

Heritage Citation



Masonic Lodge (former)

Key details

Also known as	AMORC Grand Lodge
Addresses	At 156 Norman Avenue, Norman Park, Queensland 4170
Type of place	Hall
Period	Interwar 1919-1939
Style	Egyptian
Lot plan	L380_RP12499; L379_RP12499; L378_RP12499
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 January 2004 Date of Citation — September 2013

Construction

Roof: Corrugated iron;
Walls: Timber

Criterion for listing

(A) Historical; (A) Historical; (H) Historical association

This two storey timber and stucco building was constructed as the Masonic Temple at Norman Park in 1927. It was built on land acquired by Trustees of the Norman Park Lodge in 1925 and was officially dedicated and consecrated on 28 July 1927. The hall served the local masonic community for over fifty years before being sold to the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, in 1978. The Order added a block work extension to the building in 1989.

History

The Norman Park Masonic Lodge constructed this timber and stucco building in 1927. During this period, the Norman Park area was experiencing a surge in population growth and the Masonic movement was expanding in Brisbane's suburbs.

Although the first residential subdivisions took place in Norman Park during the 1880s and the tramline arrived in 1904, the area remained mostly farmland until after World War I. Early surviving houses at Norman Park include 'Rose Hill' (circa 1896), 'Lozelles' (circa 1888) and 'Eulalia' (1889) which was part of the Early Street Historical Village from 1965 to the late 1990s. Residential development increased during the interwar years, encouraged by the opening of the Norman Park railway station in 1911. As the population grew, community buildings such as the Methodist Church (1917) and the Anglican Church of the Transfiguration (1925) were built.

Freemasonry had its beginnings in medieval England with the formation of lodges of skilled stonemasons. By the early eighteenth century, men who were not stonemasons were admitted and the first Grand Lodge was established. Freemasonry was established in Queensland in 1859, although the Queensland lodges operated under the ultimate authority of the Grand Master of New South Wales until well into the twentieth century.

The first Masonic Lodge in Brisbane was built on the corner of Albert and Ann Streets in 1866 and served as the centre for Queensland freemasonry until a larger temple was constructed in Alice Street in 1886. (Both have since been demolished). Many of Brisbane's most influential men, including John Petrie, the first Mayor of Brisbane, and Sir Charles Lilley, Premier of Queensland and champion of free education, were active masons. Lodges were established under the English, Irish and Scottish constitutions and it was not until 1921 that the United Grand Lodge was formed in Brisbane uniting 281 lodges. The imposing Masonic Temple in Ann Street, designed by Lange Powell, was opened in 1930, replacing the Alice Street Temple.

The Norman Park Lodge was established in 1923. Members used the local Presbyterian Church for meetings while plans were made to construct their own temple. In 1925, the Lodge acquired three 16 perch allotments (1214m²) in Norman Avenue. Members of the Lodge provided an interest free loan to cover the expense of building the temple which was expected to cost £1,500 to £1,800.

According to the Brisbane Courier, the stump capping ceremony held on 19 February 1927 was attended by "a large gathering of Masons, including many interstate visitors". Each of the fifty stumps received a specially constructed metal cap and donations totalling £40 were placed under the caps by various donors. The first stump

was ceremoniously capped by the Grand Master Brother C. Stumm. The remaining stumps were capped by members of the Norman Park Lodge, visiting masons and Mrs J. Bothwell and Mrs A. T. Atherton. The new temple was to be built and furnished by a father and three sons, all of whom were members of the Norman Park Lodge. On 28 July 1927, the Grand Master returned to officiate at a dedication and consecration ceremony for the new temple.

In addition to providing a venue for masonic meetings and rituals, the Norman Park Masonic Temple was used to hold social events. For example, on 8 March 1930, a dance and musical evening was held at the hall to raise extra building funds. In 1961, the Brisbane City Council approved an addition to the site which is likely to be the timber section at the rear of the building on the southern side.

The masonic temple was damaged in the severe flooding of 1974, prompting the Norman Park Masonic Lodge to sell the site to the Rosicrucian Order AMORC (Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis), a non-profit, educational and spiritual organisation. Although the titles were transferred in 1978 to the Rosicrucian Order, financial settlement did not occur until 1981.

The Order carried out extensive repairs to the flood damaged building that included reinforcing the first floor with steel girders. The members of the Order continued to use the upper floor as a temple, modifying the interior to fit their requirements and adding various paintings and symbols. There is no visible evidence in the temple of any original Masonic insignia. In 1989, the Rosacruicians built a two storey block work addition on the western side of the building.

The former masonic temple at Norman Park is one of several surviving pre-World War II Masonic halls entered on the Brisbane City Planning Heritage Register. Others include those at Sandgate (1889), Taringa (1902) and Wynnum (1920).

The Norman Park Masonic Temple provides evidence of the expansion of the Masonic movement in Brisbane during the Interwar period. Under the ownership of the Rosacruician Order, it continues to operate as a place of ritual. It is one of several surviving pre-World War II Masonic temples entered on the Brisbane City Heritage Register.

Description

The Masonic Lodge at Norman Park is a two storey timber building with a gabled roof and a stuccoed front façade. The façade is of a symmetrical design, featuring a pair of windows on either side of large double doors which are surmounted by a rectangular multi-paned fanlight. Another multi-paned window is situated above the entrance, which is protected by a small, open portico. The front façade also features a decorative, horizontal element and the letters "AM ORC".

An interior staircase at the front left of the entry leads to the upper storey which has a foyer and two small rooms in addition to the large "temple" space. The lower floor consists of a large "hall" or meeting room beyond the foyer. The foyer has a kitchen on the right and an additional room on the left.

The late 1980s addition along the eastern side of the building has two stories and is constructed of painted block work. It has a flat metal roof which is extended and enclosed to form an eave. This section of the building

contains a library and toilet facilities on the lower floor with offices and changing facilities above. There are timber additions behind the masonry section and an external staircase at the rear of the main timber building.

A painted masonry fence and iron gate along the front boundary were added by the Rosacruzian Order after purchasing the site in 1978.

There is a row of seven palm trees along the boundaries on both the northern and southern sides of the site.

The interior of the “temple” on the upper floor, the 1989 block work extension, the masonry front fence and iron gate and the rows of palm trees on either side of the building are not included in the heritage listing.

Statement of significance

Relevant assessment criteria

This is a place of local heritage significance and meets one or more of the local heritage criteria under the Heritage planning scheme policy of the *Brisbane City Plan 2014*. It is significant because:

Historical

CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history as it provides evidence of the expansion of Freemasonry in the suburbs of Brisbane during the interwar period.

Historical

CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history for the evidence it provides of the growth of Norman Park as a residential suburb during the interwar period.

Historical association

CRITERION H

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organization of importance in the city's or local area's history

as a Masonic Temple built and funded by the local Norman Park Lodge that served the organisation and the local community for over fifty years.

References

1. Brisbane City Council Building Cards
 2. Brisbane City Council Aerial Photographs
 3. Brisbane City Council Archives. Surveyor's Field Book. 156 Norman Ave, Norman Park. C549-62. 28 Feb 1936, updated 1947 and 1955
 4. Queensland Certificates of Title
 5. Latta, David. *Lost Glories: A Memorial to Forgotten Australian Buildings*. Angus & Robertson, 1986. Excerpt published on Queensland Freemasons website: www.queenslandfreemasons.com. Viewed 20 Aug 2013
 6. NLA online newspapers website- Trove. *Brisbane Courier*, 21 Feb 1927, 29 July 1927, 8 Mar 1930
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Note: This citation has been prepared on the basis of evidence available at the time including an external examination of the building. The statement of significance is a summary of the most culturally important aspects of the property based on the available evidence, and may be re-assessed if further information becomes available. The purpose of this citation is to provide an informed evaluation for heritage registration and information. This does not negate the necessity for a thorough conservation study by a qualified practitioner, before any action is taken which may affect its heritage significance.

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