

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Smithfield Masonic Lodge

Smithfield, Johnston County, JT0275, Listed 9/28/2007
Nomination by Ellen Turco
Photographs by Ellen Turco, April 2007



Façade and side view



Rear view

Smithfield Masonic Lodge
Name of Property

Johnston County, NC
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: SOCIAL Sub: meeting hall
EDUCATION library
COMMERCE office building

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: WORK IN PROGRESS Sub: _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY/Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
roof ASPHALT
walls WOOD
other _____

Narrative Description

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

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Johnston County, NC
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

c. 1854

c. 1917 to 1933

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

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Section 7/Description of Physical Appearance

The Smithfield Masonic Lodge is located at 115 North Second Street in Smithfield, the Johnston County seat. The building is set close to the sidewalk and faces east. It is located approximately one-half of a block north of the Johnston County Courthouse on Market Street. The area is commercial. The lot is .13 of an acre with a small grassy yard used for parking to the rear of the building. On the south side of the lot, a gravel drive leads from North Second Street to the parking lot.

Masonic records date the structure to ca. 1854. Local tradition holds that the building was moved to its present location in 1917, although Sanborn maps indicate that the move had occurred by 1915. This building retains much nineteenth-century material and remains an excellent example of vernacular Greek Revival architecture. However, the building has undergone a series of modifications over time. Alterations occurred around the time of the move, ca. 1915, and again around 1960 when ownership passed from the Brooks family to the Dobson family, who retained ownership until 2004.

Present Appearance/Exterior

This handsome temple-form lodge is set with a gable end to North Second Street. The rectangular building, two stories in height and three bays across, measures approximately forty by twenty-four feet. It is covered with plain weatherboards. A pediment surmounts the façade, under which is a bracketed frieze--a distinguishing detail replicated on each elevation. At each corner of the building are robust pilasters on plinths with simple capitals. An interior, brick stove flue stack rises from the south slope of the roof.

The façade features "twin" entries, added around 1915, set in plain surrounds and surmounted by two-light transoms. Physical evidence in the building's frame strongly suggests that this elevation originally had a central entry flanked by windows. Concrete steps, poured in 2006, access each entry. The wooden entry doors are comprised of one large light over two vertical panels. These doors date from the 2006 rehabilitation of the building. Separating the twin entries in the central bay is a twenty-four light, fixed picture window with a six-light transom. This window opening is also thought to date from around 1915. Three original six-over-six windows span the façade's second story. These windows are repeated throughout the building.

The rear (west) elevation, also three bays across, has an entrance at the south end. This opening is thought to be an original one; it was reverted from a window to a door opening during the 2006 rehabilitation. Presently, a solid, wood, six-panel door covers the opening. There are no window openings on the first story. A wheel chair access ramp, constructed

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in 2006, begins on the north corner and slopes upward to the entry. Original six-over-six windows are in the south and central bays of the second story; at the north end, appearing somewhat out-of-place, is a smaller, six-over-six sash. The date of, and reason for, this odd window is not known. Like the building's other windows it is a double hung-sash and its interior moldings suggest that it may be original. This window was uncovered from beneath weatherboards during the 2006 rehabilitation.

The lodge's side elevations (north and south) are alike; three bays of six-over-six window sashes below the bracketed frieze. A heating and cooling unit, installed in 2006, is situated at the west end of the north elevation.

Interior

Both the first and second floors of the lodge originally consisted of large assembly rooms in front of smaller anterooms. While this original plan remains evident on the first floor, walls were added around 1915 to subdivide the space. The 2006 renovation retained this second-use floor plan, with changes to the rear room.

Today, the first floor is divided into three main spaces with a side hall running the length of the building from east to west on the building's north side (see attachment for floor plans). At the hall's east end is the front, north entry; at the west end is a dog-leg stair leading to the second floor. This Craftsman-inspired stair dates from around the ca. 1915 relocation. Square newel posts, topped by two concentric square caps, are positioned at the base, landing, and top of the stair. A square picket balustrade connects the newels.

Each first floor room measures roughly thirteen-by-seventeen feet and corresponds with the exterior fenestration, giving each room one window in the exterior (south) wall. In 2006, the rear (west) room was divided yet again into three spaces labeled on the attached floor plan as a break room, bathroom and storage room.

Wall surfaces throughout the lodge were originally plastered; dry wall was installed in 2006 to enable insulation, plumbing and electrical upgrades. Original door and window openings can be easily identified by the vernacular Greek Revival trim treatment: a plain surround on top of which is applied full-height pilasters topped by bull's eye corner blocks. The pilasters extend downward to rest on plinth blocks set into the baseboard. This treatment creates a rectangular apron beneath each window. Non-original doorways feature plain surrounds with one-light transoms. Interior doors are double-leaf, each consisting of three panels, added in 2006. Original pine floors are found throughout the building, as are twelve-inch baseboards.

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From the second floor stair landing both the hall and antechamber are accessed via an original door opening to each room. The two-room plan of the second floor is as it was in the mid-nineteenth century. The Masonic meeting hall is a bright and spacious rectangular room measuring approximately twenty-seven-by-twenty-three feet, with three windows across the front (east) wall and two each on the side (north and south) walls. An elliptical vault runs under the roof ridgeline emphasizing the room's original ceremonial purpose. A plain frieze, originally plaster and now dry wall, echoes the ceiling and vault line. The six pendant light fixtures were added in 2006. The door and window trim of the second floor is identical to that of the first floor.

Integrity Statement

The physical integrity of Smithfield Masonic Lodge is excellent. Over time, changes to the building were made to reflect its many concurrent uses (the building was home to at least three service organizations, a public library, and offices). The exterior envelope retains its original massing, materials and Greek Revival detailing. Inside, the vernacular Greek Revival door and window surrounds remain, as do the original pine floor boards. The first-floor plan reflects room divisions made when the building was moved around 1915. These room divisions are within the period of significance and are therefore historical. The second floor hall was divided in the 1960s to create additional offices. A rehabilitation undertaken in 2006 returned the second floor to its current two-room plan. The building's most important space, the second floor Masonic ceremonial hall, is intact.

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Section 8/Statement of Significance

The Smithfield Masonic Lodge is a frame, temple-form building at 115 North Second Street. The building has housed a variety of uses in its 150-year history. It was constructed by Friendship Lodge No. 84 ca. 1854. Archival research suggests that the building was used strictly as a Lodge meeting hall until around 1915 when the building was moved to its present location by local judge and Mason F.H. Brooks. Brooks used portions of the building for his law office until the late 1950s. The Lodge continued to meet in the building until the completion of a new brick lodge in 1940. The Smithfield Woman's Club met in the building from 1917 through 1933 when they also moved to a new brick building. The Woman's Club operated Smithfield's first public library from the large second floor meeting room.

The building meets National Register Criterion C as Smithfield's best mid-nineteenth-century Greek Revival building. The three-bay, pedimented façade features a bracketed frieze and pilasters on plinths. The interior retains original door and window trim consisting of pilasters on plinths topped with bull's eye corner blocks. Intact on the second floor is the large Masonic meeting hall, later used as the town library, with an elliptical vault ceiling. The building retains its original exterior form, materials and workmanship and therefore meets Criteria Consideration B for moved buildings. The building is locally significant for its architecture and as the home the Smithfield Woman's Club. The building also derives significance from its association with the early-twentieth-century public library movement. For these reasons the building meets National Register Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Education.

The Smithfield Masonic Lodge has two periods of significance. The first is ca. 1854, the building's approximate date of construction. The second is ca. 1917 through 1933, which spans the years from when the building was placed on its new site until the Woman's Club moved to their new building.

History of the Building and Its Uses

Fellowship Lodge No. 84 was chartered December 6, 1825 (*Smithfield Herald* 13 January 1973). Real estate records show the Lodge purchased four lots at the corner of Second and Hancock Streets in 1851 for twenty dollars (JT 275). Whether the Lodge constructed a building there or occupied one already present is not certain. Lodge minutes dated October 28, 1854 summarize a building committee report outlining the deteriorated and insufficient condition of the present building. The committee recommended the building be demolished and replaced with "a Building substitute in lieu thereof." The minutes specify the Lodge's desires for their new building.

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“40 feet by 24 feet cutting off at the west end ten feet dividing the width of the same into three parts of eight feet each forming an anti-room in each of the side bases, these rooms to be lathed and plastered to a height of twelve feet from floor, the ceiling forming an elliptical arch with two rows of three pillars each on either side from east to west. The lower room to be finished as follows: ten feet to be cut off from the length of the Building forming from the right hand of the entrance a room say ten feet square. The entrance being in the center of the staircase be lodge room leading up on the left of the entrance with a closet underneath. The stair case to be five feet wide the ceiling of the lower room to be square plain lathing and plastering. The entrance to the lower room to be from the east with steps and railing on each side of same. . . The roof to be a diamond or old fashioned formed roof as we understand it to mean.”

The above description closely matches the dimensions and original interior plan of the Smithfield Masonic Lodge.

Local tradition holds that the building was moved to its current site on the northwest side of Second Street in 1917. However, 1915 Sanborn maps show a structure corresponding with the building footprint and lot placement at the current site, suggesting the move occurred slightly earlier than previously thought. Smithfield lawyer, judge and Lodge member Frederick Holliday Brooks is credited with the move. Judge Brooks used the first floor of the building for his law office and the Masons continued to meet there (Lee interview). The Masons moved to a two-story brick lodge and commercial building at 310 Johnston Street in 1940.¹

Frame and plaster patterns indicate that Brooks removed the original rear, central staircase, and built the present Craftsman-inspired stair in the northwest corner. The side hall was also added at this time, likely to permit access to the second floor without disturbing his first floor law practice. Also to this end, the central entry façade was reconfigured to its current appearance with entries flanking a large central window. Exterior and interior trim was reused for the new entries, and transoms were fashioned from original sash.

¹ In the twentieth century, Lodges that could afford to do so constructed substantial brick buildings in urban settings, often with income-producing commercial space on the first floor. The newer Smithfield Masonic Lodge at 310 Johnston Street is a good example of this trend.

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Lelia Parker Brooks, wife of Judge Brooks, was elected first president of the Smithfield Woman's Club in 1914. The club met at Mrs. Brooks' and other members' homes until 1917 when the lodge's second floor became the club's home. The club also operated a free public library out of the large hall on the second story. A lifelong member of First Presbyterian Church (formerly adjacent to the lodge's North Second Street location, now demolished), Mrs. Brooks taught Sunday school classes in the lodge's first floor meeting room (Lee interview)². Woman's Club meeting minutes state that the Knights of Pythias also met in the building, although the specific dates and rooms used are not known. The Woman's Club and the library left the Smithfield Masonic Lodge at the end of 1932 for a new brick Colonial Revival clubhouse at 405 North Second Street.

Judge Brooks was in a serious traffic accident in 1955 and his law office was closed in 1956 ("Judge"). He died in February 1960. The building was then conveyed to Wallace Ashley and Jean Denny Ashley. Tyson Yates Dobson Jr. purchased the building in 1963. This transfer precipitated additional changes and stylistic additions to the lodge.

On the front elevation, Dobson added a full-façade bracketed pent with peaks over each entry. The pent was removed at an unknown date. The peaks reflected new Colonial Revival-inspired door surrounds; oddly proportioned plywood pediments supported by fluted pilasters. The pediments obscured the entry transoms. On the rear elevation at the north end, a gabled, one-bay, three-quarter height bathroom addition was constructed. The large, front room of the first story was divided into two offices, as was the second floor ceremonial hall. Ceilings were dropped and crown moldings added. In keeping with the Colonial Revival theme, a plywood wainscot decorated with faux panels was added throughout the building.

Dobson retained ownership until 2004 when the building was donated to the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation. Raleigh architect David Maurer purchased and restored the building in 2006. Maurer restored the exterior, removing the bathroom addition and façade entry surrounds. On the interior, the ca. 1915 floor plan was retained on the first floor (although the rear room was divided into kitchen, bath and storage rooms), and the second floor was restored to its original, ca. 1854 configuration. Ceilings were returned to their original heights and the crown molding and plywood wainscot were removed.

History of the Masonic Order in Smithfield/Johnston County

The Masonic Order has its roots in seventeenth-century England. At this time guilds of stonemasons, known as "Operative Masons" or "Free Masons," started to accept as members those who were not stone workers, calling them "Speculative Masons" or

² Judge Brooks was a lifelong member of the First Baptist Church of Smithfield.

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“Accepted Masons.” It was from these groups of “Accepted Masons” that the modern benevolent organization developed. The first Grand Lodge was formed in London, England in 1717.

Freemasonry, as the movement became known, first appeared in the North Carolina colony in the middle of the eighteenth century and attracted outstanding white, male citizens. Historian William S. Powell asserts that most of the colony’s Revolutionary leaders were members of this group. During the difficult years of the post-Revolutionary period, Freemasonry collapsed as did much of the social and institutional framework of North Carolina (Powell 209, 103, 175). Within a few years conditions were improving and the Grand Lodge of Masons reorganized in Tarboro in 1787 (Lefler 244).

Freemasonry has had a presence in Smithfield since 1816 when the Neuse Lodge No. 67 was chartered. Fellowship Lodge No. 84 was chartered on December 6, 1825 (*Masons*). The group’s primary charitable cause was the Oxford Orphanage, established by the North Carolina Grand Lodge in 1858 (Brown Section F 30C).

Not much is known about the specific activities of the Lodge during the building’s period of significance since Lodge minutes have not been made public. Membership lists, however, are available and reveal that many of Smithfield’s white business and political leaders participated in Lodge life.

History of the Smithfield Woman’s Club and Library

The national Women’s Club movement began in 1868 when journalist Jane Cunningham Croly and other female journalists attempted to attend a dinner at an all-male press club in New York City honoring British novelist Charles Dickens. The women were denied admittance and in response, formed a club for the “collective elevation and advancement” of women. Clubs were organized nation-wide for the social and political betterment of white middle class women. In 1890, Croly extended an invitation to women’s clubs throughout the United States to attend a ratification convention in New York City. Sixty-one clubs attended and the national umbrella organization, the General Federation of Women’s Clubs (GFWC), was formed. By 1920, one million American women belonged to a Women’s Club (Evans 150). The GFWC was active on a wide range of issues pertaining to domestic life, culture, education, civic involvement and world peace, and provided national leadership on issues such as child labor, suffrage, and access to birth control. Each club’s agenda suited the needs and mores of the local community. Local chapters in conservative areas, particularly in the South, tended to focus on self-development and literacy programs. Membership in a local club was a socially acceptable way for white middle class women to be active in the public realm. While the leading men of the community were likely to socialize and network through fraternal service organizations

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such as the Masons, the wives of these men were likely members of the local women's club. For instance, Lelia Parker Brooks, the first president of the Smithfield Woman's Club (SWC), was active on a wide range of civic projects in Smithfield throughout her life ("Mrs. F.H. Brooks").

The Smithfield Woman's Club had its origins in a preceding organization, the Smithfield Woman's Betterment Association. The SWC was chartered by the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs in September 1914. The new club held its first meetings in members' residences, but by March 1915, the club rented a "room over Mr. G.E. Thornton's Music Store" at 110 South Third Street (Broadhurst; SWC minutes January 1915). Club activities focused on providing a library for the town, school sanitation, "Lyceum" programs (essentially adult education courses), and the beautification of public properties such as the courthouse and the town cemetery.

The minutes of the first meeting of the SWC at Mrs. Brooks' residence in January of 1915 recorded a discussion of the need for a public library in Smithfield. At this time there was no state-level agency responsible for local libraries, and no federal or state money available for funding. It was not until 1941 that the North Carolina Legislature passed an appropriation for "State Aid to Public Libraries" (Batten 20). The formation and operation of public libraries is one area in which the women's club movement had a deep and lasting impact in North Carolina and nationally. By the 1930s, Women's Clubs had founded 474 public libraries in the United States. The American Library Association credits Women's Clubs with establishing seventy-five percent of America's public libraries (<http://www.gfcw.org/>)

Prior to 1915, the Smithfield Woman's Betterment Association maintained a small book collection within the Turlington Graded School. This library operated with the help of student assistants Ava Myatt, Ruth Sanders, Ione Abell and Annie Ihrle (Myatt). When the SWC was formed in 1915, these young women joined the club and continued their involvement with the ever-expanding library project. As members of the club's "library department" the young women, with the help of other club members, operated the library from the room above Thornton's Music Store between 1915 and 1917, before moving to the spacious second floor hall in the Smithfield Masonic Lodge (SWC minutes January 1915). The well-lit meeting hall, with its high ceilings, ample floor space, and downtown location was perfect for the expanding collection. When the library re-opened in the lodge it possessed a collection of 500 books. The town showed its commitment to the library by giving the club fifty dollars to purchase books and shelves (Broadhurst manuscript). Club records from 1917 contain a receipt for the purchase of an Encyclopedia Britannica. The next year the town's appropriation doubled to one hundred dollars (SCW minutes January 1918). Club members shared librarian duties on a rotating, monthly basis.

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The SWC provided invaluable library service to the town of Smithfield until 1940. The second floor of the Smithfield Masonic Building was the library's home from 1917 to 1933 when the Woman's Club and library moved to a new building at 405 North Second Street. The library was moved from the clubhouse to the American Legion Hut for unknown reasons in April 1937. At that time, the first paid librarian was hired, a WPA worker named Bettie Sanders (Batten 8).³ The library was at that location briefly before moving again, this time to the Presbyterian Sunday School Annex. In 1940, Johnston County appointed a Library Board of Trustees. The board purchased the Annex and moved it to a lot on Johnston Street. At this time the SWC relinquished responsibility for the library, officially ending the group's twenty-five year involvement with what would become the Smithfield Public Library.

³ Beginning in June of 1937, the WPA and the North Carolina Library Commission provided librarians for school and libraries, as well as books and bookmobiles across North Carolina.

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Architecture Context

Lodges

Secular voluntary organizations such as the Freemasons, Grange, and Odd Fellows provided the nineteenth-century man with opportunities for self-improvement and socialization. Often these organizations performed charitable works as well. Lodges often met at the local schoolhouse or church, but many constructed buildings for their own use. Lodge buildings are found in both rural and town settings throughout North Carolina. While lodge exteriors vary depending on location, means, and stylistic fashion, interior plans often share room arrangements that reflected Masonic use.

The essential element of the Masonic Lodge is the assembly hall used for rites and rituals. Ceremonies are closed to non-members, and therefore these rooms are often located on an upper story to ensure privacy. A smaller antechamber may be attached to the main hall. The hall is commonly accessed by a private entrance and stair. Halls may be decorated with architectural details, special furniture, or symbolic art such as murals depicting the characteristic Masonic compass and square or Egyptian motifs. If decorative painting was present at the Smithfield Lodge it has been lost to time and alterations, but the vaulted ceiling emphasizes the significance of this room. In keeping with Masonic themes of public service, non-ceremonial spaces and those on the lower floors are often devoted to community uses, such as religious worship or education. Particularly in cities and towns, the first floor is often rented as commercial space, as is the case with the 1940 Smithfield Masonic Lodge at 310 Johnston Street. The Smithfield Masonic Lodge encompasses many of the features that typify the Masonic Lodge building type,

The loss of all but two of Johnston County's frame lodge buildings makes a comprehensive local understanding of the lodge building type impossible (Van Dolsen interview). It is unknown how many lodges populated the landscape, but given the prevalence of fraternal associations in both black and white communities, it is likely there were many. However, there are surviving nineteenth-century lodges in neighboring Wake County to the west, and in Granville County, located north of Wake County. Like Johnston County, both Wake and Granville counties are within North Carolina's Piedmont region. A comparison of four known nineteenth-century lodges in Johnston, Wake, and Granville counties provides some context for the building type.

Nineteenth-century lodges appear in two common forms. The "dwelling form" is a two-story, side-gable or hipped roof building resembling a residence. A good example of this type is the Mount Energy Lodge in Granville County (listed as a contributing resource in the Mount Energy National Register Historic District, 1988). Constructed around 1850, the frame lodge is a two-story, three-bay, hipped-roof building. Its single-pile "I-house" form is

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a familiar sight on the Piedmont landscape. The ca. 1854 Holly Springs Masonic Lodge is Wake County's only surviving antebellum lodge. The frame, two-story, three-bay building is surmounted by a side-gable roof with end returns. A hipped-roof porch spans the façade. Both the Mount Energy Lodge and the Holly Springs Lodge have irregular facades reflecting floor plans with large meeting rooms. Both buildings are evocative of nineteenth-century domestic forms.

The second form, the front-gable lodge, was more common than the dwelling form by the twentieth century. Five of Wake County's eight surviving rural lodges are front-gable buildings. The front-gable form was common in the nineteenth century and beyond for public-use buildings such as schoolhouses, rural churches and stores. Junior Hall, in the Thanksgiving community, is Johnston County's only known surviving rural lodge (Van Dolsen interview). The two-story, front-gable building is in extremely deteriorated condition. Archers Lodge, in Wilder Township, was built ca. 1870 and was demolished in the 1990s. This simple frame, two-story structure had a front-facing, pedimented gable with a louvered vent embellished with the Masonic compass and square symbol. A general store originally occupied the first floor; the Masonic chambers were above.⁴

The Smithfield Masonic Lodge, with its Greek Revival façade, does not fall into the simple front and side-gable categories described above. Perhaps the most apt comparison is with the Pittsboro Masonic Lodge in Chatham County (National Register, 1977). Pittsboro Masonic Lodge is a two-story, three-bay, temple-form building with a flush-sheathed pediment and a full-façade recessed portico supported by four massive, battered square posts. This building began as a smaller structure in the 1840s. It was enlarged to its current temple-form Greek Revival appearance in 1849 (Gadski Section 7:1). This impressive edifice speaks to the social significance and prominence of the Masons in local life. The Masonic lodges at Pittsboro and Smithfield are the only Greek Revival lodges known to survive in the Piedmont region.

The Smithfield Masonic Lodge compares favorably to the lodge in Pittsboro. Both buildings share design features typical of lodge buildings such as large private ceremonial spaces

⁴ At this point it merits mention that many lodges, both nineteenth- and twentieth-century, allowed schools, churches, clubs or commercial enterprises to meet in their buildings, most often on the first floor. The second floor, being more private and restricted, was the Lodge's meeting and ceremonial space. At Mount Energy and Holly Springs, schools utilized the first floor. The first floor of the Smithfield Masonic Lodge, after 1915, was used by a Sunday school class and for offices. The renting of unused rooms generated income for building maintenance and the group's charitable activities. By permitting schools and other groups to use their building, the Lodge could fulfill its mission of good works. The architectural development of many lodges indicates that the moving of walls and creation of partitions to accommodate multiple users was frequent.

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on the second floor and public, multi-user space below. Both buildings derive their architectural significance from their well-executed temple-form facades. The choice of the temple-form and Greek Revival detailing speaks to the Masons' view of their own status within their communities.

Mid-Nineteenth-Century and Greek Revival Architecture in Smithfield

The influence of the Greek Revival style is seen in North Carolina's residential and institutional buildings from the 1830s through the 1860s. While there are some architect-designed, high-style examples in the state, such as A.J. Davis' 1849 Playmakers Theater at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (National Historic Landmark), vernacular interpretations of the style pervade. In many cases the buildings are not Greek Revival per se, but rather simple mid-nineteenth century forms displaying elements of the style such as columns, trim, or Greek-inspired porches. It is important to differentiate between a true Greek Revival building and a mid-nineteenth century building with Greek detailing. The former being pattern book-based buildings, often architect-designed, and found in larger cities or in institutional settings, and the latter being vernacular, regional interpretations based on these high-style examples. The exterior form, detailing, symmetry and proportion of the Smithfield Masonic Lodge make it an excellent example of back-country Greek Revival architecture.

Smithfield has five recorded buildings known to date from the mid-nineteenth century (Shoemaker 5). Only one of these buildings, the Bingham House (ca. 1845-1850) at 119 South Fourth Street, remains on its original site. A typical example of a common form with limited Greek Revival detail, the two-story, side-gable Bingham House has pilasters at each corner. The pilasters "dress" the corners and simulate the columns that may be found on a true Greek Revival dwelling. The Hastings House (1853, 202 South Front Street) is another two-story, side-gable dwelling. Its two-tiered, pedimented porch supported by fluted square columns dominates the façade. The Johnston House at 407 North Third Street dates from the mid-nineteenth century. However, the vaulted, one-bay entry porch, novelty shutters and side sun porch, all added in the 1940s, give the two-story, side-gable house a Colonial Revival appearance.

The Masonic Lodge differs from the buildings described above in both form and ornamentation. The lodge, with its projecting pedimented front gable, is reminiscent of the ancient temple form that is the basis of the Greek Revival style. A two-part, classically inspired frieze runs under the eaves, and is another distinctive feature of the lodge and a hallmark of the Greek Revival style. The upper portion of the frieze is ornamented by repeating brackets. Capped pilasters on plinths are at each corner. The building's symmetrical, temple-form façade, as well as its carefully rendered detailing, make it one of

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a kind in Smithfield. It is an impressive building for its time and place and no doubt made a statement about the importance of the Masons within the community.

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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Smithfield Masonic Lodge is marked in a heavy, black line on the accompanying survey map drawn to a scale of 1" = 20'. The parcel is .13-acres.

Boundary Justification

The National Register boundary includes the .13-acre legal parcel on which the building sits. This nominated parcel has been the acreage associated with the building since it was moved to this location ca. 1915.

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Photos

Photo 1: Front/east and side/south elevations

Photo 2: Front/east and side/north elevations

Photo 3: Rear/west and side/north elevations

Photo 4: Rear/west and side/south elevations

Photo 5: Side hall looking west from entry toward stair

Photo 6: Office interior including entry and hall window to north

Photo 7: Side hall looking east from stair toward entry

Photo 8: First floor front/east room including entry and south window

Photo 9: Typical window surround

Photo 10: Detail of stair from second story landing

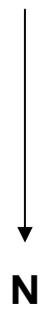
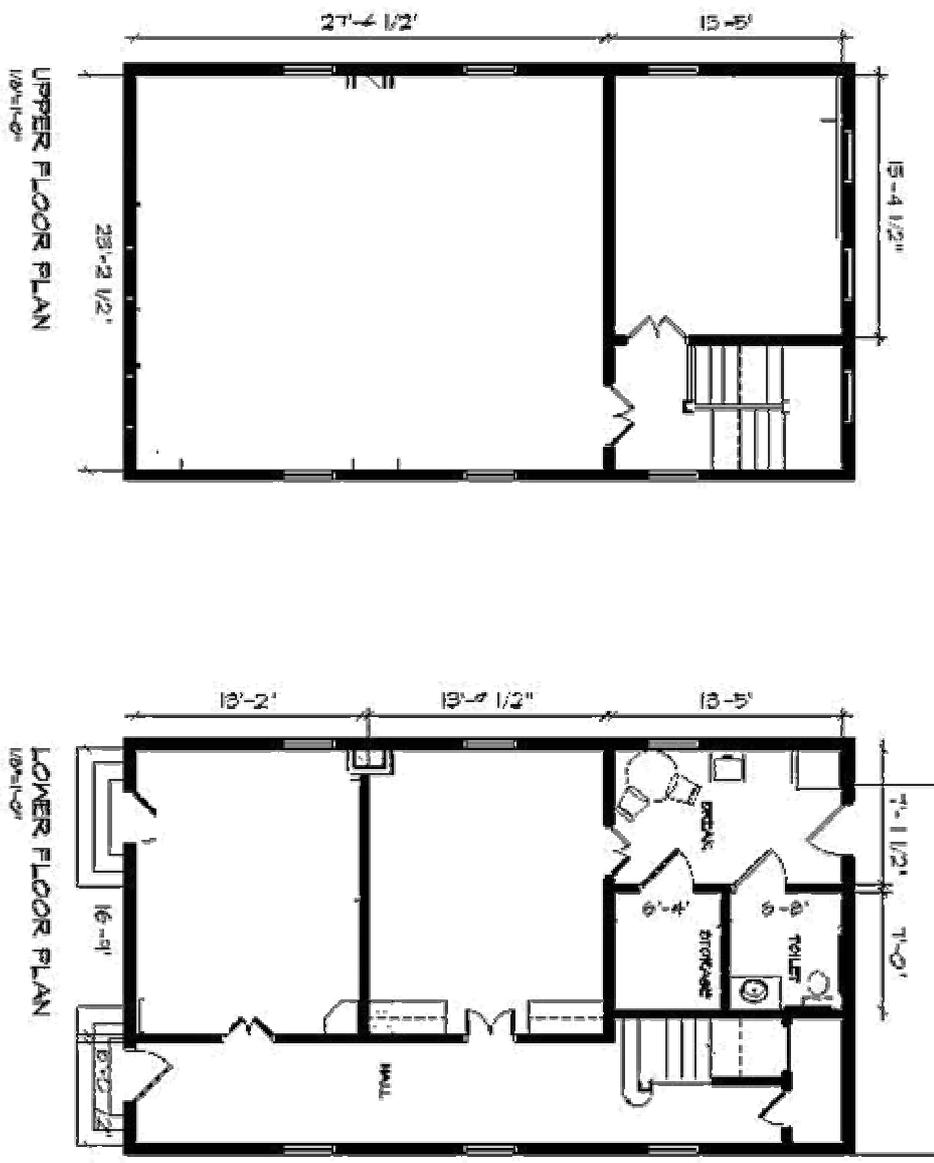
Photo 11: Second floor ceremonial hall looking east toward front elevation windows

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Smithfield Masonic Lodge Interior Floor Plans
115 North Second Street, Smithfield, Johnston County, North Carolina
May 2007