

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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JUN 6 1993

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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1. Name of Property

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historic name Armstrong Lodge No. 26, A. F. & A. M.

other names/site number Newport Masonic Hall; N-10967

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2. Location

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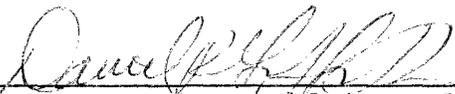
street & number 112-114 East Market St. not for publication n/a
city or town Newport, Christiana Hundred vicinity n/a
state Delaware code DE county New Castle code 003
zip code 19804

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 State Historic Preservation Officer 6/1/93
Signature of certifying official Date

Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Hall of Records, P.O. Box 1401, Dover, DE 19903
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

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6. Function or Use
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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>SOCIAL</u>	Sub: <u>Meeting hall</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Specialty store</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>SOCIAL</u>	Sub: <u>Meeting hall</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Specialty store</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS;
Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
roof ASPHALT
walls BRICK

other WOOD

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

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8. Statement of Significance
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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
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance 1913-1945

Significant Dates 1913

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(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: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property Less than one acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	447840	4395940	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

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.)

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Peter E. Kurtze, Architectural Historian

organization _____ date April 30, 1992

street & number 109 Brandon Road telephone (410) 296-7538

city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21212

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Armstrong Lodge No. 26, A. F. & A. M.
New Castle County, Delaware
Historic and Architectural Resources of Newport, Delaware

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Fred R. Campbell, architect
Thompson & Campbell, builders

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

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Armstrong Lodge No. 26, A F & A M
name of property
New Castle County, Delaware
county and State
Historic and Architectural
Resources of Newport, Delaware
name of multiple property listing

Description:

The Newport Masonic Hall is a gable-roofed brick building constructed in 1913 on the south side of East Market Street. The building was designed to function as a lodge room and auditorium, with two commercial spaces on the ground floor. The rectangular main block is five bays wide, three bays deep, and two stories high; its principal facade faces north, and fronts directly on the sidewalk. A long, one-story rectangular wing projects from the rear of the main block, resulting in a T-plan configuration. The limited exterior decorative detailing conforms to a restrained expression of the Colonial Revival style.

The building is constructed of brick, ranging in color from dark red to black, laid in a variation of common bond in which every fifth course is made up of alternating headers and stretchers. A typical brick measures 7½" long, 3-3/8" wide, and 2" high; mortar joints average ½" wide. The building rests on a stone foundation; the dark-colored random rubble is laid in tan mortar treated with decorative ribbon pointing. A cornerstone located at the northeast corner records the 1870 (date of the establishment of Armstrong Lodge No. 26) and 1913 (date of construction of the present building). The decorative treatment of building materials, including the subtle polychrome effect of the brick walls and the contrasting color and materials of the stone foundation, provides the principal aesthetic medium; architectural ornament is limited to simple Colonial Revival detailing.

The north facade is five bays wide; a central transomed entrance holds a pair of five-horizontal-paneled, double-leaf doors beneath a small pedimented portico with a concrete deck and square brick columns. This entrance leads into a small vestibule and flight of stairs leading to the lodge room, preparation room, and anteroom on the second floor. On either side of the main entrance there are large display windows with transoms of patterned glass surmounted by small pent roofs. (The present plate-glass display windows appear to date from the mid-20th century.) The outermost bays have secondary entrances, opening into the commercial spaces; each comprises a glazed door with a transom, in an opening with a rock-faced concrete lintel and a granite sill. On the second story, five one-over-one sash windows with rock-faced concrete lintels are ranged across the facade. The facade is capped by a plain fascia and a simple cornice which returns at the corners. All the exterior trim is clad in aluminum. The low-pitched gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The gable ends are three irregular bays wide; window openings are headed with segmental arches constructed of a single soldier course of brick. The roofline

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Armstrong Lodge No. 26, A F & A M
name of property
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name of multiple property listing

is treated with an overhanging cornice consistent with that on the longitudinal elevations. A small lunette is centered in the east gable; a louvered metal vent occupies the corresponding location on the west.

A long, one-story wing, constructed as an auditorium, extends from the rear (south) elevation; its five bays are defined by brick pilasters. All the openings in this section of the building are headed with segmental arches. On the west side of the wing, the north bay originally held a door, and large window openings were centered in each of the next two bays, above wide cellar windows. The cellar windows have been infilled with glass block, and the other openings have been bricked up. A double-door entrance remains in the second bay from the south, and the southernmost bay holds a small, one-over-one window, above a cellar window filled with glass block. The fenestration and treatment of the east elevation of the wing mirrors that described for the west. There are small shed roofed projections on both sides in the reentrant corners of the junction between the main block and the wing.

In 1958, a large, arch-roofed brick addition was constructed against the south end of the auditorium wing. The basement of the auditorium, which originally held a kitchen and banquet room, was refitted as a recreation room, and connected with a new banquet room in the lower level of the addition. The upper level of the addition was designed to serve as a new lodge room, which was dedicated on January 7, 1959. The original lodge room was refurbished for the use of the De Molay and Job's Daughters, and the former auditorium was given over to the Five Points Chapter of the Eastern Star. The infilling of openings in the auditorium wing likely occurred in the course of this reconfiguration.

The above-described alterations do not significantly compromise the integrity of the building. Its original configuration and plan remain clearly expressed, and it continues in the combination of uses for which it was originally designed.

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Section 8 Page 1

Armstrong Lodge No. 26, A F & A M
name of property
New Castle County, Delaware
county and State
Historic and Architectural
Resources of Newport, Delaware
name of multiple property listing

Statement of Significance:

The Newport Masonic Hall is significant for its association with the Armstrong Lodge No. 26, A. F. & A. M., Newport's oldest community organization, which has been active continually since its establishment in 1870, and for its architecture, as an example of a type of early 20th century building which combines meeting rooms and commercial space.

The Armstrong Lodge No. 26, A. F. & A. M., was organized January 14, 1870, and met in the old Cranston Hall on the bank of the Christiana (demolished) until January 4, 1883, when it moved into the newly-constructed Killgore Hall at James and Justis streets (see N-11006). Constructed by John W. R. Killgore, a member and Past Master of the lodge, Killgore Hall was designed to provide commercial space on the ground floor, with meeting rooms for fraternal organizations on the second and third stories. The Armstrong Lodge paid an annual rent of \$60.00 for the third floor, where they held their meetings until 1913.

Following Killgore's death on August 17, 1909, the property was put up for sale to settle the estate; the Masons considered purchasing the property, but found it in poor repair, too small for their increasing membership (which numbered about 60 at the time) and not amenable to expansion. Instead, the Lodge undertook to construct a new meeting hall. A corporation called the Newport Masonic Hall Company was formed in 1911 for the purpose of erecting and operating this facility; its Directors were drawn from the membership of the Armstrong Lodge. Among the corporation's first acts was the purchase of a building lot on the south side of East Market Street, adjacent to the Newport National Bank, for which it paid John A. Cranston \$1200.00. The company then commissioned an architect to prepare plans and specifications. Two alternatives were considered in planning for the new building: a larger option placed the lodge room on the second floor, above an auditorium; an alternative proposal was for a smaller building, with a ground-floor store and lodge room above. Bids were sought for both options, but all those received exceeded the amount the Directors were willing to spend. A second round of bids were similarly rejected. Finally, the Masonic Hall Company determined to act as its own general contractor, and the original architect was dismissed. On January 29, 1913, a second architect, Fred W. Campbell, presented a proposal for a building incorporating two commercial spaces on the ground floor, a lodge room on the second, and an auditorium extending to the rear. Bids were received from subcontractors, and construction was authorized to proceed on March 5, 1913. The firm of Thompson & Campbell did the carpenter work and generally supervised the construction. The cornerstone was laid May 3, 1913, and the completed building was dedicated as a Masonic Temple at a meeting held on October

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Section 8 Page 2

Armstrong Lodge No. 26, A F & A M
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Resources of Newport, Delaware
name of multiple property listing

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7 of the same year. The report of the dedication was accorded first-page status in the Wilmington newspaper the following day.

The design of the new building followed common practice and published designs of the period by providing commercial space on the ground floor with a lodge room above. A plan catalog published in 1909 by the Radford Architectural Company of Chicago, directed to investors in commercial real estate, showed several designs for two- and three-story combination store and lodge buildings functionally equivalent to the Newport Masonic Hall, and noted "this is a style of building most desired in country towns."¹

The Newport Masonic Hall Company retained ownership of the building, receiving rent from the Armstrong Lodge and other tenants. The Newport Post Office became a prominent, long-term tenant of the commercial space in the Masonic Hall. Established in 1793, the Post Office operated at various locations in town throughout the nineteenth century, and moved into one of the ground-floor stores in April, 1922. It remained at that location until 1950, when a new building was constructed to house the facility, which had officially become a branch of the Wilmington Post Office in 1945.

The building remains in its original pattern of use at present. The Armstrong Lodge continues to meet in the hall, and the western store space is currently occupied by a shoe-repair shop. In view of this continuing association, its period of significance is defined as extending from 1913, the date of construction, to 1945, the cut-off date for the survey and evaluation which forms the basis for this Multiple Property nomination.

¹ Radford Architectural Company, Radford's Stores and Flat Buildings. Chicago: Radford Architectural Company, 1909, Design No. 4798, p. 38. See also Designs No. 4089, p. 39, and No. 4088, p.63.

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Armstrong Lodge No. 26, A F & A M
name of property
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Historic and Architectural
Resources of Newport, Delaware
name of multiple property listing

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Major Bibliographical References:

Johnson, Ella Weldin. Story of Newport: a Square Little Town in the State of Delaware. Wilmington, DE: Paragon Press, 1963.

Radford Architectural Company. Radford's Stores and Flat Buildings. Chicago: Radford Architectural Company, 1909.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of the State of Delaware, 1609-1888. 2 Vols. Philadelphia: L. J. Richards & Co., 1888.

"75th Anniversary Observed by Newport Masonic Lodge," Wilmington Journal Every Evening, May 21, 1945, p. 2.

Weslager, C. A. A History of Armstrong Lodge No. 26, A. F. & A. M., Newport, Delaware. Newport, DE: Wm. N. Cann, Inc., 1970.

Wilmington Journal Every Evening, October 8, 1913, p. 1.

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Armstrong Lodge No. 26, A F & A M
name of property
New Castle County, Delaware
county and State
Historic and Architectural
Resources of Newport, Delaware
name of multiple property listing

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Geographical Data:

Verbal boundary description: The nominated property includes all of that parcel designated 20-001.00-240 on the Property Map of New Castle County, Delaware, and further indicated by the broken line on the section of the property map which accompanies this nomination.

Boundary justification: The boundaries described above were selected to encompass the single town lot historically associated with the resource.

