

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

received APR 4 1984
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Masonic Temple Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 427 South Blount Street not for publication

city, town Raleigh vicinity of

state North Carolina 27601 code 037 county Wake code 183

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Widow's Son No. 4 Lodge and Excelsior No. 21 Lodge c/o William Johns

street & number 900 Hadley Road

city, town Raleigh vicinity of state North Carolina 27610

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wake County Courthouse

street & number Fayetteville Street Mall

city, town Raleigh state North Carolina 27601

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title An Architectural and Historical Inventory of Raleigh, North Carolina
has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date published 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records The Raleigh Historic Properties Commission, 1 Mimosa St.

city, town Raleigh state North Carolina 27604

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Masonic Temple Building at 427 South Blount Street is a rectangular three-story flat roofed structure. It is of wood-frame construction with a brick veneer laid in common bond. The tall second and third story segmental-arched windows on the front (west) facade and the south facade feature raised brick partial surrounds and are accented with recessed rectangular panels under each window. These details, inspired by the Italianate style, help to relieve an otherwise severe facade. The first story south facade openings and the north facade windows are flat arched openings with sandstone lintels. The first story of the front facade is defined by a metal modillion cornice. It turns at the southwest corner of the building and terminates at the ground floor cut away corner entrance. This corner is supported by a cast-iron fluted column with a modified Corinthian capital. All of the features of this building are absolutely typical of those found on hundreds of North Carolina buildings of this type and this era.

The present main entrance to the building is in the center of the west facade. Modern double glass doors with a glass transom have been added, however they are unobtrusive. The second and third story windows are closed in order to accommodate the building's Masonic functions. Space on the ground floor accommodates a church and a school of hairdressing. The brick exterior of the building was painted; within the past year or eighteen months, it has been sandblasted.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		
				Black History		

Specific dates 1907 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Masonic Temple Building at 427 South Blount Street in Raleigh is representative of the social and charitable structure within the African-American Community in the years following the Civil War. Built in 1907, it housed the Widow's Son Lodge No. 4, established in 1867 by Bishop James W. Hood, a prominent Black missionary and social leader in Raleigh; and the Excelsior Lodge No. 21, established in 1879. Several prominent post-Civil War Black leaders were associated with these fraternal and benevolent associations. By locating the building in southeast Raleigh, the Masons helped to draw other Black institutions, businesses and residents into the neighborhood and helped to create a close-knit, vital Black society there. The building itself is a simple three story brick box with Italianate details that houses commercial space on the first floor, office space on the second floor and an assembly hall on the third floor.

Criteria for Evaluation

The Masonic Temple Building at 427 South Blount Street is significant to the history of Afro-American development in Raleigh and meets the following criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

- A. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history in that it houses the first black fraternal and benevolent association founded in Raleigh and was a social and institutional gathering place for black citizens during the early years of the 20th century; and,
- B. It is associated with the lives of persons significant to our past in that the founder of the Widow's Son Lodge No. 4 was Bishop W. Hood, a prominent missionary from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in the late 19th century, Stewart Ellison, Wake County Representative in the General Assembly, and James H. Young, a publisher; and,
- C. It is a building that is a distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction, however it embodies characteristics of its type and period in that it is a typical late 19th - early 20th century detached commercial building found in many North Carolina cities.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Raleigh West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7	7	1	3	6	2	0	3	9	6	1	2	7	5
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property being nominated consists solely of the structure as shown on the enclosed map.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charlotte Vestal Brown, PhD; William Bushong, Consultants

organization Raleigh Historic Properties Com. date November, 1983

street & number One Mimosa Street telephone 919-832-7238

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina 27604

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. Rice, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer date January 12, 1984

For NPS use only

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

for Allores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 5/3/84

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 8

Page 1

Statement of Significance

The Masonic Temple Building at the northeast corner of Blount and Cabarrus streets in Raleigh is an important African American historic landmark. This structure was the first lodge built by Raleigh's earliest black fraternal orders and for seventy-five years has contributed to the economic and social betterment of Raleigh's black community.

African Americans in Raleigh, like many freemen in the South, were quick to establish fraternal and benevolent societies to provide aid and assistance to their needy brethren and to improve the social life of the community. 1 A prominent figure in the development of black fraternal organization in Raleigh was Bishop James W. Hood of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. He came to the state from Pennsylvania as a missionary but also took an active role in the development of political and organizational activities of blacks. He served as a member of the Reconstruction Constitutional Convention and as a delegate to the National Republican Conventions of 1872 and 1876. Bishop Hood played a significant role in the establishment of black masonry in North Carolina and in 1867 organized the Eureka Lodge No. 30 in Fayetteville and the Widow's Son Lodge No. 4 in Raleigh. In 1870 the black masonic lodges of Wilmington, New Bern, Fayetteville, and Raleigh met in Wilmington and united to become the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of North Carolina with Hood as the organization's first grandmaster. 2

As the first black masonic order in the capital and only Prince Hall lodge in the area, the Widow's Son Lodge drew many of the city's prominent blacks into its organization and provided a forum for the development of political leadership within Raleigh's African American community. Black leaders such as Stewart Ellison, who served in the state legislature as a representative from Wake County, and James H. Young, publisher of the black newspaper, The Raleigh Gazette, emerged from the ranks of the Widow's Son Lodge to take active leadership roles. Both men eventually served as grandmasters of the Prince Hall Lodge of North Carolina and earned the respect of their race throughout the state. 3

Black masonry grew at a rapid pace in Raleigh and by 1879 a second lodge formed under the name Excelsior Lodge No. 21. This new organization shared lodge facilities with the Widow's Son Lodge at the corner of Hargett and Fayetteville streets on the second floor of the Raleigh Savings Bank until the bank was demolished. 4 In 1907 the lodges purchased a lot on Blount Street and built their present three-story building. The structure was planned as a facility for social gatherings and lodge meetings on the second and third floors with commercial space allotted on the ground floor.

The location of the new building was significant to its subsequent history because it was within close proximity to the heart of what became the black business district in the twentieth century. The area bounding Moore Square (National Register of Historic Places), especially Hargett Street, developed

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 8

Page 2

into the hub of the black community, and the Masonic Temple Building contributed to this clustering of black business and entertainment by renting the lodge hall for dances and providing store space for a funeral parlor, a barber shop, a drug store, and offices for black professionals. 5

The vitality of the hall hinged on the existence of a separate black business and social center created by Jim Crow laws, but as the forces of integration combined with subsequent economic decline pulled black entrepreneurs out of the area in the 1960s, the desirability of the location suffered. These events have led to its present condition as a partially occupied building. 6 The structure has provided a physical expression of the idea of united black community throughout its history and today is still symbolic of the role it has played in the betterment of black economic and social life in the capital.

FOOTNOTES

1 For a discussion of black organizational activity in Raleigh and four other Southern cities following the Civil War see Harold N. Rabinowitz, Race Relations in the Urban South Oxford Press, New York, 1978. especially pp. 227-230.

2 Centennial Issue, The Masonic Journal Volume X, Number 1 (Fall Quarter, 1970): 2-7.

3 Ibid. See also the biographical sketch of Stewart Ellison in the Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

4 See Raleigh City Directories, 1880-1881; 1883; 1887; 1899-1900. Edwards and Broughton, Raleigh. located at the State Library; and Chamber of Commerce, Raleigh, The Capital Raleigh: Chamber of Commerce, 1907, p. 15.

5 Ibid.

6 The Hanover Fire Insurance Company of New York, Policy Number 66988, August 1, 1921 to August 1, 1922. (Copy in the files of Survey Office NCDAH) and the Annual Report of the Raleigh Masonic Benevolent Association, November 1, 1926 to November 1, 1927. For an account of the growth of Hargett Street as the black business center of Raleigh see Wilmoth A. Carter, The Urban Negro in the South Vantage Press, New York, 1967.