

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 20 1986

date entered APR 17 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Masonic Temple

and or common Masonic Building

2. Location

street & number 2806 3rd Avenue North

N/A not for publication

city, town Billings

N/A vicinity of

state Montana

code 030

county Yellowstone

code 111

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Fraternal

4. Owner of Property

name Masonic Temple Association

street & number 2806 3rd Avenue North

city, town Billings

N/A vicinity of

state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Yellowstone County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Billings

state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Billings Historic Resource Survey
(Reconnaissance Survey)

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981

federal state county local

depository for survey records SHPO

city, town Helena

state Montana

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	date <u>N/A</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Masonic Temple is an imposing 3 1/2 story, rectangular-shaped, Second Renaissance Revival style masonry building located at the corner of 3rd Avenue North and North Broadway in the center of the business district of downtown Billings, Montana. The primary facade, which faces north on 3rd Avenue, is seven bays wide and divided into thirds by a slightly-projecting, grand scale pedimented central entrance. The entire north and east facades are faced with buff colored brick which covers the load bearing red brick walls. The building was designed by the prominent Montana architectural firm of Link and Haire.

The main entrance on the first floor has modern aluminum and glass double doors with a semi-circular transom, and is set in a high stone opening formed by four concentric arches. Framing the entry are stone pilasters rising to the spring line of the arch and terminated by a projecting egg and dart molding. The voussoirs are dressed stones. The large keystone projects outward and has a carved compass and square Masonic emblem. Immediately west of the entrance is a small storefront with a modern aluminum and glass door, single pane window and glass block infill. A neon sign "Belton Hearing Aid Center" projects above the window. Two brick pilasters are located adjacent to another storefront which extends to the northwest corner of the building and is divided by another brick pilaster. The westernmost storefront features a central recessed entrance flanked by original single pane windows and transoms. The adjoining storefront has a modern aluminum and glass side entrance with a large plate glass window and painted transoms. One plastic sign for "The Lockshop" is located above the window and another for the "Christian Science Reading Room" is attached to the brick pilaster. Immediately east of the main entrance is a former storefront which has been enclosed with plywood. At the northeast corner are two arched openings, one with multi-paned plate glass and the other infilled with brick. Directly above these openings is a span of concrete material attached directly over the original buff colored brick. Four similarly arched openings extend around the first floor of the east facade. The alteration to the storefronts occurred at an undetermined date.

The first and second stories are divided by a stone beltcourse. The north elevation of the second and third floors is punctuated in a symmetrical pattern by a series of large, multi-paned fixed windows, some of which have been covered with paint. Windows on the west end of both the north and south facades were replaced with aluminum sashes at an undetermined date. Above the first floor central entrance a pair of engaged, fluted, terra cotta columns with Ionic capitals rise the full height of the second and third floors to a brick beltcourse at the top of the third story windows. These columns divide three eight-light fixed windows (painted) on the second and third levels, while recessed terra cotta spandrels separate the second and third floor windows. The remainder of the facade is pierced by four large eight-light fixed windows on the second floor, and four smaller ten-light fixed windows on the third level. Each of the second story windows have keystones and bracketed hoods, while all of these window openings are surrounded by brick patterned to simulate quoins. Above the third story beltcourse aligned with the windows below are a series of small, horizontal twin light windows with radiating tracery. Four stone modillions bearing Masonic symbols are located between these windows in the central third of the facade.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1910 **Builder/Architect** Link & Haire, architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Masonic Temple is significant for its architecture as a good example of the second Renaissance Revival style, designed by the well known Montana architectural firm of Link and Haire. The Temple is also significant because it reflects the importance of the Masonic Order in the early community social life in Billings, Montana, and for its collective associations with many of the most notable men involved in the community's development at the turn of the century. Masonic orders played a crucial role in territorial community life, political structure and social order in Montana and much of the American West. Masons have traditionally been involved in not only the origin but proliferation of towns in Montana, and today they remain a relatively active organization throughout the state.

The building reflects the characteristics of the Second Renaissance Revival style which was used commonly throughout the United States from 1890-1920. It expresses a unified, symmetrical composition and utilizes classical stylistic vocabulary in the form of the colossal columns and pilasters in the Ionic order. These columns, which rise from the top of the first floor, divide the facade into three regular bays. Each of the floors of the large, 3 1/2 story structure is articulated slightly differently, and organized into distinct horizontal divisions by pronounced beltcourses. A common feature of the style was the use of window trim or surround changes from floor to floor, and small windows--in the Masonic Temple, two-light fixed with radiating tracery--which pierce the upper story. The enriched and projecting cornice is supported with large modillions and capped by a brick parapet with galvanized iron panels. The prominent location, with two primary facades facing major streets in the central business district of Billings, and the fact that it is a non-commercial building in the downtown, lends additional significance to the Masonic Lodge.

John Link and Charles Haire formed one of the most significant architectural firms in Montana during the early-to-mid 20th century. They had offices in Billings, Butte, Helena and Lewistown, and designed over 1,000 public, commercial, academic, private and institutional buildings in the northwestern United States including the additions to the Montana Capitol building and eighteen of the 56 county courthouses in the state.

Early settlement and growth in Montana was accompanied by the establishment of the fraternal order of Masonry by the most prominent businessmen and public officials, as was the case in Billings. The townsite for Billings was laid out in 1882 by entrepreneurs who had purchased land grant property from the Northern Pacific railroad. When the railroad reached Billings a population boom followed and the town quickly became established as the transportation center for south-central Montana. In 1883 a group of men received a dispensation to organize a Masonic lodge in Billings, and the following year Ashlar Lodge No. 29 received its charter. Plans were discussed in 1884 for a Masonic Temple, but because of inadequate funds, it wasn't until 1905 that a corporation

9. Major Bibliographical References

Smith, Lyman E. History of Ashlar Lodge No. 29. A.F. & A.M., Billings, Montana, 1884-1958
Kohls, William Ray. Attempts to Start Masonic Lodges in Montana
Billings Gazette 22 June 1982, Centennial Issue.
Sanders, Helen F. History of Montana, New York, Lewis Publishing Co., 1913.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Billings West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>6</u> <u>9</u> <u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 11 and 12, Block 57 of the Original Townsite of Billings, Montana
NW $\frac{1}{4}$ section 3 T1S, 26E

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John N. DeHaas, Jr., FAIA

organization _____ date 30 November 1985

street & number 1021 S. Tracy telephone (406)586-2276

city or town Bozeman state Montana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Marcelle Shafiq* date Feb. 14, 1986

title SHPO

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Helene Byers date 4-17-86
National Register

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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was formed to purchase land on which to build a structure. Excavation began in 1907, the cornerstone was laid by the Grand Lodge of Montana on April 24, 1909, and the building was formerly dedicated on August 29, 1910.

Some of the most prominent men in the history and development of Billings served on the Board of Directors for the Masonic Lodge. Thomas McGill, who was president of the Board, homesteaded in Huntley, Montana (20 miles northeast of Billings) where he was a partner in the development of a trading post and the operation of a ferry boat spanning the Yellowstone River. McGill operated a ranch which supplied beef for local railroad builders, and in 1905, he moved to Billings where he contributed generously to the construction of the Masonic Lodge. P.B. Moss was the vice-president of the Board and served for many years as the president and owner of the First National Bank of Billings. Moss also had an interest in the Northern Hotel and was owner of the Billings Utility Company. He attempted to develop the community of Mossmain, a few miles west of Billings at the juncture of the Burlington, Northern Pacific and Great Northern railroads for which the noted architect Walter Burley Griffin drew plans, but his visionary scheme failed when Billings became the regional railroad center. Moss's original house is a landmark building in Billings and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Preston B. Moss House, 4-30-82). The treasurer of the Masonic Temple Association was Charles Spear, one of the organizers of the Billings State Bank and later president of the American Bank and Trust Company after the consolidation of three of the leading banking institutions of Billings. Charles S. Bell, who served as secretary, had moved to Billings as an agent for the Northern and Adams Express Companies in 1901; in 1910 he was elected a member of the State Legislature. Other members of the Board included Harry Allen, a businessman who established a lumberyard which grew to include branch offices in several Montana communities. Albert Babcock moved to Billings in 1882 and opened a small hardware store and tinshop that grew to be a large wholesale business. Babcock was elected as the first state Senator from Yellowstone County after Montana gained statehood in 1889, a post which he held again in 1894-1898. Babcock also organized the Billings Telephone Company, co-founded the Yellowstone National Bank, and was responsible for the construction of the Babcock office and theater building in 1907. Charles M. Bair had one of the first large-scale sheep ranches in the state, and in the early part of the 20th century, was the largest individual sheep grower on the continent. William B. George had real estate and insurance interests, served four terms as city treasurer and also held office as county treasurer, mayor and state senator. Henry Rowley had worked as a civil engineer with the Northern Pacific Railroad and came to Billings with the Minnesota and Montana Land and Improvement Company, the firm responsible for platting Billings. Rowley was one of the organizers of the Billings Water Company, president of the Northern Hotel Company, and instrumental in the development of the canal and irrigation system for the area.

Despite minor alterations to the first floor storefronts, paint covering some of the upper story windows, and window replacement with similar sash configuration, the Masonic Temple retains very good historic architectural integrity. It clearly reflects the development of Billings and the importance of the Masonic Lodge

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in the community. The building continues to be used by the Masons for their regular meetings, and remains as one of the most prominent historic structures in the city's central business district.