



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## **REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES – ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION**

### **11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

#### **PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)**

- 4.3 Developing institutions
- 8.5 Forming associations
- 8.5.1 Preserving traditions and group memories

#### **HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)**

- 404 Community services and utilities
- 407 Cultural activities
- 408 Institutions

#### **11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\***

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* demonstrates the vernacular style of the region in the pleasing aesthetic of the corrugated iron wall cladding. (Criterion 1.1)

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* contains a fine and intact interior, in particular the Hall has an elaborate ceiling and simpler pressed metal walls. (Criterion 1.2)

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* exhibits features typical of Masonic Lodges (e.g. high windows, room layout and entrance points), but replicated in a vernacular style. (Criterion 1.2)

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* is valued for the pleasing use of materials, scale and proportion of the building, and the setting, that makes a significant contribution to the historic townscape in Meekatharra. (Criterion 1.3)

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\* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

## **11.2 HISTORIC VALUE**

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* is part of the development that occurred in Meekatharra in the first two decades of the 20th century, when the demand for services and facilities increased as the town developed to become the regional centre for the North Murchison Goldfield. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* is closely associated with the presence and activities of Masons amongst the rapidly expanding population of the eastern goldfields in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (Criterion 2.1)

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* was erected for the Freemasons of North Murchison Lodge 88 who occupied the place continuously from 1915 to 1994, and since 2002 the place has been the home of the Sir John Charles Head Orient 31 Lodge of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes (RAOB). (Criteria 2.2 & 2.3)

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* is associated with many local identities that contributed to and participated in the cultural and civic life of Meekatharra. (Criterion 2.3)

## **11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

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## **11.4 SOCIAL VALUE**

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* is representative of the social input Freemasons and similar charitable organisations have made in local communities across Australia, having housed the Freemasons of North Murchison Lodge 88 from 1915 to 1994, and since 2002 has been the home of the Sir John Charles Head Orient 31 Lodge of the RAOB. (Criterion 4.1)

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* contributes to the local community's sense of place as a distinctive building constructed of a once common building material in Meekatharra and with minor landmark value owing to its corner location. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1 RARITY**

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### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* is a fair representative example of a Masonic Lodge in the vernacular, clad with corrugated iron. (Criterion 6.1)

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* is an example of the use of lightweight and easily transportable materials appropriate for a remote location. (Criterion 6.2)

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* is representative of the reuse of building materials transported from one location to another, as dictated by need and changing economic circumstances. (Criterion 6.2)

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* demonstrates characteristics of Masonic cultural activities in a small remote rural community. (Criterion 6.2)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

Some maintenance and recent upgrades are evident, although some elements are in need of repair and restoration including the rear roof gablet vent, the storeroom walls and ceilings, and the kitchen foundation. Overall *Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* is in fair to good condition.

#### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

The original design and functional intention of the place is clear, although the original organisation is no longer operational in Meekatharra, a similar fraternity utilises the building. *Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* retains a high degree of integrity.

#### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

*Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* retains a considerable degree of the original fabric with minimal intervention apparent in the kitchen and storeroom extension, new entry doors into the hall, and some alterations evident to the north-east wall. Overall, *Masonic Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* has a high degree of authenticity.

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Irene Sauman, Historian and Laura Gray, Heritage and Conservation Consultant, in August 2007 with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

#### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

*Masonic Hall Lodge (fmr), Meekatharra* is a single-storey, timber framed and corrugated iron clad structure with hipped roof built in 1915.

Although the size of the Aboriginal population prior to European invasion is unclear, it is clear that the Murchison district was occupied by the powerful Wadjari peoples. Their territory extended about 400 kilometres north-south, and as much as 300 kilometres in breadth. To the north-east lies the Kuwarra people's country, with the Nyungar's to the south.<sup>1</sup> The major Aboriginal campsites near Meekatharra were two waterholes, Bumba (now known as 'Camel Soak') and Mikadah (from which the name Meekatharra is derived). Today the people refer to themselves as Ngoonooru Wadjari and Yugunga-Nya people, and some 9% of the Murchison-Gascoyne population is of Aboriginal descent.<sup>2</sup>

Europeans, moving inland from Geraldton to take up pastoral lands, initially occupied the Murchison district in the 1870s. Aboriginal shepherds were sometimes employed on the pastoral stations, but the discovery of gold in 1888 and the proclamation of the Murchison Goldfield in September 1891, covering an area of 32,000 square miles, brought an influx of prospectors, and with them came dislocation and disease for the indigenous population.

The first registered mining lease in the Murchison field was Nannine Mine, followed by Peak Hill, some 90 miles north in 1892. The track from Nannine to

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<sup>1</sup> Edwards, Hugh, *Meekatharra: The Gold Beyond the Rivers* (Swanbourne: H. Edwards, 1994), p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Tindale, Norman B, *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia* (Canberra, ANU Press, 1974); Green, Neville 'Aborigines and White Settlers in the Nineteenth Century', in Stannage, C.T., *A New History of Western Australia* (UWA Press, 1981), pp. 118-19, 125; Department of Indigenous Affairs website, [dia.wa.gov.au/DIA/Regions/murchisongascoyne](http://dia.wa.gov.au/DIA/Regions/murchisongascoyne); Meekatharra Shire website, [meekashire.wa.gov.au/meekatrails](http://meekashire.wa.gov.au/meekatrails).

Peak Hill passed through the Meekatharra district, but there was little activity there until 1894. In that year, Tom Creer sunk a shaft on the 'Haveluck Lode', but abandoned his lease due to the difficulty of recruiting labour. The lease was taken up again by R. Oliver, who turned it into one of Meekatharra's major mines, which is still producing gold today.

The landmark mine which gave its name to the town was the 'Meekatharra', founded in May 1896. A number of other mines followed, although there was never a 'rush' and, by 1901, Meekatharra's population was 63 men and 12 women, occupying 31 dwellings. With the opening of deep mines, though, the population expanded sufficiently for Meekatharra to be gazetted in 1903.<sup>3</sup> By 1911, the population was 1,821 men and 583 women in 870 dwellings and, by 1914, Meekatharra was the largest town in the Murchison.

Freemasonry's origins lie in the English trade guilds.<sup>4</sup> The first Freemason's Lodge in Western Australia was established in 1843, but growth was slow until the 1880s, when the increase in the number of lodges reflected the more prosperous conditions prevailing in the colony. The discovery of gold hastened the movement to establish lodges in the older settled areas and lodges were established in a number of the larger goldfield towns. By October 1899, there were 35 lodges in existence, owing allegiance to the Grand Lodge of England. On 27 February 1900, the Grand Lodge of Western Australia was formed, marking the attainment of autonomous government for the State's Freemasons.<sup>5</sup>

There were 23 active Lodges in the Eastern Goldfields by 1905. The early history of North Murchison Lodge No. 88, Meekatharra is unclear, since its minute books and other records have not survived, but *The Western Australian Freemason* first lists the Lodge in its 15 December 1909 issue.<sup>6</sup> The Black Range Lodge, Sandstone was also opened in that year, and these two were the last of the goldfields lodges to be established. North Murchison Lodge rented the newly opened St Oswald's Anglican Church in Meekatharra as their first meeting place.<sup>7</sup>

Freemasonry was not the only fraternal organisation in Meekatharra. The Druids held dances and 'smoke socials' in both the 'Lodge Room' and 'Druids Hall';<sup>8</sup> the Independent Order of Odd Fellows met in the AWA Hall; and, another fraternal organisation, intended to promote 'Empire', The Overseas Club, established itself in the Meekatharra Hotel.<sup>9</sup> On top of these, there were meetings for the football club, the cricket club, and various other sports. It is clear that fraternal organisations and social clubs played an important role in a mining community.

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<sup>3</sup> Edwards, *Meekatharra*, pp. 60-61; Heydon, P. R., *Nannine by the Lake*, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 1990; *Meekatharra: End of the Earth*, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the development of Freemasonry in Western Australia refer to Heritage Council documentation 01046 Masonic Lodge, Geraldton.

<sup>5</sup> Collins, N.R. & Forster, H.C., *Golden Jubilee History 1900-50: Grand Lodge of Western Australia of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons*, Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1950, pp. 5-7. 'Antient' is the Old English spelling and is correct in this instance.

<sup>6</sup> *Masonic Halls and Buildings in Western Australia, 1867-2000*, a project by Archives Committee of the Grand Lodge of WA Freemasons, unpublished manuscript, 2002, entry for Meekatharra courtesy Grand Lodge office; *Western Australian Freemason*, 15 November 1909, p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> Tuke, Bro. J., 'Goldfields Masonry: its many interesting phases', *The West Australian Craftsman*, 8 April 1935, pp. 35-36 & 8 May pp. 7-8; Archives of the Anglican Church, Meekatharra, MN 614 ACC 2956A Item 144, Minute Books, 9 August 1908 – 10 July 1934; *Masonic Halls and Buildings in Western Australia, 1867-2000*, op cit.

<sup>8</sup> *Meekatharra Miner*, 13 June 1914, and 12 December 1915. For more on Western Australian Druidic orders, see HCWA Assessment Documentation 01059 *Druid's Hall (fmr)*.

<sup>9</sup> *Meekatharra Miner*, 23 January 1915, and 29 May 1915.

The earliest official record for the North Murchison Lodge involves a report on 15 September 1911, which stated that it intended to purchase a block of land in Meekatharra, on which to build a hall. The site chosen was Town Lot 127 on the corner of Darlot and Savage streets. A 99-year Crown lease was issued with rent set at one pound a year for the first ten years. The trustees for the Lodge at this time were James Searle, ironmonger, Charles Edmond Fisher, baker and Ernest Higgins, grocer.<sup>10</sup>

In January 1915, the Meekatharra Road Board corresponded with the Health Department regarding the provision of plans and specifications for the North Murchison Lodge 'who have commenced to erect a building'.<sup>11</sup> The plans that were provided for *Masonic Lodge (fmr)* required some amendment regarding the width of the door opening into the banquet room (which needed to be five feet wide with bi-fold door) and the width and rise of the step. The building was completed on 12 June 1915 and the first installation was planned for 23 June.<sup>12</sup> A report of this event has not been located in the *Meekatharra Miner* and Grand Lodge archives suggest an opening date of 20 January 1916. This is based on a record in the Book of Proceedings of Grand Lodge for that year, which noted that the District Grand Inspector of Workings reported having visited North Murchison Lodge on 4 April 1916, and congratulated the members on the 'fine hall' they had recently erected.<sup>13</sup>

From the knowledge that the Lodge, at that time, met on the Thursday on or before the full moon, and by consulting the full moon chart for 1916, it can be deduced that the hall was probably first used for a Masonic meeting on January 20th, 1916. For the want of any evidence to the contrary that date is used in this history.<sup>14</sup>

According to Hugh Edwards, the Masonic Lodge was 'transported from Nannine in early days',<sup>15</sup> although he provides no further comment on this. This claim is, however, consistent with a report in the *Meekatharra Miner* (24 April 1915), which noted that Nannine's State Battery had been dismantled and sent to Geraldton, to be forwarded to Nullagine. Nannine had once been a booming mining town, but problems were evident as early as 1909. The extension of the railway to Meekatharra in 1910 robbed Nannine of its distinction as 'the end of the line', and World War I dealt it a severe blow in terms of labour. A long slide downwards continued until, by 1930, all that remained of Nannine was one hotel, one store and four or five houses.<sup>16</sup>

The Great War also affected Meekatharra. In August 1914, Captain Carson of Geraldton ordered the town to form a committee to take the names of volunteers willing to enlist. The first soldiers left the station on 27 August 1914, and in total 250 men – one sixth of the town's population – saw active service.<sup>17</sup> The falling price of gold added to Meekatharra's problems, and even with the number of men

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<sup>10</sup> Crown Lease No. 6532/1913, registered 8 September 1913.

<sup>11</sup> Health Dept file, Meekatharra Masonic hall, SROWA, WAS 268 CONS 1003 Item 1915/0231.

<sup>12</sup> Health Dept file, Item 1915/0231, op cit. No newspaper report on this event has been located in the *Meekatharra Miner* and the 1915-1916 issues of the *WA Freemason* are not held at Battye Library.

<sup>13</sup> *Masonic Halls and Buildings in Western Australia, 1867-2000*, a project by Archives Committee of the Grand Lodge of WA Freemasons, unpublished manuscript, 2002, entry for Meekatharra courtesy Grand Lodge office.

<sup>14</sup> *Masonic Halls and Buildings in Western Australia, 1867-2000*, op cit.

<sup>15</sup> Edwards, *Meekatharra*, p. 188.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson, H.H., *Gateways to Gold* (Adelaide: Seal Books, 1974 [1969]), pp. 86-87.

<sup>17</sup> Edwards, *Meekatharra*, p. 75.

overseas, in 1915 there were 80 unemployed miners.<sup>18</sup> If the Masonic Lodge were transported from failing Nannine, this would, at least partly, be explained by the lack of resources for new buildings in Meekatharra during the War.

The decline in goldfield production saw nine goldfield lodges go into recess by 1917-18.<sup>19</sup> North Murchison Lodge remained active throughout the 1920s and 1930s and the *West Australian Craftsman* reported a number of the annual installation ceremonies held during this period, where a Brother progressed, or was installed, into a higher rank. On 20 June 1936, 86 brethren gathered for the installation of Worshipful Brother Harry Patterson Bennett to Grand Lodge rank. Members of the various Murchison lodges assisted at the ceremony and visitors travelled from Menzies.<sup>20</sup> In July 1937, 'the largest gathering of Freemasons ever assembled on the Murchison', so the report states, attended the installation of Bro. Richard Caddy, the ceremony being carried out by his father, the Very Worshipful Bro. John Caddy. Those present represented the lodges of Mullewa, Menzies and Wiluna, among others.<sup>21</sup>

The order of a lodge meeting comprised business, ceremonial and festive parts. Business was similar to any club or organisation. The ceremonial component generally involved the working of one of the three Masonic degrees, each ceremony like a play where the candidate took centre stage, members had walk on speaking parts and the Master of the lodge had the lead role. The speaking parts involved lessons in morality and good conduct and utilised the tools of the stonemasons to illustrate. The ceremony took place in the main part of the hall and centred on a square centrally marked on the floor. The festive part of the evening was a meal with toasts, speeches, clapping, singing and music, which took place in the area referred to as the Festive Ward. The meal could vary from a catered five-course dinner to a light supper, either with or without alcoholic drinks.<sup>22</sup> Reports of installation meetings at *Masonic Lodge (fmr)* indicate that the 'festive board' was lavish and drinks flowed freely, which was understandable given the distances travelled by members and visitors, and the wealth and exuberance of a still flourishing goldfield town. These events at *Masonic Lodge (fmr)* were originally catered, perhaps by one of the hotels.

The social life of the lodge involved family members in ladies nights, picnics, concert evenings, etc, and Freemasonry also involved charity, with donations to disaster funds, hospitals and community care organisations, medical research, care for the young and aged, and support for fellow members and their families.

The War and its aftermath saw a reduction in membership, and North Murchison Lodge struggled. The later addition of the kitchen to *Masonic Lodge (fmr)* indicates that the style of festivities was reduced in line with falling membership. This situation, which affected most lodges in the goldfields to varying degrees, may have prompted the visit from the Grand Master in 1947. On 27 September that year, the Most Worshipful Grand Master Dr J. S. Battye, accompanied by the Grand Secretary, Right Worshipful Bro F. W. Sanders, travelled to Meekatharra to attend an installation. Brethren travelled from far and wide to be present at *Masonic Lodge (fmr)* and meet the Grand Master. One brother came in 130 miles to attend his lodge and about twelve carloads came from Mount Magnet,

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18 Wilson, *Gateways*, p. 115.

19 Tuke, Bro. J., op cit.

20 *The West Australian Craftsman*, 8 August 1936, p. 69.

21 *The West Australian Craftsman*, 8 July 1937, p. 27.

22 Introduction to Freemasonry, [www.freemasonswa.org.au/introtofree.asp](http://www.freemasonswa.org.au/introtofree.asp).

Cue, Wiluna, Big Bell and Reedy, making 80 in attendance. This was the first time that a Grand Master had journeyed to the Murchison for an installation.<sup>23</sup>

Freemason membership was declining gradually throughout the organisation from the 1960s, with existing members aging and fewer young men joining. This was particularly noticeable in areas such as the goldfields where there was little employment or other facilities to keep the youth in the region.<sup>24</sup>

In 1990, the lease payment for Lot 127 was increased a thousand percent to \$120.00 a half year. With few remaining members, the Lodge surrendered the lease to the Crown in December 1992, and the site was gazetted Reserve 42912 as a Hall Site vested in North Murchison Lodge No. 88.<sup>25</sup> The rearrangement of the land tenure, however, did not save the Lodge. It held its last meeting on 15 October 1994, when it surrendered its warrant of constitution.<sup>26</sup>

Reserve 42912 was then vested in the Shire of Meekatharra and was granted to the Guides, Brownies and Scouts Association of Meekatharra on a caretaker basis. The Association used *Masonic Lodge (fmr)* for a year or so before it too disbanded. *Masonic Lodge (fmr)* was vacant and rundown.<sup>27</sup>

In 2002, the Meekatharra Lodge of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes (RAOB) took a five-year lease on the place.<sup>28</sup> The Meekatharra RAOB Lodge was established in 1916 as Orient 31 and occupied a house on Lot 551, which it converted into a hall. The name 'Orient' came from the liner on which a number of Buffaloes travelled to Australia from England. They had been under the Grand Surrey banner, but in Australia they established the Grand Council of Australia and their Lodges took the name 'Orient' in place of 'Surrey'. Orient Lodges were located in Tasmania and Queensland as well as Western Australia. Other Buffalo Lodges in the State, which are affiliated with the Grand Lodge of Western Australia, do not carry the name 'Orient'.<sup>29</sup>

The RAOB is less strict than the Freemasons. This comes from its origins among a group of stagehands and theatre technicians who, in around 1822, established their own organisation when denied the former association they had enjoyed with a group of actors called the Lushingtons. Initially known as Buffaloes, the new fraternity became the Loyal Order of Buffaloes to assure authorities that it was not a threat under the Seditious and Riotous Assembly Act of the late 1800s. The word 'Loyal' soon became 'Royal' and 'Antediluvian' was added to imply that the order was ancient. The RAOB is a philanthropic and charitable body and lodges are at liberty to undertake whatever activity they consider appropriate for the needs of the community.<sup>30</sup>

Around 1959, the Meekatharra RAOB Lodge changed its name to the Sir John Charles Head Orient 31, in honour of the member who had kept the Lodge functioning throughout the lean war years. The change of name occurred after

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23 *The West Australian Craftsman*, November 1947, pp. 31-32.

24 'The Freemasons and Lodges in this District: Mid-west Murchison', pamphlet provided by Geraldton Masonic Lodge in 2004.

25 Landgate, Reserves Index, Reserve 42912; Certificates of Title, Vol. 3062 Vol. 236, 15 November 1993 & LR Vol. 3061 Fol. 812, 27 January 1999.

26 *Masonic Halls and Buildings in Western Australia, 1867-2000*, op cit.

27 *Masonic Halls and Buildings in Western Australia, 1867-2000*, op cit; Landgate, Reserves Index, Reserve 42912; Certificates of Title, LR Vol. 3061 Fol. 812, 27 January 1999.

28 Information provided by Keith D. Mouritz, member of The Sir John Charles Head Orient 31 Lodge.

29 Information provided by Keith D. Mouritz, op cit.

30 RAOB history, RAOB website [www.raob.org](http://www.raob.org).

Sir John had died, as a Lodge cannot be named after a living person. There are about twenty members of the Lodge resident in Meekatharra, with meetings held each second Sunday and generally attended by six to eight members.<sup>31</sup>

The Meekatharra RAOB Lodge undertook general repairs and maintenance on *Masonic Lodge (fmr)* when it took up the lease on the place. The front doors, as noted in the physical evidence, are flush panel and are considered temporary until the original doors are rebuilt. The original lease, which is about to expire, is to be renewed. The first home of the RAOB Lodge in Meekatharra has been sold into private ownership.<sup>32</sup>

In 2007, the Sir John Charles Head Orient 31 Lodge of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes continues to occupy *Masonic Lodge (fmr)*.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Masonic Lodge (fmr)*, Meekatharra is a single-storey, timber framed and corrugated iron clad structure with a hipped roof.

*Masonic Lodge (fmr)* is located on the south-west corner of the intersection of Darlot Street and Savage Street central in the town of Meekatharra. The site is entirely undeveloped except for the building and associated toilets, and has rocky outcrops at the rear. The site is level except for the rear where it falls steeply to the right of way along that boundary. The front boundary is partly delineated by the remains of a low fence. The adjacent residence on the south-west is separated by a vertical steel sheeted fencing.

*Masonic Lodge (fmr)* displays no particular architectural style influences. It is a typical timber framed vernacular building that responds to the function, climate and availability of materials.

*Masonic Lodge (fmr)* presents a symmetrical frontage to Darlot Street, with a central gablet, replicated by a gablet on the hipped roof behind. The roof is clad with corrugated iron that has been painted red. The roof has vents along the ridge, and a gablet at the rear matches the hipped gablet at the front, with horizontal timber louvres. The eaves are unlined. The original gutters remain insitu with PVC downpipes, and no ground level drainage.

The walls are clad with vertical sheets of corrugated iron that has been painted. The front wall features a cornice line moulding and a roughcast pressed metal patterned sheeting above, with a group of four windows central above the cornice line, associated with the feature gablet. The building is elevated off the ground on metal stumps, with a stone foundation infill in the vicinity of the kitchen at the rear. The windows are sets of four four-paned casements set high on the walls. Steel mesh is fixed over the windows. The kitchen has two sets of two louvers and mesh and shade cloth have been fixed over those windows.

The entry is unobtrusive, towards the rear on the south-west side of the building, likely not the original entry. There is another exit near the north corner on the north-west side, accessing the two separate toilets that are located on the Savage Street frontage. The entry door is a simple ledge and brace door with a steel mesh security door opening out. The Savage Street door is similarly ledge and brace but has a metal sheet fixed to the exterior.

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<sup>31</sup> Information provided by Keith D. Mouritz, op cit.

<sup>32</sup> Information provided by Keith D. Mouritz, op cit.

The floor plan is rectangular and is unchanged from the original layout, except for the rear extension of the kitchen and storeroom, which align with the rectangular form. The 'front' door opens into an expansive 'supper room' formerly known as the 'Festive Ward'. Double doors on the south-east wall of the east corner open into the hall that extends to the Darlot Street frontage. Along the rear of the Festive Ward there are double doors into the kitchen on the south corner, and a single doorway into the storeroom that accesses the exterior for the toilets.

The original interior fabric is intact for the most part, particularly the Hall. The double entry into the Hall has replacement flush panel doors with a slide peephole. The original doors are stored in the building. The entry into the kitchen from the Festive Ward is a set of double doors detailed with three panels in a vertical formation. They seem to be original and indicate that perhaps at one time it was the main entry, and the kitchen is a later addition, which is supported by the low-pitched skillion roof over the kitchen. The walls of the Hall are lined with sheets of pressed metal, as are the coved ceilings, although the Festive Ward no longer has a ceiling. The Hall ceiling is relatively elaborate in the patterning of the coved sections then a decorative band defining the central flat ceiling that is a geometric decorative pattern picked out in several colours. The walls of the Hall are similarly decorative, although painted a single colour. There is a decorative integral dado line with different pressed metal patterns above and below the line. The line steps up on an angle at the Darlot Street frontage where the entire width of the Hall is raised two steps. The remainder of the Hall has a single step platform around the perimeter, except for a higher platform near the entry. The floors throughout are timber boards. Central in the Hall, there is evidence of where the Masonic 'square' was originally located, with linoleum surrounding the bare rectangle of floor.

In the Festive Ward, the timber roof structure is revealed. The walls are lined with metal sheeting, with a vertical ripple iron dado for the entire room. The north-west wall has horizontal sheets above the dado, as do the side walls. They both show some intervention suggesting perhaps windows of a vertical configuration (double hung sashes) at a previous time. The wall between the Festive Ward and the Hall has decorative pressed metal above the dado and a row of hat and coat hooks.

The kitchen is unceiled, and the walls have been recently lined with flat sheets of fibro cement.

The storeroom, backing onto the former Festive Ward, has original corrugated iron of what was an external wall, with a row of hat and coat hooks. The remaining walls are ad hoc corrugated iron, and the back of the timber framing and cladding of the kitchen wall.

Some original elements from the Freemasons remain in situ, including the organ in the west corner, and cupboard in the Festive Ward, but predominantly the contents are associated with the current RAOB users.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

There are 88 entries for Masonic halls or lodges in the HCWA database, ten of which are entered on the State Register. Three of these are located in the Goldfields region:

*Masonic Temple*, Boulder (1901-02) is a single-storey brick building with iron roof in the Federation Academic Classical style. In use for original purpose in 1996.

*Masonic Lodge*, Kalgoorlie (1899-1900) was constructed of pink sandstone in the Federation Academic Classical style. In use for original purpose in 1996.

*Masonic Lodge (fmr)*, Cue (1899) is a two-storey iron-clad building with a turret topping the double-height entry portico. Built to a design by architect E. Owen Hughes, secretary of the Cue Masonic chapter, the place is described as having outstanding aesthetic significance for its sophisticated Second Victorian Empire style, and is a landmark in the township. It has been unoccupied since the mid-1980s. A conservation plan was prepared by John Taylor Architect in 1996.<sup>33</sup>

Other iron-clad Masonic Halls known to remain in the Goldfields region include:

Norseman Masonic Lodge is a single-storey twin-gabled building clad largely with iron but also with some fibro sheeting. It has no particular style and no architectural features, being particularly utilitarian. Date of construction is given as c.1897 in the Shire of Dundas Municipal Heritage Inventory. In 1995, the place was in use as a community hall and in fair condition.<sup>34</sup>

Mount Magnet Masonic Lodge is a gable-roofed structure of similar size and style to *Masonic Lodge (fmr)*, with an asbestos clad extension at the rear. The windows have been removed and the openings covered with iron. The building was originally the Lennonville Mechanic's Institute (or Workers' Hall) and was relocated to Mount Magnet in 1906. It is located on a fenced and treed corner site and has landmark and streetscape value. In 1995 it was in use as a Masonic hall.<sup>35</sup>

*Masonic Lodge (fmr)*, Meekatharra is a fair representative example of an iron-clad Masonic hall in the Goldfields region.

#### 13.4 KEY REFERENCES

No key references.

#### 13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

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<sup>33</sup> John Taylor Architect, *Conservation Plan for the Masonic Lodge (former) Cue (1899)*, for Ms K. Dowdell, Stoneville, 1996, pp. 5-6, 16-17, 33-34.

<sup>34</sup> Hocking Planning & Architecture, *Shire of Dundas Municipal Inventory*, 1995.

<sup>35</sup> *Shire of Mount Magnet Municipal Inventory*, place no. 7.