

24. MASONIC TEMPLE

1500 J Street (1917)



Landmark Commission Resolution: June 19, 1995

Designated by City Council: July 25, 1995

Description: This tall, two-story, box like building has stucco walls, and a flat roof with a large penthouse. Around the top of the front and right sides, facing the streets, is a fine, very wide, classical cornice with elaborate modillions, and egg and dart molding, and frieze. On the second story in the front there are four large, round-topped, deeply recessed windows. These windows have three vertical lights and three in the transoms where the glass is curved to fit the arches. The entrance has a wide opening with a segmented arch and curved hood supported by fancy, curved consoles. An iron gate separates the entrance from a vestibule.

Historic Significance: This Neoclassical structure was originally a Masonic Hall. The first local Masonic Lodge was formed in Tuolumne City in 1870 and moved to the new town of Modesto in March of 1871. Various rooms and buildings housed the Mason until 1916, when it was decided new quarters were needed. On August 11, 1917, the cornerstone for the building was laid. A time capsule was deposited within the cornerstone containing names of the officers and members of Stanislaus Lodge No. 206, Modesto Chapter No. 49, and Electa Chapter No. 72, copies of the Evening News and the Morning Herald, the city charter, and the names of the Masonic Hall Building Association members.

This building was erected in 1917 for \$30,000. The first story contained an auditorium, a reception room, a ladies' parlor, a billiard room and kitchen. The second floor was exclusively for lodge activities.

Architectural Significance: This building is one of the few remaining examples of this style in Modesto. The Neoclassical style is based primarily on Greek and, to a lesser extent, the Roman architectural orders. Symmetrically arranged buildings of monumental proportions finished with a smooth or polished stone exterior distinguishes this style of architecture.