

WASHINGTON

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received _____
date entered _____

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

1. Name

historic Masonic Temple

and/or common Masonic Temple

2. Location

street & number 104 South Lincoln Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Aurora N/A vicinity of congressional district 15th

state Illinois 60505 code 012 county Kane code 089

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" 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
	<u>N/A</u>	<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: social org.

4. Owner of Property

name Masonic Alliance: Jerusalem Temple Lodge #90 AF&AM, Aurora Lodge #254 AF&AM
Aurora Chapter #22, Aurora Commandery #22

street & number 104 South Lincoln Avenue

city, town Aurora N/A vicinity of state Illinois 60505

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kane County Court House

street & number 719 South Batavia Avenue

city, town Geneva state Illinois 60134

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of Historic Structures in Kane County has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October 1972 federal state county local

Illinois Historic Structures Survey, Illinois Department of Conservation
depository for survey records

city, town Springfield state Illinois

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Aurora Masonic Temple is an example of Neo-Classical Revival design, of the Greek order, recalling the Cleveland Museum of Art, by Hubbell & Benes, 1917. The Temple was built to house the formal meeting rooms and auxiliary facilities for the several organizations that make up the Masonic Fraternity. The nominated structure stands atop a hill overlooking the Fox River valley in acropolean fashion, at the southeast corner of the intersection of two residential streets. Towering over neighboring buildings and surrounding trees, it can be seen from many distant vantage points.

This six storey (80'-0") structure is a simple rectangular form (50'x150'). It is topped by a gable roof; and displays ionic pilastered walls on three sides. It further includes flat-linteled, double-hung windows and doorways on the north facade finished by an unbroken roof line. In the west facade, at the main entrance, it exhibits a full compliment of Greek detailing from the stylobate (first floor) through the ionic columns; placed "in antis", up to the entablature and pediment areas including acroterions (removed due to deterioration) at the points of the pediment. Masonic insignia are located on a disk in the center of the tympanum, and in the center of the lintel above the main entry doorway.

The windows are positioned symmetrically between the columns and pilasters on all facades of the building. The Greek detailing of the geison, frieze and architrave of the entablature on the front (west facade) of the building, is also repeated in full detail on all walls of the exterior building.

The structure has one small wing extending about 17ft. to the south and up the full height. Other extensions of the building were restricted to the first and basement floor levels on the north, and up to the second storey on the south; adding functional amenities e.g., stairwell/elevator corridor, offices restrooms and building manager's apartment. The basement and first floor are below the columned area of the facades (stylobate area), thereby the several extensions out from the basic rectangle of the structure, do not interrupt the clean lines of both street elevations (north and west facades). The two-storey extension to the south blends into the residential character of the block.

While the Masonic Temple was originally designed in quarried stone, it was in fact constructed of a custom-formed concrete block facade, expertly imitating the envisioned stone, and enclosing the structural, concrete encased steel frame of the building.

The Neo-Classical design elements are carried over into two formal assembly halls and the front entrance lobby. The Blue Lodge Room on the second floor seats 223 people along three walls and in the narrow balcony around an open floor space of 27'x42'. It has a beamed ceiling with pilastered beam pocket supports. The space between the bottom of the beam and the ceiling is a moulded plaster frieze with dentals. The Commandery Room on the fourth floor seats 251 people along three walls and in a narrow balcony around an open floor space of 35'x52', with a small stage at the fourth wall. It was finished simply, a few years after the building was constructed. The front entrance lobby is decorated with formed plaster wall panels and moulding, complete with beamed ceiling and pilastered walls, including acanthus leaf and "egg&dart" trim moulding. The plaster panels are hand painted to imitate heavily veined, pink marble.

A formal ballroom and another assembly room were never finished out, and are now used for storage. A drill room, club room, game room and full kitchen with dining hall for 500 people, do not have any of the Neo-Classical detailing, but are functionally designed for use by the many groups within the Masonic Temple organizations.

With the exception of painting, carpeting/flooring and furniture, the building stands unchanged for over fifty years.

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 type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates Cornerstone; 9Sep1922 **Builder/Architect** William Q. Bendus, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Aurora Masonic Temple is architecturally significant as an excellent example of Greek order, Neo-Classical Revival architecture that is rarely found in small mid-western cities. This style was popular in the major metropolitan areas of the U.S. from about 1900 to the beginning of the Great Depression (1929) for large-scale buildings of public importance.

Of the architect, William Q. Bendus, very little is known, however, he was quoted about the importance of this structure as follows: "When in the future visitors from abroad come through this country to view, to admire and perhaps to take back with them impression of such works of merit, - will your community be one of those sought out for celebrated attractiveness and be justly proud of its renowned civic achievements?"

As if replying to the Bendus question, the Masonic Alliance announced to the community that "The exterior of the temple will be of a pure-type of Grecian architecture with such slight modifications as were necessary to adapt the plans of the ancient temples to Masonic purpose. It was felt that close adherence to the sublimely simple lines of the sacred places of the ancient peoples which were the very embodiment of mystery and of profound religious feeling, would best convey the impression of antiquity, of purity, of secrecy, which the home of the legitimate successor of these early associations should possess."

It is also important to understand the significant moving force that the Masonic organizations were at that time in the community. The nearly 1000 members raised by donation and subscription, almost a quarter of a million dollars in less than one week, so as to begin construction of the new temple facilities in November of 1921.

"Just as its temple is one of the most majestic and impressives in the State, so is the Aurora Masonic organization noted for its activities in civic and charitable enterprizes. The lodges have always been closely identified with the development of Aurora.

"Dating back almost to the founding of the City (1837), Jerusalem Temple Lodge #90 received its charter in October 1850. The first worshipful master was Benjamin Franklin Hall, who seven years later became the city's first mayor after the uniting of the east and west sides of town. Burr Winton, first senior warden, was the first post master.

"The Masons first met in the Main Street Building. As the Lodge grew, and required larger quarters, a Masonic Hall was built in 1866 by Myron Stolp on Fox Street. The building still stands as one of Aurora's substantial buildings.

"In 1910, the lodge moved onto Broadway, where its headquarters remained until the construction of the present stone edifice. This structure, almost three years in the building, was started 28Nov1921 and opened 10Mar1924. The ten organizations which make up the Masonic Alliance, with their thousands of members embracing many of the leading men (and women) of the city, today have their headquarters in this magnificent \$400,000 stone temple.

* Aurora Beacon News, Aurora, Illinois 9Sep1922.

note: The last four paragraphs are paraphrased from Aurora Beacon News, Aurora, Illinois, 15 Sep 1937, Centennial Edition

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. news articles, *Aurora Beacon News*, Aurora, Illinois, 9Sep1922 & 15Sep1937.
2. *Creviston, Harry*, personal interviews, Aurora, Illinois, Feb. & Sep. 1980, a member of the Lodge since its construction.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 0.49 acres

1:24 000

Quadrangle name Aurora North, Illinois

Quadrangle scale _____

UMT References

A 16 390860 4623000
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated building occupies lots 9 and 10, Block 2, of Jenk's Addition to the Original Town of Aurora, KCI, and together the lots are about 132' x 163' in size.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Deborah J. Kramp

organization -

date 15 October 1980

street & number 727 South Fifth Street

telephone (312) 892-1002

city or town Aurora

state Illinois 60505

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *David Kennedy*

title Director

date 1/2/81

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

STATE ILLINOIS

Date Entered MARCH 19, 1982

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Unity Church	Mattoon Coles County
Masonic Temple	Aurora Kane County
Bane, Warren, Site (M1-5)	McLean County
Rutherford House	Alton Madison County
Graham Building	Aurora Kane County

Notified

Honorable Charles H. Percy
Honorable Alan Dixon
Honorable Tom Corcoran
Honorable Paul Findley
Honorable Edward R. Madigan
Honorable Daniel B. Crane

Midwest Regional Office, NPS

✓ State Historic Preservation Officer
Dr. David Kenney
Director, Department of Conservation
State Office Building
400 South Spring Street
Springfield, Illinois 62706