



Masonic Home of Washington

23660 Marine View Drive South
Des Moines, Washington 98198

Historic Resource Report
May 27, 2020

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Cover: 1937 King County Tax Assessor photograph of the Masonic Home (top), and c.2019 aerial photo of a portion of the site from Bing Maps, viewing eastward (bottom).

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BUILDING INFORMATION

Historic Name: Masonic Home of Washington, Washington Masonic Home

Current Name: Landmark on the Sound (event center)

Year Built: 1926-27 (Main Building)

Street & Number: 23660 Marine View Drive S., Des Moines WA 98198

King County Tax ID No.: 172204-9023

Original Owner: Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons, State of Washington

Present Owner: Zenith Properties, LLC

Original Use: Masonic Home and Lodge

Present Use: Vacant

Original Designer: Heath, Gove & Bell

Site Area: 30.3 acres

Gross Building Areas:

Masonic Home Main Building (1926-27)	129,680 GSF
Infirmery Wing (1966) & Addition (1987)	18,982 GSF
Garage (1937)	2,090 GSF
Octagonal Pumphouse (1926)	215 GSF
Storage Building (1997)	2,334 GSF
House/Sales Office (2004)	4,6321 GSF

I. INTRODUCTION

This report was written at the request of Zenith Properties LLC, the owner of the property since 2019, in order to ascertain its historic nature prior to a redevelopment of the site. The report provides historical and architectural information about the former Masonic Home in Des Moines, Washington, including individual structures.

On the 30-acre property is the imposing main building, which was constructed in 1927 and functioned as the Masonic Home; the main building's late 20th-century rear additions; and several smaller subsidiary buildings on the grounds. Both the property as a whole and the main building are referred to as the "Masonic Home." The facility operated as a rest home for aged members of the state's Freemasons until the first decade of the 21st century, then operated for a short time most recently as an event center called Landmark on the Sound.

The Masonic Home property includes buildings (the Main Building, and the Water Tower) that were identified by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) in 2014 as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Other buildings on the property do not appear to have been reviewed previously by DAHP.

Purpose and Methodology

The report includes context information provided to help assess the significance of the property. This context includes about the history of the surrounding community, and the development of the Masonic Home at this location. The report addresses the Home's purpose and precedents, and briefly reviews comparable institutions that exist in the state and in the country, in order to gauge the exceptionality of the property. Also included is summary information about the original architect and landscape architect of the main building and grounds. The report cites the original design and character-providing features of the buildings and concludes along with conclusions on their integrity, or their ability to convey significance. Historic and contemporary photos of the property and buildings are included at the end of the report.

This study was researched and written by David Peterson. Sources used in this report include:

- Newspaper, books, city directories, and maps referencing the property, which are cited in the report or bibliography.
- King County current and historic tax records; the former accessed online, and the latter obtained from the Puget Sound Regional Archives at Bellevue College in Bellevue, Washington. The online King County GIS mapping tool includes aerial photos from 1936.
- Archives of the Washington Masonic Charities of the Grand Lodge of Washington, in University Place, Washington (Washington Masonic Archives). Material reviewed including numerous photographs of the Masonic Home; the original building specifications by the architects Heath, Gove & Bell; and ephemera directly related to the Masonic Home such as pamphlets and brochures published by the Home, and recollections or abbreviated histories of the Home written over the years by residents. The archives also retains historical minutes of the Board of Trustees, the annual superintendent's report, and so forth related to the operation of the Home. Finally, the archives possesses many books, photos, ceremonial garb, or other items related to Freemasonry in Washington State generally. Some photos are very high resolution.
- Collections of the Des Moines Historical Society, Tacoma Public Library Northwest Room, Seattle Public Library, Washington State Historical Society, Kent Historical Museum, Washington State Archives were reviewed.
- Preliminary review of original drawings in storage at DoxVault in Lacey, Washington, which had originally been held by the Masonic Home on site. These drawings include the original 1927 structure, as well as later additions, buildings, and proposed but unbuilt structures for the period 1930s through the 1990s.
- Records of the City of Des Moines Public Works and Planning and Building Department.
- Author's on-site photographs, which date from September 2019.

III. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

History of Des Moines and Zenith

The Masonic Home of Washington was built in 1927 in the hamlet known as Zenith, which had been established in the early 1900s, just outside of the town of Des Moines, Washington.

Des Moines first developed as a rural logging and farming community along the hillsides and shores of Puget Sound, approximately halfway (16 miles) between Seattle and Tacoma. Initial homesteading in the area by Euro-Americans began in the mid-1860s, but very little development occurred until decades later. While a north-south military trail was established nearby in the 1850s-1870s (now known as Military Road), and there were a few east-west trails connecting the area to the Kent Valley, most transportation was by boat on Puget Sound.¹

In 1889, local property owners John W. Kleeb and Orin Watts Barlow platted the initial townsite, which they named Des Moines, after the Iowa city of the same name and hometown of another settler, F. A. Blasher, who sold them his adjacent 154 acres. The first businesses established were lumber and shingle mills, built to



Des Moines WA, around 1900. (Des Moines Historical Society)



The hamlet of Zenith WA, one mile south of Des Moines, in 1907. The Zenith post office shown here was located kitty-corner from the subject site at 240th and Marine View Drive, until the 1930s. Zenith's pier, visible in the distance at right, was located at the end of 240th Street. (Des Moines Historical Society)

process trees logged from the area. A wharf was built to accommodate steamers and “mosquito fleet” ferries that connected residents to more established towns around Puget Sound. Within a year, Des Moines had a population of 216 and already had a few hotels, a chair factory, a tin factory, a boat yard, a school, and churches. However, the town grew slowly over the next three decades, building to only 751 residents by 1920.

Zenith, situated a mile directly south of the Des Moines townsite plat, consisted of scattered homesteads with orchards and small farms growing primarily berries, and raising chickens. A Zenith post office was established in 1906 at the corner of South 240th Street and Marine View Drive South, across the street from the subject site, and operated there until 1932. At the west end of 240th Street was the Zenith dock, built at about the same time.² In 1907, a florist business was established in Zenith by early settler Max Elsner, which by 1910 included greenhouses located at the northeast corner of South 240th Street and Marine View Drive South—the subject site. Elsner was one of the property owners who sold their holdings in the 1920s for the construction of the Masonic Home of Washington. After the sale, he moved his company two blocks north, where it remains today as the Zenith Holland Gardens, the oldest continuously operating business in the area.³

The 1910s and 1920s brought increased transportation links to the Des Moines/Zenith area, including the first ferry to Vashon Island,

¹ Stein, Alan J., “Des Moines – Thumbnail History,” HistoryLink essay 697, January 14, 1999.

² Kennedy, pp. 31, 55, 136.

³ Kennedy, pp. 31,



Zenith in 1907. The white building at far right, near the Zenith pier, was a hotel for weekenders. The white building at center top, offset by the dark trees, was the Zenith post office; the road in front is 240th Street. The house with the pitched roof to the left of the post office was the future site of the Masonic Home, and remained on the property as staff housing until the 1970s. (DMHS)

which began service from Des Moines in 1916.⁴ On land, the Seattle-Tacoma Interurban trolley was built in the vicinity during these years, although the nearest station was located five miles to the east of Des Moines.

The widespread popularity of the automobile during this same period resulted in more paved roads in the area after about 1910, which also made a significant impact on population growth. Paving of the “Brick Highway” (Des Moines Memorial Drive) was completed in 1916. Stage lines began limited service around 1917. Weekend sightseers and drivers escaping larger cities and seeking the countryside discovered the area’s views and beaches, resulting in the growth of small hotels in the waterfront strip south of Des Moines. Some visitors were attracted by the area’s relatively inexpensive land, and some built summer homes, or year-round homes.

By 1930, the Des Moines population was almost 2,000. The completion of Pacific Highway South (State Route 99) in the mid-1930s only increased accessibility. During World War II, defense plants south of Seattle attracted a sizable number of new residents to the area. The trend continued in the postwar period, during general expansion of the region’s suburbs.



Des Moines and Zenith around 1935. Until the 1950s, most of the development in this area was largely confined to a strip of land a few blocks deep, along the waterfront. The Masonic Home at lower right was the most imposing structure in the vicinity. (Washington Historical Society 2004.0.963)

In 1959, as an effort to prevent annexation by the nearby municipality of Kent, the residents of Des Moines voted to incorporate into a city. The status gave them more control over local issues including infrastructure, development, and the increasing impact of SeaTac Airport traffic and noise. As the area continued to grow, adjacent communities were added to Des Moines through a series of annexations in the 1960s and 1970s. Zenith by this time was seen as a neighborhood district of Des Moines, and in 1982 it was annexed into its city limits. Other annexations in the 1980s included the campus of Highline

⁴ Kennedy, p. 29.

College, approximately one half mile to the east of the subject site, which was developed beginning in 1961 as the first community college in King County. The college now accommodates almost 17,000 students.⁵

Today, Des Moines city boundaries extend approximately seven miles from Normandy Park on the north to Federal Way on the south, and one and a half miles from Puget Sound to Highway 99 on the east, with Zenith and the subject site near the geographic center. Federal census data estimates the 2018 Des Moines population as just over 32,000.

Besides the subject property, Des Moines hosts two other large retirement homes: Wesley Homes Retirement Community, and Judson Park, both founded by religious groups. The largest of these, Wesley Homes, was established in the mid-1940s as Wesley Gardens by the Puget Sound District of the United Methodist Church, with the first buildings constructed in 1949.⁶ Additional properties and structures were added every decade to the present. It makes up a large 42-acre campus on the north side of downtown Des Moines, with 52 buildings housing 685 units of various levels of care. Judson Park, directly north of the subject property, is a 9-acre site purchased by the Washington Baptist Church Convention in 1959. The property consists of two buildings, including a large, U-shaped, five-story structure built in 1966 with a 2017 addition, for a total of 166 units.

History of the Masonic Order

The Masonic Home of Washington was established by the Freemasons, a fraternal order with roots in Europe and with a long history in the United States. The Washington State body is led by the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons (also styled as the M. W. Grand Lodge F. & A. M.), State of Washington.

Freemasonry was founded officially in 1717 in London, England, as the “Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.” The Masons are reportedly the oldest fraternity in the western world, with the organization reportedly growing out of medieval stone mason guilds. The organization cites its origins as legendary history associated as far back as the building of King Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem. In the late 18th century, the organization began admitting non-masons as honorary members. Freemasonry in England was open only to men, and was limited to white men of European descent. Freemasonry was introduced to France in 1835.⁷

Freemasonry came to the United States soon after its founding; there were multiple lodges in Pennsylvania as early as 1817.⁸ Masons cite their specific values as a commitment to the common good, and “the commitment between the Brotherhood ... a bond of true friendship ... a safe circle of trustworthy friends,” and commitment to “Ethics, Morality and Integrity.”⁹ In addition, Masonic Lodges have traditionally supported charities for children and youth, education, and outreach to families and the elderly.

Freemasonry often served as a model for other fraternal orders that were created in North America in the 19th century, which borrowed general ideas of rituals, ceremonial garb, rules, organization, values, and purpose. While most fraternal orders had membership limited to men, there were often women’s auxiliaries for members’ wives. Fraternal groups became popular in the United States partly as a social and networking outlet, but they also provided economic security to members by covering the costs of member burials and offering insurance to widows and orphans of deceased members, often at relatively low rates, at a time before most public or private social security programs. Some fraternal orders established homes for their aged members, like the subject building, or hospitals, orphanages, or cemeteries for the benefit of their members. While some fraternal organizations were limited to members of specific religions, others, such as the Grand Army of the Republic or Veterans of Foreign Wars, emerged in the 19th and early 20th centuries to serve similar goals of brotherhood for military veterans of the Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War I. Creation of new fraternal organizations slowed in the 1930s, in part due to economic conditions. However, most organizations’ membership did not significantly decline until the late 20th century.¹⁰

⁵ “Highline History,” Highline College, <https://www.highline.edu/about-us/highline-history/>.

⁶ Kennedy, pp. 193-199.

⁷ Grand Lodge of Washington, “About Freemasons – History.”

⁸ Sources suggest that the model of the public-school system may have derived from early American Freemasonry, and that the American Constitution was influenced by Masons as George Washington was one of the organizations’ most famous members.

⁹ Grand Lodge of Washington, “About Freemasons – Our Values.”

¹⁰ BOLA, p. 11.

Freemasons were one of numerous social fraternal orders with a national profile active in Washington State in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Such groups included the Independent Order of Old Fellows, Woodmen of the World, Knights of Pythias, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and many others.

Freemasonry appeared in the Pacific Northwest during the mid-19th century. Early settlers in Oregon Territory (which at that time included the land that is now Washington) included seven Masonic members who organized their first meeting in 1846 to obtain a charter for a lodge in Oregon City. The result was Multnomah Lodge No. 84, established in 1848, which is the oldest Masonic Lodge on the West Coast. The Steilacoom Lodge No. 8 of the Grand Lodge of Oregon soon followed, along with two additional Lodges in Portland. The first Washington Territory Lodge was chartered in Olympia in 1853, the same year that the Washington Territory was carved out of the Oregon Territory. Another soon followed in Grand Mound, along with a Grand Lodge of Washington Territory, which was established in 1858. Membership then numbered 112 Master Masons out of the territorial population of 9,000. The first Lodge in King County, St. John's No. 9, was established in Seattle in 1860.¹¹

Fraternal groups like the Masons were particularly popular during the period of 1880-1920 when the United States experienced a surge of immigration from Europe, providing a vehicle for social integration.¹² A survey of fraternal orders written in 1907 offers some rare comparative figures regarding Masonic membership versus other groups in the early 20th century. In 1907, there were 4,900 Freemasons in Washington, the third most popular society of its type in the state, after the Odd Fellows with 7,400 members, and the Ancient Order of United Workmen with 6,000 members, and on par with the fourth-largest group, the Knights of Pythias with 4,400 members.¹³

The Masonic order is organized into three “degrees” for members: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. Applicants typically are recommended by a Mason, and must be approved unanimously by the lodge members. Once a member becomes a Master Mason, there are additional degrees offered through the Scottish Rite and/or the York, or American, Rite. The last of these degrees also allows the Mason to join the Order of Knights Templar. There are a number of other fraternal organizations associated with the Freemasons, including the Shriners International.

Several symbols that occur in Freemasonry are associated with architecture or geometry, and these often appear as decorative features on Masonic lodges and buildings. The most common Masonic symbol is the square and compass overlaid with a “G” in the center. “The square and compasses stand for spirit and matter, credibility and integrity. The ‘G’ represents God, and also the word ‘geometry.’” This typically appears on Masonic buildings on or above the door, and often in other locations as well. Other symbols include the trowel; the builder’s level and plumb line; a mallet and chisel; the three Classical architectural orders represented by Ionic, Corinthian, and Doric columns; the beehive, the hourglass, and others.¹⁴ All of these symbols appear on decorative tiles in the entry porch of the Masonic Home of Washington.

Early Homes for the Aged in the Puget Sound Region

In the 1800s, care for the elderly was primarily the responsibility of children and other family members, or religious institutions, rather than the government. In the early 1900s, without a federal assistance program to help pay for care of the elderly or disabled, most states sent their impoverished citizens to “poor farms” or almshouses, with varying levels of quality of care. Persons who were seen as impoverished due to no fault of their own (such as widows and the elderly) were categorized as “worthy poor,” whereas the “unworthy poor” were indigent due to personal vices and low morals. Relief was made as unpleasant as possible in order to “discourage” dependency. They could lose their personal property, the right to vote, and in some cases the

¹¹ Grand Lodge of Washington, “About Freemasons – History.”

¹² Schmidt, p. 120.

¹³ Stevens, chart following p. 114. The states with the largest Masonic membership in 1907 were centered in the more populous East and Midwest—the largest by far was New York, with over 88,000 members. Next in line with 40,000-49,000 members were Illinois and Pennsylvania; then Ohio, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Missouri with 30,000-39,000 members. Oregon’s membership numbered 4,600, comparable to Washington’s at the time. In all, there were over 735,000 Masons in the United States in 1907.

¹⁴ Morris, pp. 229-249.

poor were sent to mental institutions. At poor farms, those receiving relief were often required to work in order to receive care.

The nation's earliest federal social security pensions developed during and after the Civil War, when there were suddenly hundreds of thousands of widows, orphans, and disabled veterans. In 1894, military pensions accounted for 37% of the entire federal budget. At the same time, some immigrant communities established organizations that helped newcomers and the aged with private funding in lieu of using public services. Fraternal organizations and societies also typically offered relief to members, usually in the form of small payments and assistance as needed. A widespread federal social security program would not appear until 1935.¹⁵

In 1854, Washington's territorial legislature assigned to the counties the care of all indigent people whose relatives could not support them.¹⁶ In 1869, King County acquired 160 acres in Georgetown, south of Seattle, to establish a poor home and convalescent hospital on the site. In 1894, it constructed a modern facility known as the King County Almshouse, with a 125 bed capacity. It was expanded in 1908 to accommodate 225 beds. In 1931, King County opened Harborview Hospital on First Hill in Seattle, to supplement the Georgetown facility.¹⁷

Seattle, as an early large city in the area, was a center for the development of home for the aged and indigent; even so, there were few options available. In 1878, the Sisters of Providence of the Catholic Church established a hospital at Fifth Avenue and Madison Street in downtown Seattle to care for the poor.¹⁸ In 1924, the Sisters built Mount St. Vincent's Home for the Aged on the top of West Seattle's High Point hill. The large Tudor Revival structure was designed by prominent Seattle architect John Graham Sr., and surrounded by landscaped grounds. The building was demolished and replaced with a new facility in the 1960s.

In 1907, philanthropists associated with the Presbyterian Church established the Kenney Presbyterian Home in West Seattle, building a Colonial Revival structure designed by architect David Myers which opened for residents by 1909. The facility underwent expansions in the 1960s and continues to operate at present.



King County Poor Farm in Georgetown around 1907 (left) and the Pierce County Poor Farm near Sumner (right). (MOHAI, Washington Historical Society)

Outside of Seattle and King County, there were fewer facilities. Pierce County's poor farm operated on rural land between the towns of Sumner and Orting, and Snohomish County's poor farm was located on acreage that is now the fairgrounds in Monroe. For military veterans, Washington State established the Washington Soldier's Home in 1891 on 181 acres near Orting, and the Washington Veterans Home in 1910 on 31 acres in Port Orchard.

Offering a more elevated level of care, the Franke Tobey Jones Home in Tacoma was opened in 1925 as a home for the aged and infirm to "live in comfort and dignity, whatever their means." It was developed in part

¹⁵ Social Security Administration, www.ssa.gov/history, "Historical Background and Development of Social Security."

¹⁶ Dorpat, p. 358.

¹⁷ HistoryLink.org, "King County Hospital begins operation in Georgetown in May 1877", essay 2982.

¹⁸ HistoryLink.org, "King County Hospital begins operation in Georgetown in May 1877", essay 2982.

by PEO, an international women’s charitable sorority, and by Mrs. Franke Tobey Jones, a Tacoma philanthropist and lumber mill heiress who had experienced adversity earlier in her life.¹⁹ The building was designed by the Tacoma architecture firm Heath, Gove & Bell, and initially could accommodate 65 residents.



(Top) Kenney Presbyterian Home in West Seattle. (1907)

(Middle) Sisters of Providence Mount St. Vincent's Home in West Seattle (1924). (Providence Archives)

(Bottom) Franke Tobey Jones Home in Tacoma (1924). (Tacoma Public Library)



¹⁹ “About us,” Franke Tobey Jones Home, <https://www.franketobeyjones.com/about-us/our-story/history>.

Masonic Homes

Freemasons have a long tradition of philanthropy; in the United States, lodges established charity funds in the early 1700s as part of member dues, primarily to assist the lodge's own members. However, because state grand lodges dominate the organizational structure of American Freemasonry, institutional Masonic philanthropies were generally focused within a state, rather than organized at a national scale.

The need for assistance to the membership particularly intensified after the Civil War. The Grand Lodge of Kentucky became the first Masonic group in the nation to establish a statewide charity, the Masonic Widows and Orphans Home and Infirmary, in 1867. They were followed by a similar institution established by the North Carolina Grand Lodge in 1872.²⁰ By the turn of the 20th century, Masonic Grand Lodges in some states had established orphanages, homes for the aged, hospitals, and even colleges, although some institutions did not last more than a few decades.

Such institutions were typically large buildings with centralized facilities, often in relatively rural locations or at the edge of established towns where land was inexpensive. The facilities were intended to meet the needs of the entire Grand Lodge, so these institutions were typically the only such institution in the state. Most were in Eastern and Midwestern states, where the greatest density of membership was located.

An example is the Masonic Home of New York, established by the New York Grand Lodge in 1893 in Utica, New York, because of that city's central location in the state. The facility included a 200-acre working farm that supplied all food stuffs for those who lived on campus, as well as products that could be sold to generate additional revenue. Within 30 years, it had expanded to include a building for 360 adults, a hospital, and



Masonic Home of Ohio (1895)

several dormitories for children. Additional revenue for the Home came from a large Masonic property in the heart of Manhattan with office space leased to tenants, built specifically to support the Home. The Utica facility remains in operation today.²¹

Another example is the Ohio Masonic Home in Springfield, Ohio, which was completed in 1895 on 250 acres as a home for the elderly and also as a children's home. The massive masonry structure featured long residential wings, common areas, and smaller support buildings on the campus. Over time, the complex was enlarged with additional buildings, and continues operating today.²²

In the West, only the Masonic Grand Lodges of California, Montana, Washington, and Oregon established homes to serve their state's aging membership. None were established in Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, or Nevada. These relied on direct payments to members, or other systems not requiring built facilities.

California's first Masonic Home was built in 1898 in Union City overlooking San Francisco Bay, in order to care for widows and orphans. Because the state is unusually large, a second facility opened in Covina, 25 miles east of Los Angeles, to serve the southern part of the state. The Union City Home is located on 267 acres, and currently serves 300 residents.

The Montana Masonic Home was established on 500 acres of farmland near Helena, Montana, in 1907, after six years of fund raising and site selection. The facility operates at present, housing 50 residents.²³

The Masonic Home of Washington was established in Puyallup in 1912, and moved to the subject building in Zenith in 1927.

²⁰ Morris, pp. 140-144.

²¹ Moore, p. 125.

²² Springfield, Ohio, is unusual for being the site of three homes for the aged, all established in the late 19th century by fraternal orders—the Ohio Odd Fellows Home, the Ohio Knights of Pythias Home for the Aged, and the Masonic Home of Ohio.

²³ "Our History," Masonic Home of Montana, <https://mhmt.org/history.html>.

The Oregon facility was established in 1922 in Forest Grove, a small farming town 25 miles west of Portland, after years of funding efforts. Known as the Masonic and Eastern Star Home, it was co-named for the Order of the Eastern Star, a sub-group of Freemasonry. The rest home operated until 1999, when the last residents were transferred to a new building. The old home was sold and now operates as McMenemy's Grand Lodge Hotel.²⁴



Besides the Washington Masonic Home, there were only three other Masonic Homes built in the West (not including Texas)--in Oregon, California, and Montana.

(Top) Two images of the Oregon Masonic and Eastern Star Home in Forest Grove, around 1930 and in 2018. It was built in 1922, and was sold around 1999 to the McMenemy's company of Portland, Oregon, which operates it as the Grand Lodge Hotel.

(Left) Masonic Home of California in Union City, established in 1898. Buildings on the campus date from multiple decades.



(Bottom) The Montana Masonic Home was established near Helena in 1907, and remains in operation today.

²⁴ "Masonic Aid History," Oregon Freemasons, <https://www.masonic-oregon.com/masonicaid/masonicaid-history>. McMenemy's also converted the former c.1911 Multnomah County Poor Farm in Troutdale, Oregon to a hotel, now known as Edgefield.

Other Fraternal Homes in Washington State

Two other fraternal orders appear to have established an institutional home in Washington State at the scale of the Masonic Home of Washington—the Knights of Pythias, and the International Order of Odd Fellows. Both of these groups, like the Freemasons, refer to their state executive body as the “Grand Lodge.”

The Order of the Knights of Pythias, founded in 1864 in Washington D.C., had a large membership in the Pacific Northwest in the early 1900s. In 1923, the two Grand Lodges of the Oregon and Washington Knights of Pythias together established the Pythian Home in Vancouver, Washington, with the intent that it serve both states’ elderly and indigent members. Later, a building was added to care for members’ orphaned children, which operated until the 1960s.²⁵ The structure has been significantly altered over time. After an expansion in the 1980s, the Home continues to operate as a active retirement housing complex for the greater Vancouver/Portland metropolitan area.

The Odd Fellows formed in England in the early 1700s, and first appear in the United States in the early 1800s. The fraternity was popular in Oregon and Washington in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1897, the Washington Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows established a home on about 10 acres in Walla Walla for widows, orphans, and elderly members of the state. The current building dates to 1923, and provides care today for 300 residents.²⁶



(Top) The Pythian Home in Vancouver, Washington, opened in 1923 to serve Knights of Pythias members in both Oregon and Washington. Although it has been expanded and remains in operation today, the original building shown here has been significantly altered with additions.



(Bottom) The Odd Fellows Home in Walla Walla, Washington, built in 1923.

²⁵ “History,” Knights of Pythias Retirement Center, www.koprc.com.

²⁶ Ponti, Karlene, June 26, 2017.

The Original Masonic Home in Puyallup

Towards the end of the 19th century, the Freemasons of Washington Territory sought to establish care for their members who had become destitute or indigent in old age, or had left resourceless widows or orphans after their death. In the 1880s, the Grand Lodge of Washington (the organization's statewide executive body) instituted an increase in member's dues towards a fund to establish a home for aged members. After almost thirty years, sufficient resources had accumulated and the Grand Lodge was able to establish the Masonic Home of Washington in Puyallup in 1912.²⁷

This facility was located in Puyallup's South Hill neighborhood, on 26 acres at 14th Avenue SE and 5th Street SE. The site was donated by a member lodge and included two houses and two barns, and agricultural fields at the base of the hill. In 1913, an additional building was erected, designed by the Tacoma architecture firm Heath & Gove. The facility housed children, women, and elderly members, and gained some self-sufficiency from its own dairy, livestock, and farm produce grown on site. The Home also received some income from the sale of chickens and eggs.²⁸ In 1913, there were nine residents, but by 1923, the home had met its capacity with 52 residents and the need was clear for a larger facility. This led to the development of the subject building. After the subject building was completed in 1927, all residents were moved from Puyallup into the new building.

The Puyallup property remained unoccupied from 1927 until 1938, when it was sold to area Lutherans to be used as the Lutheran Home for the Aged.²⁹ Since 1952, the site has operated as the Good Samaritan Hospital and has been expanded with additional buildings. Today, the 1913 buildings remain intact, but are surrounded by more recent construction.³⁰



*The first Washington Masonic Home, located in Puyallup, was established in 1912.
(Washington Masonic Archives)*

²⁷ Morris, p. 142; Nance, unpaginated.

²⁸ Price, pp. 148-149; Nance, unpaginated.

²⁹ Price, p. 150.

³⁰ The 1913 building's cornerstone was removed in 1971 and was installed the following year in the subject building, in a low stone wall in the center of the main floor ramp to the dining room. Around 2007, the cornerstone was removed from that ramp wall and is now held at the Washington Masonic Charities archives in University Place, Washington.

The Development of the Masonic Home in Zenith/Des Moines

In 1924, the Grand Lodge of Washington appointed a committee to select a location for an expanded Masonic Home facility, to be located between Tacoma and Seattle, where many of the order's membership resided. In May 1924, the subject site in the hamlet of Zenith was selected for its expansive Puget Sound views and purchased for almost \$79,000 from a half-dozen landowners.³¹ The initial property consisted of 85 acres. An appropriation of \$200,000 was approved for site improvements.³²



Cornerstone ceremonies in 1926. (Washington Masonic Archives)

Architects Frederick Heath and George Gove, who had designed the earlier Puyallup Masonic Home, were again commissioned to design the main building in late 1924 or early 1925 (their firm by this time called Heath, Gove & Bell). Advanced schematic designs for the building were completed by February 1925. Historic photographs record a large crowd attending the groundbreaking on August 8, 1925 to prepare the site for construction. The architect's final drawings were dated December 1925. Initial site work—presumably designed by Heath, Gove & Bell—included the construction of three water well pumphouses and a water tower, all completed in 1926, according to tax records.

An elaborate Masonic ceremony was held for the laying of the cornerstone of the main building on May 1, 1926. The general contractor was H. Hoard & Company, of Seattle. The building dedication was held on June 21, 1927, with a reported attendance of 1,800 people. On July 12, 1927, the subject building was opened and the 58 residents of the old Puyallup home were moved to their new quarters.

According to a 1927 newspaper article covering the opening ceremonies, the concrete and steel building featured a stucco exterior finish, trimmed with brick, terra cotta, and Wilkeson sandstone, and featured a red clay tile roof. The interior featured a main floor reception hall, sitting rooms, library, social hall, an auditorium with stage (also called the chapel), and several living rooms. On the second floor were dining rooms, the women's infirmary, and suites of residential rooms. The men's hospital and residential rooms were on the third floor. The fourth and fifth floors were residential rooms. In the basement were billiard and recreation rooms for men and women. The building was reportedly designed to accommodate 254 residents, although other sources cite a maximum of 192 residents.³³



Panoramic photo of the building in June 1928, one year after construction was completed. (Washington Masonic Archives)

³¹ Kennedy, p. 137.

³² Nance, unpaginated; Werner, unpaginated; Kennedy, pp. 195-197.

³³ Seattle Times, April 11, 1926; June 17, 1927.

To be admitted to the Home, applicants were reviewed for eligibility. The person had to be member of a Masonic lodge (or wife or widow of a member) in good standing for five continuous years; and had to be without any other means of support. The applicant had to turn over all of their remaining property to the Home. In return, the resident received a private room and daily meals for the rest of their lives, a small stipend for purchases, medical attention, and a decent burial.³⁴

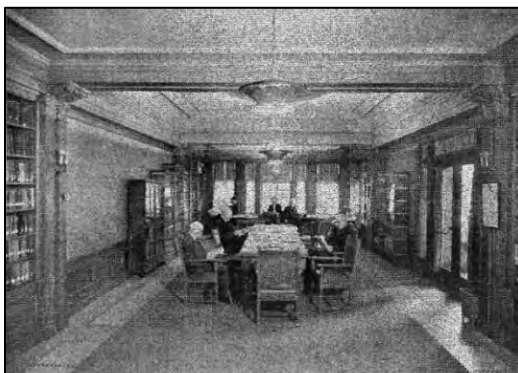
By 1930, residents numbered 75 men and 56 women for a total of 131 people. By 1933, the numbers had increased to 94 men and 84 women for a total of 178, likely reflecting the economic impacts of the Great Depression. By the mid-1940s, people were being turned away and the Board of Trustees began to consider removing the second floor infirmary into a new building in order to expand the residential capacity of the Home. In 1958, the total number of residents had dropped to 159, but with a much higher ratio of women to men, 117 to 42.³⁵

In the 1960s, the Board of Trustees recognized the need for separate facilities for those residents requiring nursing home care. The infirmary was finally moved from the second floor into a separate building, which was attached in a wing extending southeast from the rear of the Home, in 1966. This wing, designed by Naramore Bain Brady & Johanson (NBBJ), cost \$400,000 and added approximately 5,800 square feet on ground floor and 13,300 square feet on first floor. It contained 12 two-bedroom units, 14 one-bedroom units, 3 four-bed wards, two day rooms, two nurse's stations, and examination/treatment rooms. The ground floor was initially left unfinished but was designed to house either 23 additional infirmary beds, or on-site staff members.³⁶

Also in 1966, a separate residence for the Superintendent and Matron was constructed on site (these are no longer extant). In 1969, the entire kitchen in the Home's rear wing was remodeled to meet the state health department requirements.



(Above) A resident receives a visitor in her room in 1950, in the women's wing. To be eligible to live at the Home, the applicant had to have no other means of support, and had to turn over all remaining property other than a few personal items upon acceptance. In return, they received a room and meals for the rest of their lives, medical attention, a small stipend for spending, and a decent burial.



(Left) Use of the Library around 1940. Although residents' rooms were small, they had full use of the building and grounds, could have visitors, and could participate in activities sponsored by the Home.

(Washington Masonic Archives)

³⁴ "Eligibility to the home," "The Washington Masonic Home and Its Endowment," p. 10.

³⁵ Werner, unpaginated.

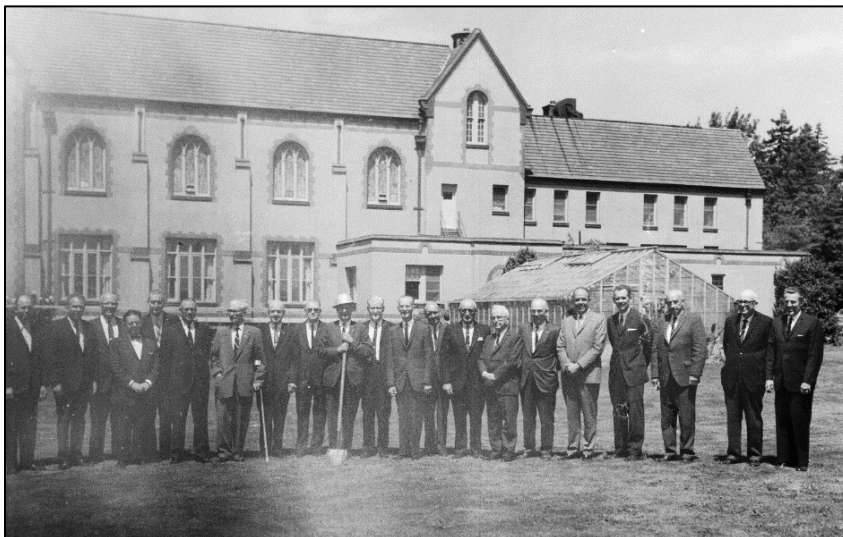
³⁶ Seattle Times, September 11, 1966.

By the mid-20th century, there were additional changes and modifications to the Main Building. In 1972, the fire doors, alarm systems, and sprinkler heads throughout the Home were updated. In 1973, the original radiator steam heating system was found to have corroded in some parts of the Home, and deteriorated beyond repair. The entire system was replaced at a cost of \$350,000. In order to meet this expense, 40 acres at the eastern end of the Home's property were sold off, resulting in the current parcel.³⁷

In 1982, the Masonic Home property and the town of Zenith were incorporated into the city of Des Moines, Washington.

In 1986, the name of the Main Building's Infirmary Wing was changed to Health Care Center to more accurately reflect its use as a skilled nursing facility with 24-hour care. In 1987, an addition to the Health Care Center was constructed which added 25 beds, a solarium, a multi-purpose room, a physical therapy room, and a spa pool room. In 1993, the Masonic Home was renamed the Masonic Retirement Center of Washington. In 1994, there were 38 men and 98 women residents, ranging in age from 66 to 98.³⁸

Around 2007, use of the property as a retirement home was decommissioned, and from about 2007 to 2012 the building functioned as a nonprofit event center called Landmark on the Sound. Around 2013, the property was put on the market for sale, and sold in 2019 to the current owner.



(Above) Typical interior scenes circa 1960. (Seattle Times, January 31, 1960)

(Left) Groundbreaking for construction of the Infirmary Wing in 1966. (Washington Masonic Archives)

³⁷ Kennedy, p. 138.

³⁸ Werner, unpaginated.

The Original Architect: Heath, Gove & Bell

The original building and site were designed by Heath, Gove & Bell, a significant and prolific firm based in Tacoma, Washington. The firm was active from the mid-1910s through the mid-1950s, designing a wide range of building types and employing a number of architectural styles. The firm was a partnership of Frederick Henry Heath (1861-1953), George Gove (1869-1956), and Herbert A. Bell (1884-1951). Frederick Heath has been described as “one of the West’s most prominent architects.”³⁹ George Gove was the lead architect on the Washington Masonic Home project, although the firm likely worked collaboratively.⁴⁰



Frederick Heath

Heath was born in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1861, and was a self-taught architect. He moved to Minneapolis around 1883, where he worked ten years for Warren H. Hayes, a noted local architect. In 1893, Heath moved to Tacoma, and had established his architectural office by 1896, but little is known of these early years.

Between 1901 and 1903, he was in partnerships with A. Walter Spaulding and A. J. Russell. Around this time, Heath began to serve as the official school architect for the City of Tacoma, an arrangement which lasted until 1920, and for which he designed 18 schools.⁴¹

From 1903 to 1908, and from 1910 to 1912, Heath worked as a sole practitioner. Between 1908 and 1910, he formed a partnership with Luther Twichell, a friend and former colleague in Minneapolis who had moved west to join Heath in his practice.

Projects during these early years of 1901 to 1912 include the following extant buildings:

- Tacoma (Stadium) High School and Stadium Bowl, Tacoma (1906 and 1910); the high school was a remodel using the shell of an unfinished c.1891 hotel which had been ruined by fire.
- Sandberg Building, Tacoma (1907-08); the 10-story building was one of the very earliest uses of a reinforced concrete structure on the West Coast, when the construction techniques were still experimental.
- Knights of Pythias Temple, Tacoma (1907).
- First Church of Christ, Scientist, Tacoma (1908-11).
- National Realty Building/Puget Sound National Bank/Key Bank Center, Tacoma (1909-11); at 14 stories, it was reportedly the tallest building in the state when completed, and only surpassed by the construction of Seattle’s Smith Tower in 1914.
- Yakima Masonic Temple (1911, altered); which features a highly ornate meeting room on the top floor.



*Knights of Pythias Temple, Tacoma
(Frederick Heath, 1907)*

In 1912, Heath entered a partnership with architect George Gove. Gove, a native of Rochester, Minnesota, had arrived in Tacoma in 1908, where he operated as a sole practitioner for four years. By 1914, Heath & Gove added a partner, Herbert A. Bell. Bell was from Tacoma and well known to Heath, having worked as a draftsman for him since about 1906. The firm name was formally changed to Heath, Gove & Bell in 1919.

In total, the firm designed over 600 projects, including residential and commercial structures, religious buildings, hospitals, public buildings, and park buildings. (Heath was a member of Tacoma’s Metropolitan Park Board from 1910 to 1918). Several of these have been listed on the national, state, and local historic registers.

³⁹ Sullivan and Sivinski, 1999.

⁴⁰ Erickson, Don, “George Gove,” Historic Tacoma. The ornate, commemorative 1927 bronze plaque from the entry vestibule, now held at the Washington Masonic Archives, states the architect was “George Gove, of Heath, Gove & Bell.”

⁴¹ Biographical information in this section from Houser, “Frederick H. Heath,” Undated.

A sample of the firm's projects after 1912 include:

- Masonic Home of Washington, Puyallup, Washington (1912)
- Paradise Inn, Mount Rainier National Park, Ashford, Washington (1915-17)
- Northern State Hospital, Sedro-Wooley (1915-1930); the firm designed twenty-six buildings and three structures within an existing campus, including residential wards, the assembly hall, commissary, and other masonry buildings in the Spanish Colonial Revival style; as well as vernacular style wood farm buildings in an established agricultural landscape designed by the Olmsted Brothers.
- Rhodesleigh, Lakewood, Washington (1922); Tudor Revival style home of department store owner Henry A. Rhodes.
- First Baptist Church, Tacoma (1923-25)
- Tacoma General Hospital (1923)
- Auburn Masonic Temple, Auburn, Washington (1924)
- Franke Tobey Jones Home, Tacoma (1925)
- A. V. Love Dry Goods Building, Seattle (1925, demolished)
- Masonic Home of Washington, Zenith, Washington (1926-27)
- Commissary at the State Soldier's Home, Orting, Washington (1927)
- Several buildings at Western State Hospital, Steilacoom, Washington (1930s-40s, often with Mock & Morrison)
- Sitka Pioneer's Home, Sitka, Alaska (1934)
- Thomson Hall and Communications Hall, University of Washington, Seattle (1948 and 1951)

Notably, Heath, Gove & Bell designed several buildings for fraternal orders over the years (as listed above), throughout the region. Frederick Heath active in two fraternal orders, the Knights of Pythias and the Freemasons. George Gove was a member of the Tacoma Masonic Lodge. These connections presumably were a source of some of their commissions, and possibly for the subject building.

In 1951, the firm's youngest partner, Herbert Bell, died at age 67. The most senior partner, Frederick Heath, remained active in the firm's affairs until shortly before his death at age 92 in 1953. George Gove continued operating the office until his death in 1956, at age 87.



Yakima Masonic Lodge (Heath & Gove, 1911) and Fern Hill Masonic Lodge in Tacoma (Heath, Gove & Bell, 1922). (Steven Pavlov/Wikimedia, Tacoma Public Library)



Other work by Heath, Gove & Bell:

(Top) Sandberg Building (1906-07), and Central School (1912), both in Tacoma;

(Middle) Paradise Inn (1915-1917) at Mt. Rainier; and First Evangelical Lutheran Church (1926) in Tacoma;

(Bottom) Medical Arts Building (1930), Tacoma; and one of the firm's last works, Thomson Hall, University of Washington, Seattle (1948).

(All images from Tacoma Public Library)

Similar projects by Heath, Gove & Bell

Two Heath, Gove & Bell projects in particular have some features which are similar to the former Masonic Home in Des Moines—the Franke Tobey Jones Home and the Sitka Pioneer's Home.



Franke Tobey Jones Home, Tacoma (Heath, Gove & Bell, 1924-25). (Tacoma Public Library)

The Franke Tobey Jones Home was completed and opened in 1925 as a rest home in Tacoma, developed in part by PEO, an international women's charitable sorority, and Tacoma philanthropists. The facility was designed as a two and a half story English Tudor mansion that could accommodate 65 residents. The original building follows a T-shaped plan, with residential wings opening to a lawn and circular drive, and a support wing at the rear. The Jones Home was designed with ramps, rather than stairs, connecting the floors for the convenience of its residents.⁴² Because both the T-plan and use of ramps are found in the Masonic Home, which was designed two years later, the Jones Home project may have provided some precedent.



Sitka Pioneer's Home, Sitka, Alaska (Heath, Gove & Bell, 1934).

The Sitka Pioneer's Home was completed on its hilltop site in 1934. In form and detail, it closely resembles the subject building which was constructed seven years earlier. The three-story stucco-clad reinforced concrete building was built to replace a collection of wood-frame buildings that had served as the Pioneer Home since its establishment by the Territory of Alaska in 1913. The original building design followed a wide C-shaped plan with two residential wings overlooking a landscaped lawn and Sitka's harbor. A rear wing was added later, in 1956.

⁴² "About us," Franke Tobey Jones Home, <https://www.franketobeyjones.com/about-us/our-story/history>.

The Original Landscape Architect, L. Glenn Hall

Original landscape plans indicate that L. Glenn Hall was the designer of the grounds around the Masonic Home. A sheet dated March 1927 for the design of the grounds immediately around the main Home lists the designers as L. Glenn Hall and J. L. Bossemeyer, Associate, in the title block.⁴³ A second sheet dated January 1928 for the design of the front grounds, pool, and circular drive list only Hall as landscape architect in the title block, with Heath, Gove & Bell as the architects.

L. Glenn Hall (1893-1954) was a prominent West Coast landscape architect and planner who was most associated with his work in California in the 1930s and 1940s. He was born in Salisbury, North Carolina, and studied architecture at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1916-17, but did not graduate. He was employed as a civil engineer and estimator until 1921, when he attended Harvard University to study landscape architecture and the city planning. While there, he worked for the City Planning Board of Boston and in the office of prominent landscape architect and planner John Nolen. In 1924 he terminated his formal schooling and was employed full time by the City Planning Board of Boston, where he held the title of Assistant Director of Zoning.

In 1925 he moved to Seattle, where he was employed as the landscape architect and park engineer for the Seattle Parks Department from April 1925 to January 1928, in charge of design and construction. Hall's work on the Masonic Home would have been an early work by the designer, and towards the end of his stay in the Seattle area.

In 1928, Hall left Seattle to accept a position as the Landscape Architect for the city of Los Angeles, and as the Chief of the Division of Forestry.⁴⁴ In the early and mid-1930s he worked for the U.S. Forest Service in San Francisco as Landscape Engineer, in charge of administrative site planning and recreation planning for the California region.

In 1938 he worked for three years in private practice. Work included Holly Park in San Francisco, a public housing project. In 1941 Hall moved to Washington DC for two years to work with the New Deal-era Federal Works Agency Public Buildings Administration, then returned to California. Between 1943 and his death in 1953, he served as San Francisco's Assistant Director of Planning, then Planning Director for the City of Sacramento, and later as the Planning Engineer for the City of Oakland.

Hall's career highlights included the development and establishment of street-tree programs for three major cities—Seattle, Los Angeles, and San Francisco—which the American Society of Landscape Architects' journal described as "a contribution so great it cannot be measured."⁴⁵ Other significant work included the establishment of new parks of Los Angeles; community centers in San Francisco; and programs for downtown parking, redevelopment, regional parks, airports, and highways for the City and County of Sacramento. Glenn Hall was active in the American Society of Landscape Architects, the League of California Cities, American Institute of Planners, and the American Society of Planning Officials.

⁴³ James L. Bossemeyer, Hall's associate listed on the March 1927 drawing, worked with Hall in 1927 at the Seattle Parks Board as a horticulturalist, according to Seattle city directories. By late 1929 he was serving as the landscape architect for the Seattle Parks Board after Hall departed, and by 1932 he had been appointed the head superintendent of the Tacoma Parks Board. By the late 1930s he had moved to the San Francisco area where he served as the head of the regional office of the National Park Service's United States Travel Bureau, and later as its national director during the 1940s.

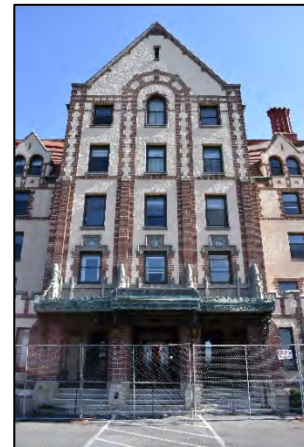
⁴⁴ Seattle Times, April 8, 1925; January 9, 1928; American Society of Landscape Architects, "A Biographical Minute: L. Glenn Hall," *Landscape Architecture* (1954), Vol. 44-45, p. 210.

⁴⁵ American Society of Landscape Architects, "A Biographical Minute: L. Glenn Hall," *Landscape Architecture* (1954), Vol. 44-45, p. 210.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Masonic Home Main Building

(1926-27, Heath, Gove & Bell)



The building in 1937 (PSRA); and in 2019.

The Main Building is a reinforced concrete structure consisting of four and a half stories over a full basement, following a symmetrical T-shaped plan with the center section and two north and south angled residential wings all facing the Puget Sound view over a great lawn and open space. The central wing extends eastward at the rear. Interior partition walls are plastered concrete and hollow tile. The building's architectural style is Chateausque, with an exuberant and eclectic mix of architectural details derived from Late Romanesque Revival, Mediterranean Revival, Collegiate Gothic, and Tudor Revival precedents.

The exterior finish is textured stucco trimmed with red brick and gray terra cotta. The truncated hip roof is clad in flat red clay tiles at sloped locations and built-up membrane at flat locations. The roof features both copper clad dormers and red clay tile clad gable-end dormers. Original wood windows visible in historic photos were replaced with bronzed aluminum which do not match the original pane configuration.

The building's front façade features a projecting gable-end entry block with a recessed porch covered by an ornate bracketed copper marquee. Colored, glazed terra cotta tiles embedded in the brick porch columns contain Masonic symbols and references.

Inside, the main floor lobby leads to wide corridors, a double-height sitting room with overlooking balconies, a room originally used as a library, and a dining room. A large commercial kitchen and loading dock are at the rear. Many of the common areas feature exposed beam ceilings, decorative column capitals, built-in bookshelves or cabinetry, fireplace mantels, special wall finishes, and stained glass windows or skylights. Decorative wrought iron railings are visible at interior common spaces, as well as on the exterior of the building. Light fixtures throughout the building appear to be original, or period replacements. An unusual original design feature is a long, switchback ramp system providing access to all upper floors without use of a stair.

The large chapel/auditorium, with proscenium arch, stage, and fly space is at the second floor of the rear wing, over the dining room. The floor is level, rather than banked, and there is a balcony at the rear. The room is wrapped by a raised dais for perimeter seating, for use in Masonic ceremonies. The room is lit by round-arched stained glass windows and ornate period light fixtures. Behind the stage, there is a double loaded corridor with sleeping rooms and a rear stair, labeled as a dormitory.

The north and south wings of the building are organized as five floors of double-loaded corridors, sleeping rooms interspersed with common bath/shower rooms, and common sitting areas located where the wings meet the central mass of the building. Corridors retain original trim and doors. Half-octagonal solariums or sun rooms are located at the wing ends, which feature built-in cabinetry. A large projecting bay on the east or

rear elevation of each wing holds common restrooms, which feature original black-veined white marble stall dividers. Original sleeping rooms were furnished with a sink, closet, and shelves, and some with a private restroom.

Throughout the building's main and upper levels are high-quality, original terrazzo floors which vary in color and pattern by location, forming a unifying design element.

At the basement level are workrooms, storerooms, a vault, and some common rooms arranged along a double-loaded corridor. The concrete beam structure is visible overhead where contemporary drop ceilings have not been installed. The basement floor is polished and scored concrete.

In 1966 and 1987, two wings were added to the Main Building. These are known as the Infirmary Wing (designed by NBBJ, 1965-66) and the Infirmary Wing Addition (designed by Harold E. Dalke & Associates, 1987)

In 1966, a low, V-shaped addition was constructed on the southeast side of the Masonic Home to house the Infirmary, which from 1927 to 1965 had been located on the second floor of the main building's south wing.



Site plan of the 1966 and 1987 additions (left) and aerial view in 2019 (right).

The new Infirmary Wing added approximately 5,800 square feet on ground floor and 13,300 on first floor, and included 12 two-bedroom units, 14 one-bedroom units, three four-bed wards, two day rooms, two nurse's stations, and examination/ treatment rooms. The new wing created a courtyard with the Masonic Home main building; the intervening space was landscaped and ringed with concrete walks, and it surrounded a greenhouse which had existed there since 1937.



View from southwest yard: 1966 Infirmary Wing on left, 1987 addition on right.

In 1987, two additional arms were added to the Infirmary Wing (then called the Health Care Facility), extending southwest and east from the central joint of the 1966 building's "V" plan. This addition also added a multipurpose room, and a walled outdoor exercise area extending to the southeast towards the existing Octagonal Pumphouse. A portion of the building included a large physical therapy room and therapy pool.

The 1966 and 1987 additions have a somewhat similar appearance, since they are both wood frame construction with stucco or marblecrete cladding, and low-slope hip roofs. Both have a

regular window pattern reflecting the interior arrangement of repeating wards along a double-loaded corridor. The 1966 V-shaped addition is two stories at the northwest arm and one story at the north arm; the two-story portion retains original aluminum tripartite windows at the upper story, while . The 1987 addition is one story, and features an exterior walkway with railing on the west side.

The 1966 addition was designed by Seattle architects Naramore, Brady, Bain & Johanson (NBBJ), with drawings stamped by Perry Johanson as the lead. The structural engineer was the Seattle firm Worthington, Skilling, Helle & Jackson; mechanical engineer was Miskimen & Dickson. The contractor was Korsmo Brothers of Tacoma. The 1987 addition was designed by Harold E. Dalke AIA and Associates of Shelton, Washington. In 1995, the Infirmary Wing/Health Care Facility (by then also called the Assisted Living Unit)

underwent an internal remodel designed by John Graham Associates/DLR Group of Seattle. The Infirmary Wing is currently unused and vacant.

Integrity

The Masonic Home Main Building remains highly intact, both on the exterior and interior. The building retains a high level of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Both the 1966 and 1987 wing additions are largely intact, although suffering from minor maintenance issues.

The Main Building (including the infirmary additions) has already been determined eligible to potentially be added to the National Register of Historic Places by the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer, in 2014, after it was reviewed in 2013 as part of a wireless antenna installation on the property's water tower.

Site and Landscape Features

(L. Glenn Hall, and J. L. Bossemeyer, 1927-28)



Eastward aerial view of the Masonic home in 1968 (left), and westward view from the Home in 2002.

The original landscape design and site design features surrounding the original building date to the same period and serve to enhance the Main Building. The primary landscape designer was L. Glenn Hall, as indicated by the original drawings. Hall's drawings specify the location of planting beds, lawns, and trees for the main yard and oval drive in front of the home, as well as for the yards on the north and south sides of the rear wing, and foundation plantings around the building itself. The 1927-28 drawings also include extensive planting lists specifying species, varieties, and quantities of each plant. Historic photos show that only the oval and foundation plantings were installed by the mid-1930s.

The main remaining designed landscape is the front lawn and oval drive between the Main Building and Marine View Drive South. These elements provide an intermediary space between the building and the spectacular view of Puget Sound. Character-defining features include the oval paved drive, lawns within and flanking the oval drive, central oval pool (which originally featured a fountain), brick retaining walls with niches for benches, paved paths, brick-edged concrete steps, planting beds, flagpole base, freestanding masonry sign, and masonry wall and gates along Marine View Drive South. Historic photos suggest that the semi-circular clipped hedge along the east edge of the oval drive may be the original planting.

While most of the original plants established in the 1920s have been removed, some remain. Particularly significant are the six large, mature cedars (identified in Masonic Home material as Cedars of Lebanon, but identified on the original landscape plan as Atlas cedars) planted in groups of three at the ends of the Main Building. These trees are dramatic forms that complement the building mass, and are well-suited to the regional climate. The trees may have been selected as a reference to the Holy Land, a location important to the Freemasons, and as a symbol of long life, thus suitable for a retirement home.

Historically, there had been houses for staff and other structures along the south property line extending eastward from the corner of Marine View Drive South. The buildings were connected with a narrow paved walk, and one of these houses pre-dated the construction of the Masonic Home. However, all of these buildings were removed by the 1980s. Near them, south of the Main Building, were the Gabled Pumphouse and the Octagonal Pumphouse, of which only the latter remains. These well pumphouses were freestanding in the landscape, and for that reason were more architecturally detailed, in order to mask their utilitarian purpose.

Only the western portion of the site, in the vicinity of the Main Building, was developed with lawns, trees, and formal planting, creating a campus-like overall setting, experience, and character. The eastern portion of the site was left wooded, and remains so at present. Historically, there was at least one house for staff located in the woods, near the water tower, but it was removed by the 1980s. There is presently one house constructed in 2004 at the south end of the woods near S 240th Street, which was last used as a sales office and is not historically significant.

There is at least one paved path through the part of the woods east of the Infirmary Wing, and the Masonic Home residents used the area for shady walks and informal recreation. An outdoor kitchen structure which dates to the 1930s-1940s remains in the glade in this area.

Outdoor service landscapes and support areas are located at the rear of the main building. A service road off of Marine View Drive S is located along the property line to the north of the Main Building, providing access to the loading dock, garage building, and rear parking lots.

Integrity

Historical photos provide indications about the changes to the site landscaping over time. These include several major changes. A prominent landscape feature was a row of dozens of tall, narrow Lombardy poplars at the south property line along S. 240th Street, but these were cut down around 1990. The construction of the Infirmary Wing severely impacted the integrity of the open space southeast of the main building, and the open area around the Octagonal Pumphouse. Construction of the house/sales office in 2004 further impacted the integrity of this area.

The oval drive and lawn area west of the Main Building are relatively intact. The only significant alteration has been that two of the planting bed sections southeast of the oval pool have been paved with concrete since 2002.

The groups of cedars at the north and south ends of the Main Building are original to the building construction, and are intact, and appear healthy. Foundation plantings around the Main Building have changed over time due to normal lifecycles, but the existence of foundation plantings has remained a constant.

The open area northeast of the main building is largely intact and is characterized by lawns and specimen trees, providing clear views of the rear and side elevations of the Main Building. Additional parking has been added along the drive, which has impacted the integrity of the setting. This area serves as a secondary, informal open space.

The rest of the landscape is informal or utilitarian. The courtyard on the southeast side of the Main Building formed by the construction of the Infirmary Wing does not appear to have been developed as an intentionally designed landscape, although it does retain mature specimen trees. The wooded eastern half of the property does not appear to have been intentionally developed as a recreational area for the Masonic Home other than the area around the Outdoor Kitchen.

Water Tower (1926)



The water tower at left, and associated pumphouse at center, in 1937. At right is the water tower in 2019.

The water tower, three drilled wells, and the three pumphouses over the wells were constructed in 1926 as one of the first steps in preparing the site for the construction of the main building, since there was no public water supply available to the site at the time. The water tower and pumphouses are shown on the earliest site plans.

The water tower's structure consists of four steel legs cross-braced with cables and set in concrete footings on an 11 foot square plan, supporting an approximately 100,000 gallon capacity steel cylindrical water tank topped by a conical roof. Tax records state that the overall height of the structure is 161 feet, although other sources state 150 feet. Wireless antenna equipment has been attached to the structure since 2013.

The tower is located northeast of the Masonic Home main building, in the parcel's north panhandle. The three pumphouses were located as follows: the Water Tower Pumphouse was at the base of the water tower; the Gabled Pumphouse was located approximately 150 feet east and 100 feet north of the southwest property corner; and the Octagonal Pumphouse was located approximately 275 feet south of the rear wing of the Masonic Home main building. Together, they supplied water for the residents, for the ornamental oval pool in front of the main building, and for landscaping. The Water Tower Pumphouse was a utilitarian board-formed concrete structure with an arched concrete roof, largely hidden from sight at the edge of the property. The Gabled Pumphouse and the Octagonal Pumphouse were plainly visible on the grounds, and therefore featured more architectural ornamentation, in the style of garden follies.

The Octagonal Pumphouse remains intact. The Gabled Pumphouse was removed before 1977, according to aerial photos, and replaced with a concrete pad. The Water Tower Pumphouse was not investigated to confirm that it is intact.

Integrity

The Water Tower appears to be highly intact. It was reviewed in 2013 as part of a wireless antenna installation, and in 2014 was determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places by the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer.

Octagonal Pumphouse (1926)



The building in 1937 and in 2019, indicated by arrow.

The Octagonal Pumphouse was completed in 1926 as part of the water well system for the Masonic Home. The building was likely designed by architects Heath, Gove & Bell; additional research could verify the designers. Besides serving as a pumphouse, the building was intended to also grace the landscape as a decorative element. It is located south of the Infirmary Wing Addition, near the exercise yard wall.

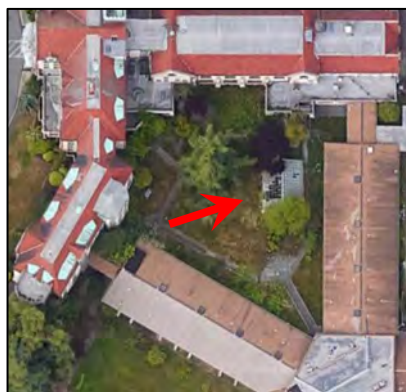
The building structure is concrete with stucco cladding, on a concrete slab. The building's footprint is octagonal with each wall segment approximately 7 feet long. Architectural features include Tuscan columns at building corners supporting a decorative brick entablature, and original arched wood-sash windows. The pyramidal roof was originally copper but is now clad in asphalt composite material and sheet metal flashing.

The construction of the adjacent 1987 Infirmary Wing Addition included a new exercise yard, enclosed by a 5-foot-high masonry wall, which excluded and isolated the Octagonal Pumphouse. Drawings indicate that the pumphouse stands free from the wall.

Integrity

The building is highly intact and retains most original features.

Greenhouse (1937)



The building in 1937 and in 2019, indicated by arrow.

The Greenhouse was installed in 1937 on the south side of the rear wing of the Masonic Home main building, at a time when the area was open lawn extending to the Octagonal Pumphouse. The Greenhouse originally consisted of a concrete base with a steel and wood structure supporting glass panes, and measured 22 by 32 feet in plan. The greenhouse may have provided recreational gardening to residents, or may have been used to provide flowers and ornamental plants to the Home. In 1966, the Infirmary Wing was constructed, creating a courtyard and enclosing the greenhouse.

Recent photos indicate that the Greenhouse is currently in poor condition, with numerous glass panes broken or missing, and a shed structure built within it.

The site plan for the 1987 Infirmary Wing Addition by Harold E. Dalke & Associates cited another greenhouse on the north side of the Masonic Home rear wing, just northwest of the Garage. This building, if it was a greenhouse, appears in the 1977 aerial photo, but it was removed by 1993.

Integrity

Although a remaining original component of the Masonic Home, newer construction has significantly impacted aspects of design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

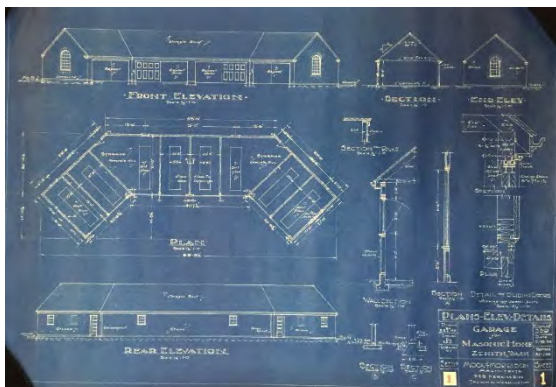
Garage

(Mock & Morrison, 1937)



The building in 1938 and in 2019, indicated by arrow.

This C-shaped building is located northeast of the Masonic Home main building's rear wing, on the rear service drive which leads to the Home's loading dock. It was constructed in 1937 and was designed to accommodate eight vehicles for the Home's staff. Tax records indicate that the building is wood frame construction with a stucco on lath exterior, on a concrete foundation. The roof, originally cedar shingles, is currently finished with asphalt composite shingles, which are in poor condition. Garage openings were originally enclosed with wood eight-panel sliding doors hung from a rail; currently there are contemporary overhead doors installed. The building retains original wood sash windows at the gable ends and possibly at the rear, and appears to retain original stucco siding.



1937 architectural drawings for the Garage.

The designers of the Garage were Mock & Morrison, a prominent Tacoma architecture firm which occasionally collaborated with Heath, Gove & Bell on projects in the 1930s. At the time, the two firms were designing several buildings together at the Western Washington Hospital in Steilacoom.

Behind the Garage, to the east, is a V-shaped storage building similar in scale and proportion to the Garage. The storage building was constructed in 1997, and is a recent addition to the property and not historically significant.

Integrity

Although the original garage doors have been replaced, impacting integrity of materials, workmanship, and feeling, the Garage retains sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, and association.

Outdoor Kitchen

(c.1930-1949)



The Outdoor Kitchen in 2002 (left), and in 2019 with the adjacent structure (right).

The construction date of the Outdoor Kitchen is unclear but it was in place before 1950, when a Masonic Home brochure of that year mentions it as a site amenity: “An outdoor kitchen and tables are provided in the park at the rear of the Home where Lodges, Chapters, or family groups may gather for picnicking in season. these are greatly enjoyed by our members in the Home. It is not unusual to discover five or six of the Brethren enjoying the cozy warmth of one of the stoves and the companionship it affords.”⁴⁶

The Outdoor Kitchen is a rectangular wood-framed open structure on a concrete pad, with a pyramidal roof supported by four square posts per side. There is a full-height wall on the west side, supporting a kitchen counter and cabinets. The other three sides are enclosed with a half-height wall clad in clapboard between posts. The roof features exposed rafter ends and is topped with a metal vent.

Adjacent to the Outdoor Kitchen is another open, roofed structure which appears to date to the 1960s-1970s, providing simple weather protection.

Integrity

The Outdoor Kitchen retains sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association.

⁴⁶ Washington Masonic Home. “The Washington Masonic Home and Its Endowment,” undated pamphlet (c.1950).

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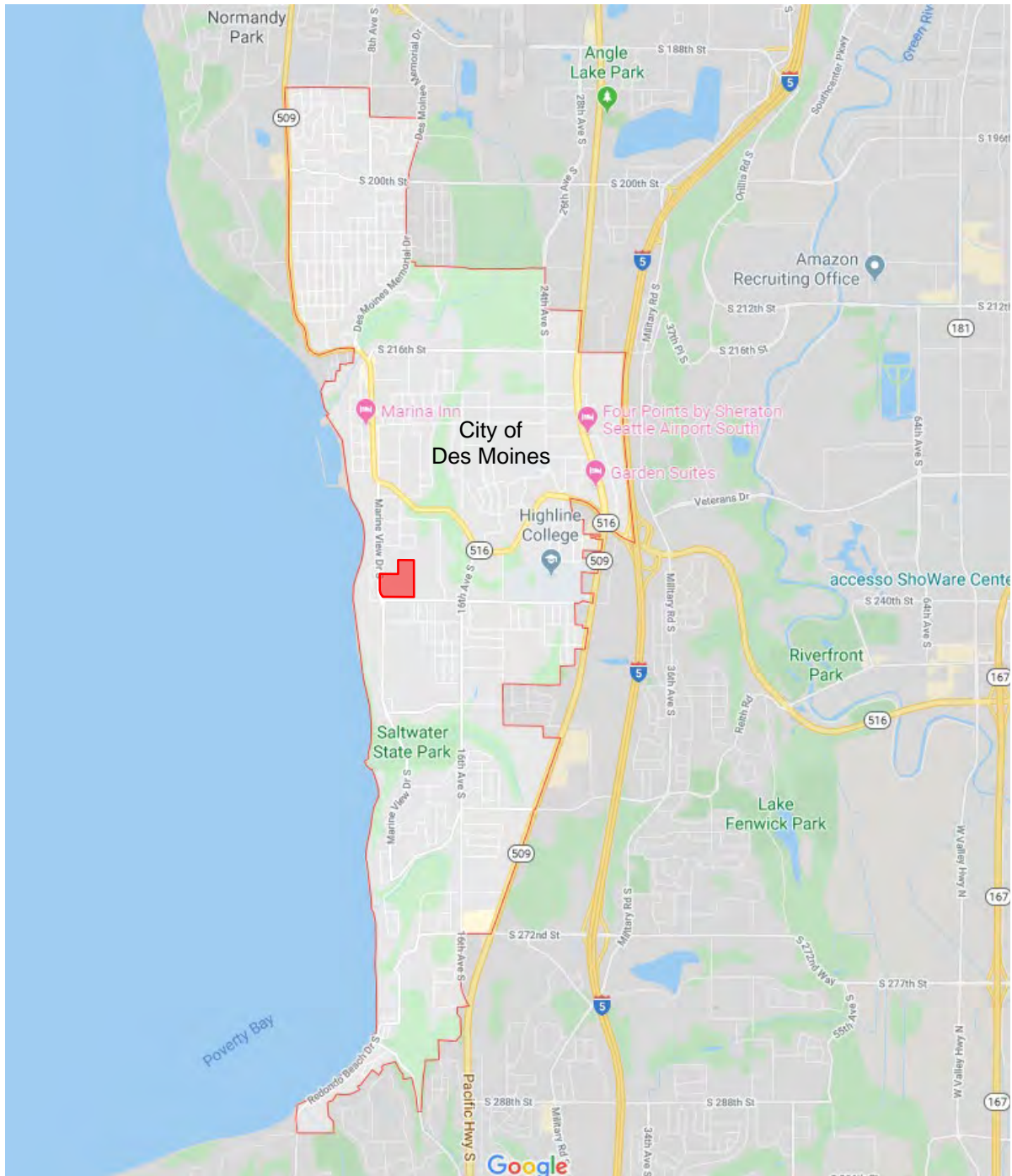
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VII. FIGURES



Map of Des Moines, Washington showing the subject location in 2019. North is up. Approximate site of subject parcel indicated by red shading. (Google Maps)



Aerial photo of the site in 2019. (King County Tax Assessor)

Aerial photo of the full 30.3 acre site in 2019, showing current conditions. North is up. The property lines are indicated by the red dotted line.



An aerial photo of the site in 1936. (King County Tax Assessor)

The 1936 image above is the earliest aerial photo found for this report. The red dotted line indicates the current 30-acre parcel boundaries; however, the original site extended eastward and encompassed 80 acres in total. (Note that the historic photo and actual parcel boundaries do not align exactly). By 1936, the date of this photo, the Garage and Greenhouse had not yet been built. The purpose of the narrow rectangular building oriented north-south behind the Main Building is unknown, but it appears to be a shed or covered parking area.



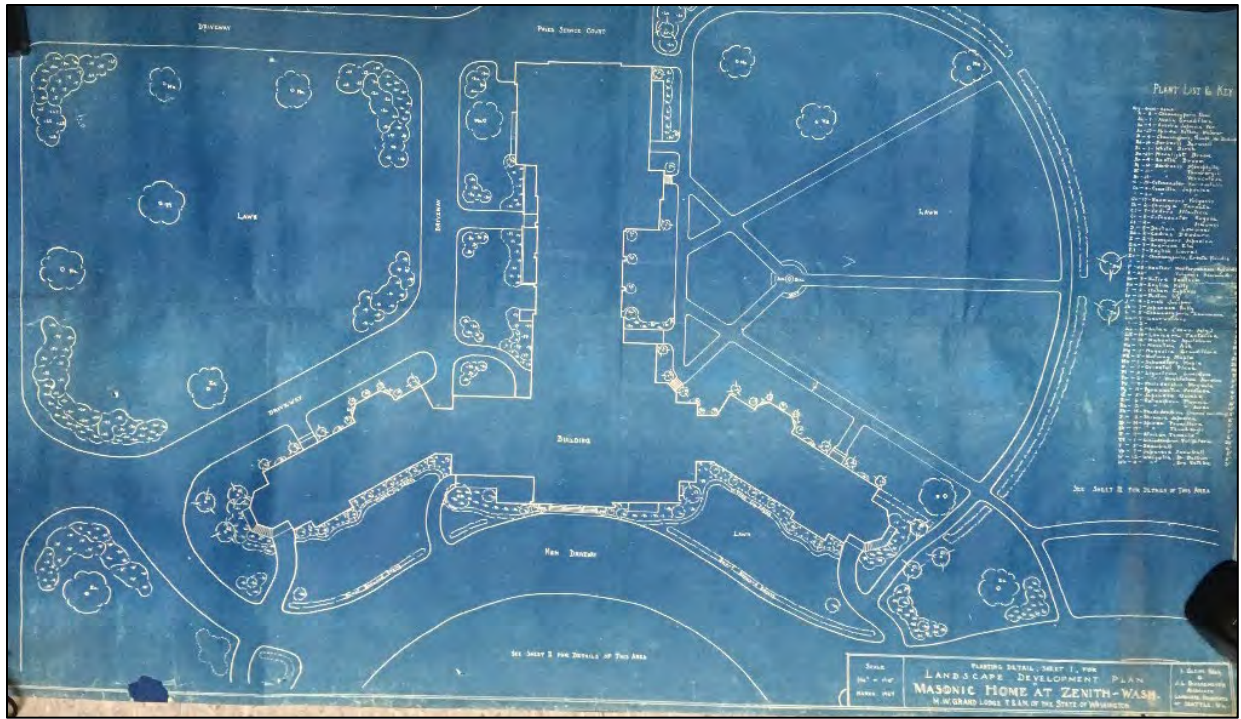
Masonic Home, c. 1940. North is oriented to the upper left of the photo. (Washington Masonic Archives)

The image above from 1940 shows almost all of the essential features of the Masonic Home, which were intact by 1937. The large T-shaped main building, constructed in 1927, dominates the site, and its formal front is set back from Marine View Drive S by a wall and gates, large lawn, and landscaped oval drive. Behind the main building, the property is largely wooded. The water tower constructed in 1926 is visible at the center top of the photo; it is fed by a well and pumphouse, not visible, at its base. Two other small pumphouses are visible to the southeast and southwest of the main building, and are linked by an irregular paved walk across the lawn. Residential structures for Home staff are visible at the southwest property corner, which were removed by the 1980s. Another staff home is discernable east of the water tower. The Garage, built in 1937, is visible just above the rear wing of the Main Building. The access road to it is visible along the north property line.

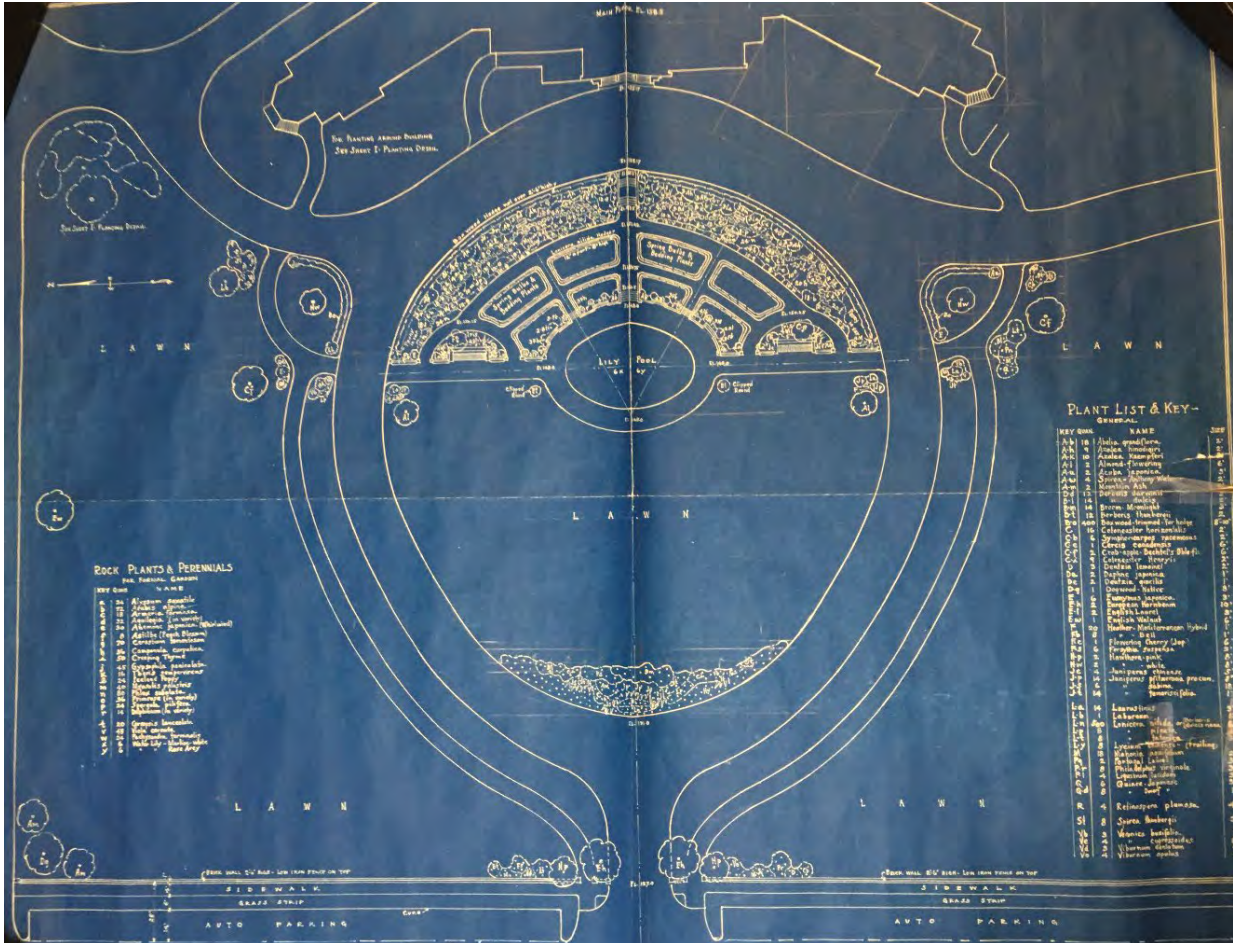


Masonic Home in 1977, showing 1966 Infirmary Wing at rear, which would be expanded in 1987. North is oriented left.

(Washington Masonic Archives)



March 1927 landscape plan (L. Glenn Hall, Landscape Architect, with J. L. Bossemeyer, Associate)



January 1928 landscape plan (L. Glenn Hall, Landscape Architect, with Heath, Gove & Bell, Architect)



Top to bottom: Groundbreaking ceremony on August 8, 1925; Cornerstone laying ceremony on May 1, 1926, and a visit by the Grand Lodge of Alaska and Washington on June 17, 1928, one year after completion. (Washington Masonic Archives)



The Washington Masonic Home viewed from the northwest, around 1930. (Washington Masonic Archives)



The Masonic Home around 1950, from a promotional pamphlet. (Washington Masonic Archives)



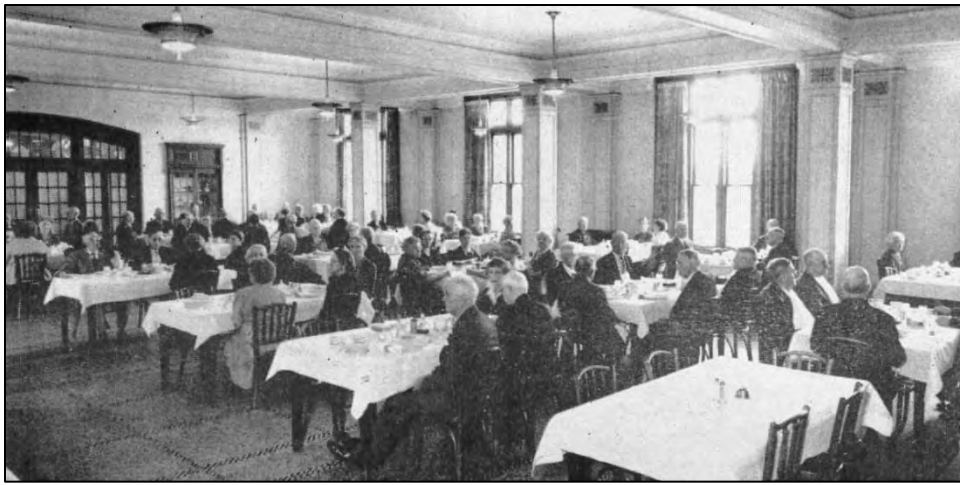
The Masonic Home around 1950. (Washington Masonic Archives)



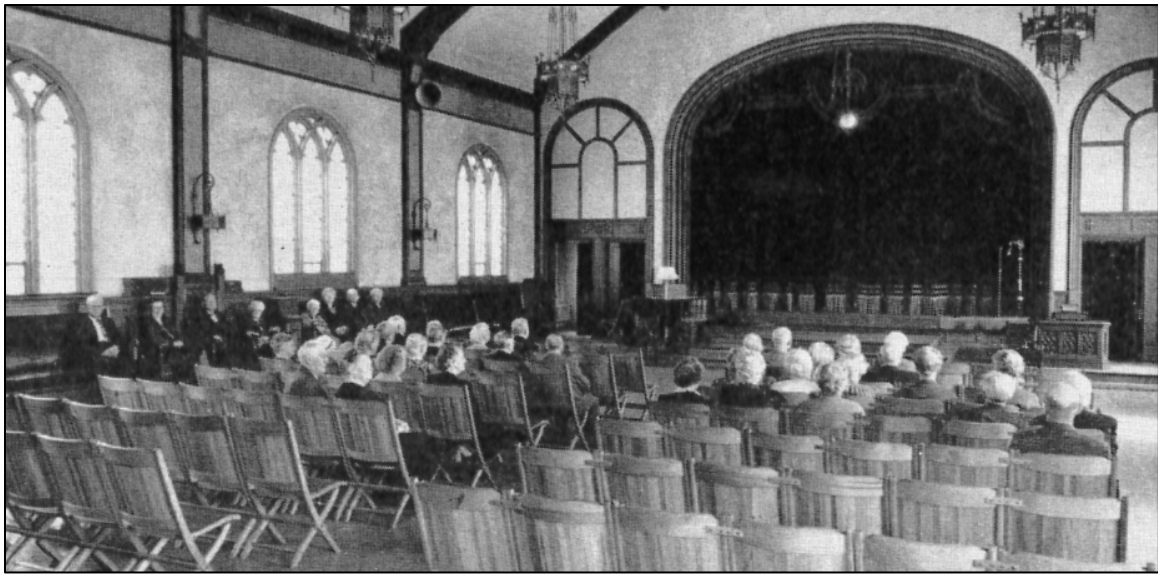
Images of the interior of the Masonic Home around 1950, showing the library (top) and the sitting room (bottom) off the main entry.



(Washington Masonic Archives).



Three images of the interior of the Masonic Home around 1950, showing the dining room, a typical bedroom, and one of the solarium rooms. (Washington Masonic Archives)



Two images of the interior of the Masonic Home, showing two views of the Auditorium/Chapel around 1950 (above) and 1965 (below). (Washington Masonic Archives)



These King County tax assessor photos record buildings no longer on the Masonic Home property.

Above, the Gabled Pumphouse which once covered the well at the southwest part of the site. It was demolished by the 1970s and the well is now covered with a concrete slab.

At left and below are three houses which were used for staff housing, including the Home's superintendent. The house at left pre-dated the Masonic Home and was located at the corner of Masonic View Drive South and South 240th Street.



APPENDIX A – Current building photos

Note: All images by author and date to September 2019 unless noted otherwise.

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Fig. 1 – Main building, west elevation from front gates, view in 2018. (Ron Clausen Wikimedia Commons)



Fig. 2 – Main building, west elevation.



Fig. 3 – Main building, west elevation, detail of central upper gable.



Fig. 4 – Main building, west elevation, south wing.



Fig. 5 – Main building, west elevation of central portion, detail of wall.



Fig. 6 – Main building, west elevation, north and south solarium bays.



Fig. 7 – Main building, west elevation, main entrance marquee.



Fig. 8 – Main building, west elevation, main entrance porch.

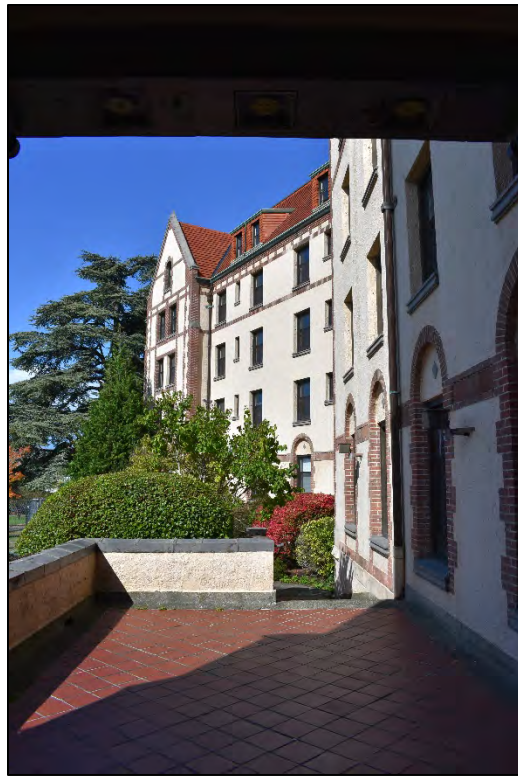


Fig. 9 – Main building, west elevation, main entrance porch.



Fig. 10 – Main building, west elevation, main entrance porch, detail of Masonic ornamental tile.



Fig. 11 – Main building, east elevation, north wing.



Fig. 12 – Main building, view south to east and north elevations.



Fig. 13 – Main building, view west to east and north elevations.



Fig. 14 – Main building, north elevation.



Fig. 15 – Main building, east elevation, rear service wing, showing loading dock.



Fig. 16 – Main building, south and east elevations, rear service wing, showing loading dock and Infirmary Wing.



Fig. 17 – Main building, south elevation facing Infirmary Wing courtyard.



Fig. 18 – View southeast from upper floor towards Infirmary Wing courtyard.



Fig. 19 – Infirmary Wing, east elevation, covered entrance.



Fig. 20 – Infirmary Wing, east elevation of north arm, view to northwest, with Main Building rear wing south elevation.



Fig. 21 – Infirmary Wing, east elevation of north arm, detail of marblecrete wall.



Fig. 22 – Infirmary Wing, juncture of east arm (at left, built 1987) and north arm (at right, built 1966).



Fig. 23 – Infirmary Wing, east elevation of east arm (built 1987).



Fig. 24 – Infirmary Wing, south elevation of east arm (built 1987), showing outdoor walled exercise area.



Fig. 25 – Infirmery Wing, southwest arm (left) and east arm with outdoor walled exercise area (right), both built 1987. Left of center is the Octagonal Pumphouse, built in 1926.



Fig. 26 – Octagonal Pumphouse, south elevation.



Fig. 27 – Infirmary Wing, outdoor walled exercise area, view west towards building.



Fig. 28 – Infirmary Wing, outdoor walled exercise area, view east from building.



Fig. 29 – Infirmary Wing, outdoor walled exercise area, view south from building.



Fig. 30 – Infirmary Wing, southwest arm (built 1987), south (end) elevation.



Fig. 31 – Infirmary Wing, southwest arm (built 1987), yard adjacent to south (end) elevation, view northwest.



Fig. 32 – Infirmary Wing, southwest arm (built 1987), west elevation.



Fig. 33 – Infirmery Wing, view north from west yard, showing northwest arm (1966) at left and southwest arm (1987) at right.



Fig. 34 – View north from yard west of the Infirmery Wing.



Fig. 35 – Central Oval, view west from Main Building.



Fig. 36 – Central Oval, curved brick retaining wall at pool, view north.



Fig. 37 – Central Oval, brick retaining wall at walk, view south.



Fig. 38 – Water Tower (built 1926).



Fig. 39 – Storage Building at left (built 1997); Garage at right (built 1937).



Fig. 40 – Outdoor Kitchen in woods west of Main Building.



Fig. 41 – Central Oval lawn, view north.



Fig. 42 – Central Oval lawn, view south.



Fig. 43 – Central Oval, masonry sign.



Fig. 44 – Front gates and wall.



Fig. 45 – Main Building, front entrance.



Fig. 46 – Main Building, interior, first floor, entry vestibule.



Fig. 47 – Main Building, interior, first floor, main hall, view north.



Fig. 48 – Main Building, interior, first floor, main hall, detail of terrazzo floor.



Fig. 49 – Main Building, interior, first floor, sitting room, view south.



Fig. 50 – Main Building, interior, first floor, sitting room, view southwest.



Fig. 51 – Main Building, interior, first floor, former library, view north.



Fig. 52 – Main Building, interior, first floor, waiting room, view east into dining room.



Fig. 53 – Main Building, interior, first floor, waiting room, view west.



Fig. 54 – Main Building, interior, first floor, dining room, view east.



Fig. 55 – Main Building, interior, first floor, dining room, view west.



Fig. 56 – Main Building, interior, first floor, dining room, detail of fireplace.



Fig. 57 – Main Building, interior, first floor, kitchen.



Fig. 58 – Main Building, interior, first floor, kitchen, support space.



Fig. 59 – Main Building, interior, first floor, main circulation ramps off main hall.



Fig. 60 – Main Building, interior, second floor, main circulation ramps.



Fig. 61 – Main Building, interior, upper floor, main circulation ramps, longitudinal view.



Fig. 62 – Main Building, interior, upper floor, main circulation ramps, longitudinal view and support column.



Fig. 63 – Main Building, interior, typical secondary stair.



Fig. 64 – Main Building, interior, second floor, chapel/auditorium, view east to front.



Fig. 65 – Main Building, interior, second floor, chapel/auditorium, view west to rear.



Fig. 66 – Main Building, interior, second floor, chapel/auditorium, wall light fixture.



Fig. 67 – Main Building, interior, second floor, vestibule to chapel/auditorium main floor and balcony.



Fig. 68 – Main Building, interior, second floor, chapel/auditorium, balcony seating at west end.



Fig. 69 – Main Building, interior, second floor, chapel/auditorium, stage and fly loft at east end.



Fig. 70 – Main Building, interior, second floor, chapel/auditorium, detail of stained glass window.



Fig. 71 – Main Building, interior, second floor, dormitory behind chapel/auditorium, view east.

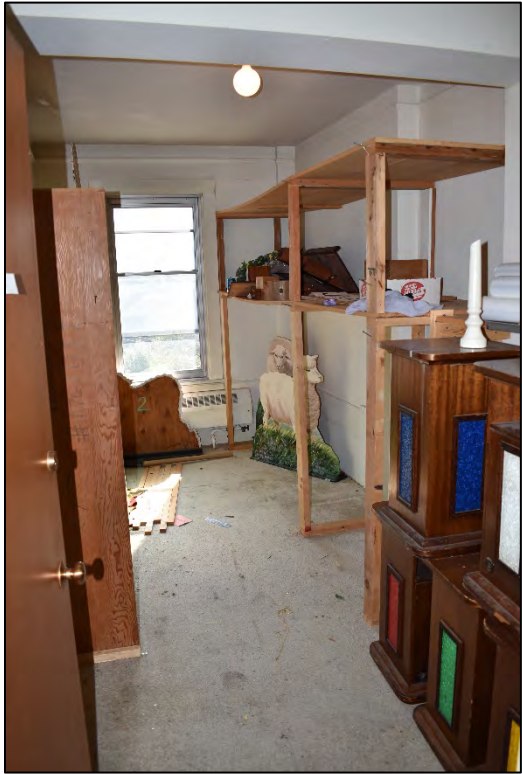


Fig. 72 – Main Building, interior, second floor, dormitory behind chapel/auditorium, typical room.

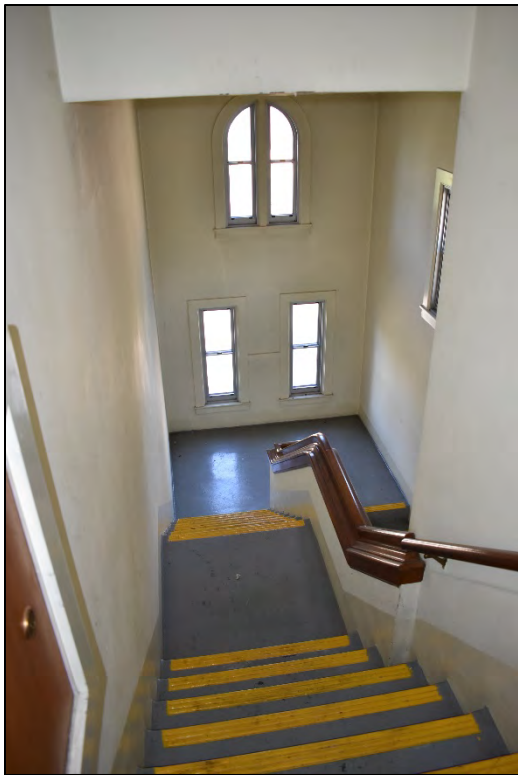


Fig. 73 – Main Building, interior, second floor, dormitory behind chapel/auditorium, northeast exit stair.



Fig. 74 – Main Building, interior, third floor attic space behind chapel/auditorium and above dormitory.



Fig. 75 – Main Building, interior, upper floor, typical residential wing corridor.



Fig. 76 – Main Building, interior, upper floor, typical residential wing mid-corridor sitting area.



Fig. 77 – Main Building, interior, upper floor, typical residential wing mid-corridor sitting area.



Fig. 78 – Main Building, interior, upper floor, typical residential unit.



Fig. 79 – Main Building, interior, top floor under roof, typical residential unit.



Fig. 80 – Main Building, interior, top floor under roof, typical residential unit.



Fig. 81 – Main Building, interior, upper floor, typical solarium at end of residential corridor.



Fig. 82 – Main Building, interior, upper floor, typical solarium at end of residential corridor, showing terrazzo floor.



Fig. 83 – Main Building, interior, upper floor, typical solarium at end of residential corridor, showing built-in bookcases.



Fig. 84 – Main Building, interior, upper floor, typical shared bathroom.



Fig. 85 – Main Building, interior, upper floor, typical shared toilet room.



Fig. 86 – Main Building, interior, basement, typical corridor.



Fig. 87 – Main Building, interior, basement, typical corridor.



Fig. 88 – Main Building, interior, basement, corridor at vault room.



Fig. 89 – Main Building, interior, basement, typical room.



Fig. 90 – Main Building, interior, basement, typical room, showing concrete floor structure overhead.



Fig. 91 – Infirmary Wing, interior, first floor, typical corridor, view south in north arm (built 1966).



Fig. 92 – Infirmary Wing, interior, first floor, typical ward along corridor (built 1966).



Fig. 93 – Infirmary Wing, interior, first floor, nursing station at center (built 1966, 1987).



Fig. 94 – Infirmary Wing, interior, first floor, multipurpose room (built 1987), view through door at left is walled outdoor exercise area.



Fig. 95 – Infirmary Wing, interior, first floor, east arm (built 1987), view east.



Fig. 96 – Infirmary Wing, interior, first floor, east arm (built 1987), pool therapy room.



Fig. 97 – Water Tower (built 1926).



Fig. 98 – Site: View south on road east of Infirmary Wing.



Fig. 99 – Site: View north through glade towards Outdoor Kitchen, in woods east of the Main Building.



Fig. 100 – Site: Outdoor Kitchen.



Fig. 101 – Site: Glade in woods east of Main Building and Infirmary Wing, view north.



Fig. 102 – Site: Path through glade in woods east of Main Building and Infirmary Wing.



Fig. 103 – Site: Path through woods northeast of Main Building and Infirmary Wing, near Water Tower.



Fig. 104 – Site: Road east of Infirmary Wing, view northwest. Chain link fence is a recent and temporary barrier.



Fig. 105 – House (built 2004 as a model home and sales office) southeast of Infirmary Wing along south property line, view southeast.