. In December 1912, W.F. Henning hired Shaffer to design a brick business block located south of the opera house on North Center Street. The facade of the building was to be finished in terra cotta. No other examples of his architectural designs have been located in Casper. Little is known about Shaffer's formal education, but at some point he took a drafting course in Chicago, where he probably learned the skills allowing him to originate architectural plans.

In 1914, Shaffer designed the Masonic Temple, which probably represents the peak of his career as an architect. He continued to advertise as an architect throughout 1915. However, by 1916 it appears that he became involved in other enterprises; from 1919 through 1925, he was listed as the secretary of the Shaffer-Gay Company (Lew M. Gay, president), with a wide range of services, such as furniture, stoves, ranges, hardware, furnaces, carpets, shades, upholsterers, camp outfitters, and undertakers, located at 136 East Second Street. According to one source, Shaffer sold his interest in this company to Lew Gay in 1916; however, he was still listed as partner in the company through 1926. At that time, Shaffer-Gay Company was listed as funeral directors, ambulance service, private chapel, and office, located at 149 South Grant Street. Shaffer apparently tried his hand at several occupations, and in 1920 was listed in the State Business Directory as a photographer, located at 120 East First Street. Shaffer is listed in the 1920 Census as engaged in the furniture business. He was age forty, married for twenty-three years to Maude F. Shaffer, and father of Clyde, age fourteen, and Clayton, age nine. Clyde was born in 1906 in Nebraska, so it appears that the Shaffers came to Wyoming from Nebraska.

While living in Casper, Homer Shaffer was active in several organizations. He served as an officer in Masonic organizations. In addition to being a Mason, Shaffer was also a founding member of the Casper Mutual Building and Loan Association, which provided loans to prospective homeowners. The Casper Club of the Lions International was organized in Casper in 1922, and Shaffer served as third vice-president.

At some point after 1926, Homer Shaffer left Casper and moved to Cheyenne. In 1928, Shaffer was employed as a car salesman for Dildeen Garage in Cheyenne. According to the 1930 Census, the family lived

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as roomers on Thomes Avenue there. After 1930, Shaffer was no longer listed in Wyoming state or city business directories.

In about 1931, the Shaffers moved to Alamosa, Colorado, where Homer Shaffer was engaged as an electrical contractor; he also opened an electrical shop with his son Clyde. Although he was primarily an electrician, he continued to design the occasional building, including the Elks Lodge in Alamosa. Shaffer was a past master of the Alamosa Masonic Lodge, member of the Elks Lodge, Royal Arch Masons, Commandery, Al Kaly Shrine, and the Episcopal Church. He died in Alamosa on March 15, 1965, after a short and unexpected illness. He was survived by his widow, Maude, and his two sons, Clyde of Alamosa and Clayton of Oregon. As of 1965, Clyde Shaffer still operated "Blanco Electric." Clyde died in 1981, but his widow still resides in Alamosa.

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"Masonic Temple Formally Opened." *The Casper Record*, 2 February 1915.

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"Scientific Lighting of Masonic Temple." *The Casper Record*, 5 January 1915, p. 1.

"W.F. Shaffer, Once Resident of Casper, Dies in Northwest." *Casper Tribune-Herald*, 30 May 1937, p. 2.

"Want a Masonic Temple." *Natrona County Tribune*, 3 April 1912, p. 1

"Will Lay Masonic Temple Cornerstone." *Natrona County Tribune*, 20 August, 1914.

"With the Busy Builders." *Natrona County Tribune*, 9 June 1914, p. 1.

Telephonic Communication

Mrs. Clyde Shaffer, Alamosa, Colorado. 7 December 2004

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Masonic Temple
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10. Geographical Data

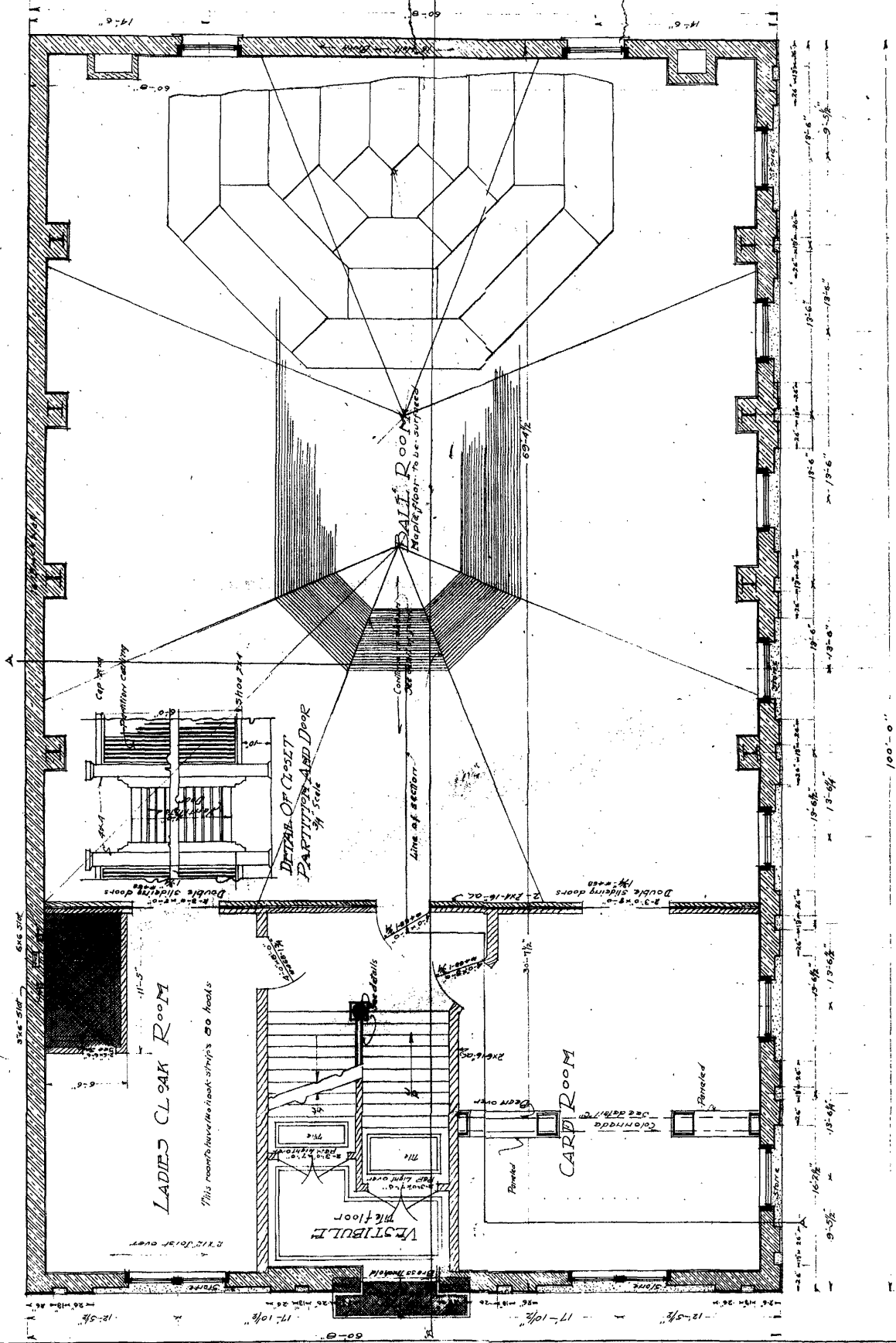
Verbal Boundary Description

The property is located at 105 North Center Street, Casper, Wyoming, and occupies Lot 7, Block 10 of the Casper Addition.

Boundary Description

The boundary is defined by the legal boundary of the lot that the building occupies (8400 square feet).

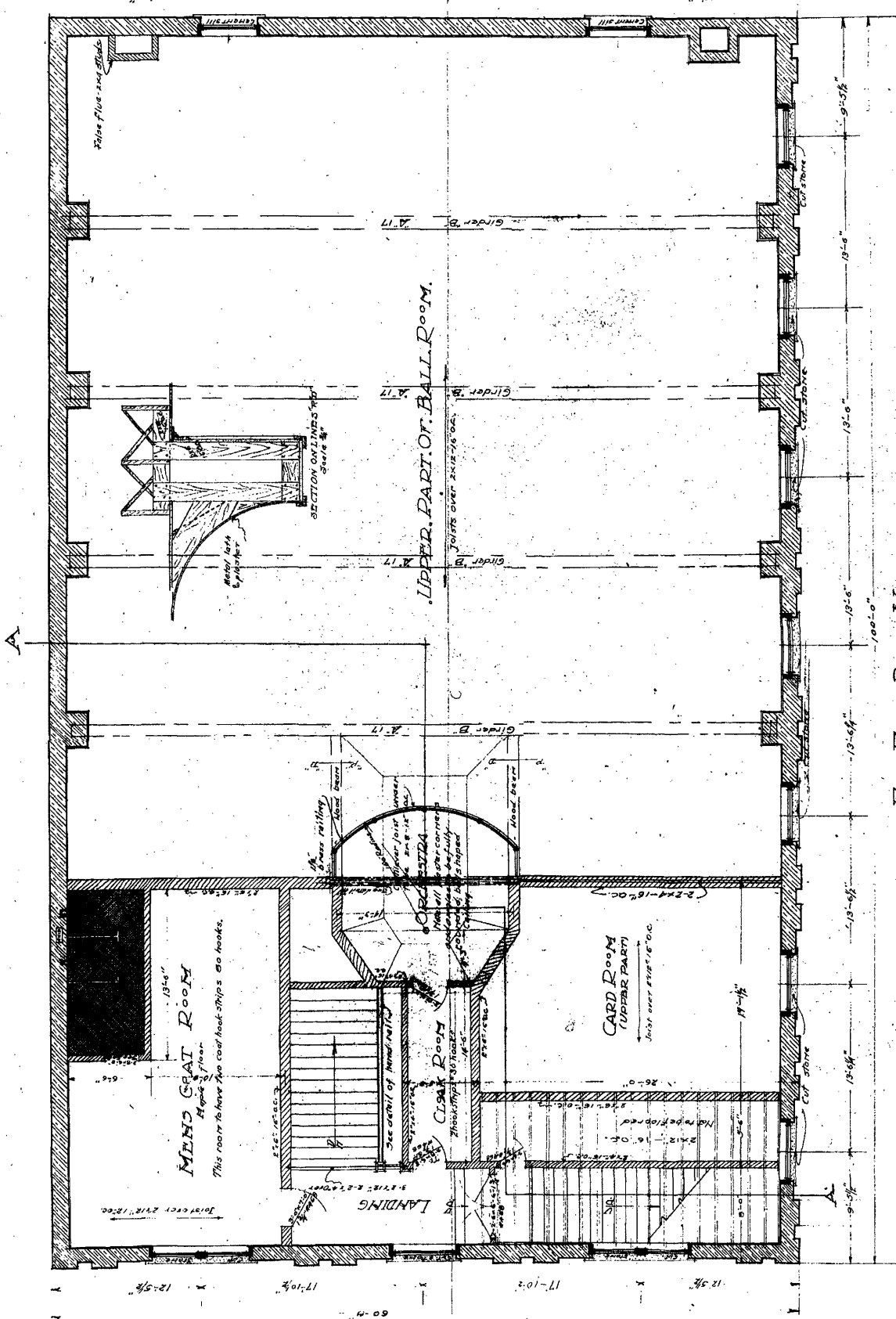
2



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
Scale - 1/8" = 1'-0"

MASONIC TEMPLE, CASPER, WYO.
H. F. MATTER ARCHT.

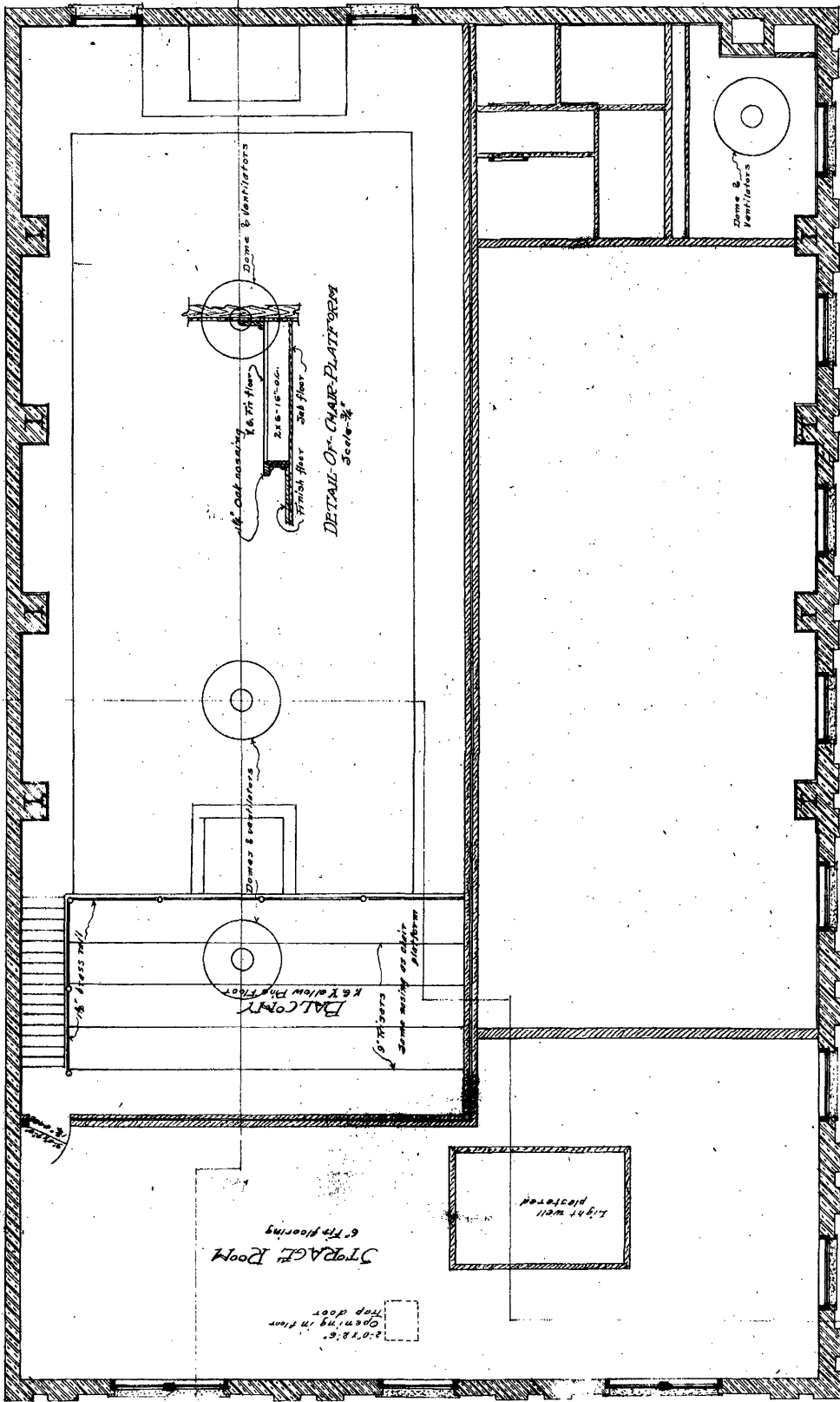
3



FIRST FLOOR PLAN No. 2
Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

MASONIC TEMPLE, CASPER, WYO.
H. J. WATNER, ARCHT.

5



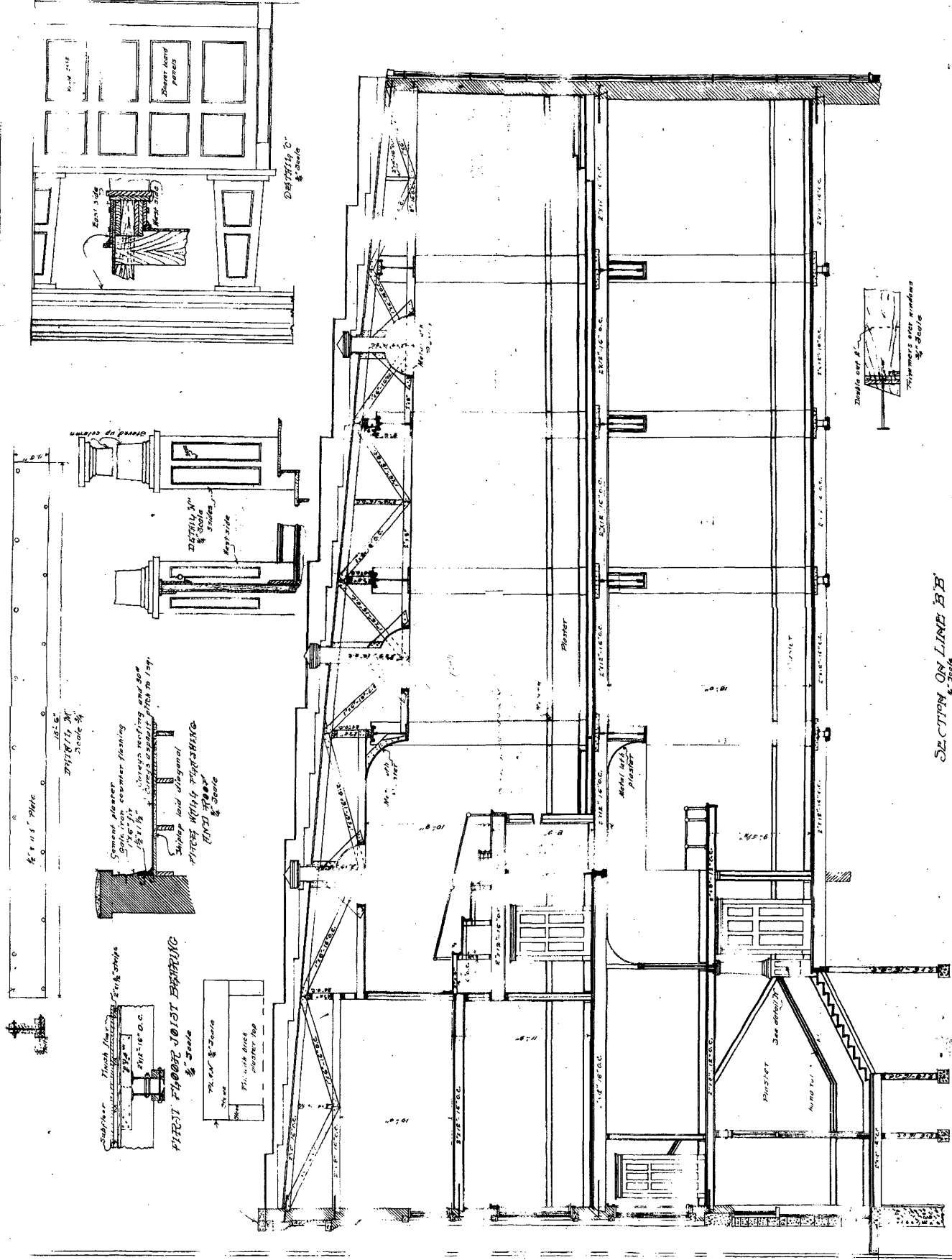
Second Floor. PLAN. No. 2.

MASONIC TEMPLE. CASPER. WY.
H. J. SHAFER, ARCHT.

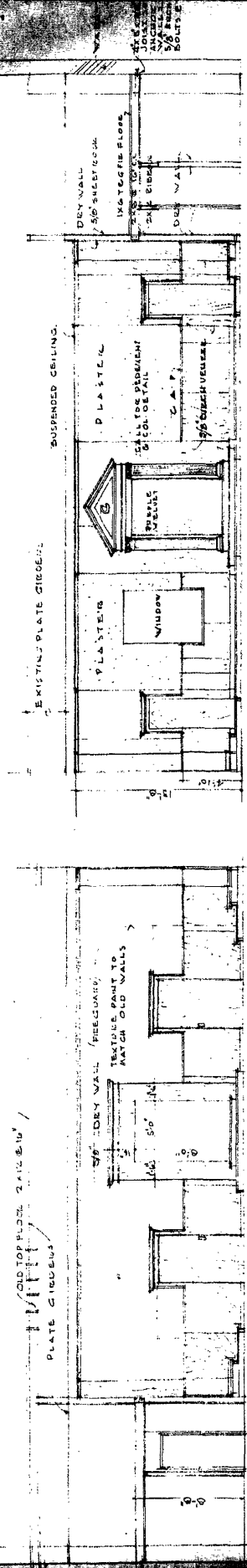


SOUTH ELEVATION
Scale - 1/4" = 1'-0"

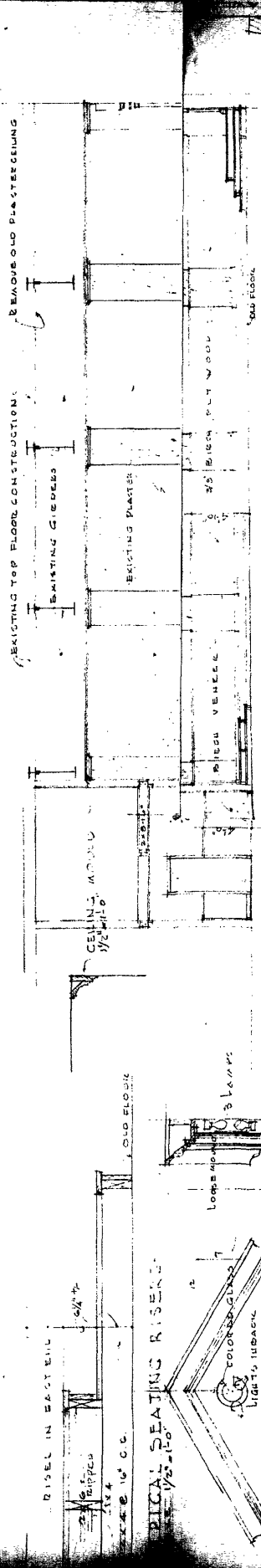
MAS. INC. TEMPLE-CASPER, N.Y.
F. F. CHAFFER, ARCHT.



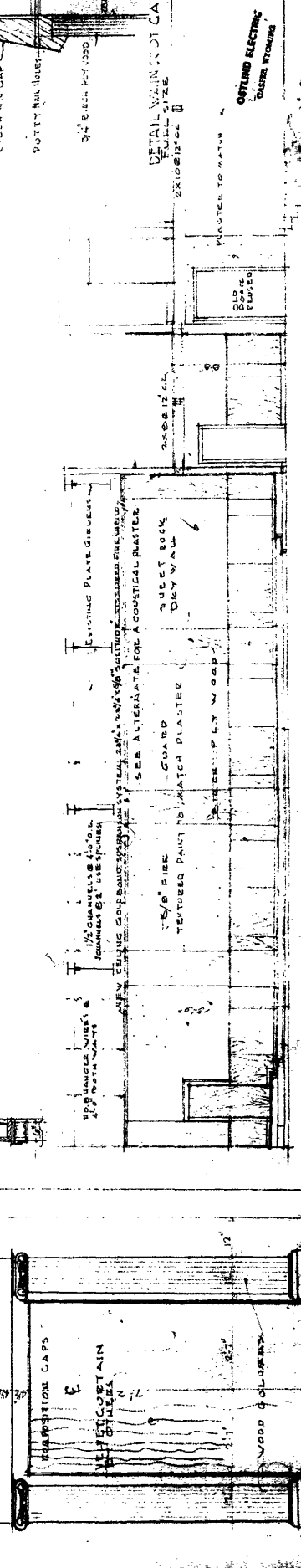
SECTION ON LINE B-B
 MAP OF "TEMPLE" CASPER N.Y.
 W.P. SHAFER ARCHT.



SECTION AT LINE C LOOKING WEST
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



SECTION AT LINE B
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



SECTION AT LINE A
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"

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