

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Holly Springs Masonic Lodge

Holly Springs, Wake County, WA0642, Listed 4/7/2010
Nomination by Jason Harpe
Photographs by Jason Harpe, July 2009



Façade and side view



Rear view

**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 any 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 Holly Springs Masonic Lodge

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 127 Raleigh Street not for publication N/A

city or town Holly Springs vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Wake code 183 zip code 27540

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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 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.)

Signature of certifying official Date

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<u> </u> entered in the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined eligible for the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<u> </u> other (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Holly Springs Masonic Lodge
Name of Property

Wake County, North Carolina
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	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Historic and Architectural Resources of
Wake County, NC (ca. 1770-1941)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Social Sub: Meeting Hall
Education School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Social Sub: Meeting Hall
Education School

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century/Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
roof Metal
walls Weatherboard
other _____

Narrative Description

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

Holly Springs Masonic Lodge
Name of Property

Wake County, North Carolina
County and State

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.)

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)

Social History

Education

Period of Significance

ca. 1852-1959

Significant Dates

ca. 1852

1854

1892

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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 # _____

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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Holly Springs Masonic Lodge
Wake County, North Carolina

7. Narrative Physical Description

The Holly Springs Masonic Lodge Number 115 is located on Raleigh Street in Holly Springs, North Carolina, in Wake County, and has occupied this lot since the building was completed in ca. 1852. The lodge is cited on a flat .80 acre lot, trapezoidal in shape, landscaped with open grassy lawns, red cedars, boxwoods, and oak trees. The lodge building is situated on the west side of Raleigh Street, facing south with the east elevation of the building close to the street, in a residential neighborhood of tree-lined streets near downtown Holly Springs. A gravel driveway and two large red cedar trees are situated at the property's southern boundary. A gravel parking area is located between this boundary and the lodge.

Holly Springs Masonic Lodge Building, ca. 1852

Contributing Building

Exterior Description

The Holly Springs Lodge built a utilitarian Greek Revival-influenced side-gable roofed building with returns and nine-over-six windows and a gabled-roof front porch ca. 1852, but these original windows have been replaced with four-over-four windows. The lodge is a three-bay-wide, two-story building with 2,640 square feet of heated space and a dirt crawlspace. The size and depth of the building is conducive to its historic and community functions as a Masonic Lodge and school. The building has a post and beam structural system, and is sheathed in wood weatherboard siding with wood corner boards. The building has ca. 1852 interior wood louvered shutters, but the exterior shutters were a later addition. The roof is covered with metal, and the gable ends have boxed cornices with returns. Stone piers support the building, and the front porch is supported by chamfered posts and concrete block footings. Flush tongue-and-groove boards cover the porch ceiling of the 1902 replacement hipped-roof front porch that is covered in metal. In June 1963, Lodge members poured a "concrete pad" that leads from the gravel parking lot to the concrete porch steps that were added in 1970.

With the exception of one original nine-over-six sash window on the northwest elevation, all of the building's windows are replacement four-over-four wooden sash windows, installed when Gene Barrow, a local contractor, did work on the windows, added new porch decking, rebuilt the front door, and renovated the first-floor bathroom, all in 1997.¹ A single-shouldered plain brick chimney rises from the building's north elevation. In 1962, the Lodge installed a neon sign bearing the Masonic symbol of the square and compass with the letter "G," but it was replaced in

¹ Dixon, *History of Holly Springs Masonic Lodge #115, 1847-1997*, 30.

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1997 with the current wooden sign with the Masonic symbol and the Lodge's name and number.² The building's exterior and second-floor Lodge rooms retain many of their original elements that convey the architectural and stylistic features indicative of the mysteries of Freemasonry.

The lodge's cornerstone is located at the northeast elevation and displays the inscription: "Chartered/December 10, 1847/Reset/Oct. 11, 1947." The lodge removed the cornerstone on August 27, 1947 and took it to Brother Mason Arnaiz's Marble Works where it was cleaned. Additionally, Arnaiz carved a Masonic emblem on the cornerstone, and a copper box with the following contents was placed inside: a copy of the lodge's history, list of charter members and officers, list of current members and officers, copy of the commemoration program, small bible, 1947 Roosevelt Dime, *Raleigh News and Observer* clippings, and a 1943 dime.³

Interior Description

The lodge's first floor has been altered throughout the building's history to accommodate schools, lodge activities, and other functions associated with civic and governmental organizations. The most notable is the removal of an original partition wall, in 1880, to create a large open space. Exposed I-beams were added, in 1986, to counteract structural issues partially caused by the early removal of this partition wall. A bathroom and kitchen were added to the west end of the first floor, in 1953 and 1954. Entrances to the lodge's first floor are located on the north, south, and west elevations. A double-leaf five-panel front door is located on the south elevation and single wood doors on the north and west elevations each have two panels surmounted by two lights.

A paneled door with a rim lock opens onto the stairs from the southwest corner to the dog-leg staircase that runs west along the south wall and turns north to the second floor. The walls of the staircase are lined with original diagonal and horizontal flush pine boards, now painted white, and the original stair treads, risers, and molding are carpeted. A window is located in the stairway on the first floor south wall, but the lower sash is currently covered with plywood. A modern handrail leads from the staircase landing to the second floor, and the original pine, wood-pegged, chamfered post and horizontal rails extend from the south wall to the head of the stairs in the second floor hall.

² Ibid.

³ Holly Springs Masonic Lodge Minutes, October 11, 1947. Holly Springs Masonic Lodge, Holly Springs, North Carolina.

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Located on the west elevation of the second floor, at the head of the stairs, is an original vernacular mantel with recessed panels surmounted by a small overmantel, where a fireplace once provided the lodge with heat. Its opening has been filled with wide flush boards. The ceiling and walls of the second floor are covered in the original flush pine boards and, with the exception of the preparation room in the building's northwest corner, these boards are painted white. An original two-panel door leads from the stairhall to the preparation room. The preparation room retains its original exposed pine wall and ceiling boards that display illegible graffiti by students that attended school in this building over the years. Two other two-panel doors flanking the Senior Warden's station, at the west end of the Lodge room, provide access to the Lodge room, one from the stairhall and the other from the preparation room.

The configuration of the Lodge room is consistent with the geometric and traditional alignment elucidated in the organizational tenets of Freemasonry. The Worshipful Master's station is situated at the east end of the room, the Senior Warden to the west, Junior Warden to the south, Senior Deacon to the east, Junior Deacon to the west, and the Stewards to the east and west of the Junior Warden's station. The Tyler guards the door to the stairhall during meetings. The treasurer's desk is located in the northeast corner, north of the Worshipful Master's station, and the secretary's desk is located in the southeast corner, south of the Worshipful Master's station. Located in the center of the room, midway between the Worshipful Master's station and Senior Warden's station, is the altar. Three candle stands are situated near the altar and point towards the East, West, and South, and are always lit before the officers open the Lodge. A bible and a square and compass all rest on the altar.

The three principal offices in the Lodge are the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, and Junior Warden. These officers' stations represent the sun at rising, his meridian, and his setting.⁴ The lodge's orientation from east to west between north and south forms the earth, Heavens, and from the surface to the center. The Worshipful Master's station has three steps leading to its platform, the Senior Warden has two steps, and the Junior Warden has one step. These steps are symbolic of the journey from youth to adulthood and old age. Two wood pillars painted gold stand on bases in front of the Senior Warden's station, with globes resting on top of the columns. Lodges paint these pillars gold to emulate the two bronze columns of King Solomon's Temple. The Lodge room's walls and ceiling are covered with original flush pine boards. As is typical with second-floor Masonic Lodge rooms, the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge room is lined with photographs of past Worshipful Masters. The Lodge room's flooring retains its original, wide, pine boards and each of the raised officer's stations is decked with original pine. Additionally,

⁴ Edmond Ronayne, *Ronayne's Handbook of Freemasonry* (Chicago, Illinois: Ezra A. Cook Publications, Inc., 1965), 7.

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the podiums at each of the officer's stations are pine joined by wooden pegs, now painted black. These podiums are located to the side of each raised station, and are of an unusual L-shaped design with curved board supports topped by wide, flat surfaces.

The only objects not original to the Lodge room are objects used by the brethren to carry out their work at monthly meetings and during degree work. These additions include: two columns donated by Brother R.L. Shirlen and a ballot box made and presented by Brother E.A. Leavitt of the Apex Lodge, both in 1944; an altar donated by Ralph Stephens in 1963; three pulpit chairs donated by the Methodist Church in 1968; fluorescent lights installed over the principal officers' chairs in 1971; wood and metal theater seats for the members of the Lodge placed in 1991; and, new columns for the Senior Warden's station added in 1994.⁵ The Lodge room retains its original flush, hand-planed pine wall boards, ceiling, and decking, officers' stations and podiums, and the wooden letter "G" that Brother J.E. Holland's grandfather carved with a pocket knife and donated to the Lodge prior to the Civil War.⁶

The Lodge accepted the new building in January 1853, but they reported that the chimneys had not yet been plastered. Repairs were made to the lodge in 1880 at a cost of twelve dollars.⁷ Also in 1880, the officers agreed to remove an original partition on the first floor.⁸ A twenty by forty foot rear ell addition, built for educational purposes, was completed on September 15, 1888.⁹ The Lodge removed the ell from the north elevation and boarded up the gap left by this removal in July 1902. A portion of the ell must have remained at this time because, in 1908, the Lodge voted to remove the annex at the north side.¹⁰ The Lodge built chimneys at the north and west elevations in 1902, and Lodge minutes from January 1947 explain that a destructive snow storm forced down "the hall's chimney."¹¹ According to the minutes, limited heat from a single chimney forced the Lodge members to continue their meetings at the Apex Masonic Hall in nearby Apex. They rebuilt this chimney during the summer of 1947.¹² Sometime between 1902 and 1947 the Lodge lost one of the chimneys mentioned in the 1902 minutes because they only reference rebuilding one chimney after the 1947 snow storm.

⁵ Dixon, *History of Holly Springs Masonic Lodge #115, 1847-1997*, 1-31.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 8

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹² *Ibid.*

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Over the next fifty years, the Lodge made alterations to both the exterior and interior of their historic building. In 1944, they laid the current brick porch steps.¹³ The Lodge decided in 1958 to forego the use of wood stoves to heat the building and installed gas heaters, closing off the fireplaces at this time. The Lodge added a concrete walk in 1963 leading to the front steps.¹⁴ In January 1964, the Lodge purchased and installed pine paneling on the first floor, and in August of that year, installed oak flooring on the first floor.¹⁵ Within three years, the Home Demonstration Club of Holly Springs updated the lodge's lighting with contemporary light fixtures on the first floor and made repairs to the front steps. The Lodge installed brick steps in 1970 on the lodge's north elevation. In 1991, the lodge installed the current wooden theater seating in the Lodge room along the north and south walls.¹⁶

Cast Aluminum Marker, 2000

Non-Contributing Object

The Lodge purchased from Sewah Studios of Ohio, in 2000, a cast aluminum marker similar to the historic markers that the North Carolina Highway Historical Marker program erects throughout the state, and erected it at the property's eastern boundary near the entrance to the property. This marker commemorates and celebrates the Lodge's establishment as one of Wake County's earliest Lodges and as the location of a school for girls from the 1860s to the 1890s.

Integrity

The Holly Springs Masonic Lodge and its grounds are in excellent condition. The Masonic Lodge is situated on Raleigh Street near downtown Holly Springs in its original location. Built ca. 1852, the Lodge's officers and members have preserved the architectural integrity of the building's interior and exterior while minimally altering this integrity with renovations to the front porch, porch stairs, windows, and the interior of the first floor. Alterations to the first floor of the building include a dropped ceiling, a modern bathroom and kitchen, exposed I-beams spanning the large open space, a modern brick fireplace, and pine paneling. These renovations were made to meet the needs of the Lodge and other groups who rented this space over the course of one hundred years for educational, religious, civic, and governmental purposes, including groups such as the Baptist Missionary Society, Women's Society of the Methodist

¹³ Ibid., 20.

¹⁴ Ibid., 25.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 30.

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Church, Home Demonstration Club, and the Wake County Health Department, in 1956.¹⁷ Although the Lodge has made extensive renovations to the first floor for their meetings and activities, they have left undiminished the architectural elements of the second-floor Lodge room and preparation room which define the building's architectural significance.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the lodge began to experience structural problems that still affect their building to this day. In 1986, Woodley Kennedy donated I-beams for use on the first floor to support the weight of the second floor.¹⁸ Prior to this donation, the Lodge utilized a large hydraulic jack situated under the building's foundation and a post prop on the first floor to support the Lodge room and prevent its collapse during meetings. In 1994, a leaky pipe in the first-floor kitchen necessitated the re-tiling of the first floor kitchen and bathroom. In 1997, Gene Barrow rebuilt the front door, made extensive repairs to the windows, downstairs bathroom, and replaced the porch's decking. Barrow also supervised the replacement of the neon sign installed by the Lodge in 1962 with a painted wooden sign installed in 1997, which still hangs from the exterior of the Lodge building.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid., 20, 24.

¹⁸ Ibid., 29.

¹⁹ Ibid., 30.

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8. Statement of Significance

Summary

The Holly Springs Masonic Lodge, built ca. 1852, is Holly Springs and Wake County's only surviving antebellum Masonic Lodge, and is the oldest extant Masonic Lodge and school building in Wake County.²⁰ It meets National Register Criterion A for its association with Social History and Education in Holly Springs. The lodge was the location of the earliest school in Holly Springs, as well as the first school available to female students in town, and the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge and its lodge building were closely tied to the promotion of education in Holly Springs from 1854 to the early twentieth century. In addition, the lodge building was a gathering place for the Masonic gentlemen of Holly Springs from ca. 1852 to the present, although its post-1959 use is not of exceptional significance, and the Lodge's various service activities benefited both its members and the community. The period of significance is ca. 1852, the estimated date of the completion of the lodge's construction, to 1959.

The Holly Springs Masonic Lodge held their first meetings in 1851, after receiving their charter in 1847 and before the construction of their lodge, at the Western Sun Lodge building in west Wake County. They also met at the home of Richard Jones, a local merchant, occasionally during the 1840s. They began construction on their building in 1851, and "accepted" it in January 1853.²¹ They laid the cornerstone on November 10, 1853.

Education was one of the Lodge's greatest interests in its early history, and they began renting the lower rooms of their new hall for educational purposes on November 27, 1852.²² They helped organize the Holly Springs Academy, in 1854, under the leadership of a board of trustees consisting of, in part, members of the Lodge and the Raleigh Baptist Association. The Lodge also built a dormitory separate from the lodge for the new school, but it burned soon after its opening.²³ On October 27, 1855, in response to the founding of the Holly Springs Academy for male students, the Lodge endorsed the establishment of a special school for females, with classes held on the first floor of the lodge, and in April 1856 rented the lower rooms to Nancy Turner for this purpose.²⁴ The Lodge assumed control of the Holly Springs Institute, a later incarnation of the Holly Springs Academy supported by Colonel George Benton Alford, already located in the Masonic lodge, and renamed it the Holly Springs Masonic Institute in 1892.²⁵

²⁰ Lally, *The Historic Architecture of Wake County, North Carolina*, 363.

²¹ Dixon, *History of Holly Springs Masonic Lodge #115: 1847-1997*, 4.

²² *Ibid.*, 5.

²³ *History of Holly Springs*, unpublished typescript, 1.

²⁴ *History of Holly Springs Masonic Lodge #115: 1847-1997*, 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

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The Holly Springs Masonic Lodge falls into Context 1-4 in the “Historical and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina, ca. 1770-1941” (MPDF), pages 8-78, and each of these four sections provides historic and architectural context for Wake County’s growth and development from the Colonial Period through the 1950s. The lodge is locally significant under Property Type 4B “Schools” and 4C “Lodge Buildings,” pages 147-152, subsets of the property type “Institutional Buildings” in the Wake County MPDF. Historic lodges are rare and extremely important representatives of community life and development in Wake, and as such, architectural integrity can be lower than that required for more numerous institutional buildings, such as churches. Location, setting, overall form, fenestration, a majority of materials, and a substantial amount of original detailing should be maintained for a lodge to be considered eligible under Criterion C for architectural significance, according to the registration requirements on page 154 of the MPDF. The Holly Springs Masonic Lodge maintains its original setting on a large open lot with mature trees in a residential area. It also exhibits excellent architectural integrity, retaining most of its original materials and spare detailing at the exterior. The lodge also retains its interior finishes in the stair and on the second floor—particularly the flush board wall and ceiling sheathing, the second-floor hall mantel, and the original Lodge room podiums and daises. Post-1941 contextual information is not provided by the MPDF, but is included in this nomination.

Historical Background

Holly Springs, located in south Wake County, was settled in 1826 and chartered in 1877. The town is situated at an altitude of 350 feet, and was named for a plethora of holly trees and springs in the town and its vicinity.²⁶ Holly Springs is the only incorporated town in the Holly Springs Township. The township was created in 1889, and incorporated parts of Middle Creek and Buckhorn townships, and was marked by a large African American population, since the area’s less desirable soils, and Holly Springs’ distance from Raleigh, made it less attractive to white citizens of Wake County.

Early Holly Springs citizens sought to establish the community as a seat of primacy in Wake County. Confederate Colonel George Benton Alford, an early member of the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge, was instrumental in the local effort to establish Holly Springs as a center of commercial and industrial development in Wake County, a vision that did not come to fruition until the late twentieth century. Holly Springs’ population increased by 2,000 people between 1980 and 1990, but the community still ranked as the fourth smallest in Wake County with only 5,786. Currently, Holly Springs’ population numbers nearly 20,000 people.²⁷

²⁶ William S. Powell, *North Carolina Gazetteer: A Dictionary of Tar Heel Places* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 233.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 360; <http://www.hollyspringsnc.us/about/history.htm>, December 20, 2008.

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Holly Springs was a small community that originally served as a Tuscaroran Indian hunting ground during its earliest period, and during the Colonial period was a thriving community with a sawmill, cotton gin, a store and house that was used as a dwelling and church. The church in Holly Springs was one of the first four members of the Raleigh Baptist Association in 1805.²⁸ Richard Jones moved to Holly Springs around 1800 and built a store, and the Western Sun Masonic Lodge received its charter in 1818. By 1822, Holly Springs had a post office and Baptist Church. Archibald Leslie, a Scottish tailor, built a two-story Greek Revival-style house on Church Street in Holly Springs during the 1840s, and the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge received its charter on December 10, 1847.²⁹ The Lodge completed its hall by 1852, and by 1860 the unincorporated town of Holly Springs had five stores, a Masonic Lodge, a church, and schools for both males and females.

During the Civil War and Reconstruction, Holly Springs sent many of its young men to fight in the southern war effort. These men made up the majority of the Twenty-sixth Regiment, North Carolina Troop's roster, and their absence immensely affected day-to-day life in Holly Springs. Union troops occupied Holly Springs to catch Confederate soldiers retreating at the end of the war, stationing themselves at the Leslie House for two weeks. According to Barbara Koblich, Holly Springs historian, "bummers, bands of renegade soldiers that scoured the countryside without supervision, raided other local homes."³⁰

The Civil War left Holly Springs with very few men to rebuild their town during Reconstruction, and progress did not come until nearly a century later. An 1871 survey of the town outlined only ten sizeable buildings, and it was not until the arrival of Colonel George Benton Alford that Holly Springs experienced any commercial growth. Alford, who originally lived in the Middle Creek Township, adjacent to Holly Springs, moved to Holly Springs in 1875 and was instrumental in the incorporation of the town of Holly Springs in 1877, and along with B.S. Utley, in re-establishing a functional school in the community. During the 1880s, Alford and Utley were able to re-establish a school at the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge, the Holly Springs Institute, which operated until March 19, 1892, when the Lodge assumed responsibility for the school and renamed it the Holly Springs Masonic Institute. By August 1892 the Masonic Institute had fifty-one students.

Alford served for many years after Reconstruction as the president of the Oscar R. Rand Memorial Association, a Confederate Veterans Group in Holly Springs, and the Commander of

²⁸ <http://www.hollyspringsnc.us/about/history.htm>, December 20, 2008.

²⁹ *History of Holly Springs*, 1.

³⁰ Ibid.; "Unhurried Holly Springs Losing Both Holly and Springs," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), 5 June 1949.

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the Camp of United Confederate Veterans, No. 1278 in Holly Springs.³¹ He purchased Holly Springs' most distinctive local property, the Leslie House (Leslie-Alford-Mims House, NR 1997), in 1870, and was engaged in the mercantile business on Main Street in Holly Springs.³² His purchase of the Leslie property included not only the house, but also a nearby store building that was sited on the property. Around 1876, Alford built a simple two-and-a-half story front gabled frame building on Main Street for his mercantile business. This building still stands in Holly Springs and is one of the oldest extant commercial buildings in Wake County. Alford also promoted and secured the charter for the Cape Fear and Northern Railroad, which ran through Holly Springs, in 1892, and organized the *Cape Fear Enterprise* as a promotional newspaper that he hoped would spur economic development in Holly Springs. In addition to his mercantile and newspaper businesses, Alford operated a sawmill, cotton gin, turpentine works, brick kiln, and organized the Holly Springs Land and Improvement Company.³³

In 1906 and 1907, Raymond A. Burt, J. Rang Carter, and the Woman's School Betterment Association led the local effort to build a new public high school in Holly Springs.³⁴ They purchased ten acres near the town's spring and planted and harvested cotton, and held parties and fundraisers to raise money for the high school. The Holly Springs High School was completed in 1908, and was one of Wake County's first four public high schools. The Grand Lodge of North Carolina convened in the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge in February 1909 for the purpose laying the cornerstone at the new Holly Springs High School. However, Historian Moses N. Amis described Holly Springs as a "deserted village" in 1913.³⁵ In 1920, the community had just 333 people within their city limits, a number that had hardly increased since the 1880 census, while surrounding communities, such as Apex, experienced economic and population growth during Reconstruction with the extension of railroads and the opening of new industries.

³¹ Ibid.; Sumner Archibald Cunningham, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Confederated Southern Memorial Association, United Confederate Veterans, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, "The Last Roll," *Confederate Veteran* vol. XXX, no. 1 (January 1922): 69; Minutes, Holly Springs Town Council, May 15, 2007. In 1913, Moses M. Amis wrote about Col. Alford in *Historical Raleigh with Sketches of Wake County and its Important Towns*. In it he stated the following: "By virtue of his service in the Confederate army, George B. Alford has been honored by his comrades by election to the position of Commander of the Camp of United Confederate Veterans, No. 1278 at Holly Springs. The military service of Mr. Alford began in the fall of 1864 (at age 19,) when he joined the R.H. Tucker cavalry company. He was with his company in Baker's regiment, Barnes brigade at Petersburg and Dinwiddie Courthouse. He was in important raids on Stony Creek and Bellfield. Being taken ill with typhoid fever, he was sent to the military hospital at Raleigh, under the care of Dr. Tracey. Upon his recovery he was ordered back to his regiment, near Petersburg, the day the battle of Aversboro was fought. Before he could get to the front Richmond fell, and the war was over. At the surrender, as at his enlistment, he was a private."

³² Lally, *The Historic Architecture of Wake County, North Carolina*, 360-361.

³³ <http://www.hollyspringsnc.us/about/history.htm>, December 20, 2008.

³⁴ *History of Holly Springs*, 4.

³⁵ Ibid.

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As Alford worked incessantly to make Holly Springs an industrial community during the New South period, bright leaf tobacco markets opened in nearby Apex and Fuquay Springs and limited the possibility of Holly Springs' participation in this industry.³⁶ World War I pulled a large number of their male population into service overseas, and many families relocated to larger cities seeking employment. The community was further crippled by the death of their founder and most active public relations and economic development officer, Col. G.B. Alford, in 1923. The Bank of Holly Springs closed in 1924, and was the first bank in North Carolina to do so before the Great Depression started with the stock market crash in 1929.³⁷

Holly Springs remained in an economic slump throughout the 1930s and 1940s, and did not experience any progress until the 1960s. An expository article from Raleigh's *News and Observer* in 1949 painted a vivid picture of Holly Springs as a "lazy and sleepy, pastoral hospitable" small town. Mary Hicks Hamilton, the author, explained in the article that Holly Springs' citizens enjoyed their small farms and gardens with peas, white potatoes, and corn, and nearly all yards had roses, pansies, and verbena. Hamilton asserted that industry "practically ignored" this community. She contributed this to the loss of a hosiery mill and two planing mills. The Holly Springs High School was one of Wake County's first public schools, but by 1946 lost its students to high schools in Apex and Fuquay Springs because of consolidation. In 1949, Holly Springs had five churches (two for whites and three for African-Americans), missionary societies, sewing circles, an African American church club, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, a drug store, two booths for socializing, a small softball field, one hundred eighty-two registered voters, and fifteen houses with running water. Hamilton also reported on the dismal situation the community faced with the loss of most of their springs and holly trees to overgrowth of honeysuckle, weeds, poisonous ash and poison ivy, and large oak trees.³⁸

In 1949, the community witnessed an occasional "weiner roast" or a party, but there was a collective disdain for "kissing games" and dancing. There was no alcohol sold at the local businesses, and no slot machines occupied spaces in these businesses. The only access to popular culture was the infrequent visit by young people of the community to neighboring towns. After World War II, Holly Springs suffered from a depleted population, and the Holly Springs High School dropped grades nine through eleven. In 1958, the Holly Springs High School was closed and all of the students consolidated into classes at Fuquay Springs and Apex.³⁹ The community changed very little over the next thirty years, but there were improvements that made Holly Springs a more desirable place to live.⁴⁰

³⁶ Lally, *The Historic Architecture of Wake County, North Carolina*, 360.

³⁷ <http://www.hollyspringsnc.us/about/history.htm>, December 20, 2008.

³⁸ "Holly Springs: A Place To Sit And Talk A Spell," *Raleigh Times*, 2 April 1975.

³⁹ *History of Holly Springs*, 4.

⁴⁰ "Unhurried Holly Springs Losing Both Holly and Springs," 3.

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During the 1960s, the town illuminated their once dark and dreary streets with streetlights, and installed a public water system. Mims' Drugstore, Joe Bissette's fish market, grocery store, and gas station, Brewer's grocery store, and Dewar's Antiques were businesses that thrived in Holly Springs during the 1970s, and George Underwood's furniture store and Gene Jones' gas station were popular social gathering spots. The town completed a sewer plant in 1985 that enticed the textile company Warp Technologies to open a plant in Holly Springs. The resulting population growth from these new industries precipitated the construction of the Sunset Ridge golf course; a new 35,000 square foot Town Hall in 2003; the Parrish Womble Park; the ninety-acre Bass Lake Park in 2004; and, the development of a plethora of festivals and celebrations. Holly Springs' population had increased from 9,000 in 2000 to 17,500 in 2006.⁴¹

Freemasonry and the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge

Freemasonry is the oldest and most respected benevolent and social fraternity in the United States.⁴² Established in colonial America as early as four decades before the American Revolution, the fraternity boasts a lineage that connects it to the Grand Lodge of England and a central meeting between four Lodges of London in 1716 at the Apple Tree Tavern.⁴³ The Grand Lodge became a formal organization the following year and possessed the authority to charter subordinate Lodges in Europe and in America. Early British immigrants that arrived in America carried with them knowledge of the tenets of Freemasonry, and disseminated the code of Freemasonry throughout American cities. As each town accumulated sufficient numbers of men committed to the fraternity, they could apply to the Grand Lodge in Britain for a charter to begin the "work" of the Craft. A charter enabled the Lodge to elect officers, conduct rituals, and initiate new members or petitioners.⁴⁴

Described as a "system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols," Freemasonry is a philosophical journey through antiquity that includes the study of ancient Egypt, Greece, Israel, and Roman history. Early stonemasons belonged to craft guilds similar to other medieval guilds that emphasized the significance of the Craft and the preservation and dissemination of the Craft's mysteries.⁴⁵ Freemasons believed the earliest operative stonemasons were involved in the building of King Solomon's Temple, in which was housed the Ark of the Covenant on Mount

⁴¹ <http://www.hollyspringsnc.us/about/history.htm>, December 20, 2008.; "Holly Springs: A Place To Sit And Talk A Spell," *Raleigh Times*, 2 April 1975; "Unhurried Holly Springs Losing Both Holly and Springs," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), 5 June 1949.

⁴² Alan Gowans, "Freemasonry and the Neoclassic Style in America" *Antiques* 77 (1960): 172-175.

⁴³ Eric Fox, ed. *Valley of the Craftsmen: A Pictorial History* (Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A.: The Supreme Council, 33°, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry), 10, hereinafter cited as Fox, *Valley of the Craftsmen*.

⁴⁴ John D. Hamilton, *Material Culture of the American Freemasons* (Lexington: Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library, Inc.), 4, hereinafter cited as Hamilton, *Material Culture of the American Freemasons*.

⁴⁵ Fox, *Valley of the Craftsmen*, 12.

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Moriah, and joined stonemasons' guilds during the end of the seventeenth century because of their mutual affinity for Rosicrucianism, Neoplatonism, Isaac Newton, Necromancy, and other mysterious belief systems associated with ancient civilizations.⁴⁶ They believed their membership gave them access as "special holders of a secret fund of timeless knowledge and of the only truly universal religious and moral tenets."⁴⁷

Early in the eighteenth century, the constituency of "operative" stonemasons, those actively employed as stonemasons, dissipated and gentlemen of British descent joined, promoting the study of ethics and philosophy through the ideas of Enlightenment and a yearning for ancient knowledge. Those who sought the intellectual and spiritual aspects of Masonry obtained honorary memberships in guilds and lodges, and carried the label of Accepted Masons.⁴⁸

"Speculative" Freemasonry is a designation carried by Freemasons that do not practice the stonemasons' trade, and includes a myriad of symbols borrowed from "operative" stonemasons of early guilds that represent the values and ideals that relate to the development, betterment, self-improvement, and "uprightness" of the individual man and the collective unit of the fraternity. These Freemasons also emulated other aspects of ancient stonemasonry. They preserved a time-honored legacy of mutual protection and assistance, and promoted the building of fraternal bonds for their fellow brethren.⁴⁹

Freemasonry reached North America in the 1730s and each of the thirteen colonies had established Lodges by 1765. The earliest Lodge of Freemasons in America was organized in Philadelphia's Old Tun Tavern in 1730-31.⁵⁰ Another early Lodge, Founding Lodge, was founded in Boston in 1733. The precedent set by the founding of these two Lodges in colonial America initiated a Masonic movement that spread across the entire continent. The annals of early American Masonic history contain the names of the early Republic's most prominent and important gentlemen, such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Paul Revere, Andrew Jackson, Dewitt Clinton, and other men of high social status that helped establish and shape the identity of the new republican nation.⁵¹ These men, their Lodges' cornerstone ceremonies, and Masonic ideas in general, extended beyond just the honor, reputation, and standing of the

⁴⁶ William D. Moore, "American Masonic Ritual Paintings," *Folk Art* (Winter 1999/2000), 59, hereinafter cited as Moore, "American Masonic Ritual Paintings".

⁴⁷ Kathleen Smith Kutolowshi, "Freemasonry and Community in the Early Republic: The Case for Antimasonic Anxieties," *American Quarterly* vol. 34 no. 5 (Winter, 1982): 546.

⁴⁸ The word Accepted is attached to most Masonic Lodges, and is abbreviated F. & A. M. (Free and Accepted Masons).

⁴⁹ Clement M. Silvestro, introduction to *Masonic Symbols in American Decorative Arts* (Lexington: Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library, Inc., 1976), 10, hereinafter cited as *Masonic Symbols in American Decorative Arts*.

⁵⁰ Fox, *Valley of the Craftsmen*, 33.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

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prominent social class; they did what historian Steven Bullock explained as identifying Freemasonry “with the ideals of the nation as a whole.”⁵² Early Freemasons sought to unify all social classes through the moral ideals of virtue and liberty. They believed that societal success, development, and progress depended not on aristocracy and monarchical government, but rested on the virtue and character of the Nation’s people. To exemplify this stance, lodge’s opened membership to men of “every grade of life, from the monarch on the throne to the honest and industrious peasant that turns the globe.”⁵³

Just as early Freemasons employed symbols for meaning and value within the Craft, they also used the prime numbers three, five, and seven throughout the Craft’s degree. Ubiquitous in Masonic decorative arts and architecture are representations of ladders, winding staircases, seven jewels, Grand Masters (King Solomon, King Hiram of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff), orders of architecture (Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite), and seven liberal arts and sciences (Grammar, Arithmetic, Dialect, Rhetoric, Music, Geometry, and Astrology). The Craft utilized these images and symbols to represent each brother’s movement through the levels of human consciousness, as represented in the Lodge as a brother’s ascension from West to East.⁵⁴ Freemasons employed symbols and their meanings to provide structure and a better social order. The appeal of Freemasonry in America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was its focus on tradition, mystery, moral and self-improvement, and rationalism. Masons believed fervently in their ability through Masonic principles to bring about an improved social order through progress, reason, charity, and industry against a generation of sectarianism and partyism. Masonry was built upon a system of meritocracy where ambitious men where assured unlimited mobility through the ranks. The fraternity’s prestige and mystique through exclusivity promised a structured, ritualistic, and selective course in a time when “uprooted pioneers faced social disorientation, and mobile, individualistic Americans.”⁵⁵

In his book, *Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol*, Kirk W. MacNulty takes the fraternity’s usage of the prime number three a step further as he examines our founding fathers’ association with Freemasonry and their framing of the Constitution and branches of government. The fathers of the Constitution separated the power structure of the three branches of government (legislative, judicial, and executive). The three great pillars of Freemasonry are three columns denoted as Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty. As expressed by MacNulty, each of the three

⁵² Steven Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 136.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁵⁴ Kirk W. MacNulty, *Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol* (New York: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1991), 78.

⁵⁵ Kutolowshi, “Freemasonry and Community in the Early Republic: The Case for Antimasonic Anxieties,” 547-548.

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branches of government contains three levels (federal, state, and local), and within these levels are three main bodies. On the local level, there exists a Municipal Court (judicial branch), Mayor (executive branch), and City Council (legislative branch).

Masonic Lodges are organized into jurisdictions (districts) of subordinate Lodges -- the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge is a subordinate Lodge -- under a Grand Lodge. North Carolina has forty-one districts. The Holly Springs Masonic Lodge is part of District 15 Wake West. Each district is overseen by a District Deputy Grand Master and a District Grand Lecturer, and each subordinate Lodge must hold a charter from the Grand Lodge or a dispensation from another chartered Lodge before it can conduct its meetings. Subordinate Lodges such as the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge, either under dispensation or chartered, only have powers that the Grand Lodge establishes.

The Holly Springs Masonic Lodge Number 115 has a long and storied history of upholding the principles of Freemasonry and serving Holly Springs' educational, social, and civic needs. The Lodge held its earliest meetings as a separate Lodge in 1847. They met under a special dispensation before receiving their charter on December 10, 1847. Many of their original members belonged to the Western Sun Masonic Lodge #72, which was located in western Wake County and existed from 1818 to 1828. The Lodge members recorded in the earliest extant minutes from 1847 were Holly Springs' wealthiest and most well-known men. They included A. Hunter, Worshipful Master; Gaston Utley, Senior Warden; J.T. Hunter, Junior Warden, *pro tem*; P.B. Burt, secretary, *pro tem*; William Dupree, Treasurer, *pro tem*; R. Sewell, Senior Deacon, *pro tem*; A.K. Clements, Junior Deacon, *pro tem*; and, Thomas J. Utley, Tyler, *pro tem*. They held their first regular meeting as a chartered Lodge on January 8, 1848 at the Western Sun Masonic Lodge, and at this time met in the morning and, after a short session, adjourned before resuming their business in the afternoon.

Education Context

From the 1820s until the 1860s, Masonic Lodges in the North and South took a strong interest in the establishment of schools to prepare teachers for common schools and "develop the mental resources of the young." The earliest Masonic-sponsored institution was established in 1841, and between 1841 and 1861, eighty-eight schools were started in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. North Carolina ranked second with Alabama behind Mississippi with a total of fourteen institutions: six academies, one college, five institutes, and two schools.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Richard W. Woods, "Masonic Educational Institutions," *The School Review* vol. 44 no. 6 (June 1936): 456-461. Woods does not mention the names of the academies, colleges, institutes, and schools in his article; he provides these figures in a table.

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The Holly Springs Masonic Lodge rented their first floor lower rooms for school purposes as early as November 27, 1852, and continued their commitment to education until the beginning of the twentieth century.⁵⁷ In 1854, the Lodge organized the Holly Springs Academy with a board of trustees composed of members from the Lodge and the Raleigh Baptist Association. This was an all-male school open to young men throughout North Carolina.⁵⁸ In 1854, the Lodge recognized the need and demand for a female school in Holly Springs and began renting their lower rooms to Nancy Turner for this purpose in April 1856.⁵⁹ Although it is unclear whether the Holly Springs Academy continued during the Civil War, the minutes show that the Lodge rented the lower rooms to Mr. Julius Allison for the purpose of educational instruction on August 25, 1865.⁶⁰ According to Lodge minutes, the Lodge expanded their building between 1883 and 1886 for the Holly Springs Institute, a later incarnation of the Holly Springs Academy supported by Colonel Alford and housed in the lodge. This addition is described as a twenty by forty foot construction on the north elevation, with a twenty foot gap between the lodge building and the structure.⁶¹ On March 19, 1892, the Lodge discontinued their joint educational venture with the school committee, and renamed the school the Holly Springs Masonic Institute. The Masonic Institute's curriculum was consistent with other Masonic schools, and included preparatory subjects found in the late nineteenth century, such as geography, Latin, Greek, French, arithmetic, and grammar. The Institute's roster was filled with fifty-one students in August 1892.⁶² The Masonic Institute's educational activities came to a close in 1902, when the Lodge passed resolutions that precipitated the removal of the addition. However, the Lodge planned to rent their building as a private school.⁶³ In 1908, a county public school for whites was built for grades one through eleven and supplanted the need for the Masonic Institute, which closed that year.

Social History Context

The Holly Springs Masonic Lodge was a benevolent and social organization deeply involved with the societal development of the Holly Springs community since the completion of their Lodge building in ca. 1852. The Lodge's earliest members were the community's most prominent citizens, but Lodge membership extended to men of various social stations. Their membership roles include men who were local politicians, educators, ministers, and building

⁵⁷ Dixon, *History of Holly Springs Masonic Lodge #115: 1847-1997*, 5.

⁵⁸ From the 1820s to the 1860s, the term "Academy" was employed in the traditional sense to mean a secondary school with a large curriculum.

⁵⁹ Dixon, *History of Holly Springs Masonic Lodge #115: 1847-1997*, 6.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 8. The exact date of this addition is not listed in the minutes, but this entry is included between Lodge business in 1883 and 1886.

⁶² Ibid., 9-11.

⁶³ Ibid., 15.

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contractors. These men espoused Masonic principles of charity, morality, and benevolence, and inclusiveness at local cornerstone ceremonies, and provided both financial and in-kind contributions to Lodge members and members of the community

The Lodge began their benevolence in the community during the mid-nineteenth century when there were very few social or charitable organizations in Holly Springs other than those started by churches to provide ministry and support for their own parishioners. They began providing a service to its members and the community between 1858 and 1859 when they voted to allow vacancies in the recently formed female school to be filled by the orphans of deceased members.⁶⁴ In January 1870, the Lodge appointed a committee to assist and advise the widow of one of their members about buying a house. Between 1875 and 1878, the Lodge gave the charity committee the authority to spend money from the treasury without the Lodge's approval.⁶⁵ They also later rented the first floor of the lodge to churches, schools, the Red Cross, and the Wake County Health Department for polio vaccinations.

During the twentieth century, local charitable efforts in Holly Springs were led by individuals, churches, the Woman's School Betterment Association, and, predominantly, by the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge. During World War I, the Lodge invested funds in war bonds and assisted with the fundraising effort to construct a building at Camp Sevier for soldiers that were Masons. In 1932, Jack Holt, a member of the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge, thanked the Lodge for adjourning their meeting early to extinguish the fire that ravaged his father's house.⁶⁶ The Lodge changed their rental policy in 1935, and donated the use of the first floor for the use of the Baptist Missionary Society and the Women's Society of the Methodist Church in Holly Springs.⁶⁷ In 1943 and 1944, the Lodge contributed funds to the United War Fund and American Red Cross, and in 1951 gave eleven bags of fruit to needy families in Holly Springs during Christmas.⁶⁸ In 1956, they began a tradition of giving gifts to the families and widows of Masons in Holly Springs.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 7-8.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 23.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundaries follow the parcel lines of Parcel 0649927211 as shown with a heavy black line on the attached Wake County GIS map at the one inch = 200 feet scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries encompass 1 5/16 acres on Raleigh Street in Holly Springs, which is a portion of the acreage historically associated with the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge. It provides an appropriate setting.

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Photographs

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Holly Springs Masonic Lodge
127 Raleigh Street
Holly Springs, Wake County, NC

Photographer: Jessica Dockery

Date: July 2009

Location of digital images: North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina.

1. South elevation
2. East elevation
3. North elevation
4. Southwest elevation
5. First Floor, looking northeast
6. Stairhall, looking west
7. Former Mantel and Hearth, west wall
8. Lodge Room showing Altar and Worshipful Master's stations, looking northeast