

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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club
 other names/site number _____
 name of related multiple property listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 302 State Street

N/A	not for publication
N/A	vicinity

 city or town Schenectady
 state NY code 036 county Schenectady code 077 zip code 12305

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In 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

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

St. George's Lodge No.6 Masonic Temple & Club
Name of Property

Schenectady County, NY
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

COMMERCE: department store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:

Neoclassical

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: BRICK; STONE

roof: Rubber

other: WOOD: windows

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

St. George's Lodge No. 6 Temple and Club is located on the south corner of State Street and Eric Boulevard in downtown Schenectady, Schenectady County, New York. The building, which faces State Street, was constructed in 1911 as a furniture store; however, it was completely renovated and reimaged as a masonic temple and lodge in 1919. The five-story, three-bay building is designed in the Neoclassical style and features a number of ornate classical decorative elements including a dramatic, massive cornice, which adorns the roofline, and a temple-inspired masonic temple entry on the rear corner, facing Eric Boulevard. The building features seven-course red-brick masonry construction, but the exposed sides, which face the streets, feature a yellow brick veneer and pairs of one-over-one double-hung wood sash windows with stone sills. The exterior surface is defined by protruding pilasters and frames in the brickwork. The first story is mostly covered by modern materials, but it retains the appearance of the commercial storefront that it was for most of its history. While the first-floor interior, which has housed at least five different businesses, has no identifiable original materials, the upper stories have an abundance of historic wood paneling and retain the historic floorplan. Included in the upper levels are historic meeting and recreation rooms, a large dining room, a secondary lodge room, a myriad of dark stained cabinets and the wonderful and dramatic top floor Gothic Revival masonic temple/lodge space. The masons occupied the building until 1992, when it became an office, until being sold and vacant since 2000.

Narrative Description

Site

The former St. George's Lodge No. 6 Temple and Club, at 302 State Street, occupies the same footprint as when it was first constructed as Brown's Furniture Store at the corner of State Street and the Erie Canal. The building is built to the limit of what was its parcel boundary when constructed, with its façade (northeast elevation) facing State Street and its long, exposed side (northwest elevation) facing Eric Boulevard. The rear of the building (southwest elevation) faces an asphalt parking lot, while the southeast elevation abuts 304 State Street, and its rear extension abuts 306 State Street. Erie Boulevard (the former Eric Canal) is now a major six-lane thoroughfare through the city with a deep sidewalk and tall decorative light posts. State Street is a two-lane road with the same sidewalk and light configuration.

Exterior

Façade (northeast elevation)

The building at 302 State Street is a five-story, three-bay L-shaped building built to the lot lines on the corner of State Street and Erie Boulevard, with its primary and original entrance facing State Street. The first-story façade has been altered from when it opened as a Goodlow's clothing store ca. 1920 (and from its initial use as Brown's Furniture Store in 1911). At that time, the three-bay façade was echoed on the first floor with a recessed entry flanked by two large display windows and piers at the corners with stone veneer. By 1945 Bond's Clothes had taken over the space, but the original storefront configuration and surfaces appear to have been retained. By ca. 1970 Bond's still occupied the space, but the first-story façade had been altered in several ways. The marquee had been extended down from the cornice to cover the upper portion of the display windows; this was then extended next door to unify it with the front of 304 State Street, which temporarily housed part of the Bond's store (but is not included in the nominated boundary). In support of this effort, the two corner piers were clad in narrow, horizontal bricks which were matched on the far edge of the first-story façade of 304 State. This brick cladding still covers the corner piers. After Bond's closed in the 1970s, the first-story façade was altered further with the recessed entry being moved to the right (west) bay from the center, and modern bronze aluminum storefront windows being installed. Also, the open, pedestrian accessible first-story bay facing Erie Boulevard has been filled in with a flush metal panel that matches the bronze aluminum storefront elements.

A stone storefront cornice with brackets adorns the division between the first and second stories, visually and physically separating the commercial first story from the yellow-brick-veneered upper levels. The second, third and fourth stories are largely the same with the side bays having single one-over-one double-hung wood sash and the central bays having slightly smaller paired windows of the same type. All of the windows have simple stone sills. Between the second and

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third and the third and fourth stories are horizontal, recessed brick rectangles. Between each bay, and adorning the corners as well, are simple protruding square pilasters, which run from the bottom of the second story to the top of the fourth story, where they extend to the sides to form a frame and mark the end of the middle section of the building. Atop the two central pilasters are two stone decorative features which visually serve as capitals.

The top, fifth story has its own distinctive decorative theme, while retaining common materials and elements from the lower stories. A three-part stone cornice creates a clear division between the central portion of the building and the large upper story. The cornice consists of a row of egg and dart, a row of Greek key scroll, and a final row of sections of smooth stone. The windows at this level are the same as the lower stories, but the yellow brickwork is more decorative and distinctive. Every fifth row of brick is recessed, creating the visual effect of quoins across the width of the façade. Additionally, the central bay protrudes slightly beyond the plane of the building.

The building is crowned by an elaborate, multilevel Greek Revival entablature with various decorative stone elements. Immediately above the fifth floor is a simple architrave supporting a character-defining frieze featuring triglyphs and metopes, though the metopes are filled with five-leaf rosettes. Above the entablature is a molded, boxed cornice supported by alternating brackets and rosettes. A narrow strip of verdigris copper coping extends along the cornice's upper edge. Above, and stepped back from the cornice, is a parapet wall adorned with alternating smooth framed sections and square panels which seem inspired by acanthus leaves and serve to demarcate each bay of the building. Though no longer present, for many years above each leafy panel was a lamppost.

Exposed side, masonic entrance (northwest elevation)

The long northwest elevation, which faces Erie Boulevard, echoes all of the decorative features and fenestration of the façade. Between the entries at the north and south ends of the elevation, stone pilasters and brick frames divide the wall into three bays that mirror the façade's fenestration. On the first story, flush panels cover or replaced the storefront display windows that once extended along the adjacent sidewalk. Above the storefront extends an ornamented frieze with alternating triglyphs and metopes; this element likely continues along the altered north entry bay and wraps around to the façade but is concealed by the aforementioned sign panel. Matching the façade, the second through fourth stories have three brick frames, one at each end of the elevation and a third, centered frame, which divide the wall into three bays. The second- through fourth-story bays each have pairs of one-over-one, double-hung wood sash with stone sills. On the fifth story, the projecting bays are distinguished by brickwork "quoins" like those on the façade. Wrapping around from the façade, the cornice between the fourth and fifth stories, the fifth-story's boxed cornice, and the parapet feature the same ornamental elements. The iron fire escape ladder which runs from the fifth story to the first, from the south (rear) of the building towards the front, is seen in early images of the building.

Among the most significant changes to the building between its time as a department store and a masonic temple is the creation of the rear temple entrance in the southernmost bay of the side elevation. The large, elaborate entrance, adorned with "MASONIC TEMPLE" etched in stone above the door, is a conglomeration of many Classical Revival elements, along with some masonic imagery. Overall, the entry takes the form of a temple façade following the Ionic order. The central arch has segmented stones and is topped with a decorative keystone highlighted by a saintly figure. The two triangles which fill out the square frame of the entry arch feature masonic imagery: the "square and compass" with an interior 'G' and a paired image which might be a carpenter's level. Flanking the entry arch are two pairs of square pilasters, both featuring Ionic capitals. The inner pilasters are fluted, while the outer ones are smooth. Above the arch and pilasters is an entablature with an architrave. Above the architrave is a frieze with triglyphs paired with two metopes filled with circles, each surrounding a masonic symbol: the "masonic keystone" and what appears to be the masonic sword. The central section of the frieze features the etched "masonic temple" text. Above the frieze is the same cornice as the storefront area continued to the back of the building but protruding out from the building and above the entry arch and pilasters. Above each pilaster capital, a lion's head extends outward, breaking up the cornice. Finally, atop the cornice is an elaborate cartouche surrounding masonic symbols: the masonic 'G' is central below an "all seeing eye" and above a bible opened to Ecclesiastes XII and marked with the ever-present masonic square and compass.

Rear of building (southwest elevation)

The rear of the building is simple, revealing the seven-course red-brick walls punctuated irregularly with twenty-four one-over-one, double-hung wood sash with stone sills. On the west end, the finished yellow brick and stone details slightly turn the corner to the rear elevation. The base of the building has a concrete water table, and, at the top south corner of the roofline, a tall brick boiler chimney extends above the roofline, which is accentuated by verdigris copper coping.

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Southeast elevation

The east side of the building faces into the block, with the lower stories partially or completely obscured by the neighboring buildings. The rear section of this side mirrors the back of the building with exposed seven-course red-brick masonry construction; the windows are paired down the middle, following the staircase. There is a second, middle, section of this elevation that consists of a flat, unadorned brick wall. On the blind northernmost portion of the southeast elevation, yellow brick veneer wraps around from the façade, as do the cornice above the fourth story and the elaborate cornice and parapet at the roof level. This portion of the southeast elevation has no windows.

Interior

Basement

The basement is nondescript with concrete floors, some finished and some exposed brick walls and piers along with mechanical wiring and piping.

First floor

The first floor was occupied by a series of commercial tenants over the life of the building and, other than the rear masonic entrance, retains some but not much historic material. The layout of the first floor consists of a central hall running almost the length of the building with small offices along each side. All of the floors are carpeted. Modern drywall finishes the walls, and the ceilings have dropped acoustical panels. There is wood trim for the baseboards and door surrounds along with unpainted single-panel wood doors.

The south (rear) portion of the first floor, which served as the lobby for the masonic temple and club, is highly decorative with many Classical Revival elements. The entry has an exterior recessed porch, which is currently inaccessible. This ends in a wood arch which mirrors the exterior arch, including a scrolled keystone. Below the arch are a transom and sidelights with multiple panes of glass. The post and lintel entry has a classical cornice, and simple square pilasters form the posts and frame a non-historic, commercial double-glass door. The entry provides access to a vestibule with walls painted in a faux marble pattern, a stacked cornice at the ceiling level, and another post and lintel entry surrounded by a transom and sidelights. This interior entry does not have an arch, but it also features modern, commercial double-glass doors. Beyond the entry and vestibule is the lobby with large windows overlooking the rear parking lot, original glass sunburst hanging light fixtures and a plaster ceiling divided by stacked wood supports. A pair of wood and glass doors, with horizontal panels on the bottom and large single panes on the top, access the elevator. There is wood trim around doorways, the ceiling, windowsills, and walls. The rear corner of this floor has restrooms, and these are repeated in the same location on each floor.

Second floor

From the second floor upwards, the building retains many features and decorative elements related to its use as a masonic hall. The second floor has wood floors in the landing area. The primary layout consists of a long, wide central hallway with rooms flanking both sides and carpeted floors. All of the rooms along the building's Erie Boulevard side have one or more windows. This floor was generally used for club room areas in the front half and a lobby area in the rear. This floor featured areas for welcoming guests and locations for games, cigars and cards. Multiple rooms on this floor have historic wood paneling and seating areas, including one at the front (State Street end) and several down the hall and to the rear. Ogee four-centered arches divide some of the rooms. A paneled hallway at the rear runs across the back of the building and accesses a formal lobby area for greeting guests. The lobby features wood paneling and a room separated from the hall by windows (some with diamond panes) and twelve-light, double-glass doors. Across the hall is a meeting room, also likely for greeting guests; it retains its dark-stained wood, coffered ceiling, and square pilasters. At the end of the hall, as with all floors, is the elevator with the same wood and glass doors seen on the first floor.

Third Floor

The third floor was used predominantly for dining and hosting events. The layout is largely intact and features a wood floor with the floorboards running diagonally. At the front (State Street) end are two small offices and a narrow landing area. The large dining room, which takes up the entire central portion of the building, has four small offices on the left (southeast side). The main dining room is simple with plaster walls and ceiling and radiators along the exterior (Erie Boulevard) wall, which also is punctuated with the paired windows. Along the rear wall of the dining room are seven

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original pass-throughs for delivering food from the kitchen to the dining room. Each has painted wood paneling and doors which slide up and down. Dark-stained, fifteen-light, wood double doors access the rear of this floor. Behind the passthroughs is a large kitchen area with some equipment and cabinetry. On the other side there is extensive original, dark-stained cabinetry for storing food and supplies. There are also a few simple offices with no decoration at the back of the building.

Fourth Floor

The fourth floor was the lodge meeting area for St. George's Lodge No. 6, until it completed the fifth-floor temple space in 1932. During the entire history of the building, the fourth floor served as a lodge or meeting space for multiple other masonic organizations that used the Masonic Temple and Club building with St. George's Lodge. The front (State Street) end of this floor retains two small rooms with dark-stained wood trim and multiple closet-type spaces, each accessed by a five-panel wood door; these appear likely to be coat or robe rooms. Occupying the central section of the floor, much like the dining room below, is a huge space, which was the official lodge meeting space for the masonic groups. The hardwood floor is mostly covered by carpet and there are raised platforms on the sides for seating. Pairs of windows line the exterior side of the room and a stained-wood cornice wraps around the room just below the ceiling. The far end of the room has a raised platform, likely for the lodge master, and a framed opening with a curtain behind it, likely a choir/musician loft. The ornate masonic furniture which was used on this floor was moved to the new and current lodge location of St. George's Lodge No. 6, where it remains in use.

Dark-stained, single-panel doors access the rear of the floor. In the elevator area of the floor is another elaborate vestibule/lobby area; hanging from the ceiling are the same sunburst light fixtures as seen on lower floors. Throughout most of the rear section of the floor, spanning several rooms, are ornate, dark-stained, wood and glass-front, numbered storage cabinets for either members or individual masonic organizations.

Fifth Floor

The fifth floor is the location of the highly ornate Gothic Revival temple used by St. George's Lodge No. 6 from its completion in 1932 until St. George's Lodge sold the building in 1992. The entire central portion of the fifth floor is double-height to accommodate the temple space, while the rest of the floor has two levels, essentially a sixth floor, at the front and rear of the building. This area of the building is where the additional five feet of height added during the masonic renovation was utilized. The front (State Street) end of the floor has, like the fourth floor below, dark-stained closets for members robes; these doors have five panels, but the top and bottom panels are louvered. This area also has a ladder accessing a loft area with more storage and small access doors into the area behind the former location of a large stained-glass panel, which is likely for servicing lighting behind the panel. The stained-glass panel itself was moved to the current lodge in 1992.

The rear of the fifth floor is very much like the fourth floor below, with a formal vestibule area off the elevator and a large number of dark-stained, wood cabinets with glass fronts. There are also several small office-type rooms. The rear "sixth floor" consists of the organ/choir loft. The organ itself was also moved to the new lodge location in 1992. This area is accessed by two sets of narrow stairs from the temple space below.

The formal lodge/temple space occupies the massive central section of the fifth floor, matching the third and fourth floors but with dramatically higher ceilings. The space was specifically designed to conform with the Early English Gothic architectural tradition, and the architect was influenced by York Cathedral in England. The large, open space is flanked on both sides by double rows of traditional theater-type seating with stained-wood framing. Behind each row of seats is a large, sectioned, dark-stained wood panel with small spires at each end and a trefoil arch atop each section. The walls are decorated with scored stone, to appear as stone blocks behind the wood seating panels. Between each seating panel are stone pilasters with matching trefoil arches that continue into the ceiling, forming horizontal ribbing and hiding the ceiling support system. The ceiling is slightly curved from the sides to the center and is decorated with quatrefoil panels, each with a central rosette, which are open in the middle third of the ceiling, likely for ventilation.

The front end of the temple space features a raised platform in front of a detailed decorative stone wall. The wall is divided into three sections, each topped with an ogee four-centered arch, as seen in spaces in the floors below. The two side sections are plain except for the arches. Flanking the central section are two pilasters, similar to those on the side walls, but topped with a quatrefoil. The middle section of this wall features a large ogee four centered arch with five vertical sections; the lower half is solid stone, with a central pediment, triangular arches, trefoils and decorative posts, clearly

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inspired by a Gothic altar. Above this is an area of stone tracery with vertical trefoils and an open space behind which used to house a large stained-glass panel. The far end of the temple space has another raised platform, for the master of the lodge. There are again three sections to the wall; the two side sections feature stairs to the organ loft and a central balcony. The middle section of the wall has two pilasters which mirror those at the other end. In the very middle is a detailed stone relief of columns, trefoils, a pediment, and a central "rose window" space which holds a clock. This relief invokes the façade of a Gothic church.

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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.)

Property is:

- 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1919 - 1974

Significant Dates

1919; 1932

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smith, William Neil: Architect and Builder for 1919

Renovation to Masonic Temple

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with the renovation of the building in 1919, which transformed the building from a furniture store into a masonic temple and club. The period of significance extends to 1974 (the traditional NPS fifty year limit) as the building continued to be used as a masonic and club until the 1990s.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Social History for its long association with the Schenectady masonic community, specifically St. George's Lodge No. 6, the largest and most prominent masonic order in the city during the twentieth century. The Masonic Lodge and Club was located at 302 State Street from 1919 until the Masonic Association sold the building in 1992, spanning the majority of the twentieth century during a time of significant change for masonic orders and traditions. The largest and oldest continuously operating masonic organization in the City of Schenectady, St. George's Lodge No. 6 traces its origins to the eighteenth-century Colonial era and continued some of the same traditions through to its time at 302 State Street. The temple and "Masonic Club" also hosted the regular meetings of more than a dozen other masonic organizations, making the building a regional hub for the full range of masonic orders and traditions. Additionally, the membership of St. George's Lodge regularly included the leading citizens of Schenectady; a majority of the mayors of the city from its first charter until the late twentieth century were members of St. George's Lodge. St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club is also significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as an excellent example of a sophisticated, high-style, designed masonic temple and lodge building type. After its extensive 1919 renovation, 302 State Street was essentially transformed into a purpose-built masonic lodge of dramatic proportions and detail. The building retains excellent integrity and representative features that link this resource strongly to the tradition and history of Freemasonry. Additionally, the design of the lodge room at the top level typifies the imagery and iconography of the masonic lodge tradition. The period of significance spans from 1919, when the initial renovation and conversion to a masonic lodge occurred, to 1974, representing its continuous operation as a masonic lodge and club for more than half a century.

Narrative Statement of Significance

A Brief History of Schenectady, N.Y., particularly the State Street Area

One of New York's older cities, Schenectady has a long history dating to the early seventeenth century, but it was formalized with the granting of the deed from the Dutch West India Company to Arent Van Curler and his partners on July 27, 1661. This land was obtained from the chiefs of the Mohawk country and the city's name is derived from their name for the area: "Schonowe," meaning "Great Flat."¹ Three years later, the colony, including Schenectady, was lost to the English, who created a new charter and map more clearly delineating boundaries encompassing 128 square miles for the land patent, which included what would become the City of Schenectady. For several generations, Schenectady remained a small settlement with an almost entirely agriculturally based economy, namely wheat, focused on a defensive stockade surrounded by farmland.² Schenectady began to grow into a larger community in the eighteenth century when it became a land- and river-based transshipment station; Schenectady was served by the Mohawk River and the Albany Road. This led to the emergence of a mercantile economy. Schenectady became the gateway to expanding settlements west along the Mohawk River, which cut through the center of the state. On October 23, 1765, Schenectady gained borough status and a seat in the provincial legislature.³

Schenectady was fortunate to avoid any substantial repercussions from the American Revolution and was chartered as a city in 1798. Its role as a transportation and commercial hub continued to contribute to its growth in the nineteenth century as more people continued to settle west in the Mohawk Valley. The military stockade was demolished in favor of wharves and warehouses along Washington Street. Additionally, Schenectady remained a major trading center on the road from Albany and was along a second turnpike to Troy.⁴

¹ Neil Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey* (Historic Architecture Field Services, Troy, New York: March, 1993), p III-1, 2.

² Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-3, 10.

³ Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-25, 27, 32.

⁴ Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-37, 38, 40.

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Several factors stalled Schenectady's growth in the nineteenth century. First, the War of 1812 led to a substantial disruption of trade for the entire region. Second, a huge fire in 1819 destroyed the wharf and warehouses, and most of the commercial sector of the city. When the commercial area was rebuilt, the former "stockade" area was transformed into mostly residential uses. Commercial development was pushed to what would become State Street. Finally, in 1825 the Erie Canal was completed, which rectified the irregularities of the course of the Mohawk River and allowed boats to access the Hudson River more directly. This effectively reduced Schenectady to one stop along the river, rather than the transportation connection center that it had been for many years. However, the Erie Canal also focused the new commercial center along State Street and the surrounding area.⁵ By 1850 State Street had become a major commercial center with manufacturing, warehousing, and canal-related services densely built out; major businesses included grain and plaster mills, a foundry, lumberyard, and furnace, ending with a drydock along the canal. By this time the most important intersection in Schenectady was State Street at the canal.⁶ With the opening of the Albany to Schenectady Mohawk and Hudson Railroad in 1832, Schenectady added another economic and transportation option, with a depot created specifically for State Street by the Erie Canal. Additional railroads were added over the next several decades, helping to make up for the lost transportation business resulting from the decline of the Erie Canal. With the railroads all converging on the State Street area, this part of the city continued to lead commercially. A direct result was growth in railroad-related industries, particularly the American Locomotive Company (Alco), which employed more than four thousand men by 1901 and was the largest employer in the city.⁷ Schenectady also earned the name of the "Broom-Corn Capital of the World," as broom manufacturing and corn production remained leading industries through much of the nineteenth century, after the arrival of the Erie Canal.⁸ The growth in the commercial and industrial capacity of Schenectady resulted in a huge influx of thousands of first Irish and then, later, German immigrants. Black workers also played an important role in the economy, beginning in the colonial period, primarily as laborers.⁹

The late nineteenth century brought The Edison Machine Works (later the Edison General Electric Light Company) to Schenectady from New York City, to make light bulbs. Eventually, Edison General Electric merged with Thomson-Houston Electric to form what would become the industrial juggernaut General Electric Company, with headquarters in Schenectady. By 1914, the original small light bulb plant had grown to more than a hundred buildings with 18,000 workers and earned Schenectady the moniker "Electric City." Those 18,000 workers in 1914 were more than the population of Schenectady in 1902, demonstrating tremendous economic growth in a very short period of time.¹⁰ State Street continued as the primary business corridor of the city and grew eastward, as it was constrained by the older residential neighborhoods. All of State Street east of Broadway was built out with commercial buildings and hotels. The canal in many ways became the line between old and new Schenectady.¹¹ Between 1910 and 1930 the population of the city grew from 72,826 to 95,692 as commerce and industry boomed. The Great Western Gateway Bridge was completed in 1925, linking State Street with the nearby community of Scotia, serving another area commercially. Additionally, in 1925 the Erie Canal was filled in, creating Erie Boulevard and providing more available real estate for commercial development around State Street. By 1930 Schenectady had largely finished its economic and population expansion, with the number of people then seven times that of fifty years earlier.¹²

Schenectady was able to weather the Great Depression better than most cities as a result of General Electric and Alco having contracts that kept them in business throughout the 1930s, though often at lower employment levels. The local economy slowed but did not stall or collapse. However, after the end of the Depression, the dramatic growth previously seen for General Electric did not return. As with nearly the entire country, construction during the lengthy downturn largely came to a stop. Federal funding allowed the city to continue with important institutional works such as City Hall (1931) and Mont Pleasant High School (1931). The Jay Street Post Office doubled in size (1930s) due to Works Progress Administration funding and the Schonowe Housing Project was completed (1930s).¹³

⁵ Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-41, 42, 44

⁶ Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-45, 46.

⁷ Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-47, 48, 49, 50.

⁸ Gregory Rosenthal, *Electric City* (Gregory Rosenthal: Schenectady, NY: 2008), p 76.

⁹ Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-52.

¹⁰ Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-61, 62.

¹¹ Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-75.

¹² Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-78; Rosenthal, *Electric City*, p 80.

¹³ Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-80.

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Along with most of the United States, World War II brought a substantial economic rebound, including for General Electric and Alco, with both producing equipment for the war effort. However, over the long-term Schenectady faced serious headwinds for its economy. The railroad industry declined, leaving the status of Alco in doubt. General Electric had old facilities and increased competition. The rapid emergence of suburbs also diluted the workforce and residents of the City of Schenectady proper. Retail establishments followed the residents to the suburbs, State Street declined, and the streetcar system was removed in 1946, chased out by the explosion of automobile ownership.¹⁴ The net result was a nearly complete decline in the traditional "downtown" State Street area, mirroring similar situations in industrial towns across the United States. General Electric eventually closed nearly all of its facilities, and Alco closed completely. Schenectady began a decades-long effort at redevelopment, sometimes aided by the historic preservation movement.¹⁵ This effort resulted in decidedly mixed results and only really began to see substantial success in the twenty-first century.

The History of 302 State Street, Schenectady, New York

The former masonic lodge and temple building located at 302 State Street in Schenectady, New York, began as the newly built headquarters of the A. Brown & Son Furniture Company in 1911. A deed dated February 14, 1911, grants the demised premises (located at the easterly corner of State Street and Dock Street (later Erie Boulevard)) from Clinton C. Brown to A. Brown and Son Company for the sum of one dollar. Additionally, the deed asserts that the A. Brown and Son Company was already in possession of the building by way of a lease with the seller.¹⁶ The Brown Furniture Company was founded in 1829 and operated at various State Street addresses for its entire existence.¹⁷ An advertisement in the Schenectady city directory from 1888 first links A. Brown & Son Furniture to the 302 State Street location. The business is described as upholsterers, as well as suppliers of parlor, library, hall, kitchen, chamber and school furniture. Additionally, they sold "caskets, robes, etc."¹⁸ Later city directory advertisements continued to highlight the company's role as "upholsterers," as well as a similar variety of furniture types as listed in 1888 and earlier. By 1895, they were specifically "Furnishing Undertakers."¹⁹ Later listings show a change in the store to a more formal image; the store was known as "The Brown Store" and offered "plenty to attract you, more to interest you, and everything to tempt you..."²⁰ Multiple photographs from the late nineteenth century document the earlier frame building, which served the Brown Furniture Company for several decades after having been a hotel for many years. For a brief period in the early twentieth century the Brown Store occupied a three-story masonry building. This building was ruined by a water main break in 1911.²¹ By 1913, now ensconced in its new headquarters at 302 State Street, The Brown Store declared that it was the "foremost FURNITURE Store, between New York and Cleveland..."²² That same year a former store clerk reminisced about selling two mahogany beds to then-Governor William Sulzer's wife.²³ However, the Brown Furniture Company's time in its new building was brief as the company closed permanently with a "close-out sale on Saturday, February 16, 1918."²⁴ (Figure 1) The Brown family then sold the building to the Masonic Hall Association on July 29, 1918. The purchase price was one dollar; however, the buyer had to pay off a \$75,000 mortgage and interest held by the Browns with Albany Savings Bank.²⁵

On March 19, 1908, St. George's Lodge, No. 6, in cooperation with several other local masonic organizations, had formed the Masonic Hall Association with the goal of acquiring a significantly larger temple location. Their location at that time had served them since 1869, and the membership had increased by a factor of almost ten in the intervening years. Before settling on the final location, the association had considered and rejected several other options, including building a new temple on the current temple site, pursuing construction at several other new locations, or purchasing one of multiple

¹⁴ Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-84, 85.

¹⁵ Larson, *City of Schenectady, Historic Resources Survey*, p III-88.

¹⁶ Schenectady County, Deed Book 206, p 244-45.

¹⁷ Larry Hart, *Tales of Old Schenectady, Volume I: The Formative Years* (Old Dorp Books, Scotia, NY), 1975, p 173; *Schenectady City Directory*, various.

¹⁸ *The Schenectady City Directory*, 1888.

¹⁹ *The Schenectady City Directory*, 1895, various.

²⁰ *The Schenectady City Directory*, 1903.

²¹ Larry Hart, *Tales of Old Schenectady, Volume I*, p 173.

²² *The Schenectady City Directory*, 1913.

²³ Larry Hart, *Tales of Old Schenectady, Volume I*, p 173.

²⁴ Larry Hart, "Tales of Old Dorp, *The Daily Gazette*, July 12, 1977, p 8; Larry Hart, *Tales of Old Schenectady, Volume I*, p 173.

²⁵ Schenectady County, Deed Book 228, p 458-59.

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existing buildings. To support whichever final option they selected, the association formed a Temple Fund Drive in 1916 that raised over \$90,000 in subscriptions. By 1918, World War I had forced a halt to new construction, which left the association with the choice of finding an existing building. Fate intervened and the Brown Furniture Company building was put up for sale that year. Likely reflecting other compensation sources than what were listed on the deed, the final purchase price was stated as \$123,000.²⁶

The Brown building was a modern, almost new, five-story building with the added benefit of featuring a first floor which would readily accommodate commercial rental, providing future income to St. George's Lodge. The association completed the purchase of 302 State Street on July 30, 1918.²⁷ With the purchase of the Brown building complete, the Masonic Hall Association began renovations almost immediately in September 1918. The architect and constructor was William Neil Smith, and the building was dedicated by the Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York, William S. Farmer.²⁸ (Figure 2) The work plan included raising the roof approximately five feet for the temple space, additional structural work, and extensive interior renovations to accommodate the needs of the lodge and the temple. The work also included the creation of a new entrance to the temple from Erie Boulevard. Initially all of the club rooms were completed and the fourth floor was temporarily used as the lodge room until the double-height fifth floor could be transformed into the temple space which exists today. The initial total renovation cost, including \$80,000 for building alterations and \$23,000 for furnishings, was \$103,000, with the project completed and the cornerstone ceremony held on December 6, 1919.²⁹ (Figure 3) The final work on the temple was completed in 1932 when the main lodge room on the fifth floor was finished. This work had been deferred until after the 1918-1919 renovation to control costs; however, by 1931 the mortgage had been retired. The design for the "Grand Lodge Room" had already been made with the help of the architect, William Neil Smith, and the work was approved in 1931 with a budget of \$25,000.³⁰

The first floor of 302 State Street was initially occupied by Goodlow's Good Clothes and later by Bond's Clothing Store until it closed in 1976. After that the Masonic Hall Association operated a Craftsmen Shop from the ground floor location.³¹ A full page city directory listing from 1925 lists the "Masonic Temple and Club" as being open to all visiting masons and the image shows signage for Goodlow's.³² The importance of this building for Schenectady is demonstrated by the number of other "masonic bodies" that also held their meetings there besides the St. George's Lodge No. 6: New Hope Lodge, Mead Lodge, Corlaer Lodge, Yates Lodge, George Hope Star, Sigma Body, Corlaer Eastern Star, Acacia Court, St. Andrew DeMolay, Shrine Club, and a general Masonic Club. Additionally, St. George's Lodge held separate meetings for each of its divisions: Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery and Court.³³ By 1945, Bond's was the first-floor occupant and the selection of local masonic bodies that met at the building had fluctuated, with some new organizations, including Beukendaal Lodge, Scottish Rite-Sigma Lodge, Gehomecobe Grotto, Rotterdam Masonic Club, Shepherd Shrine and the Triangle Girls.³⁴ The list of organizations that met at 302 State Street continued to vary, with new groups including the Cyprus Shrine, Oriental Shrine, Keystone Club, the Masonic Glee Club and the Sigma Sovereign Consistory Valley of Schenectady.³⁵ (Figure 4) After the 1950s, the full-page city directory listings for the Masonic Temple stopped appearing, and by the 1970s discussions about selling the building had begun.³⁶ (Figure 5) Lack of use and a reliable tenant, along with the decline of masonic organizations generally, led the Masonic Hall Association to finally sell their temple building in downtown Schenectady. The ownership of 302 State Street by the Masonic Hall Association of Schenectady ended on March 3, 1992, when the building was sold to the Alcoholism Council of Schenectady County Inc. for \$245,000.³⁷

²⁶ *Sketch of Building Project*, ca 1920, document from the Schenectady City Archives.

²⁷ *Sketch of Building Project*, ca 1920, document from the Schenectady City Archives.

²⁸ A bronze plaque, which used to adorn the building at 302 State Street, and now resides at the current temple, spelled out the details of the project and its participants; *Sketch of Building Project*, ca 1920, document from the Schenectady City Archives.

²⁹ *Sketch of Building Project*, ca 1920, document from the Schenectady City Archives.

³⁰ "Proposal to Remodel and Refinish Our Main or Grand Lodge Room," *Dragon*, Vol. VI, No. 1, January 1932, p 28-31.

³¹ "Masons to Open Card Shop at Old Bond Site," *Daily Gazette*, February 22, 1978, p 23.

³² *Schenectady City Directory*, 1925, p 700.

³³ *Schenectady City Directory*, 1925, p 700.

³⁴ *Schenectady City Directory*, 1945, p 849.

³⁵ *Schenectady City Directory*, 1949, p 855.

³⁶ "Masons to Open Card Shop at Old Bond Site," *Daily Gazette*, February 22, 1978, p 23.

³⁷ Schenectady County, Deed Book 1340, p 0328-29.

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Brief History of Freemasonry in the United States and particularly New York State

While stories and histories link the origins of Freemasonry to medieval European guilds, and there were earlier lodges in existence, the formal establishment of the modern masonic movement is linked to the 1717 creation of the Grand Lodge of England and the 1723 publishing of "The Constitution of the Free-Masons" (also called the Anderson Constitution). This "Constitution" quickly evolved into the universal laws of modern Freemasonry, far beyond its roots in England.³⁸ Freemasonry in the United States is descended directly from the lodges of England, Ireland, and Scotland. In 1730 the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England appointed Colonel Daniel Coxe to be the first Provincial Grand Master of the provinces of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, representing the first official link between English and American Freemasonry. The earliest lodge in the United States, linked to the modern masonic movement and constitution, was the St. John's Lodge in Philadelphia, founded in 1730. The first officially "constituted" lodge was the First Lodge of Boston, founded July 30, 1733 and recognized by the Grand Lodge of England. The first documented constituted local lodge in New York State was St. John's No. 2 in New York City in December 1757. However, there were likely earlier examples, as suggested by the fact that this one was named the *second* St. John's Lodge. Additionally, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Free and Adopted Masons in New York was holding formal meetings at least as early as 1753.³⁹

New lodges in New York State emerged regularly in the decades after the 1750s, both in New York City as well as several outside the city. The oldest constituted lodge outside of New York City was Lodge No. 74 in Albany in 1759. One of the earliest of these lodges was St. George's Lodge in Schenectady, which requested recognition in 1773 and was granted a warrant on September 14, 1774.⁴⁰ The Grand Lodge of the State of New York was constitutionally established on June 6, 1787, with sovereignty over all state lodges; this was supported by a legal warrant from the Grand Lodge of England. The result was that all of the current lodges in the state were reconstituted under the new authority of the New York State Grand Lodge.⁴¹ From this time forward, the masonic lodge system functioned in New York much as it did elsewhere in the United States. Owing to the secretive nature of Freemasonry, there were periods in the United States, particularly in the nineteenth century, of anti-masonic sentiment and suspicion. In New York State this peaked with the supposed murder of William Morgan in 1826, likely as a result of his threats to expose masonic secrets.⁴² This did result in a dramatic decline in the number of lodges in New York from approximately five hundred in 1827, to eighty-two in 1830; membership dropped precipitously from around 20,000 to no more than 3,000.⁴³ By 1847 there were still only seventy-five lodges in good standing; this low number was also partially exacerbated by the temporary Schism of 1849 between rural and urban lodges. However, by 1856, the number of lodges had rebounded to more than three hundred with membership of more than 15,000.⁴⁴ By the outset of the Civil War, New York State's masonic membership had grown to 30,835 and had leapt to 77,079 by 1871. Membership fluctuated the rest of the nineteenth century, never exceeding 84,000.⁴⁵

As a means of serving the public and keeping Freemasonry in the mind of the general population, the various masonic lodges would regularly lead the ceremonial laying of cornerstones for public buildings and monuments and churches.⁴⁶ The masons also focused on taking care of their own community; with this in mind the Masonic Home at Utica, NY, was established for indigent and aged brethren, destitute widows, and orphans of masons. Later called the Masonic Home and School, this facility opened in 1892.⁴⁷ In addition to their then-regular community service projects, the New York masons took a leading role in supporting the war effort during World War I, including creating a War and Relief Fund that raised enough funds that, after the war, they were able to create a Masonic Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hospital, also located in Utica, New York.⁴⁸ By 1922 the Grand Lodge of New York recorded 902 statewide lodges with a total

³⁸ Ossian Lang, *History of Freemasonry in the State of New York* (New York: Order of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in the State of New York: 1922), p 1-3.

³⁹ Lang, *History of Freemasonry*, p 6-17, 30.

⁴⁰ Lang, *History of Freemasonry*, p 34-48.

⁴¹ Lang, *History of Freemasonry*, p 72-78.

⁴² Lang, *History of Freemasonry*, p 108-25.

⁴³ Lang, *History of Freemasonry*, p 126.

⁴⁴ Lang, *History of Freemasonry*, p 135-36; 142-43.

⁴⁵ Lang, *History of Freemasonry*, p 150.

⁴⁶ Lang, *History of Freemasonry*, p 161-63.

⁴⁷ Lang, *History of Freemasonry*, p 177, 182

⁴⁸ Lang, *History of Freemasonry*, p 197-99.

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membership of 272,634.⁴⁹ When the St. George's Lodge of Schenectady was finalizing its new headquarters at 302 State Street, the larger New York masonic community had reached a high point of statewide participation and community recognition. Indeed, this began the peak period of Freemasonry in the United States.

Separately, the esoteric nature of Freemasonry should be a point of appeal to potential members, but also a source of suspicion from the general population. First, masonic lectures and rituals are, by the nature of the organization, accessible only to members in a closed meeting. This creates a purposeful barrier to nonmembers and a curtain of secrecy between members and the general population. Second are the real and imagined hidden meanings in masonic rituals and symbolism. Besides establishing a gap in knowledge between members and nonmembers, it can also create a divide within a lodge between new initiates and established members.⁵⁰

Considered from a broader viewpoint, it is believed that Freemasonry defined much of American society during the Colonial and Early Republic periods. The lodges allowed the elite to dictate many larger societal questions. Counterintuitively, as the masonic orders evolved, they began to allow membership to those outside the social elite, contributing to a gradual decline in the absolute dominance of the traditional ruling class.⁵¹ It has been argued that the nature of Freemasonry changed again in the United States in the early twentieth century, from an organization more focused on the moral and spiritual character of men into a group defined by being civic-based and representing "Americanism."⁵² Another facet to this change was that the rise in urbanism and commercialism in American culture led to lodges taking a more open approach to society as a whole. Lodges were now as focused on leisure activities as on rituals, secrets, and sacred spaces.⁵³

Another change for many lodges, perhaps inspired by the change in the focus of Freemasonry generally, was a patriotically inspired jump in membership after both World War I and World War II. This resulted in many more members, many of whom, however, were not active participants. Slowly a backlash within lodges changed the focus from simply increased enrollment to finding members who adhered to the "principles of Freemasonry."⁵⁴ However, this change in emphasis, along with various changes in society as a whole, led to a collapse in membership in the second half of the twentieth century. Changes in American society after World War II were significant and varied, leading to permanent societal transformation, much of which was detrimental to the practice of Freemasonry. Women entering the work force, increased marital social interaction, working hours, and television, and the rise of suburbia and decline of downtowns are all blamed for the decrease of masonic membership in the second half of the twentieth century. Ironically, faced with these challenges, in some ways many lodges turned back to a more ritualistic approach, focused on the esoteric in response to the fall in membership.⁵⁵

St. George's Lodge No. 6 F & A.M. History

On October 4, 1773, the Masters Lodge in Albany, New York, received a petition from a group of brothers in Schenectady requesting to be "formed into a regular body by the name of St. George's Lodge."⁵⁶ A dispensation was granted on June 21, 1774, to meet and assemble in the name of St. George's Lodge No. 1. The lodge then held its first official meeting on August 18, 1774, when its by-laws were adopted. The lodge was formally warranted by Sir John Johnson, the Provincial Grand Master of the Province of New York with a charter dated September 14, 1774. The first master of this lodge was Christopher Yates, likely the first mason in Schenectady. This charter granted the new St. George's Lodge the right to "make Masons," while ensuring that the members "observe and keep the rules, order and regulations...and the particular by-laws" of the lodge.⁵⁷ Pursuant to multiple reorganizations of the New York masonic order, the number issued to the

⁴⁹ Lang, *History of Freemasonry*, p 209.

⁵⁰ Alexander Towey, *The Rise, Decline and Renaissance of Freemasonry in the United States during the 20th and 21st Century*, Master's Thesis, 2022, p 7-8.

⁵¹ Towey, *The Rise, Decline and Renaissance of Freemasonry*, 2022, p 9.

⁵² Towey, *The Rise, Decline and Renaissance of Freemasonry*, 2022, p 6.

⁵³ Towey, *The Rise, Decline and Renaissance of Freemasonry*, 2022, p 10.

⁵⁴ Towey, *The Rise, Decline and Renaissance of Freemasonry*, 2022, p 6.

⁵⁵ Towey, *The Rise, Decline and Renaissance of Freemasonry*, 2022, p 11-12.

⁵⁶ *Sesquicentennial History, St. George's Lodge* (Schenectady, N.Y., September: 1924), p 7.

⁵⁷ *Sesquicentennial History, St. George's Lodge*, September, 1924, p 7-11.

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Schenectady St. George's Lodge was changed from No. 1 to No. 7 in 1800, to No. 8 in 1819, until finally being assigned No. 6 in 1839.⁵⁸

During the American Revolution, many Continental army officers joined St. George's Lodge, as many other lodges in the region had temporarily ceased activities. Later, St. George's Lodge survived the dramatic decline in masonic membership during the scandal of the William Morgan murder; however, meetings were reduced to once annually from 1827 to 1834 during the worst of the "Masonic persecution." Between 1827 and 1844 there were no new members admitted to the lodge, leaving only nine active brothers by 1839. After weathering this period of significant challenge, St. George's Lodge No. 6 flourished, with a steady increase in membership well into the twentieth century.⁵⁹

Extensive surviving early meeting minutes reveal many details about the functioning of the lodge. Early meetings of the lodge were held every two weeks on Saturday evening and were followed by a social hour including wine and brandy; failure to attend resulted in a fine. Fines were also levied for cursing, swearing, blasphemy or drunkenness. There was an initiation fee originally paid in English pounds, and common expenses were writing quills and firewood.⁶⁰ Elements of early lodge design continued into the twentieth century temple at 302 State Street, including two large wood columns topped by large globes which represent the earth and heavens and a central altar in the lodge room. These are echoed in photographs of the finished temple space.⁶¹ St. George's Lodge No. 6 also maintained traditional rituals from earlier times, including the use of three lighted candles arranged in a triangle around a traced image of the lodge detailed with symbols of Freemasonry when "Making a Mason." This symbol of the triad is derived from the historic ritual "Holy Royal Arch." Since the earliest meetings of the lodge, an initiation ceremony was always followed by the traditional social hour.⁶²

Before 302 State Street, St. George's Lodge met in at least nine previous locations. The first location was a tavern owned by Robert Clench, a brother of order, where the lodge met until December 1777. The second meeting location was the home of Abram V. Truax, also a lodge brother. In 1779 the lodge moved to the house of another brother, John Aaron Bradt, on State Street near Washington Avenue, and used this location until 1782. Between 1782 and 1790 the lodge met part time at Widow Clench's House and the remainder of the time at Mr. Hudson's Schenectady Coffee House at the corner of Union and Ferry Streets.⁶³ In 1790 the lodge purchased a house and lot from Dr. Nicholas Van der Volgen on the south side of State Street. The first floor was rented out, and the upper level was used as the lodge room. This building, the first dedicated lodge building for St. George's Lodge, was also the second location in the state, after Albany, to be used exclusively as a masonic lodge. This location was used by the lodge for forty-five years, until it was taken by the railroad in 1835.⁶⁴ Between 1835 and 1844, there are no records of the meeting location for St. George's Lodge. Beginning on January 27, 1844, St. George's Lodge began to meet at the "New Lodge Room in the Lyceum Building," which was located on the corner of Yates and Union Streets and had an octagon form. The lodge sold its interest in this building on January 23, 1856, and began leasing the top floor of the Van Horne Building on State Street until 1869.⁶⁵ Finally, in 1869, St. George's Lodge No. 6 designed and built its own lodge on Church Street. They used this location until moving to 302 State Street in 1919. At that time, the 1869 lodge building was taken over by the Schenectady Civic Players, who use the building to this day.⁶⁶

From its earliest history, St. George's Lodge in Schenectady had brothers who were well known leaders in the community, beginning with multiple Revolutionary War officers. Starting with Joseph Yates in 1798 and John Yates in 1808 and 1811, through 1992 there were fifty-four mayors of Schenectady and thirty of them were members of St. George's Lodge. Joseph Yates became perhaps the most famous lodge member when he was elected governor of New York in 1822. Thomas B. Clench captained the boat which carried Governor DeWitt Clinton and the Erie Canal Commissioners

⁵⁸ *Sesquicentennial History, St. George's Lodge*, September, 1924, p 12.

⁵⁹ *Sesquicentennial History, St. George's Lodge*, September, 1924, p 13-16.

⁶⁰ St. George's Lodge No. 6 F. & A.M. *200th Anniversary*, September 12, 1974, p 2-3; this booklet utilized the extensive minutes of the Lodge, which are intact, covering more than two hundred years of Lodge history.

⁶¹ *The Dragon*, Vol. VII, No. 1, January, 1933, p 14-15; *Sesquicentennial History, St. George's Lodge*, September, 1924, p 4.

⁶² St. George's Lodge No. 6 F. & A.M. *200th Anniversary*, p 4-5.

⁶³ *Sesquicentennial History, St. George's Lodge*, September, 1924, p 25.

⁶⁴ *Sesquicentennial History, St. George's Lodge*, September, 1924, p 25-26.

⁶⁵ *Sesquicentennial History, St. George's Lodge*, September, 1924, p 26.

⁶⁶ *Sesquicentennial History, St. George's Lodge*, September, 1924, p 26.

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westward along the Mohawk River on a fact-finding trip to make the final decisions regarding the route of the Erie Canal.⁶⁷ The first record of an African American member of St. George's Lodge was Richard P. G. Wright and his son, Theodore S. Wright, in 1844. Richard Wright had been a member of other local masonic organizations since 1821, while Theodore Wright graduated from the Princeton Theological Seminary and served as the pastor of the first Presbyterian church with a black congregation in New York City.⁶⁸ Samuel S. Stratton served as mayor in 1956 before beginning a thirty-year career in the United States House of Representatives.⁶⁹ Additionally, numerous members of St. George's Lodge were prominent members of the business community and local political leaders, as well as several members of the state legislature.

An article in the 1929 *St. George's Bulletin* relates the local importance of the Schenectady Masonic Club in the building at 302 State Street. The club is described as filling the gap between the lodge room and the home or office, a common meeting place for masons. At the club, brother met brother for a game of billiards, pinochle, or cribbage. Members who were not attending regularly were admonished. The article describes the pressures of society pulling members away from the club...movies, the general "amusement-craze age," automobiles and picnics, and the general outdoors.⁷⁰ The articles laments that, while there were more than 4,000 members, many did not even know that they were part of the lodge. A fall pocket billiards and cards contest was announced to entice brothers back to the club. The article calls upon members to "get behind the officers of the club...support club activities."⁷¹ It is important to highlight that, while the upper level temple served St. George's Lodge No. 6, the Masonic Club was open to the multiple masonic organizations which held their meetings on the fourth floor of 302 State Street.

Another article claimed the Schenectady Masonic Club to be one of the largest in the National League of Masonic Clubs, selling the most cherry blossoms for the Washington University Endowment fund of any club in the country. Travelling masons were encouraged to visit the club as well. The club rooms were advertised as being on the second floor.⁷² To educate its members as they worked their way through the degrees of brotherhood, St. George's Lodge adopted The Lodge System of Masonic Education. This system inducted members into the principles and teachings of masonry.⁷³ An article in July 1931 spelled out how one lived a life of masonry through Reverence, Brotherliness, Education and Americanism. Within the lodge, reverence is supported by the three pillars: Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty, foundations of a God-like life.⁷⁴ The altar is the center of the lodge where the Bible rests. Masonry itself is based upon five ideals: Fatherhood of God, Brotherhood of Man, the Moral Law, the Golden Rule, and the Hope of Life Everlasting.⁷⁵ Education is a foundation of masonry, with the Second Degree of brotherhood emphasizing the Liberal Arts and Sciences; masons are expected to support educational movements in the greater community, outside the lodge. However, a direct role in politics is not part of masonry. Finally, Americanism is a key component of masonry (at least in 1930s America). The masons tied the language of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution directly to early Freemasonry.⁷⁶

As with all masonic orders, the leading point of focus for the members of St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club was the lodge's efforts to serve their community. Masonic teachings often speak of sheltering the feeble and the orphans, raising up the downtrodden and promoting learning. "The primary aim of St. George's Lodge, and all other Masonic Groups, is to raise money for charitable causes."⁷⁷ As of 2010, the largest organization the Schenectady masonic groups supported was the Shriners Children Hospital, which provides free care for children until they reach adulthood. In addition, St. George's Lodge contributes to the Schenectady County Historical Society, Vale Cemetery, and other local organizations.⁷⁸ Earlier accounts of St. George's Lodge tell the same story of public service. A 1930 annual meeting report

⁶⁷ St. George's Lodge No. 6 F. & A.M. *200th Anniversary*, p 12-13.

⁶⁸ St. George's Lodge No. 6 F. & A.M. *200th Anniversary*, p 13.

⁶⁹ Bill Buell, "In the lodge of fellowship," *The Daily Gazette*, February 27, 2010, B4, B6.

⁷⁰ Douglas K. Miller, "The Schenectady Masonic Club," *St. George's Bulletin*, October, 1929, p 6.

⁷¹ Miller, "The Schenectady Masonic Club," p 7.

⁷² "The Schenectady Masonic Club," *The Dragon*, Vol. IV, No. 4, October, 1930, p 5-6.

⁷³ *The Dragon*, Vol. V, No. 2, April, 1931, p 5.

⁷⁴ Wor. Bro. C. R. Dye, "Masonry in Everyday Life," *The Dragon*, Vol. V, No. 3, July, 1931, p 5.

⁷⁵ Dye, "Masonry in Everyday Life," p 5.

⁷⁶ Dye, "Masonry in Everyday Life," p 6-8.

⁷⁷ Buell, "In the lodge of fellowship," p B6.

⁷⁸ Buell, "In the lodge of fellowship," p B6.

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addressed the "annual collection for the Masonic Home Children's Christmas Fund."⁷⁹ Another article from 1931, addresses the concept of "organized brotherliness...takes the form of gifts made by clubs and lodges for noble purposes." An example of this was the annual \$500 gift to the local orphanage or the home for the aged. A 1948 advertisement, purchased as part of the sesquicentennial celebration of the City of Schenectady, trumpeted the newly established Masonic Foundation for Medical Research and Human Welfare led by the Grand Lodge of New York, which raised \$500,000 in its first four months: "Masonry has accepted the challenge, and dedicated itself to a great humanitarian task."⁸⁰

St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club as a Masonic Building Type

The Masonic Lodge Room, 1870-1930

The peak of freemasonry membership and lodge construction in the United States was during the approximate period of 1870 to 1930. During this time the number and architectural stature of masonic buildings increased dramatically. These ritualistic masonic buildings were alternately called halls (generally for mixed-use buildings) or temples, which were generally dedicated to masonic purposes exclusively. Earlier examples tended to follow the masonic hall model, but by the early twentieth-century temples were more common. The Schenectady Lodge, with its dedicated first-floor commercial space, but upper floors serving only the masonic community, could be seen as a blending of these two definitions. Regardless of the period, design, or name of these buildings, the lodge rooms "served as both theaters and site of worship..."⁸¹

In its simplest form, the lodge room was where masonic rituals took place and the "fraternity of men" was formed. However, the variety in design, style, size, and elaboration of these rooms ranged from small, simple, largely unadorned rural meeting rooms, to the high-style, dramatic lodge rooms seen at buildings such as the Schenectady Lodge. Later lodge rooms were often highly decorated, creating a space for members, which "transported them from their own particular locations..." This journey was "...part of the chain of masonic officers, a chain which both their literature and ritual portrayed as being eternal."⁸² Common characteristics of a lodge room included that it was above street level, adopted a rectangular form, had a high ceiling, featured symmetrically placed doors on one end, and an altar in its center.⁸³

The lodge space was designed around the concept of a pair of axes, one running down the center, or length of the room, while the other split the room horizontally. The long primary axis would start at the letter G on the wall, which was a symbol of both God and geometry, through the Master to the Senior Warden at the other end of the room. The secondary axis was perpendicular to the primary one and would run from the Junior Warden through the altar in the center of the room to the far room splitting the room. Elevated platforms were used for seating along the sides of the room.⁸⁴ The more important the member or the object, generally the closer they were to one of the two axes. Three of the axes endpoints were the chairs of the officers: the worshipful master, the senior warden and the junior warden. This is clearly seen in the Schenectady lodge room. These chairs tended to be exaggerated in size and ornamentation. However, the seating for all other members was the same in height, placement, and decoration, which highlighted their equality in the brotherhood, regardless of their social status outside the lodge, in general society. Member seats ran along the sides of the lodge room and faced each other, as compared to pews in a church, which all faced forward. This design is also seen at Schenectady and encouraged members to think of themselves as part of a larger group and all equally accessible to the central altar.⁸⁵ The central altar was the location of the Bible, "where initiates took their oaths." Overall, the "lodge room was designed to shut out the exterior world and outsiders."⁸⁶ Windows were either blocked by shutters or stained glass, or didn't exist, as

⁷⁹ *The Dragon*, January, 1930, p 4.

⁸⁰ Dye, "Masonry in Everyday Life," p 6; "The Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons, extends congratulations on the occasion of the sesquicentennial celebration of the Incorporation of the City of Schenectady," *The Daily Gazette*, 1948.

⁸¹ William D. Moore, "The Masonic Lodge Room, 1870-1930: A Sacred Space of Masculine Spiritual Hierarchy," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Vol. 5, 1995, p 26.

⁸² Moore, "The Masonic Lodge Room," p 27.

⁸³ Moore, "The Masonic Lodge Room," p 27.

⁸⁴ Moore, "The Masonic Lodge Room," p 28.

⁸⁵ Moore, "The Masonic Lodge Room," p 29-30.

⁸⁶ Moore, "The Masonic Lodge Room," p 30.

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seen at Schenectady. Access to the lodge room was via a stairway, which “separated the room from the pedestrian realm...esoteric symbols, the understanding of which united members and excluded outsiders, often decorated the wall and ceilings of the lodge room...”⁸⁷ The Schenectady lodge room was clearly designed with these principles as the primary guide.

The use of revivalist styles (Gothic in the case of Schenectady) “allowed the masons to leave the present and lose themselves in a romanticized past.” The rituals performed in these lodge rooms were often viewed as a form of “participatory theater...enactments structured around memorized dialogue and standardized floor movements” Members often dressed in elaborate costumes and makeup when performing these rituals.⁸⁸ In some rituals the master of the lodge “metaphorically became King Solomon, and the lodge room became Solomon’s temple.” The evidence from the time of design and construction, as well as the surviving lodge rooms today, speak clearly to a decision to expend tremendous levels of time, effort and money to create these spaces.⁸⁹

Separately, the masons conceived of “the lodge room as a religious realm...freemasonry is not only a brotherhood but a church...” It was declared that “lodge meetings should be conducted with as much dignity as a church service.”⁹⁰ In the end, “the lodge room emphasized a hierarchy and corporate identity” Unlike the changing status of workers as the economy industrialized in the outside world, inside the lodge room was “the fraternal hierarchy as comprehensible, ascendable, and visible...”⁹¹ The decorative themes of these lodge spaces matched the episodes of history that the masons evoked in their rituals and claimed as historical antecedents to their orders: “Egyptians, ancient Jews, Islamic Arabs, the knights of the crusades, the builders of the medieval cathedrals, the architects of England’s architectural renaissance, and American’s founding fathers.” The masons then selected a revivalist style to match that imagined history: Egyptian, Gothic, Persian, Norman, Georgian, or American Colonial.⁹²

The St. George's Lodge No. 6 Temple and Club as a Masonic Space

The interior space of 302 State Street is substantial, and some of its historic uses and assignments are known. The first floor was always a commercial space, from its inception as the main entrance to Brown Furniture through its many years as a rental space under the Masonic Temple. As part of the conversion from a furniture store, a separate entrance to the Masonic Temple was created at the rear west corner, replacing two storefront bays. This entrance led to the entry foyer of the temple with access to stairs or an elevator to the upper floors (photos 12, 13, 14). The second-floor featured club room areas in the front half and the lobby area to the rear. This floor featured areas for welcoming guests, and locations for games, cigars and cards. Certain rooms retain extensive wood paneling and seating and clearly would accommodate social activities (photos 17, 18). At the rear, next to the elevator, is a formal lobby for greeting guests, and abutting this area across the hall is a large meeting room (20, 21). The third floor was largely dedicated to dining in the front half (photo 24) with a large open area which could accommodate many guests; the rear of the dining room still features multiple pass-through doors for delivering food from the kitchen area (photo 23). The rear of the third floor held the large kitchen (photo 25) and retains formal cabinetry for food and supply storage (photo 26).⁹³

The fourth floor is dominated by a huge space that served for several years as the lodge room for St. George's Lodge, until the upper temple was completed (photos 28, 29). For most of the temple's existence, the fourth-floor space was used by other masonic organizations for their meetings. These included Eastern Star, a women's masonic group, and many others. The front area retains several historic, paneled coat rooms at the front (photo 27). The rear of the fourth floor features a vestibule/lobby area for visitors arriving for a meeting, with intact, ornate storage cabinets for the belongings of either members or their organizations (photo 30), with one cabinet door still retaining a label for the Shepherd Shrine (photo 31). Other rooms hold dozens of impressive, paneled, glass-front numbered cabinets (photos 32, 33). The furniture from the fourth floor lodge was moved to the current St. George's Lodge No. 6 location at 394 Princetown Road in the

⁸⁷ Moore, “The Masonic Lodge Room, p 30.

⁸⁸ Moore, “The Masonic Lodge Room, p 31.

⁸⁹ Moore, “The Masonic Lodge Room, p 33.

⁹⁰ Moore, “The Masonic Lodge Room, p 34.

⁹¹ Moore, “The Masonic Lodge Room, p 35.

⁹² Moore, “The Masonic Lodge Room, p 35.

⁹³ Gloria Kishton, Notes taken during interview with current St. George's Lodge members, 2022; Frank Karwowski, current member of the St. George's Lodge, July 25, 2024 email.

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Rotterdam sector of Schenectady. (*Figure 6*) The upper floor (fifth and sixth stories) is double height, except at the front and rear, and is the location of the highly ornate and intact masonic lodge room; this is the space where an extra five feet of height was added during the original 1918-1919 renovation. The rear of the fifth floor retains a lobby comparable to the space on the fourth floor, with abundant cabinetry and a set of decorative elevator doors (photos 35, 36, 37). The rear of the sixth floor is the organ/choir loft (48, 38, 39, 40). The organ itself was also moved to the new lodge location in 1992. At the very top, at the back of the building, is a small apartment which housed a custodial staff person; for many years this was Myra Martin.⁹⁴

The masonic lodge room occupies all of the main, central double-height section of the top floor. This formal masonic lodge mirrors the specific design and iconographical details laid out in the earlier discussion of "The Masonic Lodge Room, 1870-1930." The northeast (State Street) end of the temple features a raised platform with impressive Gothic Revival features and a recessed area behind the traceries which formerly housed a stained-glass window (photo 44), which has also been moved to the new lodge location (*Figure 7*). This would have served as one end of the "primary axis" and, with the higher elevation, also likely the location of the throne for the Grand "Worshipful" Master of the lodge. The southwest end of the temple is highlighted by another raised platform (one step less than the other end of the primary axis), also with elaborate Gothic Revival decorative elements punctuated by a clock and topped by a balcony in the organ/choir loft (photo 42). This is likely where the Senior Warden would have been seated during lodge meetings. Both sides of the temple floor are flanked by double rows of seats for members during meetings (photos 41, 43, 45, 46).⁹⁵ The southeast side of the lodge features a third raised platform with a stone Gothic Revival arch featuring architectural detailing. This would have anchored the horizontal, secondary axis of the lodge room and likely served as the seating location for the Junior Warden. Two photographs of the remodeled lodge room from soon after completion show the extensive furnishing and decoration which adorned the temple space.⁹⁶ (*Figures 8, 9*) According to the St. George's Lodge magazine (*The Dragon*), the Grand Lodge Room was remodeled to conform with the Early English Gothic architectural style, and the architect was specifically influenced by details from York Cathedral in England. Stone was used on the side walls, pilasters, and arches. The woodwork details utilized oak "treated in antique English finish." The architect worked with Bro. R. P. Swackhamer of Schenectady to develop a unique lighting system which allowed for lighting effects simulating different times of the day from dawn to sunset. Also included were a new heating ventilation system and cathedral seating.⁹⁷

Masonic Temples and Lodges on the National Register in New York State

The Tahawus Masonic Lodge, 14234 Main Street, Town of Jay, Essex County, NY

The Tahawus Masonic Lodge (NRHP 2020) was listed under Criterion A (Social History) as a significant local masonic lodge used by multiple organizations from its construction in 1911, until closing in 1971. It was also found eligible under Criterion C (Architecture) as a rare early example of a commercial building which survived the local 1925 fire. The Tahawus Lodge shares the same commercial history as the Schenectady Lodge, but the size and design are much more restrained than the dramatic masonic lodge in Schenectady. Additionally, while an important local resource, the interior upper levels retain only limited historic elements, and nothing remains of the original temple/lodge design and decoration.

Caledonia House Hotel, 3141 State Street, Village of Caledonia, Livingston County, NY

The Caledonia House Hotel (NRHP 2001) was listed under Criterion C (Architecture) as "an outstanding example of early nineteenth-century, Federal-style design in western New York," with a period of significance from 1831-1950. While the Caledonia Hotel is a notable resource, its importance is in its architectural design, detailing, and integrity, and not in its role as a masonic building type. The interior retains outstanding Federal architectural features. However, the early twentieth-century masonic lodge elements, added as part of a reworking of the building functions, are limited and much less dramatic than the lodge in Schenectady. There is an elevated platform at one end providing seating for all three officers (in contrast to the more elaborate bi-axial plan of fully developed lodge spaces. The other end retains three narrow, recessed niches, delineating at least the long axis of the formal lodge space.

⁹⁴ Gloria Kishton, 2022; Frank Karwowski, July 25, 2024 email.

⁹⁵ Gloria Kishton, 2022; Frank Karwowski, July 25, 2024 email.

⁹⁶ *The Dragon*, Vol. VII, No. 1, January, 1933, p 14-15.

⁹⁷ Bro. Charles H. Copestake, "Dedication of the Remodeled Lodge Room," *The Dragon*, Vol. VII, No. 1, January, 1933, p 12.

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Hobart Masonic Hall, 6 Cornell Avenue, Village of Hobart, Delaware County, NY

The Hobart Masonic Hall (NRHP, 2001) was listed under Criterion C (Architecture) as "a distinct example of Stick style design." It was also found eligible under Criterion A (Social History) as an intact local example of a purpose-built masonic lodge, with a period of significance for the year of its construction: 1889. This is an early example of a still extant masonic lodge with strong architectural integrity. It also retains the basic elements of a formal masonic lodge room on the second level with an elevated seating area for the three officers and a coved ceiling, which establishes the long axis of the temple space. Additionally, the façade gable retains wood carvings of common masonic imagery. However, Hobart Hall differs substantially from the Schenectady Lodge in its size, sophistication, and level of detail. Additionally, the building form is that of a house, rather than the much larger multi-story building in Schenectady.

Lowville Masonic Temple, 7552 South State Street, Village of Lowville, Lewis County, NY

The Lowville Masonic Temple (NRHP, 2008) was listed under Criterion C (Architecture) as a locally significant example of Georgian-inspired civic architecture. It was also found eligible under Criterion A (Social History) as a purpose-built masonic meeting hall, with a period of significance focused on its period of construction: 1928-29. Still in use by the local historic society at the time of its listing, the temple retains excellent architectural integrity. And, while only two stories, versus the five-story Schenectady Lodge, this substantial building features a dedicated exterior masonic-inspired entry and excellent interior features. The second floor features all of its original historic detailing, though most of it is not specifically linked to freemasonry. However, the former elevated seating area for the three officers is retained, along with the central altar, side wall seating, and large stand-alone columnar globe lights. While the dramatic Gothic-inspired lodge space of the Schenectady Masonic Temple is larger and more ostentatiously decorated, the Lowville masonic building is an excellent example of the masonic building type.

Masonic Temple, Newport Lodge No. 455 F. & A.M., 7408 Main Street, Village of Newport, Herkimer, County, NY

The Newport Masonic Temple (NRHP, 2009) was listed under Criterion C (Architecture) for its distinctive Neoclassical Architecture and under Criterion A (Social History) as a locally significant, purpose-built fraternal headquarters, with a period of significance from 1902-1959. This masonic temple building has good architectural integrity, but the size and scale is not comparable to the massive Schenectady Lodge building. Additionally, the second level lodge space, while still in use by the local masons, has little in the way of masonic decoration or iconography, other than the furnishings. There is a small, raised platform for the seating of the three officers, and a small central platform for the altar, establishing a basic version of the masonic axis.

The Tower Homestead and Masonic Temple, 210 Tower Street, Village of Waterville, Oneida County, NY

The Tower Homestead and Masonic Temple (NRHP, 1976) was listed under the areas of Industry (Criterion A) and Architecture (Criterion C) with a period of significance from 1830-1910. This property consists of a large complex of agricultural and commercial buildings spanning its time as a residence and working farm. In 1896, what would become the masonic temple, was constructed as a law office and residence across the street. The building was designed to resemble a church with a dramatic 103' front tower, and featuring Italianate details. The law office building was purchased by the masons in 1899, to serve as the local lodge. While the entire Tower family complex is a unique and fascinating resource, and the later masonic temple building is an extraordinary building, the link to masonic traditions or building types is limited.

The Warren Masonic Lodge #32, 1144 Centre Road, Town of Clinton, Dutchess County, NY

The Warren Masonic Lodge (NRHP, 2007) was listed under the areas of Criterion C (Architecture) as a good local example of an Italianate civic building, and Criterion A (Social History) as a purpose-built masonic hall, with a period of significance from 1865-1957. The two-story building conveys the appearance of a church, with the first floor serving as a multi-purpose room while the second level serves as the lodge room. The lodge room retains its molded wood detailing, arched doorways, and cove ceiling, which delineates the primary axis. Unlike many of these smaller masonic buildings, this lodge space has raised platforms at both ends of the meeting space. However, while an excellent local resource and an early extant masonic temple, this building pales in comparison to the much larger, grander and more elaborate Schenectady Masonic Lodge.

Watertown Masonic Temple, 240 Washington Street, Watertown, Jefferson County, NY

The Watertown Masonic Temple (NRHP, 1980) was listed under Criterion C (Architecture) as an outstanding example of large-scale institutional Neoclassical Revival style design, with a two-story Greek portico façade. Additionally, the resource is significant under Criterion A (Social History) as an early twentieth-century purpose-built masonic temple, with a period of significance from 1914-1917. This masonic lodge is a rare high-style example of the building type and

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comparable to the Schenectady Lodge. The lodge room itself is quite large, and a full two stories in height with a rectangular design running on an axis from the large stage at one end to a raised platform at the other end. As with the Schenectady Lodge, and befitting a correctly designed lodge space, the Master is seated to the east, the Senior Warden to the west and the Junior Warden to the south, at the opposite end of the axis. Also echoing traditional lodge room design, the sides feature extensive seating for members, including a balcony level which, along with the stage, creates the impression of an auditorium. Like the Schenectady Lodge, the Watertown Masonic Temple's overall design and ornamentation represents a rare masonic building type of this stature, with intact and elaborate large-scale masonic features.

The Albany Masonic Temple, 67 Corning Place, City of Albany, Albany County, NY

The Albany Masonic Temple is a contributing resource to the Albany Historic District (NRHP, 1980). The Renaissance Revival Style, purpose-built temple has served the Wadsworth Lodge No. 417, F. &A.M. since 1896. The grand, four-story lodge is constructed of granite and an entire block in width, retaining strong architectural integrity. Like the Schenectady Lodge, the Albany Temple features a two-story lodge space, which is entirely intact. The room features heavy use of original oak woodwork, classical plaster ornamentation and stained-glass windows. Though very different from the Gothic-inspired Schenectady Lodge, the Albany Masonic Temple is as grand and highly ornamented and another rare example of a high-style masonic building type.

CRITERION A: SOCIAL HISTORY

Freemasonry arrived in the United States from England, Ireland, and Scotland in the early-to-mid eighteenth century, with New York State hosting some of the earliest lodges in the nation. St. George's Lodge No. 6 was chartered in 1774 and has remained an active lodge ever since, operating for more than two centuries. The current lodge maintains nearly all of the minutes for the history of the organization, which have helped convey the story of the lodge, including significant changes and continuities. The temple at 302 State Street is a rare surviving, purposefully designed Masonic Lodge and Club with more-than-a-century-old features and details largely intact. On the interior, the paneled rooms, highly decorative foyers, expansive storage areas for multiple other masonic orders, and the elaborate Gothic-inspired fifth floor lodge all communicate the functionality, traditions, and rituals of the masonic community in Schenectady, and the nation, at a level of detail not often seen. When coupled with the prominent role the temple and its members served in the larger Schenectady community, business and political realms, this building is a remarkable resource within the City of Schenectady and within the larger regional masonic community.

CRITERION C: ARCHITECTURE

The St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club is an outstanding example of an early twentieth-century Gothic Revival masonic building type, particularly the lodge space on the top level. While many buildings related to masonic organizations survive today in New York State, few boast the level of dramatic, sophisticated design seen at the Schenectady building. Additionally, the Schenectady temple features a stunning lodge room, which embodies all of the contemporary features, iconography and design elements seen in properly high-style masonic spaces. From the two-story stone entry, through the multiple floors of meeting rooms, cloak rooms, card rooms and other member spaces, each featuring elaborate stained-wood paneling, to the overwhelming two-story lodge room, this building articulates the nature of freemasonry as well as the stature of this organization in the community of Schenectady. The St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club has strong architectural integrity and is a rare example of a surviving high-style masonic building with nearly all of its original features intact.

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MAY BE MADE INTO MASONIC TEMPLE.

THE BROWN BLOCK, CORNER OF STATE AND DOCK STREETS, SCHENECTADY, WHICH MEMBERS OF THE CRAFT MAY PURCHASE.

(Photo from White's Studio, 229 State street.)

Free Masonry

Figure 1: Image of 302 State Street ("The Brown Block") in 1918, shortly before the sale to the Masonic Association (*The Daily Gazette*).

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Figure 2: Bronze plaque commemorating the project; previous attached to 302 State Street; located at current St. George's Lodge No.6.

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Figure 3: Undated photograph (ca 1920) of 302 State Street ca showing Goodlow Good Clothes store on the first floor and the new Masonic Temple Entrance on Erie Boulevard. Photographer unknown, courtesy of the Schenectady County Historical Society.

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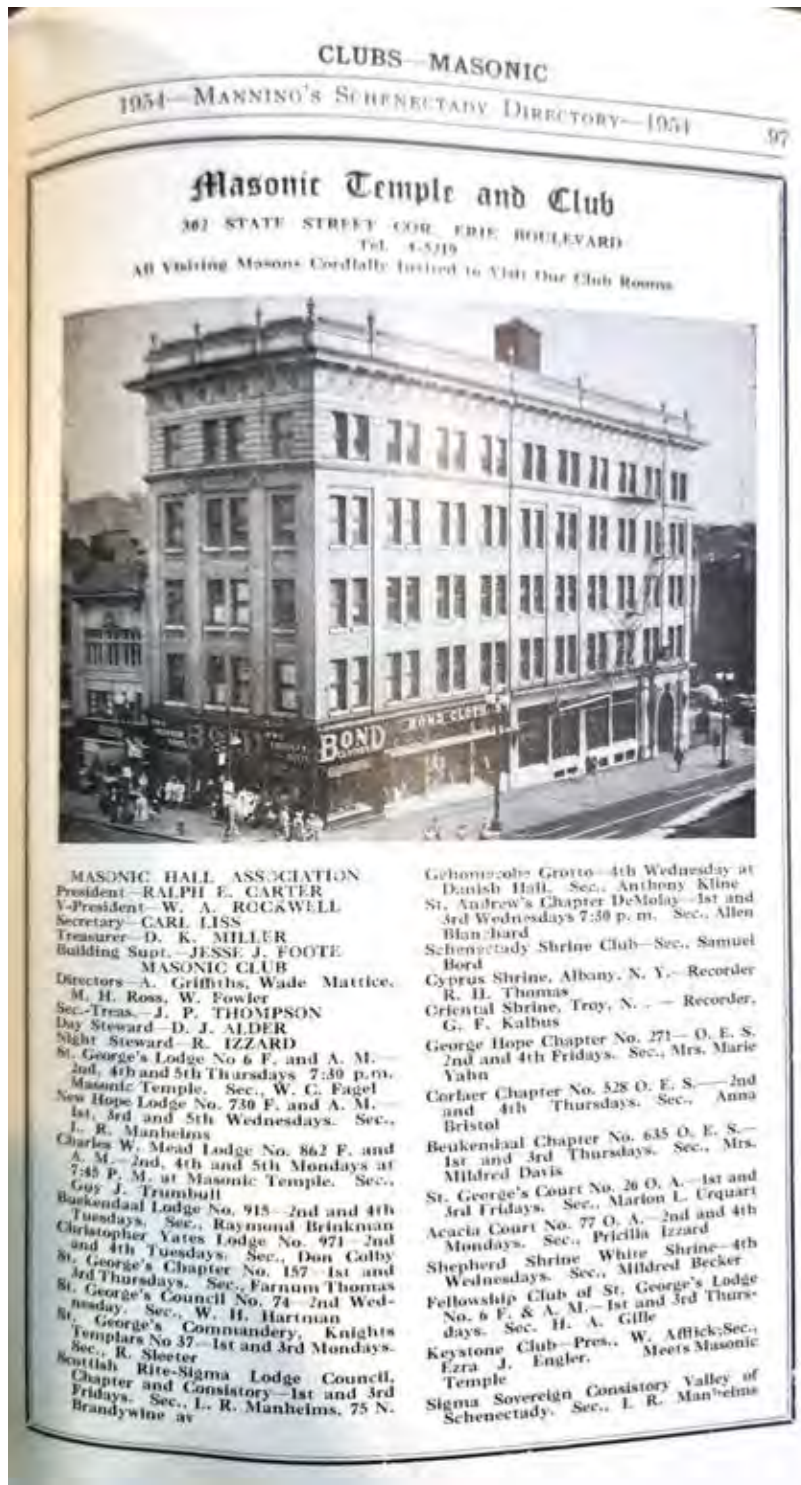


Figure 4: Masonic Temple and Club listing in the City of Schenectady Directory (1954).

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Figure 5: Ca 1966-1971 photograph of Erie Boulevard, facing east. 302 State Street first floor tenant is Bond Clothes and the current first floor façade is visible. Photograph by John P. Papp, courtesy of the Schenectady County Historical Society.

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Figure 6: Former fourth floor lodge furniture from 302 State Street; located at current St. George's Lodge No. 6: 394 Princetown Road, Rotterdam, Schenectady, NY.

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Figure 7: Stained glass installation, formerly installed in the top floor masonic temple at 302 State Street; located at current St. George's Lodge No. 6: 394 Princetown Road, Rotterdam, Schenectady, NY.

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Figure 8: 302 State Street masonic temple (east interior); image from *Dragon Magazine*, 1933, p.14.

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Figure 9: 302 State Street masonic temple (west interior); image from *Dragon Magazine*, 1933, p.15.

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St. George's Lodge No.6 Masonic Temple & Club

Schenectady County, NY

Name of Property

County and State

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: **Schenectady City Hall Archives (Efner History Center); Schenectady Co. Historical Society**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 34

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple includes all of the property historically associated with the masonic building located at 302 State Street.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marcus Pollard contact: Kathleen LaFrank, NYSHPO

organization Commonwealth Preservation Group date February 2025

street & number 536 W 35th Street telephone 757-651-0494

city or town Norfolk state VA zip code 23508

e-mail _____

St. George's Lodge No.6 Masonic Temple & Club

Schenectady County, NY

Name of Property

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club

City or Vicinity: Schenectady

County: Schenectady State: NY

Photographer: Marcus Pollard

Date Photographed: 6/26/2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo No (of 50), Description, Camera Direction

- | | |
|----|--|
| 01 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, exterior, east oblique and adjoining buildings, facing W |
| 02 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, exterior, façade and east oblique, facing W |
| 03 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, exterior, façade, facing SW |
| 04 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, exterior, façade and northwest elevation, facing S |
| 05 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, exterior, northwest elevation, facing SE |
| 06 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, exterior, masonic temple entrance, facing SE |
| 07 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, exterior, west oblique, facing E |
| 08 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, exterior, rear south oblique, facing N |
| 09 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, exterior, rear of building and adjoining buildings, facing N |
| 10 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, interior, first floor, foyer, facing NE |
| 11 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, interior, first floor, central hall, facing SW |
| 12 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, interior, first floor, rear masonic temple entry foyer, facing S |
| 13 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, interior, first floor, rear masonic entry doorway, facing NW |
| 14 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, interior, first floor, rear masonic vestibule, facing S |
| 15 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, interior, second floor, entry landing, facing S |
| 16 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, interior, second floor, central hall, facing SW |
| 17 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, interior, second floor, front meeting room, facing N |
| 18 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, interior, second floor, rear meeting room, facing N |
| 19 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, interior, second floor, rear hall, facing E |
| 20 | St. George's Lodge No. 6 Masonic Temple and Club, interior, second floor, rear hall extension, facing S |



DO NOT TOUCH THE WALLS

cb20



State St

12-6

TO RENT





MASONIC TEMPLE

1918

6

15



MASONIC TEMPLE

1918





SHIRTS-PANTS
RUDNICK'S
SHOES-MENS FURNISHINGS

 **TRUSTCO BANK**





RUDNICK'S
GOLD-HEAVY FURNITURE

TRUSTCO BANK

Bank Entrance



EXIT







19C

EMPLOYE
ONLY

Emergency
Exit
Only





Emergency
Exit
Only

EXIT







21D









BUILDING A WALL TO PREVENT RELAPSE

A red brick wall display with the title "BUILDING A WALL TO PREVENT RELAPSE" at the top. The bricks are red and have various handwritten notes and drawings on them. The display is mounted on a wall with a wooden baseboard.









MEMORIAL
In Loving Memory of
MARTIN
SHARIF
THOSE WE LOVE ARE ALWAYS WITH US

EXIT





EXIT



DIVISION















Emergency exit →

TIXE

74









EXIT



BROTHER, CAN YOU
SPARE A DIME?
A DAY FOR THE
MASONIC RESEARCH
LABORATORY

THE
SLOTS





























Three tall, narrow, vertical windows on the left brick building.

POSTER
ZOCOR

cb20