

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 93000218 Date Listed: 4/9/93

Masonic Temple Marion WV
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Kathleen W. Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

4/9/93
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

Because the information submitted in the nomination does not justify significance in the area of "commerce", this area of significance has been deleted from the nomination. The West Virginia SHPO has been informed of this issue and agrees. The property is listed under Criterion A for significance in the area of social history, and Criterion C for significance in architecture. The West Virginia SHPO has sent a plat map for inclusion in the nomination file to clarify the boundaries of the property. The nomination is officially amended to include this information.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Masonic Temple

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 320 Jefferson Street N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Fairmont N/A ☐ vicinity

state West Virginia code WV county Marion code 049 zip code 26554

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

William C. Brown
Signature of certifying official/Title

2.16.93
Date

State of 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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Masonic Temple

Name of Property

Marion County, West Virginia

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: meeting hall
GOVERNMENT: post office
COMMERCE/TRADE: business
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store
COMMERCE/TRADE: business

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Beaux Arts

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other WALLS: TERRA COTTA

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.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORYCOMMERCEARCHITECTURE**Period of Significance**1906 - 1942**Significant Dates**1906 Laying of cornerstone1907 Building dedication**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A**Cultural Affiliation**N/A**Architect/Builder**Giffin, H.F., ArchitectBrady Construction Company**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☒ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Fairmont State College Library

Masonic Temple
Name of Property

Marion County, West Virginia
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	573720	4370800
Zone	Easting	North	ing
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	North	ing
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.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Debra B. Baroni, AIA Assistant Professor of Architecture, Historic Architect
organization N/A date December 4, 1992
street & number 217 Braddock Street telephone (304) 363-5049
city or town Fairmont state WV zip code 26554

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Paul K. Eddy
street & number 63 Pell Street telephone (304) 366 - 8071
city or town Fairmont state WV zip code 26554

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service**

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Section number 7 Page 1

**Masonic Temple
Marion County, West Virginia**

Description

The Masonic temple is a large, five-story mixed use commercial building with a mezzanine, a balcony, a partial sixth floor and a full basement. It has three bays on the front facade and eight on each of the sides; the flat roof is asphalt with gravel ballast on it. The footprint of the building covers the entire property. It is an outstanding example of historical commercial architecture in Fairmont's city center.

The Masonic Lodge No. Nine commissioned the building to Architect H. F. Giffin in 1906, and the Brady Construction Company was responsible for the erection of the 55 foot wide, 109 foot deep by 90 foot high structure. The Masons spared no expense in its construction, stating that "nothing has been omitted to make this a modern lodge and first class office building in all its appointments"; its construction cost was \$122,000.00.

The foundation is brick, and the structural components are reinforced concrete and steel ("absolutely Fireproof"). The front exterior skin of the building, with the exception of the first floor, is beige face brick with extensive terra cotta detailing including: an overhanging cornice with brackets and dentils which support cartouches and the Masonic Temple nameplate on a square pediment on the top of the building; horizontal and vertical banding, window surrounds and Masonic emblems at the fifth floor level; semi-circular surrounds with keystones over the three Roman arch windows on the fourth floor balcony windows; and "capitals" and "bases" for the four brick pilasters which extend from the fourth through second floors. The exterior facing of the first floor is brown face brick. There is a large rectangular storefront opening on the right-hand side, and one segmented arch opening with "voussoirs" created with receding courses of brick on the left. Horizontal bands also created in this manner tie into these "voussoirs" and extend to the concrete base of the building, where there is an inscribed

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**Masonic Temple
Marion County, West Virginia**

Description (continued)

cornerstone. The sides and back of the building are constructed with a reddish common brick. The original interior walls are constructed of structural tile and plaster on lath.

Originally, there were three segmented arch openings with "voussoirs" on the first floor. However, this was altered in the 1940's. The two right-hand arch openings were combined to create the present rectangular storefront window by removing the brick between them. The original brick above these openings which created the "voussoirs" was also removed; bricks were salvaged and laid in regular coursing in the area to match the horizontal banding, as evident by the use of some broken brick units in this area. In another alteration, a set of concrete steps and a concrete ramp were constructed in the front area of the storefront opening, moving the exterior wall further back into the building.

The cornerstone of the structure was laid on April 9, 1906, and more than 200 Masons as well as hundreds of townspeople attended "despite the drenching showers"; a photograph of the event is in the archival records of the Masons. The Post Office moved its quarters into the building on December 17, 1906, even though the rest of the structure was not yet complete.

The Masonic Temple was dedicated on June 6, 1907; the Fairmont Masonic Building Company sent a public invitation for the townspeople to tour the entire building and "over one thousand people" passed through it. At the Masonic dedication ceremonies, "nearly 1,000 Masons and their ladies were in attendance."

The original historic functions of the building are listed in the Masonic archival records as well as in newspaper accounts. The topmost rooms between the roof and the fifth floor Lodge Room were used by Architect Giffin. The fifth floor Lodge Room, with its sixteen-foot ceiling, was used by

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Masonic Temple
Marion County, West Virginia

Description (continued)

the Masons only. The fourth story was a banquet hall; because of its sixteen foot ceiling, it has a balcony which retains its original oak railing. In addition, it had reception rooms, retiring rooms, and a kitchen; it was used for public meetings, receptions, and banquets as well as for the grand lodge meetings. The third floor was made up of apartments and contained a total of seventeen rooms. The second floor contained seventeen office rooms, which had already been taken at the time of the dedication. The first floor, with its sixteen-foot ceiling, was utilized by the Post Office, and was "the best equipped post office in West Virginia." The basement was used for the Temple bowling alleys and pool room, as well as the mechanical equipment. A mezzanine between the first and second floor was installed in the 1940's and was used for storage.

Throughout its eighty-five year life, the functions of the building have varied. The basement bowling alley gave way to Pierson's Printing Shop in the 1920's, and is currently used for storage. After the Post Office moved out of its quarters, Ross Furniture was the next tenant. The first floor was subsequently used as a streetcar station, a bus terminal, and is currently a used furniture store. The second and third floors have been and are being used for a variety of offices, including doctors, dentists, beauticians, lawyers, etc., although many of them are currently vacant. In the 1970's, the fourth floor banquet hall was subdivided with partitions and a dropped ceiling was installed so the space could serve as Webster College (a business college); the balcony was walled off. Currently, the fourth floor is a used furniture display room and the balcony is used for storage. The fifth floor Lodge Room is virtually unchanged, and is also being used for storage today. The partial floor between the fifth floor and the roof was previously used as the building's caretaker's apartment, but it is now vacant.

The condition of the building is fair at best, as it has been neglected for many years. A roof leak, which has since been

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**Masonic Temple
Marion County, West Virginia**

Description (continued)

remedied, has damaged the interior walls of the sixth, fifth, and fourth floor balcony. The plumbing pipes are deteriorated and leak, and there has been some damage to the walls and floors in the affected areas. The wood windows have not been painted; parts of them have exposed wood and the grain of the wood is raised due to the weathering. Small heating units, ductwork, and partitions have been insensitively placed in the structure. The lack of heat in some areas has led to peeling paint and cracking plaster.

Statement of Significance

The Masonic Temple is historically significant for its long association with the social activities in the city of Fairmont. Although it was originally constructed by the Masons in 1906-1907 to satisfy the organization's need for a larger lodge room and a suitable banquet hall, the banquet hall was also a vital gathering space for many other organizations and individuals who, throughout the years, had their social functions there. In addition, the first tenant of the ground floor was the Post Office. The Masons spared no expense in the building's construction to make it a modern, multi-use structure for its time. Its significant technology included the relatively new materials of reinforced concrete and steel for its structural system; a state-of-the-art elevator; and modern equipment and facilities for the Post Office. Stylistically, it is unique among the other commercial buildings downtown because of its Beaux Arts characteristics, which may have been adapted from the neighboring Marion County Courthouse, of the same style. Its significance is further enhanced by its prestigious location downtown, as well as possibly being the tallest office building at the time of its construction. It was indeed "an ornament to the city". Although the structure has undergone many renovations for subsequent uses and has suffered from years of neglect, the architectural integrity of the exterior and the primary spaces remains, and the building can be restored to its former grandeur.

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Masonic Temple
Marion County, West Virginia

Statement of Significance (continued)

Historical background and significance:

At the turn of the twentieth century, Fairmont was a thriving community due to its wealth of coal and manufacturing; the population was able to support three daily newspapers at that time. The city had a concentration of buildings in its downtown area, including several hotels, office buildings, and an opera house. The nearby Fairmont Normal School (now Fairmont State College) also contributed to the success of the area.

The Fairmont Masonic Lodge Number Nine, A. F. & A. M. was in need of more commodious quarters. They formed the Masonic Building Company and commissioned H. F. Giffin to design their new Masonic Temple for its new location on Jefferson Street, prime real estate in the downtown area. The Brady Construction Company of Parkersburg, West Virginia was hired to construct the building at a cost of \$122,000.00; and the cornerstone was laid on April 9, 1906 with great ceremony. "Despite the Drenching Showers Masons Laid Cornerstone for New Temple", read the headlines of the day. More than 200 Masons from all over the state gathered at the construction site, as well as hundreds of townspeople.

Although the remainder of the building was incomplete, the Post Office moved into its new quarters on the first floor of the Masonic Temple on December 17, 1906, just before the Christmas rush. The formal dedication of the Masonic Temple occurred on June 6, 1907 with much fanfare. The Masonic Building Company sent invitations to the public to "inspect their new lodge and office building" and boasted that the modern structure was "absolutely Fireproof". A description of the new facility states: "In fact, nothing has been omitted to make this a modern lodge and first class office building in all its appointments". Visitors were first taken by the modern Otis hydraulic elevator ("the best equipped, safest, and most up-to-date machine to be found") to the upper story and looked over the city from the roof; since it

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**Masonic Temple
Marion County, West Virginia**

Statement of Significance (continued)

may well have been the tallest office building at the time of its construction, it offered a panoramic view of Fairmont. Visitors were also shown the Mason's private Lodge Room, where Dowden's Orchestra was stationed for two nights to provide entertainment during the open house.

During the building's dedication, the first floor Post Office, which had been already functioning for six months, was extremely popular with the townspeople; over one thousand people passed through it during the two day event. The facilities were state-of-the-art for their day: "Here is contained what is admitted to be the best equipped post office in West Virginia". It was the "most up-to-date and completely furnished postoffice" in the state. The postal workers were on hand for the dedication, and "gave much information concerning the detail workings of the office". Postmaster A. Howard Fleming was so pleased with his new, efficient facility that he had a handsome souvenir booklet printed for distribution, which included many photographs of the handsome rooms and modern equipment.

At the Masonic dedication ceremony, Grand Master E. M. Showalter "made a short and appropriate address, touching on Masonic history, greatness of Fairmont, the city's importance in the industrial and commercial world, the grandeur of the new home for the local Masons, its benefit to present and future generations of Fairmont, and the community surrounding it". For many years to come, the citizens of Fairmont used the ballroom for dinners, banquets, receptions, parties, and other social events, either in the context of an organization or as private individuals.

Just as the Masons spared no expense in the construction of the Masonic Temple's building systems and equipment, they also paid close attention to its aesthetic character as well. At the time of the dedication, it was seen as "an ornament to the city". This is due to its abundance of rich terra cotta detailing on the upper part of the facade as well as the

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Masonic Temple
Marion County, West Virginia

Statement of Significance (continued)

masonry detailing on the bottom, which give it the distinction of being the only Beaux Arts commercial structure in Fairmont. This unique, flamboyant style is in contrast to the neighboring structures, with their static, conservative classical ornamentation; and may have drawn its inspiration from the Marion County Courthouse, another Beaux Arts structure, which is located diagonally from it. This detailing includes the terra cotta brackets, dentils, cartouches, and curves in the Masonic Temple nameplate at the top of the building, as well as the brickwork which was made to appear as rusticated stonework on the base of the building.

Although the Masonic Temple has undergone vast functional changes and suffered under insensitive interior additions and neglect, it survives today where many other structures downtown have not. This is due to the foresight of the Masons in providing its historic and social context in the city, its solid structural integrity, and its aesthetic quality.

Bibliography

The Fairmont Times, Fairmont, West Virginia; April 9, 10, 1906, June 6, 7, 1907.

The Fairmont West Virginian, Fairmont, West Virginia; April 9, 10, 1906, June 5, 6, 7, 1907.

Archival Records, Fairmont Lodge No. 9, A. F. & A. M.

Souvenir, Fairmont Post Office, Fairmont, W. VA. 1907
(booklet from building dedication).

Interview, Marshall Lupo, October 22, 1992, former owner of building (1975-1985) and lifelong resident of Fairmont, West Virginia.

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**Masonic Temple
Marion County, West Virginia**

Verbal boundary description

South portion, Lot 41, Plat 297-555

Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property rests entirely on the piece of property.



MASONIC TEMPLE, FAIRMONT

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

NW/4 FAIRMONT 15' QUADRANGLE

MORGANTOWN 16 MI.

RIVESVILLE 2.6 MI.

80°07'30"

39°30'

4963
(RIVESVILLE)

MASONIC TEMPLE
FAIRMONT, MARION
COUNTY, WEST
VIRGINIA

360 000
FEET

UTM:

17/573720/4370800

MEADOWDALE 3.2 MI.
MORGANTOWN 15 MI.



