

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic The Masonic Temple

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 101-107 West Broad Street N/A not for publication

city, town Richmond N/A vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county (in city) code 760

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Richmond Foundation of the Arts Masonic Assoc.

street & number 101 East Clay Street 31 N. ... Rd

city, town Richmond N/A vicinity of (city) state Virginia 22235

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Richmond City Hall

street & number 900 East Broad Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Downtown Richmond Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 22, 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

The Masonic Temple is located at a conspicuous intersection in a busy urban district of Richmond's West Broad Street. The richly rendered Romanesque-style, five-story brick and brownstone mass is the visual focal point of the turn-of-the-century commercial area which also includes several major department stores and theaters. The facade of the temple is subdivided into three tiers, indicating the functional arrangement within. The combination iron-and-wood structural system is shown by colonnettes which locate the structural bay. The stair tower on the western side of the temple is treated as a separate unit with different elevational treatment. The window arrangement is directly expressive of the spaces within, the size, shape and embellishment relating to the significance of the rooms. The Grand Lodge Room and the Banqueting Hall have large arched windows; the offices have smaller windows with rectangular heads. The exterior of the temple is exceptionally well preserved. The interior of the building retains its original arrangement of spaces, and the volumes of these spaces have been unchanged. The rooms have been redecorated and no longer suggest their original appearance.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The Masonic Temple, the finest example of the Richardson Romanesque-style in the state, is related to H. H. Richardson's department store designs, which made use of large arcades on the lower levels and smaller arcades on the upper floors. This parti permitted display windows at ground level and offices or storage above. The temple was erected as a mixed use structure with commercial, public, and Masonic facilities all accommodated in the facility. The exterior design is carefully developed to express this function, as well as the structural system.

The first floor housed a department store. The second and third floors held the major public rooms, and the fourth and fifth floors Masonic Lodge meeting rooms. Each of the basic subdivisions of the building were marked with string courses and by a varied elevational treatment.

The stairwell is entirely vertical in treatment, thus expressing its function. The first floor preserves large display windows for the store; the major public spaces have monumental arched windows and the Masonic spaces have small arched windows. Newspaper articles pointed out that the temple should be regarded as an arrangement of solids and voids, a remarkably abstract conception for the popular press of the 1880s.

The structural system was clearly expressed also. The structural system of the temple is a combination of iron columns, steel girders, and wooden floor joists. The first all-steel frame was erected in Chicago in 1883-85;

(See Continuation Sheet No. 1)

8. Significance

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

Specific dates Built 1888-1893 **Builder/Architect** Jackson C. Gott FAIA

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Richmond's Masonic Temple, designed by Baltimore architect Jackson C. Gott and erected in 1888-1893, is Virginia's largest and most impressive example of the American Romanesque. Sophisticated, logical and progressive in design, the structure was regarded by its contemporaries as one of the most "magnificent examples of modern architecture in the South"(1), and was published in national magazines... The largest building erected by Virginia's Masons in the 19th century, the massive task of funding, designing and building the temple occupied the Masons for forty years. Accommodating a department store and cultural facilities as well as Masonic meeting rooms, it was the site of many balls, concerts, and banquets during the eighty years it was used as a Masonic Temple; the most important of these was a banquet held for Theodore Roosevelt in 1905. Vacated by the Masons in 1971, the temple was acquired by the Richmond Foundation for the Arts in 1982 for conversion to use as an art center for the Richmond area.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Grand Lodge of Virginia felt the need for a Masonic Temple in the 1850s and established the Masonic Temple Association in 1858. This organization began to acquire property and to raise funds for the facility immediately, but the Civil War and its associated disruptions made it impossible to erect a temple at that time.

Following the war, the Association continued to raise funds and buy property, but did not begin serious efforts to erect a temple until the 1880s. In 1886, the Association acquired property at the corner of 5th and Main Streets, and hired an architect to develop plans. These proved to be too expensive, and in 1888 the Building Committee of the Association advertised for new designs.

The Committee selected the design of Jackson T. Gott from among seventeen submissions. Gott (1828-1909), was a member of a prominent Maryland family, and practiced architecture from Baltimore. He was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, and his works were published in American Architect and Buildings News and Inland Architect, one of the most progressive journals of the day (2).

The site of the temple was fixed at the corner of Adams and Broad Streets, just to the west of Richmond's business district. It was correctly assumed that the temple lay in the path of the expanding retail area, and that the temple would soon become the center of a thriving urban district

9. Major Bibliographical References

Christian, W. Asbury. Richmond: Her Past and Present. Richmond: J. L. Jenkins, 1912.
Engelhardt, George W. Richmond, Virginia: The City on the James, Richmond: G. W. Engelhardt, 1902-1903.
(See Continuation Sheet No. 4)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .30
Quadrangle name Richmond Quadrangle scale 1:24000
UTM References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>284110</u>	<u>4158050</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The temple entirely occupies its site, 126' x 102', on the southwest corner of the intersection of Adams and Broad Streets. The boundaries have been drawn to incorporate the lot on which it stands.

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert P. Winthrop
organization Robert Winthrop Architect date November 4, 1982
street & number 417 North Boulevard telephone (804) 353-8828
city or town Richmond state Virginia 23220

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature H. Bryan Mitchell
title H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director date DEC 14 1982
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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thus the Masonic Temple's partial frame was comparatively advanced. The huge girders which spanned the Grand Lodge Room were regarded as considerable achievements by Richmonders at the time.

A three-bay subdivision of the Broad Street facade expresses the structural bay. Attached colonnettes indicate the location of the columns. These increase in size as they rise. The temple's profile expands, counteracting the effect of perspective. This increases the visual mass of the building.

The exterior walls of the temple are brick and brownstone. The first floor of the Broad Street front is stone; the use of stone diminishes as the structure rises. Brownstone is used for the major string courses.

The sculpture of the temple was carefully considered and is subtly designed. Leaves and decoration grow out of undressed stones, creating the impression of Romanesque ornament using an economy of means. This combination of historic ornament and naturalistic expression is unusual and successful.

The treatment of the entrance is different from the rest of the structure. The stonework was richly carved with emblems of the Order, most notably columns surmounted by globes. These symbolically represent Jachin and Boaz, the columns which flanked Solomon's Temple. These played an important part in Masonic ritual symbolism.

The three-part subdivision of the Masonic Temple by three arcaded tiers corresponds to the temple in Jerusalem. It is not possible to know if this relationship was intended or coincidental. The original entrance was on the west side of the building because the Masonic rooms had to face the east.

The first floor of the temple is a single space, originally interrupted only by the cast-iron Romanesque columns. The wood floor slopes to match ground level on Adams Street. The most notable surviving features of this room are the patterned wood ceiling and large windows. The ceiling was installed by Woodward & Lothrop in 1890 and is well preserved. Many of the windows have been closed.

The original service area was to the rear of the room, and the freight elevator to the basement remains in place. The major change in the room has been the introduction of a mezzanine on three sides of the space. This is engaged with the columns on the east, but is suspended from the ceiling on the west. The walls of the room have been covered with light-weight and flammable materials.

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The public and Masonic rooms of the temple were entirely separate from the department store on the first floor. They had their own entrance through the Grand Stair Hall. This stair remains and has changed little. The Richmond Dispatch in 1888 described the stair as "spacious and well lighted," ascending in "wide and easy flights". It is metal with small Romanesque columns supporting an oak handrail. The newels originally supported light fixtures.

In 1918, a vault was built over the first landing, thus destroying the spacious feeling intended by the architect. The other landings remain unchanged. The elevator remains in its original location, although it formerly was entered through a large opening.

The major suite of public rooms is located on the second floor and consists of three spaces: the Grand Foyer, the Grand Lodge Room, and the offices of the Grand Secretary. This was the headquarters of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, a lodge which included Masons of elevated rank. The shape and proportion of these rooms have been preserved, but the original decoration has been changed. The stair hall is separated from the foyer by a screen of highly polished granite columns.

The Grand Foyer extended the width of the building and terminated in floor to ceiling windows which opened onto a balcony. A portion of the foyer was turned into offices in 1918, making the room dark. This room was low and broad in conformity with its location under the Grand Banqueting Hall on the third floor.

A suite of three offices and parlors is located between the Foyer and Broad Street. These accommodated the Grand Secretary, Treasurer, and Grand Master of the organization of the Grand Lodge. These rooms were connected by sliding doors so that they could serve as reception rooms. These were the private reception rooms used by President Roosevelt in 1905. Acoustical ceilings and plywood paneling have been installed in these rooms. Simple but unusually detailed fireplaces remain in these offices.

Opposite the office entrance is the entrance to the most important room in the temple, the Grand Lodge Room. Vestibules and an anteroom were common elements in Masonic ritual. They are found in front of most major rooms in the temple. The low Grand Foyer and the dark and small anteroom were intended to contrast dramatically with the large volume of the Grand Lodge Room. The stair to the balcony opens into the anteroom.

The Lodge Room is the largest space in the building. It extends the full depth of the temple and is thirty feet high. It is flooded with light

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from six large arched windows. All the windows of this floor had wooden shutters for sun control. These have been removed. In spite of the high ceiling, the proportions of the room are low. A balcony on the west side of the room is supported by cast iron columns and has a fine cast iron railing. All of the interior finishes have been replaced with drywall or acoustical tile. In the balcony there are two layers of modern acoustical treatment.

In the newspaper coverage of the many events which took place in this room, none mention the decor of the room. It was typically elaborately decorated. At the dinner for Theodore Roosevelt the decorations covered the entire room, giving no view of the walls. The room was apparently bland, and thus well suited for decoration.

The Banquet Hall is almost the same size as the Grand Lodge Room, but has a ceiling only twenty feet high. The windows of this room are larger than those in the Lodge Room, making this the brightest room in the building. It was originally subdivided into three spaces.

The top two floors of the temple housed a number of Masonic Lodge rooms. Each space was long and narrow, and was oriented to the east. Most have several anterooms or vestibules.

The Masonic Temple was vacated by the Masons in 1971-72 and was little used in the following decade. In 1982, the building was acquired by the Richmond Foundation for the Arts to serve as an art center. The large columns and simple spaces of the interior are exceptionally well suited for this use.

8. SIGNIFICANCE - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In addition to the Masonic meeting rooms, the temple accommodated a major department store-- Woodward and Lothrop-- and a series of public meeting rooms and banquet rooms. Gott's design fully expresses the complex functional character of the building, with each of the functions clearly indicated. Rendered in brick and brownstone and making use of the powerful forms of H. H. Richardson's Romanesque, the temple is the largest and most impressive example of the style in Virginia.

The cornerstone was laid with full Masonic ceremony in November, 1888, and the building was to be completed by 1890. After many delays and a 60 percent cost overrun, the temple was turned over to the Grand Lodge in 1893. Masonic records give a complete history of the construction process and provide insight into the problems of erecting public buildings at this period (3).

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The temple was gradually phased into use between 1891, when the department store opened, and 1893, when the Grand Lodge took possession. It immediately became a focus of Richmond's civic and social life, and was regularly used for banquets, public meetings and balls. The most notable social event accommodated in the temple was a banquet for four hundred people in honor of President Theodore Roosevelt in 1905 (4).

The temple was intended to meet the needs of the Masons for twenty-five years; it remained in regular Masonic use until 1971, when most of the lodges moved to suburban locations. Little used in the 1970s, it was acquired in the 1980s to become an art center for the Richmond metropolitan area. Thus, the temple may again play the social and cultural role for which it was intended.

Footnotes

- (1) Picturesque Richmond, Richmond, 1891.
- (2) Articles on Gott's works are listed in the Avery Index.
- (3) The entire building history of the Masonic Temple is included in Report of Special Committee on the Masonic Temple Association Adopted by the Grand Lodge of Virginia on December 25, 1899, Richmond, Virginia, 1906. This includes verbatim on the reports to the Grand Lodge on the project between 1856 and 1899.
- (4) W. Asbury Christian, Richmond Her Past and Present, notes most major events which took place in the temple. See also Richmond Dispatch, August 26, 1892.

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Morrison, Andrew, ed. The City on the James, Richmond, Virginia.
Richmond: G. W. Engelhardt, 1893.

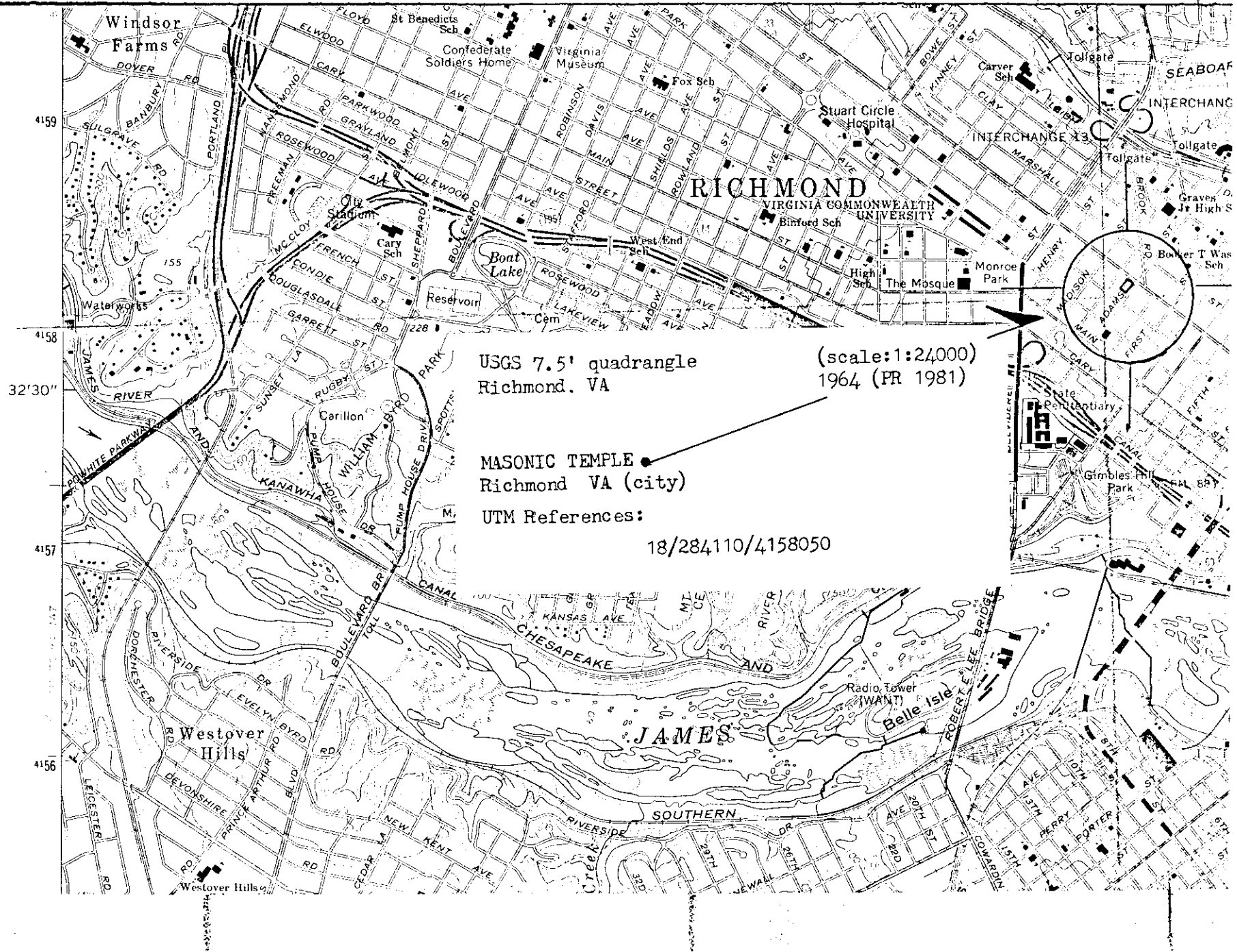
Poindexter, Charles. Snapshots of Richmond, Virginia, U.S.A.. Richmond:
G. W. Engelhardt, 1895.

Report of Special Committee on the Masonic Temple Association Adopted by
the Grand Lodge of Virginia on December 25, 1899, Richmond: Masonic
Publishing Company, 1900.

Richmond Dispatch articles:

November 15, 1888	January 26, 1893	October 6-7, 1895
November 16, 1888	May 10, 1893	July 12, 1896
August 26, 1892	December 7, 1893	October 19-20, 1905

The Rough Ashler, Vols. 1, 2, 3. The Masonic Publishing Company,
Richmond, 1891-1893.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle
Richmond, VA

(scale:1:24000)
1964 (PR 1981)

MASONIC TEMPLE
Richmond VA (city)

UTM References:
18/284110/4158050

4159

4158

32'30"

4157

4156