

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Bryant Masonic LodgeOther names/site number: Bryant American Legion Post 37

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. LocationStreet & number: 204 E Main StCity or town: Bryant State: South Dakota County: HamlinNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D_____
Signature of certifying official/Title:_____
Date_____
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal GovernmentIn my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria._____
Signature of commenting official:_____
Date_____
Title :_____
State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

0

buildings

0

0

sites

0

0

structures

0

0

objects

1

0

Total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Italian Renaissance

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Stone, Walls: Brick, Stucco, Roof: Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Bryant Masonic Lodge is a rectangular two-part commercial block structure with a flat roof, and Italian Renaissance Style influences. It's oriented north-south with a small alley along the eastern side, located at the intersection of Main Ave. and N. Underwood St. The building is currently owned by the Bryant American Legion Post 37, which occupies the ground floor.

The lodge retains good overall integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship and materials, which leads to a high integrity of feeling and association. On the exterior, significant features include the arched windows subdivided by pillars on the second floor, the roof-line parapet, and the textured rusticated brickwork on the first story, all of which are features of the Italian Renaissance Style. Additionally, the window openings remain intact, and while boarded up on the exterior, from the interior it is possible to see they retain their original fixtures including transoms and fanlights. The main entrance also retains the original door.

On the interior, significant features include the original floorplan, the six-panel doors, wood millwork such as window and door trims, baseboards, wood floors, the wood paneling underneath the staircase, the wood and frosted glass partition between the meeting room and dining room, original light fixtures, and the stage located on the second floor. Minor alterations have occurred on the interior, including the installation of drop ceilings and modern lighting, and the application of wallpaper printed to look like wood. The second floor in particular shows signs of deterioration in the ceiling, and water damage is present throughout the building. Legion members report that the roof was replaced in 2018. Despite these alterations and slight deterioration, the Bryant Masonic Lodge presents very good integrity.

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Narrative Description

Location and Setting

The Masonic Lodge is located on the east 75 feet of lots 5, 6 and 7 of block 12, on the northeastern corner of the intersection of Main Ave. and Underwood St. in Bryant. The lot has patches of grass which surround the lodge on the west, north and east sides. The south façade faces Main Ave. and a concrete sidewalk.

The lodge is on the eastern end of the commercial district, which historically ran east to west at an angle perpendicular to the rail line. The surrounding area retains a some of its commercial enterprises to the west of the lodge, while to the east lie primarily residences. Across the intersection from the lodge is the Bryant auditorium and a local government office is directly across the street. The area has always had a mix of commercial and residential buildings.

Exterior

South Elevation

The main façade to the south has red brick laid in a stretcher bond. This is not typically used for solid walls, so the wall is most likely a brick veneer. All the original openings remain unchanged. The entry door located on the westernmost part of the façade is original and retains its original trim. Over the door there is a transom window and two boarded-up sidelights. The sidelights are covered from the exterior, but from the interior it is possible to see the original trims that divide the sidelights into small square panels adjacent to the transom and two elongated windows that reach approximately half way down the door. A plaque is present to the right of the entrance door commemorating the transfer of the building from the Masons to the Legion, reading: "This building was given to Bryant American Legion Post 37 by Bryant Masonic Lodge 118 in 1982." A round American Legion emblem is also affixed above the entrance. To the east of the door, there are two large street-level windows that have one large fixed pane each with a three-pane transom above that is boarded up to the exterior. These windows also retain their original trim and fixtures. A stringcourse pattern throughout the first-floor story creates a textured surface, with one brick course recessed from the façade every four courses. The base of the building is stone, which acts as a sill for the two large windows on the first floor. The first and second stories are divided by what appears to be a stone sill that runs the length of the façade and is painted white.

The second story has three slightly recessed window bays with arched windows divided by pillars. The three rounded arch windows on the second story are boarded up but are intact behind the wood boards. These windows retain their original fixtures, including shutters, which cover approximately half of the window, and round fanlights with grid-like mullions. On the exterior, each window has a stepped brick arch that ends on a set of stepped pilasters located inside each bay. Also located in each bay are stepped dentils above each arch.

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Right above the bays there is a slightly projecting brick course. Above that, there is a cornice near the top of the structure with a stone course painted white and dentils underneath it. The roofline is capped with a stone course also painted white. Centered at the top of the building is a stone emblem with the Masonic abbreviations: "A. F. (Masonic symbol) A.M."

East and West Elevations

The east and west elevations are utilitarian. They are both covered in stucco finish and have no openings.

North Elevation

The northern elevation (rear) of the building is also utilitarian and is covered in the same stucco finish with some visible cracking. There is an electric meter present, as well as the gutter system. There are two sets of paired windows on the second story with very slight arches and stucco sills, which are boarded up. From the interior however, it is possible to see that the windows retain their original trim and fixtures and are one-over-one. On the first story, there are two single windows with slight arches and stucco sills that are also boarded up. Here too the original windows are intact behind the boards. All four windows have a slightly projecting sill. On the westernmost side of the façade there is one entrance door with a slight arch that is also boarded up.

Interior

First Floor

The main entrance leads to a small vestibule. As mentioned, from the interior, it is possible to see the original main door transom and sidelight windows which are boarded up on the exterior. Right across the door, there is a section of original wood paneling on the underside of the stairway. An entrance to the east of the vestibule allows access to the two main rooms on the first floor. The south room, which faces Main Ave., is set up as a meeting room, while the room to the north is set up as a dining or event room. The meeting room allows access to a restroom and the staircase that leads to the second floor. The staircase is framed by a large arch. The original banister and baseboard of the stairs are still visible, but the steps have been covered with linoleum. The meeting room retains the original six-panel doors, wood window and transoms, door trims, baseboards, wainscoting, and wood floors.

The two main rooms are separated by the original partition. This partition has a wood trim and central double doors, with one raised wood panel at the top, a rectangular frosted glass pane in the middle, and two small rectangular raised wood panels at the bottom. These doors are in good condition and remain functional. On each side of the door there is a window with six panes of frosted glass and thin wood mullions.

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The dining room is longer than the meeting room and also retains the original wainscoting, wood floors, and doors. From the dining hall, it is possible to access a closet space, bathrooms, and a small galley kitchen located at the north end. The kitchen has an access point with a small pass-through opening with narrow countertop. Both these retain the original wood trim. There is some water damage on the ceiling of the kitchen.

Both the meeting room and dining hall have had drop ceilings installed. Wallpaper printed to look like wood is installed on the west wall of the dining hall, in the vestibule, and in the kitchen. The lighting fixtures have been updated to fluorescent lighting and ceiling fans with lights. The interior wood millwork including trim, paneling, wainscoting, and baseboards remain unchanged. The original wood flooring is in good condition and six-panel wood doors are still present and functional.

Second Floor

The enclosed stairway leading to the second floor is curved. The steps have linoleum surfaces, but the original wood baseboards and handrail remain intact. The second floor is largely unused and has retained almost all of its original details and layout. There are two distinct spaces on the second floor. The landing and closets occupy the southern (front) end of the building, while the northern (back) end of the second floor is the main hall.

The steps emerge on the southern end of the building. Here, there is an ornate closet with a platform and a balustrade on top, and a window from which it's possible to see the main hall. The closet is located approximately in the center of the space, facing the arched windows that look out onto Main Ave. The ornate arched window millwork, interior shutters, and hardware is intact. The interior shutters are present only on the lowest portion of the window. The windows are boarded up on the exterior southern elevation but are intact on the interior. The closet is intact, including its original wood paneling, balustrade, and narrow two-panel door leading up to the platform. The woodwork is unaltered and is in very good condition. Two angled walls draw the eye to the closet and to its platform on either side. These angled walls have original six-panel doors and trim. The rooms behind these doors have a trapezoidal configuration and were originally also used as closet spaces. Both these closets lead to the main hall.

The main hall is very characteristic of Masonic Lodges and is where ceremonies were performed. There are two small raised areas on both ends of the main hall with carpeted steps. One raised carpeted step continues around the perimeter of the room. At the northern end of the hall the raised section is centered in-between two windows. The windows on the northern wall are boarded up on the exterior, but from the interior is it possible to see the original framing. The ceiling in the main hall is deteriorated, and the wood rafters are visible. A drop ceiling was installed over it, which is also in a state of disrepair. There are several original ceiling light fixtures still present along the walls. The chair rails and baseboards are original and painted the same color as the walls. On the southern end of the hall, there are two entry doors. The six-panel doors and trim are original. These doors lead to the pass-through closets.

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Historic Integrity

The Byrant Masonic Lodge retains very good integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship and materials. The building was never moved, and the surrounding area has retained its historic mixture of residential and commercial properties. The exterior façade facing Main Ave. is intact and retains the original Italian Renaissance influences as evidenced by the arched windows, roof-line parapet, and rusticated first story. The window and door openings remain intact, and while they are covered on the exterior, from the interior it is possible to see they still retain their original fixtures.

The floorplan of the building has remained intact as there are no additions or significant alterations. Significant interior features include the original wood windows and transoms, six-panel doors, wood baseboards, wood floors, wood paneling underneath the staircase, wood and frosted glass partition between the meeting room and dining room, original light fixtures, and the wood paneled closet located on the second floor. Overall the Byrant Masonic Lodge presents good integrity and conveys historic significance.

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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 grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1911-1969

Significant Dates

1911

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Bryant Masonic Lodge is locally significant under **Criterion A** in the context of social history for its association with the local chapter of the Masonic Lodge. The building exemplifies the important role fraternal organizations played in encouraging social order, moral character, and charitable endeavors. The Bryant Masonic Lodge organized community wide events and provided gender-exclusive socialization opportunities for the newly-settled region. For these reasons, the Masonic Lodge served as an important contributor to social development in Bryant.

The lodge is also significant under **Criterion C** as it is locally significant for its architecture. The building is a good example of the Italian Renaissance style and the only building of this style in Bryant. Its façade presents the style's key elements, which include strong division of floors with differing window types, a rusticated first story, a parapet roof, and arched windows divided by pillars.

The building's period of significance is from 1911 to 1969. Per National Register guidelines the building doesn't convey sufficient significance to go past the fifty-year cut off. The structure was originally built for the Masonic Lodge and was transferred to the American Legion in 1980s. Overall, the building presents good integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship and materials and continues to convey its historic and architectural significance.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Development of Bryant

The Great Dakota Boom of 1878 to 1887 was a period of unprecedented growth in the Dakota Territory, and contributed to the settlement of this area. Settlers poured into the territory as the railroads stretched across the plains. Over two thousand miles of railroad tracks were built during this period. In Dakota Territory, transportation systems were the most important factor for the settlement and growth of towns. The railroads brought new settlers, visitors, mail, and carried the crops to market, all crucial for communities to succeed.¹ People were further encouraged to settle by advertising from the territorial immigration commission and the discovery of gold in the Black Hills.²

Establishing towns in the Dakota Territory was a risky venture carried out by entrepreneurs, town site companies, and railroads. Individuals and companies relied on well-established strategies from the eastern regions they had come through earlier to found and develop towns. One key strategy was for town site promoters to lure railways in certain locations by offering incentives like free right-of-way and

¹ Mark Hufstetler and Michael Bedeau, *South Dakota's Railroads: An Historic Context* (Butte, Montana: n.p., 2007), 4.

² James F. Hamburg, "Railroads and the Settlement of South Dakota During the Great Dakota Boom, 1878-1887," *South Dakota History* Vol. 5, No. 2 (1975): 165-178.

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depot land.³ Towns passed over by the railroad often died, and the residents would move to towns located on a railroad route, or in some cases relocate the town itself near a railroad. In South Dakota, many towns were established by railroad subsidiary companies. During the Great Dakota Boom these companies platted 138 of the 285 total towns platted.⁴ Their objective in creating these towns was primarily to control business along their lines. The towns were trade centers for the surrounding farmland.⁵

The Milwaukee Land Company was formed in 1881 as a subsidiary of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad. The railroad utilized the company as a marketing tool for the land that was being acquired in their westward expansion.⁶ They would often advertise land along their newly-built lines promising individuals they could double their investment in just a few years.⁷ To motivate settlers further, the Milwaukee Land Company would offer rebates for the cost of breaking land within one year of purchase. This practice was extremely successful.⁸

Hamlin County was created in the 1870s it developed due to the continued railroad construction. By the 1890s, the county population had grown to over four thousand.⁹ The first post office was located about three miles from Bryant in Elkhorn.¹⁰ Bryant is located in Hamlin County in the valley of the Big Sioux River in the northeastern region of present-day South Dakota. Bryant was formed in 1887 when the Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul Railroad built its line through the southwestern corner of Hamlin County and platted the town.¹¹ In the same year the railroad depot was constructed. At one time the town had two passenger trains and one freight train a day.¹² The town grew quickly, and even competed for the county seat against the nearby towns of Castlewood and Estelline.¹³ Bryant was named after an official of the Milwaukee Land Company, the promoter of the town site.¹⁴ It was common practice to name a town after a railroad official, or his friends and family.¹⁵

In the nineteenth century, it was common for wealthy Americans to invest in western land or frontier industries instead of the stock market. Buying and selling land could be very lucrative.¹⁶ John E.

³ A *New South Dakota History*, ed. Harry F. Thompson (Sioux Falls: Center for Western Studies, 2005), 157-158.

⁴ James F. Hamburg, "Railroads and the Settlement of South Dakota During the Great Dakota Boom, 1878-1887." *South Dakota History* Vol. 5, No. 2 (1975): 172-174.

⁵ John C. Hudson, "Towns of the Western Railroads," *Great Plains Quarterly* Vol. 2, No. 1 (1982): 41-54.

⁶ Stanley Johnson, *The Milwaukee Road's Western Extension: The Building of a Transcontinental Railroad* (Coeur d'Alene, ID: Museum of North Idaho, 2007), 15.

⁷ Milwaukee Road Advertisement, "Chapter 3 – A Leap of Faith," In *The Milwaukee Road's Western Extension: The Building of a Transcontinental Railroad*, by Stanley Johnson, 67.

⁸ August Derleth, *The Milwaukee Road: Its First Hundred Years* (New York: Creative Age Press, 1948), 127.

⁹ Hamlin Historical Committee, *Hamlin County: 1878 – 1979* (n.p., 1979), 4, 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹² *Bryant, S.D. Centennial, 1886-1986, June 27-28-29: Biggest Little City in the Northwest* (n.p., 1986), 4.

¹³ Donald Dean Parker, *History of Our County and State: Hamlin County* (Brookings: South Dakota State College, 1963), 61.

¹⁴ "Early County History," *SD Journal of County Government*, General Subject Files (Vertical Files). n.p.

¹⁵ *New South Dakota History*, 174.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 159.

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Underwood and his sister Mrs. Eliza Young, pioneering residents of Bryant originally from Ontario, Canada were two such investors.¹⁷ John filed a homestead certificate consisting of one hundred and sixty acres. In 1887, he sold part of his land to the Milwaukee Land Company, who surveyed it and divided it into lots, blocks, and streets. This land became the Town of Bryant. Eliza filed a patent on land just south of the original town site. She had it platted and named "Young's Addition."¹⁸

The land the Masonic Lodge was built on was originally owned by the Milwaukee Land Company and was the second addition to the town of Bryant. The company sold three lots to John and Augusta Larson in 1889.¹⁹ The Larsons were Swedish immigrants who lived on Main Street.²⁰ In 1919, the widowed Augusta transferred a portion of those lots to the Masonic Lodge.²¹ Although construction was completed in February 1911, the deed transfer might reflect the date the Masons paid off their debt on the building.²²

History of Freemasonry

In the Middle Ages, the term "Freemason" was used to define any craftsmen who shaped stone with tools.²³ These men were some of the most highly skilled workers of the period, and to assure labor quality and standards, they organized into guilds.²⁴ Early in the seventeenth century, these organizations became known as the Ancient Order of the Free and Accepted Masons. The organization eventually began to admit individuals who were not connected with any building trade.²⁵ The term "speculative" mason was used to distinguish those honorary members from the practicing craftsmen, who were called "operative" masons. In time, the speculative masons became the dominant members.²⁶ By the eighteenth century, Freemasons became a philosophical organization and largely dropped their historical links to craftsmen.²⁷

The Freemasons were connected through their secret initiation rites. In Europe, the earliest meeting places for these men were temporary structures on the actual jobsite where they could, eat, drink, and

¹⁷ 1910 U.S. Census, Bryant, Hamlin, South Dakota, Ward 3, Enumeration District 0200, Page 1A, Family 7, Eliza M Young, Digital Image, Ancestry.com, (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 20 May 2019). and 1900 U.S. Census, Bryant, Hamlin, South Dakota, Ward 3, Enumeration District 0156, Page 3, Family 76, John E Underwood, Digital Image, Ancestry.com, (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 20 May 2019).

¹⁸ *Bryant Jubilee Journal: 75th Anniversary, Bryant, South Dakota* (n.p., 1961), 3.

¹⁹ Hamlin Co., SD, Deed Book 1: Lot 5, 6, 7, Vol. 10, Page 309-11.

²⁰ 1910 U.S. Census, Bryant, Hamlin, South Dakota, Ward 1, Enumeration District 0200, Page 3A, Dwelling 37, Family 37, Larson Family, Digital Image, Ancestry.com, (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 16 February 2019).

²¹ Hamlin Co., SD, Deed Book 3: Lot 5, 6, 7, Vol. 25, Page 528.

²² Kari Muller (Office Manager, Grand Lodge of South Dakota), email message to Joanne Merkel, March 1, 2019.

²³ James Stevens Curl, *The Art & Architecture of Freemasonry: An Introductory Study* (Woodstock NY: The Overlook Press, 2002), 20.

²⁴ Bob Reeves, "Who are the Masons?" *Lincoln Journal Star*, Mar 13, 2004.

²⁵ Curl, *Art & Architecture of Freemasonry*, 21.

²⁶ Liz Almlie, *Scottish Rite Masonic Temple*, National Register of Historic Places, Nomination Form (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2013).

²⁷ David Jensen, "Masons: Losing the Mystery," *South Dakota Magazine*, January/February 2008.

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rest together.²⁸ Masonic Lodges were recorded as forming in England by the early 1700s, spreading through Europe and to the American colonies by the early 1730s.²⁹ The first lodge in the present-day United States was established in 1733, in Boston. There was little control over individual lodges, which eventually gained a negative reputation as rowdy taverns despite efforts to organize charitable programs. Eventually, revised and standardized rituals in the 1840s and 50s helped mitigate this perception.³⁰ During the nineteenth century, the Freemasons began to move their meetings from public to private spaces, designating them as "Lodge Rooms." These were usually above street level for privacy.³¹ They rented or leased rooms in local buildings and relied heavily on Masonic imagery as décor. One of the most common symbols was the image of two pillars. It signified the entrance to the temple and served as a reminder of the seeking, finding and keeping of lost wisdom.³² Other examples of commonly used décor items were paintings, stained glass, or carpets.³³ These adornments would help distinguish spaces for specific purposes. One of the primary activities held in the Lodge Rooms was the initiation of members.³⁴

There are four modern Masonic organizations, including the Blue Lodge, the York Rite, the Scottish Rite, and the Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (a.k.a. the Shrine). Generally, each organization focuses on character development, virtue, and prestige of its members. All organizations take part in charity and service in their communities.³⁵ In their initiation Masons take an oath to support their brethren in times of need.³⁶ Often local groups organize discrete financial assistance for their members in need through almoners, and national organizations have taken on specific charitable causes, like the Shriner's children's hospitals and the Scottish Rite's fundraising for speech pathology programs and higher education.³⁷

The Bryant Masonic Lodge falls under the Blue Lodge organization. These are open to all men of different faiths and backgrounds. Blue Lodges grant three degrees, the third being a master Mason. Master Masons are also eligible to join any of the other three Masonic organizations: the York Rite, the Scottish Rite, or the Shrine.³⁸ The Blue Lodge is the most common type of Masonic organization in South Dakota.

Masonry continued to grow primarily because of its focus on character building and good will.³⁹ It also allowed upper and middle-class men to create power networks via fraternal associations. The golden

²⁸ Curl, *The Art & Architecture of Freemasonry*, 24.

²⁹ Almlie, *Scottish Rite Masonic Temple*.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ William D. Moore, *Masonic Temples Freemasonry, Ritual Architecture, and Masculine Stereotypes* (Knoxville: Univ of Tennessee Press, 2006), 15, 20.

³² Curl, *The Art & Architecture of Freemasonry*, 53.

³³ Moore, *Masonic Temples*, 27, 28.

³⁴ Ibid., 25.

³⁵ Bob Reeves, "Who are the Masons?" *Lincoln Journal Star*, Mar 13, 2004.

³⁶ Lynn Dumenil, *Freemasonry and American Culture, 1880-1930* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 19.

³⁷ Almlie, *Scottish Rite Masonic Temple*.

³⁸ Bob Reeves, "Who are the Masons?" *Lincoln Journal Star*, Mar 13, 2004.

³⁹ Ibid.

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age of the Ancient Order of Free and Accepted Masons, which lasted from about 1870 to 1930 in the U.S., was marked by soaring membership. During this time the organization achieved its greatest enrollment and influence. By 1925, there were over three million members nationwide. However, from the mid-to late-twentieth century there was a decline in popularity. Many factors are attributed to this drop including the disconnect between Victorian moral ideals and modern society, the rise of the counterculture of the 1960s and 70s, and the growth of organizations formed around shared interests instead of identity.⁴⁰

Freemasonry in Bryant

Fraternal organizations had a statewide surge in popularity from the 1890s to 1915. The number of lodges began to increase after the Civil War. By the 1881, there were thirty-one lodges in the Dakota Territory with over a thousand members.⁴¹ In western states such as South Dakota, fraternal organizations played a central role in their communities. These organizations brought people together, which was especially important for residents that had recently settled here from the east or foreign countries. They provided the opportunity for social connections, or participation in local causes such as emergency assistance, insurance, or dependent care.⁴²

Bryant Freemasons were organized in 1894 and their first meeting was held in the office of L.R. Burlingame in town. They continued to meet in various rented rooms until their Masonic Lodge was built.⁴³ Plans for the new Blue Lodge Temple began in 1910 for a two-story structure located on Main Street. Construction on the new Masonic Lodge was completed in 1911. The Bryant Masonic Lodge was a key component for the town's social activities and hosted many local events. In October 1940, they hosted a Masonic ceremony including guests from seven other lodges in the area and the Grand Lodge of South Dakota. Over one hundred members and guests were present. With the help of the Eastern Star, the temple was redecorated and repaired.⁴⁴ In May of 1941, the Junior-Senior banquet of the Bryant School was held at the Masonic Lodge.⁴⁵ In the same year, the Freemasons planted sixty-five trees on the land surrounding the lodge as part of a clean-up and beautification program for the town.⁴⁶

The Masonic Lodge was undeniably an important organization in Bryant. Other social clubs in town included the Fern Leaf Chapter #28 of the Order of the Eastern Star, organized in 1895 and an auxiliary to the Masonic Lodge, the Bryant Independent Order of Odd Fellows #105 organized in 1889, the Union Veterans Club, organized in 1898 for veterans of the Civil War, and the Woman's Club, organized in 1915

⁴⁰ Delia Hagen, *Arlington Masonic Temple*, National Register of Historic Places, Nomination Form (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2016); Liz Almlie, *Scottish Rite Masonic Temple*.

⁴¹ Almlie, *Scottish Rite Masonic Temple*.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Hamlin Historical Committee, *Hamlin County*, 100.

⁴⁴ "Dedicate Masonic Temple at Bryant," *Daily Argus-Leader* (Sioux Falls, SD), Oct. 17, 1940.

⁴⁵ "Junior-Senior Banquet is Held at Bryant," *Evening Huronite* (Huron SD), May 7, 1941.

⁴⁶ *Bryant, S.D. Centennial, 1886-1986*, 54.

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as a study club for women.⁴⁷ While these groups served different functions and were intended for different groups, all of them served an important social function in Bryant.

The Bryant Masonic Lodge was officially closed in 1982 due to declining enrollment, and the remaining members joined the De Smet Lodge. The deed was transferred to the American Legion Bryant Post 37 in December 1982, and in February 1983 the legion moved to the old Masonic Lodge.⁴⁸ The American Legion post had been created in 1919, and after a slew of temporary venues, the organization had previously been housed in the old Cleveland No. 2 schoolhouse which they had purchased and remodeled in 1940.⁴⁹ Currently, the Bryant American Legion post is very active in Bryant. The organization donates to the local fire department and host many annual activities for the community, such as their Poultry Party, Pancake Breakfast, and Movie Night with Santa at the local cinema. Because of the American Legion, the Masonic Temple continues to fulfill its social purpose in Bryant today.

Architectural Influences

Freemasons had their foundations in stonemasonry, and building was considered a way to connect to these ancestral roots. More importantly, the construction of fraternal halls was also seen as a way to express the organization's ideals while contributing to the community's improvement.⁵⁰ When they first formed, many fraternal halls were located on the second level of commercial buildings, however this was considered unfit for the sacred aspects of the fraternity. These organizations were able to purchase and reconfigure prominent buildings already extant in the community, which included old schoolhouses, churches, commercial buildings, or even residential properties.⁵¹ It wasn't until the early twentieth century that buildings in the US were designed and built solely for Masonic purposes.

Financing a new structure could be accomplished in a number of ways. The most popular were bonds sold to its members, inheritance money left to the local lodge, mortgages, and Masonic fairs (or bazaars). Fairs had entertainment, food and booths with all types of goods for sale and were inclusive to the whole family.⁵² In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most fraternal orders retained their gender separations and women and families were active through their own auxiliary organizations, such as the Eastern Star, the Order of Job's Daughters, and the Order of DeMolay. Through these organizations women and families could participate in social events and fundraising.⁵³

Although Masonic buildings are often designed in a mixture of architectural styles, they have roots in Neoclassicism.⁵⁴ Fraternal halls built around the state present a variety of architectural styles. Freemasons, especially in larger cities, often commissioned architects to design their buildings in high-

⁴⁷ *Bryant, S.D. Centennial, 1886-1986*, 53-55.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁹ Historical Committee, *Hamlin County*, 89.

⁵⁰ Moore, *Masonic Temples*, 124.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 141-143.

⁵³ Almlie, *Scottish Rite Masonic Temple*.

⁵⁴ Curl, *The Art & Architecture of Freemasonry*, 221, 229.

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styles. An example of this was the Scottish Rite Masonic Temple in Yankton. The elaborate structure features a skillful blending of Richardsonian Romanesque and Chateausque influences and is unique in the state.⁵⁵

The 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago was a nationally significant influence on the early twentieth century architectural styles. The exposition presented more traditional, classical influences that endured for a generation. As small towns, like Bryant, often looked to larger cities and urban architects to help enhance their status, these styles found their way into the architecture of small towns and were often seen in important institutional buildings, such as banks or courthouses.⁵⁶ The exposition's influence had far reaching effects because it was extensively reported on, and photographs were widely available.⁵⁷

One of the architectural styles to emerge in this period was the Italian Renaissance style. The Italian Renaissance style was typically used in commercial, residential, and public buildings, specifically social lodges. The Italian Renaissance style, sometimes called the Second Italian Renaissance Revival, was inspired by Italian palaces of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This style became popular after more Americans started traveling to Europe and studying its architecture. Architects and builders were exposed to the buildings firsthand instead of merely seeing representations in Victorian pattern books.⁵⁸ This style was prevalent between 1890 and 1920, post world's fair period, and particularly around the turn-of-the-century.⁵⁹

Some of the characteristic elements of the Italian Renaissance style are strong division of floors with stringcourses, masonry exterior walls, different window types on each floor, low pitched or flat roof hidden by cornices, and rectangular floorplans.⁶⁰ Italian Renaissance also incorporates round arches.⁶¹ Simpler, less ornate examples are smaller in scale but have many of the same details.⁶² Italian Renaissance exemplified formalism, and brought back concepts like restraint, balance and symmetry, which had been unpopular with many of the earlier Victorian styles. By the 1890s, a return to classical

⁵⁵ David Erpestad and David Wood, *Building South Dakota: A Historical Survey of the State's Architecture to 1945* (Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997), 178-180.

⁵⁶ Richard V. Francaviglia, *Main Street Revisited: Time, Space, and Image Building in Small-Town America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 41-42.

⁵⁷ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 435-438.

⁵⁸ John Milnes Baker, *American House Styles: A Concise Guide* (New York: The Countryman Press, 2018), 84.

⁵⁹ City of Omaha, "Second Renaissance Revival," *Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission*, <https://landmark.cityofomaha.org/styles/second-renaissance-revival>

⁶⁰ Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation., "Italian Renaissance Revival," *Architectural Style Guide*, accessed March 16, 2019. <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/historic-buildings/architectural-style-guide/italian-renaissance-revival>

⁶¹ Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, "Italian Renaissance Revival Style 1890 – 1930," *Architectural Field Guide*, accessed March 16, 2019. <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/italian-renaissance.html>

⁶² History Colorado, "Renaissance Revival," *Colorado's Historic Architecture & Engineering Guide*, accessed May 21, 2019. <https://www.historycolorado.org/renaissance-revival>

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forms was becoming prevalent with examples of Italian Renaissance Revival by famous architects like McKim, Mead & White appearing in larger cities.⁶³

The Bryant Masonic Lodge was designed in the Italian Renaissance style, as evidenced by the strong division between first and second floors, different window types on each floor, rounded arches, and flat roof all of which are a distinct element on the Bryant Masonic Lodge's façade. In contrast, the sides and rear elevations were purely utilitarian. Structures on Main Street were meant to fill up their lot completely and lie adjoining other buildings, which was why most had blind side elevations and a rectangular shape. Although the Lodge never had a commercial function, it is typical of a two-part commercial block building. These usually have two to four stories, and strong divisions between first and second stories. The upper stories were generally semi-private spaces. Fraternal halls frequently took this form, and it continued to be very common in America from about 1850 up until the 1950s.⁶⁴

The Bryant Masonic Lodge façade is brick. In the earliest days of white settlement in the territory, bricks were a valued building material usually bought from nearby states with high shipping costs. Bricks began to be manufactured on a commercial scale in the state in the late 1860s and 1870s. These brickyards mostly produced the common red clay type. By 1910, local brickmaking was mostly put out of business by the railroad and the increased accessibility of all kinds of building materials from larger cities in an out of South Dakota.⁶⁵

Other notable buildings still standing on Main Street in Bryant are Wards Store and the Bryant Cinema, located west of the lodge. Both structures are still used and maintain some of their original exterior brick details. The Bryant cinema was built in 1920 and has a minimal stepped brick cornice. The street level façade and entrance doors have been modified over the years and are not original. Wards Store is also a brick building and is much larger, located on a corner lot. Built in 1905, it also has simple brick cornice details, but has been altered significantly on the street level. The Masonic Lodge is one of the few remaining historic buildings in town designed in the Italian Renaissance style that maintains exterior and interior integrity.

The architectural influence usually depended on the financial resources that the organization had for the project. The urban examples were usually much more elaborate, while the smaller communities had modest vernacular versions.⁶⁶ For example, built in 1899, the Aberdeen Masonic Temple is an imposing three-story building with Italian Villa, Moorish, and Romanesque styles, while smaller examples present simplified or local variation of high styles.⁶⁷

Of the ten Masonic Lodges and Temples individually listed on the National Register in South Dakota, the Arlington Masonic Temple in Kingsbury County, the Madison Masonic Temple in Lake County and the

⁶³ Leland M. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (New York: Icon Editions, 1980), 191-193.

⁶⁴ Richard W. Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000), 12-31.

⁶⁵ Erpestad and Wood, *Building South Dakota*, 23-25.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁶⁷ Carolyn Torma, *Masonic Temple*, National Register of Historic Places, Nomination Form (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1980), National Register Reference #80003719.

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Flandreau Masonic Temple in Moody County are geographically closest to the Bryant Masonic Lodge. However, stylistically these are quite diverse.

The Arlington Masonic Temple, built in 1908, is one of few Masonic buildings built in wood in the Queen Anne Style. It has a gabled roof, shingles and stained-glass windows. The Flandreau Masonic Temple is categorized as a Colonial Revival Style with a wood frame, stucco walls, a hipped shingled roof and a portico located at the center of the façade with a large pediment supported by four Ionic columns. The Madison Masonic Temple was classified as a Neo-Classical Building and was designed by local architect Joseph Schwarz between 1906 and 1907. It featured a recessed portico supported by four Ionic columns, a brick veneer, a parapet flat roof, terra-cotta cornice and brick parapet.⁶⁸ This building was demolished in 2015.

Architecturally, the building that more closely resembles the Bryant Masonic Lodge is the Parker Masonic Hall, another example of Italian Renaissance architecture. This structure was originally built as a residence in 1925 and later used by the Masons. Its exterior elements include stucco finish, red clay roof tiles, pilasters around the entrance portico, and round arch hood molding above the windows.⁶⁹

As demonstrated by these examples, the architectural style, building material, and vernacular variation are wide ranging. However, almost without exception these buildings are constructed with definite high style features.

Historic Significance

The Bryant Masonic Lodge is eligible locally under **Criterion A** in the context of social history. The building was constructed in 1911 for the local chapter of the Masonic Lodge and was given to the American Legion Post 37 in 1982. The building was, and continues to be, an important structure for the social activities in Bryant. The Masonic Lodge is also eligible under **Criterion C** for its architectural significance as it presents the only example of Italian Renaissance architecture in Bryant. Significant features of the style include the rusticated first floor, distinct windows in the first and second floors, parapet roof, and arched windows on the second floor. Exterior and interior integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship and material allow the building to convey its social and architectural significance to an elevated degree.

⁶⁸ Ben Zimmerman, *Madison Masonic Temple*, National Register of Historic Places, Nomination Form (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1990), National Register Reference #89002335.

⁶⁹ Chris Nelson, *Parker Masonic Temple*, National Register of Historic Places, Nomination Form (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2004), National Register Reference #04000761.

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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 # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): HL00000312

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude:

Longitude:

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐

NAD 1927

or

☒

NAD 1983

1. Zone: 14	Easting: 621795.0201	Northing: 4938670.8455
2. Zone: 14	Easting: 621815.1814	Northing: 4938673.7031
3. Zone: 14	Easting: 621813.5939	Northing: 4938623.6967
4. Zone: 14	Easting: 621796.1314	Northing: 4938623.6967

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

National Register nomination includes the east 75 feet of Lots 5,6, and 7, Block 12 of Milwaukee Land Co's Second Addition to the Town of Bryant, Hamlin County, South Dakota

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary chosen corresponds to the historic lot the Masonic Lodge was built on.

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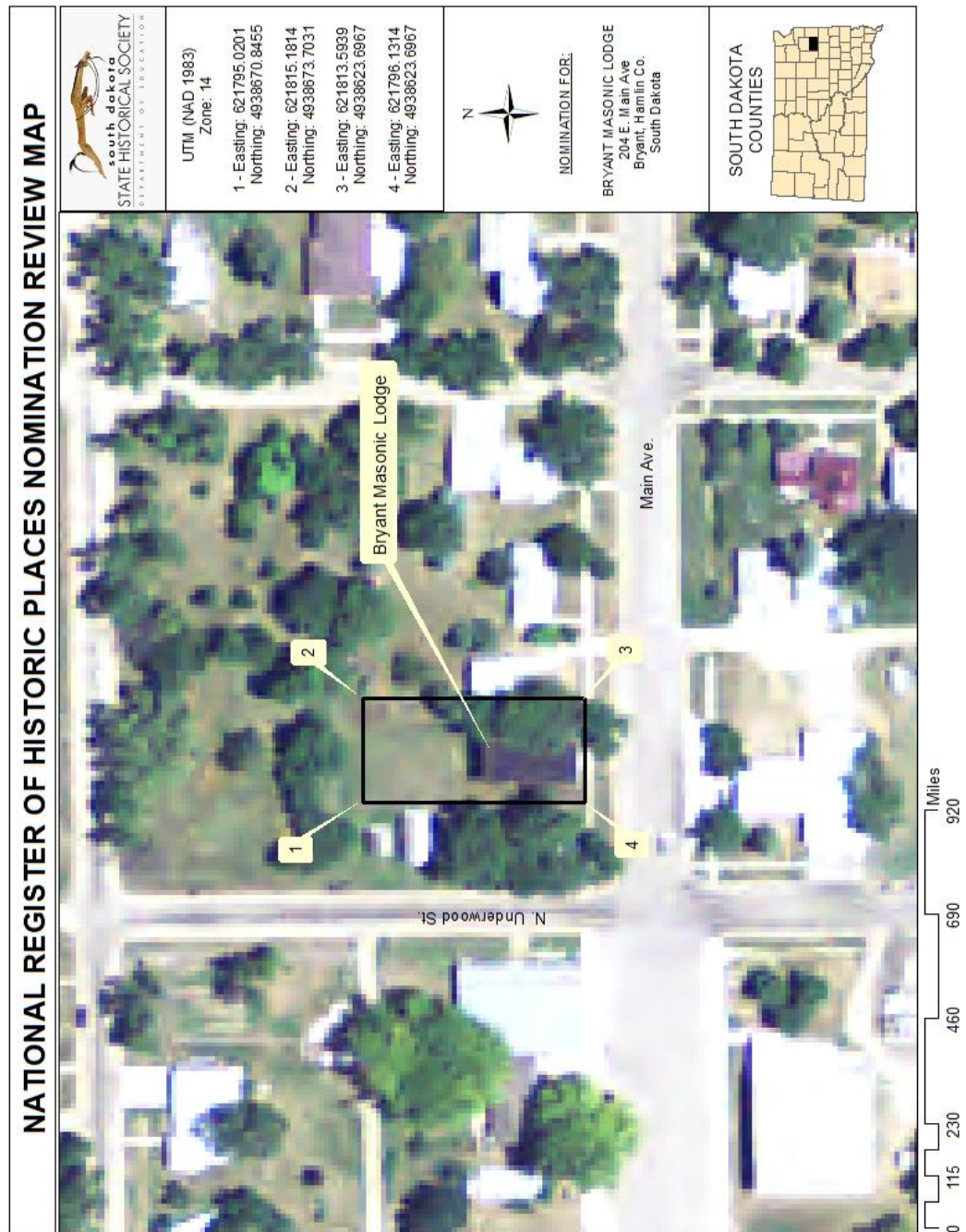
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Section 10_ Fig. 1 – Bryant Masonic Lodge location in context to site and surrounding structures.

Produced in ArchMap 10.5 by Sofia Mattesini, July 3, 2019.



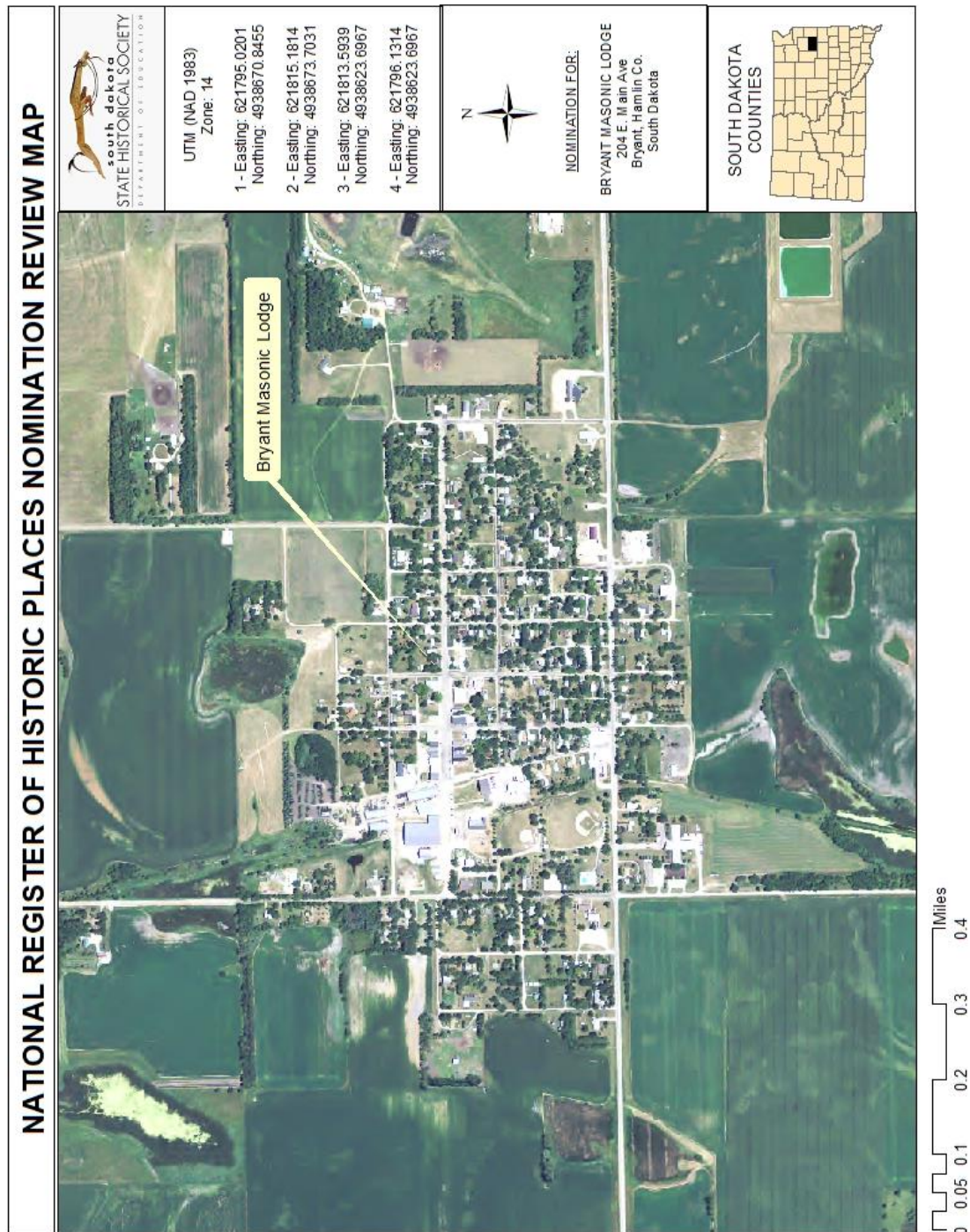
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Section 10_ Fig. 2 – Bryant Masonic Lodge location in context to surrounding area. Produced in ArchMap 10.5 by Sofia Mattesini, July 3, 2019.



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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Joanne Merkel (with assistance from Sofia Mattesini, SHPO staff)

organization: Contract for SHPO

street & number: 1702 Abbey Rd, Apt 204

city or town: Pierre state: SD zip code: 57501

e-mail: jmerkel08@gmail.com

telephone: 585-201-0175

date: April 2019

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Bryant Masonic Lodge

City or Vicinity: Bryant

County: Hamlin

State: SD

Photographer: Joanne Merkel and SHPO

Date Photographed: July 2018 and August 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of ____.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

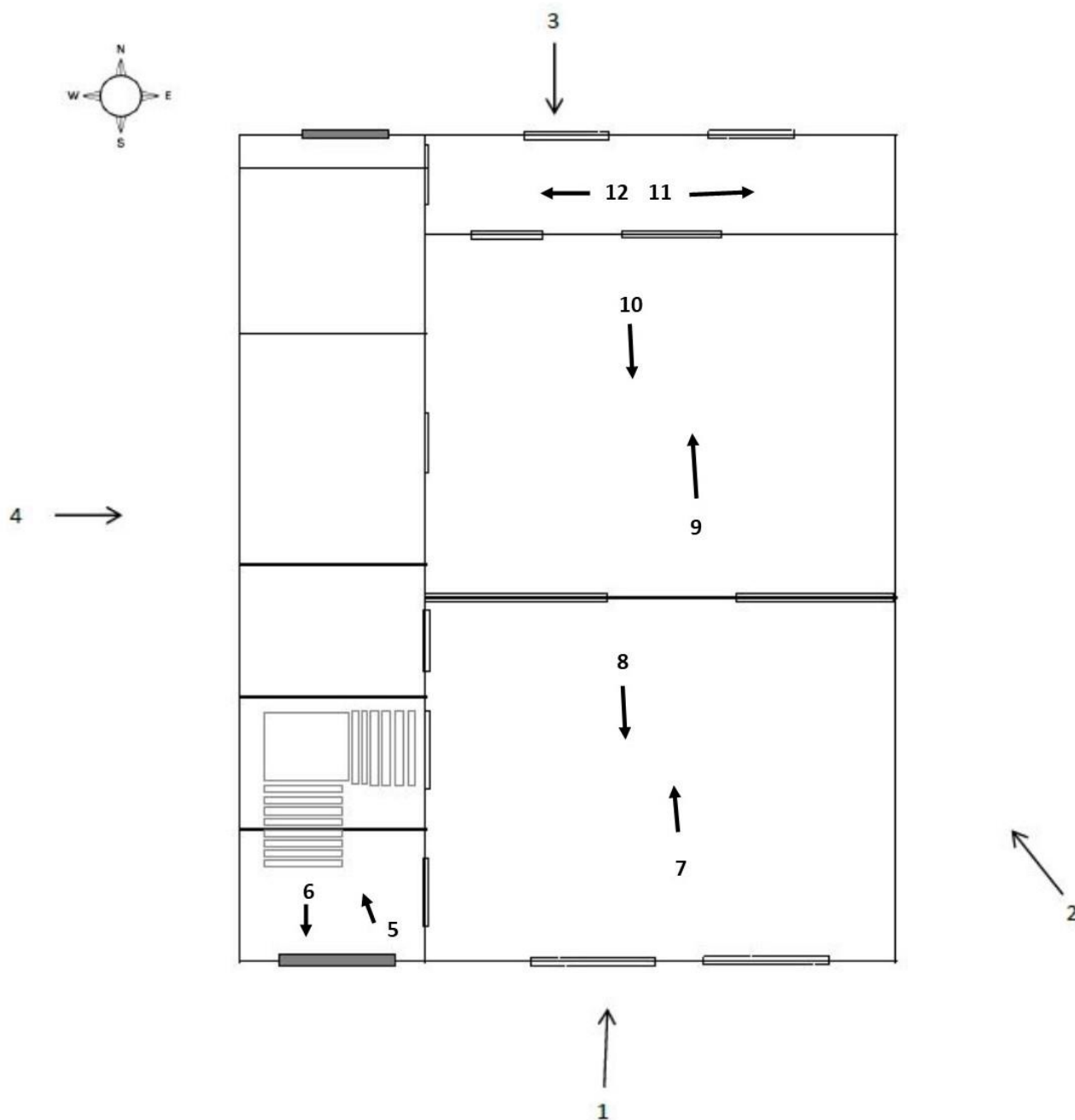
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Section 11_Fig. 1: Photo Key of first floor



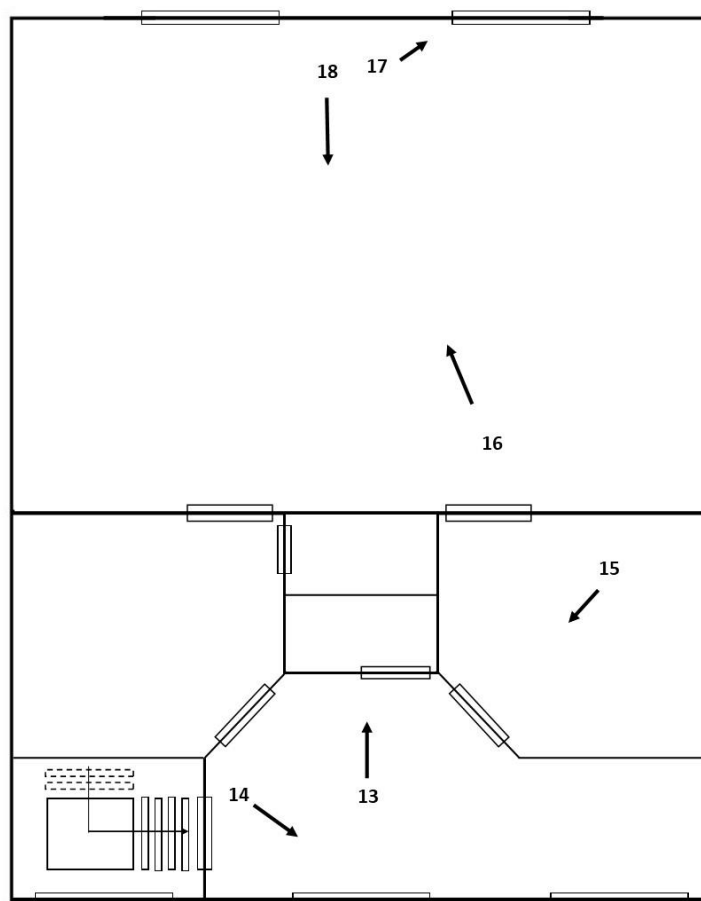
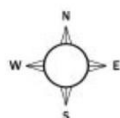
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Section 11_Fig.2: Photo Key pf second floor



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SD_Hamlin County_Byrant Masonic Temple_0001: View of south (main) façade, camera facing north.



SD_Hamlin County_Byrant Masonic Temple_0002: View of east façade, camera looking northwest

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SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0003: View of north (rear) façade, camera facing south.



SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0004: View of west façade, camera facing east.

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SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0005: View of vestibule and paneling under the stairs.
Camera facing northwest.



SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0006: View of vestibule and main entrance. Camera facing south.

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SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0007: View of meeting room. Camera facing north.



SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0008: view of meeting room. Camera facing south.

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SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0009: View of dining hall. Camera facing north.



SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0010: View of dining hall. Camera facing south.

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SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0011: View of kitchen. Camera facing east.



SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0012: View of kitchen. Camera facing west.

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SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0013: view of stage on second floor. Camera facing north.



SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0014: View of historic windows on second floor. Camera facing southeast.

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SD_Hamlin County_ Bryant Masonic Temple_0015: View of easternmost closet. Camera facing southwest.



SD_Hamlin County_ Bryant Masonic Temple_0016: View of hall on second floor. Camera facing north.

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SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0017: View of original window in the hall. Camera facing northeast.



SD_Hamlin County_ Byrant Masonic Temple_0018: View of hall. Camera facing south.