

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT FOR SCHEDULED HERITAGE BUILDING:
FORMER LODGE ST. JOHN NO. 84 AT 25 GORDON ROAD**



Google Street View (Image capture August 2023, accessed July 2024)

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Temporary 2GP Scheduled Heritage Building Reference No:	BX118
Address:	25 Gordon Road, Mosgiel
Other Building Names:	Mosgiel Masonic Hall
Located within a Heritage Precinct:	No
HNZPT List Reference & Description:	N/A
Heritage Covenant:	No
Building Use at Time of Record:	Unknown
Condition of Property:	N/A - Property owner has obtained resource consent for redevelopment of the subject site.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

Historic/Social	Meets criteria
Spiritual/Cultural	Meets criteria
Design	Meets criteria
Technological/Scientific	Does not meet criteria

RECOMMENDATION:

The building meets one or more of the significance criteria from Policy 2.4.2.1.b and is recommended for inclusion in Appendix A1.1 of the 2GP.

RECOMMENDED PROTECTION

[Tick]	Features	Details
✓	Building envelope	Entire external building envelope
	External/ancillary elements	
	Internal elements and/or rooms	Not considered as part of this desktop assessment. Owner may nominate interior elements for protection
	Excluded elements	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Lodge St John No. 84 has historical, social, and cultural significance for its association with the Masonic Brotherhood in Mosgiel from 1925 to 2024 and as a community venue. The former Lodge has design significance representing a modest early twentieth-century with distinct characteristics owing to its association with the Freemasons. The Masonic Lodge demonstrates a combination of classical styling and Masonic motifs. It is located on a prominent corner site in Mosgiel and retains a good level of authenticity and integrity.

It is comparable to scheduled heritage buildings within Dunedin of a similar type and function. When compared with other scheduled buildings, the Mosgiel Masonic Temple meets the threshold to be included on the district plan heritage schedule.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Architectural Period	Interwar (1914-1939)
Style	Interwar Classical Revival
Era/Date of Construction	1925-1926
Architect/Designer/Builder	Not known
Historic Use & Cultural Associations	Masonic hall
Primary Construction Materials	Masonry, timber door and window joinery, render, corrugated metal roof
Notable Architectural Characteristics	Face brick, gable roof form, columns, pediment, masonic detail

Previous site development

The use of the site before the construction of the Masonic Temple is unclear. Prior to the Freemasons' ownership, the site appears to have been owned by George Howell from its original subdivision *circa* 1883 until Howell died in 1903.¹ There are advertisements by Howell for shops and dwellings for lease,

¹ Archives New Zealand, R22756321, R.442; *Evening Star*, 4 May 1903, Page 4.

but it is uncertain if these are located at the 25 Gordon Road site or elsewhere.² No mention of existing buildings on the site has been identified in the minutes of the Mosgiel Lodge.³

Freemasonry in Mosgiel began in 1885 when a lodge was formed under the English Constitution.⁴ This became Lodge St John, Mosgiel, No. 2102, E.C.⁵ By the twentieth century the monthly meetings of the Mosgiel Masons were held in the Loyal Mosgiel Lodge of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Odd Fellows.⁶ This 1886 building was formally located on Gordon Road, to the north of the existing Masonic Lodge, but was demolished in 2013 to create a car park for Woolworths.⁷ By 1893 the Lodge had joined the New Zealand Constitution and became known as Lodge St John, No. 84.⁸



Demolition of the former Loyal Mosgiel Lodge.
(Built in Dunedin. <https://builtindunedin.com/>. Accessed 21 June 2024)

Design and construction

The prospect of a dedicated Masonic Temple in Mosgiel was raised in April 1925. By June, W. Blackie, the chair of the Building Committee, "...submitted a plan, which the Committee recommends with slight alterations." The next month "Bro. W. Blackie reported that the building Committee had a plan and specifications prepared."

It is unclear if an architect or other construction professional was involved in preparing the plan and specifications, or whether the lodge members prepared the plans and specifications. Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga notes that Masonic Lodge buildings were generally designed by its members.⁹

² E.g., *Evening Star*, 11 January 1894, Page 3; *Otago Daily Times*, 2 October 1895, Page 3.

³ Hocken Collections, 88-032.

⁴ Hocken Collections, 88-032.

⁵ *Otago Daily Times*, 17 May 1886, Page 4.

⁶ Hocken Collections, 88-032.

⁷ Cropper, D., C. Watson, N. Woods, and S. Cawte. 2018. *The Mosgiel Countdown Development: Final Report for Archaeological Investigations under Archaeological Authority No. 2014/174*. Unpublished report for General Distributors.

⁸ *Otago Daily Times*, 13 January 1893, Page 2; Hocken Collections, 88-032.

⁹ Burgess, R. 2008. 'Masonic Hall (Former): 38 Shiel Street, Reefton.' *New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero*. <https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/1686/Listing> (accessed 21 June 2024).

Thomas Crozier invited tender for the erection of the 'Masonic Hall' to be built of brick.¹⁰ After the job was tendered, the Building Committee recommended Mosgiel contractors Melrose and White as contractors with their tender of £1,917. Mosgiel Borough Council issued a building permit in October 1925.¹¹ Governor-General Sir Charles Ferguson (Grand Master of the New Zealand Lodge of Freemasons) laid the foundation stone was laid on 30 November 1925.¹²

The first Lodge Meeting at the new hall was held in June 1926.¹³

The building combines classical details, masonic motifs, and vernacular construction characteristics. The hall's principal elevation to Gordon Road presents as a Greek temple, complete with Doric columns, entablature, and pediment. A render was applied to the Gordon Road elevation creating a formal façade emphasised by decorative mouldings. The former entrance on this side of the building has been blocked up. The Park Street elevation is formed from unfinished brickwork with an additional entrance. This is sheltered by a rendered portico supported by plain pilasters and topped with another pediment featuring decorative moulding. Specific masonic details include the square and compass motifs on both pediments, the lodge name and number on the Gordon Road elevation, and the small upper windows allowing light into the lodge room while preserving its privacy. The classical and masonic aspects are supported by a building that utilises various vernacular features that were current at the time it was built. These include timber casement windows, and a corrugate-covered roof with projecting rafters that is reminiscent of the bungalow-style housing of the era.¹⁴



Detail of a 1947 aerial photograph showing the Masonic Temple at the corner of Gordon Road and Park Street (Retrolens, SN399-P-21)

A 1940s meeting leaflet included in the Lodge's minute books suggests that the new Masonic Hall became the 'brand' of the Mosgiel Freemasons.

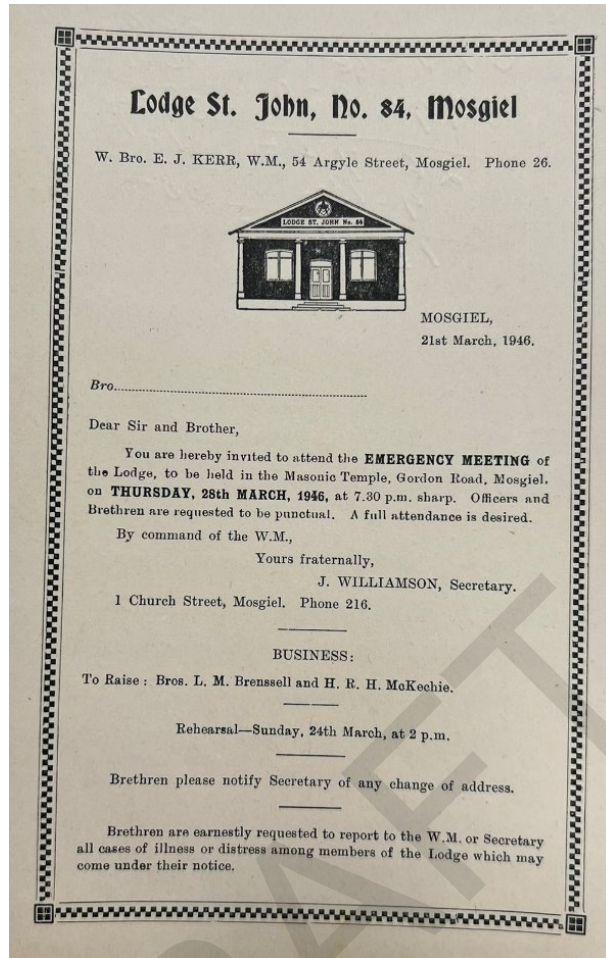
¹⁰ *Otago Daily Times* 27 July 1925 Page 1.

¹¹ *Otago Daily Times* 6 October 1925 Page 13

¹² *Otago Daily Times* 1 December 1925 Page 10

¹³ Hocken Collections, 88-032.

¹⁴ Salmond, J. 1986. *Old New Zealand Houses*. Auckland: Reed.



A meeting leaflet from 1946 featuring the Gordon Road elevation of the Masonic Temple.

Later history and development

The Masonic Hall was used as a venue for significant community or family events. For example, the jubilee of the Taieri County Council was held there in February 1927.¹⁵ Families also held celebrations there, such as a silver wedding party and dances, and organisations such as the Taieri Women's Institute held functions and regular meetings there.¹⁶

Lodge St John, No. 84 owned and used the Masonic Temple building for almost 100 years, before it was sold in February 2024. Declining membership meant the Lodge was unable to sustain the building's operating costs. In an article recording the sale Lodge member Kevin Wilson noted that it "had been a special place for the members."¹⁷

¹⁵ *Otago Daily Times*, 9 February 1927 Page 7.

¹⁶ *Otago Witness*, 28 February 1928 Page 37; *Otago Daily Times* 24 April 1928 Page 18; *Otago Daily Times* 13 May 1932 Page 12.

¹⁷ *Otago Daily Times*, 14 February 2024, <https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/mosgiel-masons-lodgeless-after-sale> (accessed 21 June 2024).

Notable people/Themes

Freemasonry in New Zealand and Mosgiel

Heritage New Zealand has previously described the historical context of Freemasonry and its practice in New Zealand:

Freemasonry is a fraternity of religious men of differing religions and denominations who believe in a system of moral and spiritual philosophy as outlined in Freemasonry's rituals, teachings and practice. Operative Masonry (organisations of medieval builders) existed in many European countries besides Britain prior to establishment of the first Grand Lodge of Freemasons in England in 1717. Speculative Masonry (Freemasonry) developed in England, Ireland and Scotland and spread to the 58 countries where it is now practised. Masonic lodges, halls or temples are places where Freemasons assemble. Lodge rooms are where ceremonies of the Craft are performed.

Lodges have been likened to friendly societies, volunteer fire brigades, military units and bands in the vital role they played in the social and business life of the colonial male. They have been seen as a place for men to escape domestic worries, talk business and socialise with their fellow men. While the practice of benevolence and charity is a hallmark of Freemasonry, Freemasonry is not a benefit society that undertakes to make payments in return for contributions from its members. Freemasons' Lodges in New Zealand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century appealed to many employers and employees alike. Freemasonry continues in New Zealand, and is noted for its supportive environment provided to many men returning to civilian life after the First and Second World Wars. However, membership of lodges has been declining over the past 40 or more years.¹⁸

In Mosgiel and Dunedin, as elsewhere in New Zealand, Freemasonry was a prominent institution from the late nineteenth century into the latter half of the twentieth century. The Dunedin social historian Erik Olssen notes that many masons were publicly prominent – “governors general, leading Liberals [politicians], wealthy merchants”¹⁹ – and this gave the group a significant influence in public life. Olssen also notes that “from the 1880s onwards most public buildings and churches were opened in masonic ceremonies”; local examples being the opening of Mosgiel School in 1885 and St Lukes Church in 1893.²⁰

¹⁸ Burgess, R. 2008. ‘Masonic Hall (Former): 38 Shiel Street, Reefton.’ *New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero*. <https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/1686/Listing> (accessed 21 June 2024).

¹⁹ Olssen, E. 1995. *Building the New World: Work, Politics and Society in Caversham, 1880s-1920s*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, Page 60.

²⁰ Olssen, E. 1995. *Building the New World: Work, Politics and Society in Caversham, 1880s-1920s*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, Page 60; *Otago Witness*, 26 September 1885, Page 22; *Otago Daily Times*, 31 July 1893, Page 2

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC/SOCIAL

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. Mosgiel's Lodge St John No. 84 was meeting place for Mosgiel's Freemasons from 1926 until 2024. The Lodge Hall also provided a community venue for significant occasions, providing a social venue for the town. Freemasonry was an important historical movement providing that continues to this day although with declining membership. The former Masonic Hall represents the Lodge's 140-year history in Mosgiel.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. As noted above, "Freemasonry is a fraternity of religious men of differing religions and denominations who believe in a system of moral and spiritual philosophy as outlined in Freemasonry's rituals, teachings and practice."²¹ The Masonic Temple was designed to house these rituals, teachings, and practices.

DESIGN

The building demonstrates heritage values within this criterion. It is an interwar period building with distinct characteristics owing to its association with the Freemasons. The building demonstrates a combination of classical styling and Masonic motifs. It is located on a prominent corner site in Mosgiel and retains a good level of authenticity and integrity.

TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC

The building does not demonstrate heritage values within this criterion.

REFERENCES

Publications and Reports

Cropper, D., C. Watson, N. Woods, and S. Cawte. 2018. *The Mosgiel Countdown Development: Final Report for Archaeological Investigations under Archaeological Authority No. 2014/174*. Unpublished report for General Distributors.

Olsen, E. 1995. *Building the New World: Work, Politics and Society in Caversham, 1880s-1920s*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.

Salmond, J. 1986. *Old New Zealand Houses*. Auckland: Reed

Newspapers

- Accessed via PapersPast (<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/>) and the ODT website (<https://www.odt.co.nz/>)

Otago Daily Times.

²¹ Burgess, R. 2008. 'Masonic Hall (Former): 38 Shiel Street, Reefton.' *New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero*. <https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/1686/Listing> (accessed 21 June 2024).

Evening Star.
Otago Witness.

Archival Sources

Archives New Zealand.
Hocken Collections.

Websites

Burgess, R. 2008. 'Masonic Hall (Former): 38 Shiel Street, Reefton.' *New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero*. <https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/1686/Listing> (accessed 21 June 2024).

Built in Dunedin. <https://builtindunedin.com/> . Accessed 21 June 2024.

Retrolens.

Date Initial Assessment Completed	21 June 2024	Author	Origin Consultants
Date Peer Reviewed and Information added	1 August 2024	Reviewer	HB
Date Peer Reviewed	14 August 2024	Reviewer	MM
Date Confirmed Completed	14 August 2024		