

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

II-5

EXTRA COPY

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Masonic Temple  
other names/site number 081-222-22057

2. Location

street & number 135 North Main Street N/A not for publication  
city, town Franklin N/A vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Johnson code 081 zip code 46131

3. Classification

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. 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.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Indiana Department of Natural Resources Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: Meeting Hall

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH &amp; 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other TERRA COTTA

STONE

WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Completed in 1924, the former Franklin Masonic Temple (No. 107 F. & A.M.) is a well-maintained Neo-Classical building located on the east side of Main Street in Franklin, Indiana. The buff-colored brick and glazed terra cotta structure is rectangular in plan, three stories in height above a raised basement. Its flat, asphalt roof is shielded from view by stone-capped parapet walls.

The front or Main Street view (Photos 1 & 2) features a small lawn that is bisected by a wide sidewalk which connects the Temple's main entrance to the street. Hedges line the center walk as well as the building's front. The sides and rear of the building are devoid of landscaping.

The principal or west facade (Photos 1 & 2) is articulated by the stone-capped parapet, complete with an ovolo molding, followed by a brick section with decorative soldier coursing. Below, there is a classically-inspired entrance entablature with a terra cotta cornice and architrave and a brick frieze with large bronze letters yielding MASONIC TEMPLE. (Photo 3) The entablature is supported by four engaged Ionic columns in antis. The brick and terra cotta antae with recessed center panels are located on the building's corners while the fluted terra cotta columns divide the facade into three bays. Each bay is further defined by raised brick edging and panels that frame the window region. The northern and southern bays are identical in their window arrangement with casement and sash units of identical widths occurring at the first, second and third levels. The first story has one-over-one windows surmounted by leaded glass transoms with a triangular-paned, classical fretwork motif. The second story windows are leaded, transomed casements with a similar fretwork design. Leaded, fretworked casements complete the third story openings. The central bay differs in that the main entrance is found at the first level, marked with a terra cotta pediment, corbels, scrollwork and the Masonic emblem. (Photo 4) The original doors have been replaced with a modern aluminum and glass unit. Finally, below the main level is the raised brick basement with a stone cap and the main staircase, which is constructed of brick and concrete.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

1922-24

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Shoppell, Clifford (Shoppell & Company)

Bryant, Roy C. & Co.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

The former Masonic Temple at 135 North Main Street in Franklin, Indiana is outstanding among Neo-Classical buildings erected in Indiana during the twentieth century. It is significant for its monumental design, fine craftsmanship and architectural detailing.

The temple was designed by Clifford Shoppell of Shoppell & Company, Evansville, Indiana. Built in 1922-24 by a Franklin firm, Roy C. Bryant Company, the Temple is especially important since it possesses an extraordinary level of integrity, remaining virtually unchanged since its dedication in April of 1924.

**Historical Background:**

Freemasonry came to Indiana in two streams, one from the south and the other from the northeast. The southern stream originated in Virginia and entered Indiana via Kentucky. The northeastern stream originated in the states of Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Connecticut and reached the state by way of Ohio. In 1809, the first Indiana lodge, Vincennes No. 15, was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Kentucky. The name was changed to Vincennes No. 1 in 1818.

Midway through the nineteenth century, a move was made to organize a lodge in Franklin, when on January 1, 1850, eight men met under the direction of Fabius Finch. Finch, a prominent citizen, state legislator and Judge of the Circuit Court, became the first Worshipful Master. The new Franklin Lodge originally met in rented quarters and in January of 1869, moved into a new Masonic Temple in the third floor of the Vawter Block. The Vawter Block, located at the northwest corner of Jefferson and Water Streets, was a donation from lodge member John T. Vawter. In 1903, the lodge acquired the third story of the adjacent Tanner Building.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See Continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Specify repository:**

Johnson County Historical Museum  
Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acresage of property** City Lot--72' across and 144' deep--Less than one acre

**UTM References**

A 16 58 1290 4370490  
 Zone Easting Northing

C            

B              
 Zone Easting Northing

D            

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is outlined in red on the enclosed map clip from Bergen's Atlas of 1820-1900. Lot 5 is bound by Main Street to the first alley east of Main Street and the first alley north of Madison Street to Lot 6, otherwise known as Lot 5 of Addition 1, Franklin, Johnson County, Indiana.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property constitutes the entire lot historically associated with the Masonic Temple.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jerry McMahan  
 organization Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana date 10/20/90  
 street & number 340 West Michigan Street telephone (317) 639-4534  
 city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46202

also--Gyneth Wilson Fredbeck, Johnson County Historical Society

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The north facade (Photo 5) is relatively utilitarian save the west end and the side entrance. On the west end and encompassing approximately one-fourth of the north facade's length are architecturally detailed bays that wrap the articulation of the principal (west) facade around the corner. There are antae binding the unit at the ends which in turn support the entablature. Furthermore, there are two window bays at each of the three levels, with the second level windows and the eastern window on the first level being bricked-in. On inspecting the original plans, these bays were intended to be blind (unglazed) windows and thus are original. The side entrance (Photo 5), located in the eastern one-third of the north facade, is enhanced by a terra cotta surround, sidelights and a large six-section transom. The remainder of the north facade contains single and double unit sash and casement windows in random groupings (the small upper windows light the Asylum Chapter Lodge Room).

The south facade (Photo 7) mirrors the north except that no windows are absent from the architecturally detailed bays and there is no side entrance. The rear or east facade is purely utilitarian. It has randomly placed double-hung windows. To the north is a fire escape with doors at the second and third stories and an exterior chimney is roughly centered on the east end wall.

The interior of the Temple, like the exterior, is virtually identical to the original fabric. Upon entering the small (4'x 10') Vestibule on the first floor, the visitor is faced with a spacious lobby (19'x 18') and Main Hall (Photo 8, 18'x 66'). Located along the south side of the Hall from west to east are the Silence Room (22'x 18'), the Secretarial Area (15'x 13') and administrative support areas. Along the north side from west to east are the Lounging Room (38'x 18'), Game Room (15'x 18') and Ladies Parlor (17'x 18'). Completing the main level on the east end is the Billiard Room (22'x 57'). All of these rooms have plaster ceilings and walls with hardwood baseboards and doors and painted crown moldings. The flooring is cork checkerboard in two shades of brown, and the door facings are pilastered with entablature headers. Of special interest is the main staircase (Photo 9), the built-in Secretarial counter (Photo 10), the Lounging Room fireplace (Photo 11) and the Billiard Room entrance (Photo 12). The main staircase, located just inside of the Main Hall along the south side, has square posts and balustrades, harmonizing with the door treatment while the Secretarial counter has very nice recessed panel cabinets. The Lounging Room fireplace is constructed of brick with a battered inset and decorative arched niche above the wood mantle. Finally, the Billiard Room entrance is defined by two sets of French doors and a central panel containing a divided-light window and raised-panel

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wainscoting. Topping off all three sections is a divided-light transom.

The second floor contains the Blue Lodge Room (Photo 13, 23'x 48') at the front or west end, the Red Cross Room (16'x 30') as well as stair hall and preparation rooms. Occupying the east end of the second floor is the Asylum Chapter Lodge Room (48'x 57'), plus a stage (9'x 19'). All of the second floor rooms are finished with plaster walls and ceilings and with doors, trim and baseboards identical to the first floor examples. The same cork flooring extends to the second floor with the exception of the Asylum Chapter Lodge Room which is carpeted. The Asylum Chapter Lodge Room (Photos 14 & 15) is noteworthy due to certain design features. The prominent stage at the east end has pilasters at the corners and a large tudor arched opening with a decorative plaster surround. Switch-back staircases on both sides of the stage ascend to the third or balcony level, the balcony being supported by square wood columns in the same mode as the door facings. Located in the solid balcony railing are circular medallions which are centered above each column. Completing the room and adding weight to the expansive space are large plaster ceiling beams which are oriented along the north-south axis of the room.

The third level is comprised of an Armory (23'x 57') at the west end, store rooms in the middle and the Upper Asylum Chapter Lodge Room or balcony at the east end. All of the areas have plaster ceilings and walls, the same hardwood baseboards, doors and facings and the cork flooring as mentioned previously. The balcony is the significant space with seats along the north, south and west ends and wide aisle between the seats and the walls (Photo 15). Additionally, there are diagonally-oriented stairs that cut across the northwest and southwest corners to give access to the balcony seating.

The last floor of the building is the basement which is comprised of a large Banquet Room (Photo 16, 38'x73'), Kitchen (22'x 19') and various support and mechanical areas. The basement is finished with plaster walls, acoustic ceiling tiles, hardwood baseboards, doors and trim and a concrete floor. Of special interest are the original kitchen cabinets (Photo 17).

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Soon after the turn of the century there arose a movement to construct a home for aged Masons and widows and orphans of Masons. In 1909, after many pleas from the Masons and especially from the ladies of the Eastern Star, the Masonic Brethren deemed it appropriate to establish a Masonic Home Fund. Next came the arduous task of selecting a site and after an often bitter competition, Franklin was chosen. The cornerstone for the Home was laid on October 21, 1915, and the doors were opened on October 21, 1916.<sup>3</sup> The opening of the home in turn led to a desire for a new Temple in Franklin. As reported in a local newspaper, the purpose of erecting this notable building was "not for their personal satisfaction or that they might boast of it to Masons elsewhere. It has been the general feeling of all local members that since the Masons of Indiana have honored this community so signally in establishing the great State Home here, that it was a duty of Franklin Masons to erect here, a Temple that would be a credit not only to this community, but to the Masons of the whole state."<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, on April 4, 1919, the lodge purchased Lot 5 on the original plot of the town, now city of Franklin, from Ida L. LaGrange for \$4,500.<sup>5</sup> A Temple Building Association was formed in 1920 to raise the funds and procure the plans for the new Temple. These tasks completed, ground was broken on March 24, 1922, and two years later, on April 14, 1924, the new Temple was dedicated. Although the membership of the lodge had waned during the years of the Civil War and the financial panic of 1873, a member stated at the 1924 dedication, "We leave the old Temple with six hundred and twenty true and loyal brothers to face a future bright with promise."<sup>6</sup>

The original construction estimates were in the range of \$169,000 to \$196,000 and thus well over the anticipated \$100,000. Therefore, the Temple Building Association postponed construction until costs were lowered, which was realized with a final construction contract of \$104,106. A major help in lowering costs was the utilization of volunteers, thirty-five to forty, who excavated the basement and spent four days removing the fill with wagons and teams. This one effort saved \$4,000 and the women of the Eastern Star contributed by cooking and serving dinner each day. However, the greatest accomplishment of the volunteer effort was the spirit that was inspired--an even greater interest and enthusiasm in the Temple's construction.

The architect, Clifford Shopbell, was born December 8, 1871, in Princeton, Indiana. He studied at Southern Indiana University and worked on the engineering corps of the Evansville and Terra Haute Railroad.

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Shopbell spent time in several Indianapolis architectural firms before opening his own practice, Shopbell & Company, in Evansville in 1894 with his partner W.J. Harris. It was Shopbell & Company that received the commission for the Temple in 1921. As a note, the name of the firm was changed to Shopbell, Fowler and Thole in 1924, after the death of Mr. Harris and was consequently known as such at the time of the Temple's dedication in April of 1924. Shopbell designed several buildings in Evansville now listed on the National Register including the American Trust and Savings Bank (1904), Court Building (1909), Buckingham Apartments (1911), Masonic Temple (1912), former YMCA (1913), Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Coliseum (1916), Evansville Municipal Market (1918) and the Old Fellwork Auto Company (1922). Shopbell designed residences on the National Register include the John W. Boehne House (1913) and the Michael D. Helfrich House (1920).

The work of the contractor, Roy C. Bryant is reflected in many local public buildings. His firm was involved with the construction at Franklin College, the Indiana Masonic Home, Hopewell High School, Johnson County Infirmary, Franklin Public Library, Franklin High School Gymnasium, Heugland Canning Company and the Suckow Milling Company. Other institutions demonstrating confidence in his firm's work were Hanover College (Madison, IN), Indiana Boys' School (Plainfield, IN), Indiana Soldiers and Sailors Orphan Home (Plainfield, IN) and the Indiana Board of Agriculture Building at the State Fairgrounds (Indianapolis, IN).

Once the Temple was completed, the members reached a decision as to the function of the new building. A newspaper account revealed, "The idea that these men had in mind was a Temple that would be purely Masonic in which commercialism should find no part... (and should)... be the exemplification of the Masonic idea of helpfulness, encouragement and comfort for all."<sup>10</sup> The only intended use other than for Masonic rites and purposes was to supply the town of Franklin with a much needed and long-awaited community center.<sup>11</sup>

Over the years, the multiplicity of uses of the Temple have served the community of Franklin very well, from offering space for community banquets to school related activities to funerals for dignitaries (i.e., Luther Short, former Ambassador to Turkey). Furthermore, the Temple was used by Camp Atterbury during World War II as headquarters for the American Red Cross where surgical dressings and kit bags were prepared, meetings were held and blood was collected and processed.<sup>12</sup> Finally, it appears that the building has come full-circle, now being owned by the Johnson County Historical Society and used to house the Johnson County



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Historical Museum. It was the Temple that was used for the County's first organized showing of artifacts in 1923--the County's Centennial Celebration--prior to the Temple's dedication.

In essence, the Franklin Masonic Temple, an outstanding example among Indiana's Masonic structures, has garnered much significance, largely because of the quality and monumentality of its architectural design and the integrity of the building. It is also outstanding among Neo-Classical buildings in Franklin. Other Neo-Classical buildings in Franklin include the former Citizen's National Bank at 10 East Jefferson Street and the Carnegie Library at 198 East Madison Street. These structures, in comparison to the Masonic Temple, were treated with simpler, less monumental details. Both are constructed of brick with limestone ornament and both are considerably smaller than the Masonic Temple. Additionally, the Temple's finely crafted Ionic columns, door and window surrounds and ornate cornice exhibit the fine architectural craftsmanship and monumentality of the structure. While both the Bank and Library have architectural detailing, the finer and more grand details of the Temple distinguish it from other Franklin examples. Furthermore, the architect Shopbell practiced on a regional basis, evidenced by the contract on a building so far from his home base of Evansville. And lastly, the integrity of the structure is superb which shows the respect that these Masons and the community had for their Temple, indicating the high stature of Freemasonry in the community of Franklin.

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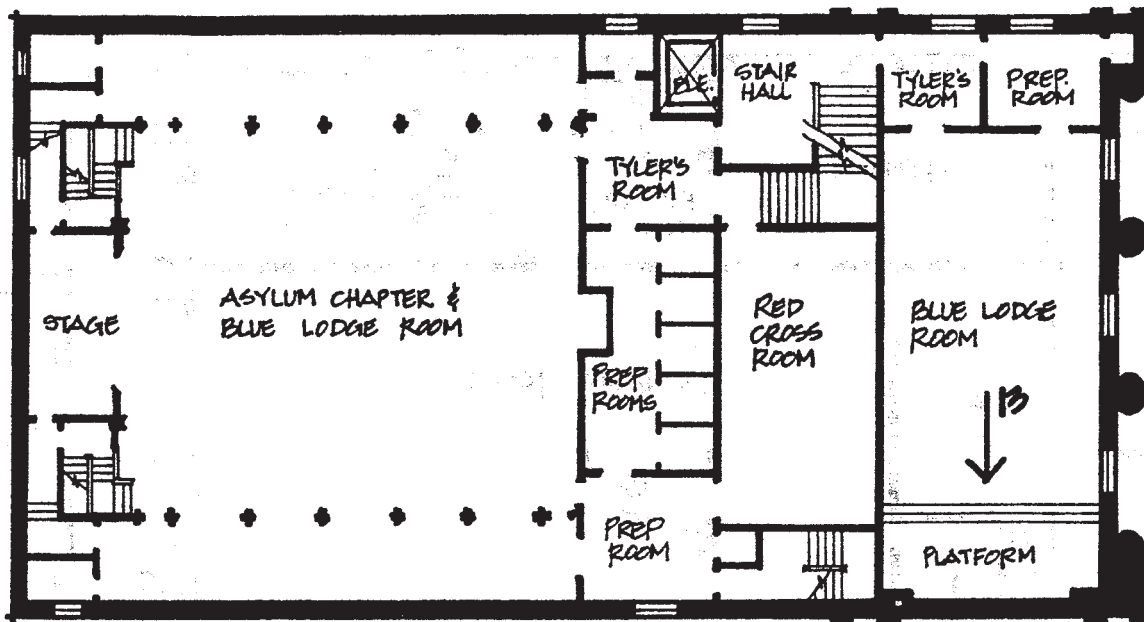
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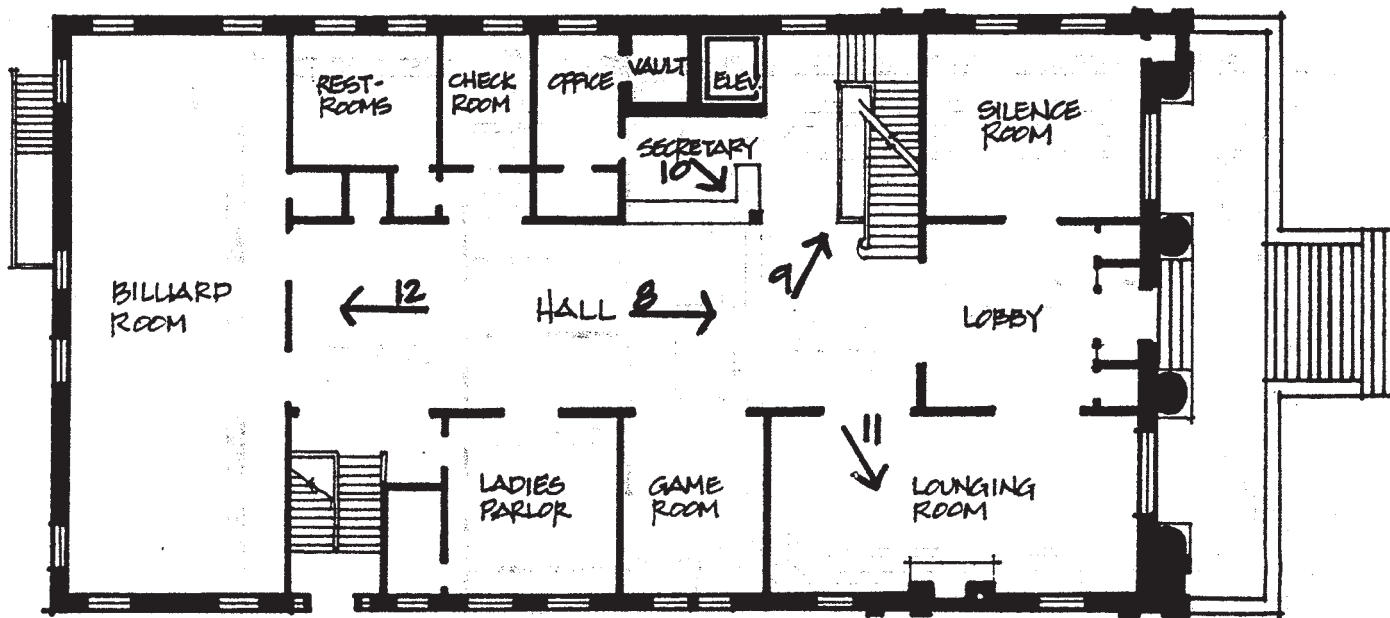
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SECOND LEVEL FLOOR PLAN  
(Not to Scale)



FIRST LEVEL FLOOR PLAN  
(Not to Scale)

# KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS

MASONIC TEMPLE ■ FRANKLIN, IN.