



Langley Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Received _____

Type all entries

1. Name of Property

Historic: Masonic Lodge (Temple)

And/or common: Langley City Hall

2. Location

Street and number: 112 Second Street

City: Langley

State: Washington

Zip: 98260

3. Classification

Category

☐ District
☒ Building(s)
☐ Structure
☐ Site
☐ Object

Ownership

☒ Public
☐ Private
☐ Both
Public Acquisition
☐ In process
☐ Being considered
☒ Not Applicable

Status

☒ Occupied
☐ Unoccupied
☐ Work in progress
Accessible
☐ Yes: restricted
☒ Yes: unrestricted
☐ No

Present Use

☐ Agriculture
☐ Commercial
☐ Educational
☐ Entertainment
☒ Government
☐ Industrial
☐ Military
☐ Museum
☐ Park
☐ Residential
☐ Religious
☐ Scientific
☐ Transportation
☐ Other

4. Owner of Property (Use continuation page if more than one owner)

Name: City of Langley

Street and number: 112 Second Street

City: Langley

State: Washington

Zip: 98260

Telephone: 360-221-4433

E-mail: langleymayor@langleywa.org

5. Physical Description

Condition

☐ Excellent
☒ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Deteriorated
☐ Ruins
☐ Unexposed

Check one

☐ Unaltered
☒ Altered

Check one

☒ Original site
☐ Moved Date _____

Narrative description: (Use one or more continuation sheets for a description of the present and original physical appearance of the property)

6. Significance

Year built: 1948

Builder/Architect: Albert Melsen (builder)

Narrative description: (Use one or more continuation pages for a description of the history and significance of the property to Langley's heritage).

7. Major Bibliographical References

Place bibliography on one or more continuation sheets.

8. Additional Documentation

Place maps and photographs on one or more continuation pages.

9. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: The Langley City Hall occupies the western 50 feet of the lot also occupied by the Langley Library at the junction between First and Second Streets. The parcel initially containing the City Hall (#R33034-135-3500) and that occupied by the Langley Library (#R33034-133-3570) were combined in 1994. The tax parcel for both is currently #R33034-134-3550.

Legal Description: CITY HALL AND LIBRARY IN GL 1: BG PT 170' E OF NECR BLOCK 11 TOWN OF LANGLEY N PARA/W E LN TOWNSITE INTER CO RD RUN TO WHARF ELY ALG DLN RD 50' E BY S ALG SLN CO RD 60' SELY ALG BLUFF 200' TP SLN 2ND ST EXT INTER CO RD W TPB EX 2ND ST TGW:TRIAN TR

Tax Parcel Number: R33034-134-3550

Plat Name:

Block:

Lot(s): 1

10. Form Prepared By:

Name/Title: Robert Waterman/Chair

Organization: Langley Historic Preservation Commission

Date: 7-30-08

Street and number: 88 Saratoga Creek Lane

Telephone: 360-221-8644

City or town: Langley

State: WA *Zip:* 98260

E-mail: bobanne@whidbey.com

11. Signature of Property Owner(s):

CONTINUATION PAGES – City Hall Nomination

5. Narrative Description of the Property

The building currently housing the Langley City Hall is located between First and Second Streets. It is a two-story, Georgian style, rectangular wood frame building with cement brick façade and poured concrete foundation. The hip roof has asphalt shingles. A small cupola and several antennae project from the roof.

The main entrance faces south toward Second Street. There is also an entrance on the north side.

Windows are located on both first and second floors, and a fire escape door and external stairs are located at the northeast corner of the second floor. Flower boxes are located on the second story windows on the west side of the building.

A small porch with a roof supported by two, round, fluted wooden columns and dental detail on the molding protects the main entrance on the south side.

The area between Second Street and the south entrance contains a bench, bike rack, flagpole, large rock with a plaque, and information kiosk. This area also contains plants and pavers. A wall-hung pay telephone is located on the south side of the building to the left of the main entrance. Two small plaques containing historical information about the building are located on the south wall to the right of the main door.

A picnic table and small covered area are located on the small lawn at the north side of the building facing First Street.

A narrow concrete walkway between Second and First Streets runs along the west side of the building.

Rectangular signs ("Langley City Hall") are located between the second story windows on the north and south sides, and a square, inlaid, concrete sign with the date of construction (1948) below a Mason insignia is located above the city hall sign on the south wall.

Major alterations to the building include repositioning of the fire escape door and stairs from their original position on the northwest side of the second floor to the northeast side in 1992, and the addition of 1 over 1, vertical, slider windows in the west side and two on the east side, plus one, larger, fixed pane window on the north side of the second story in 2007-2008.

A landscaping project underway in 2008 will add a variety of plants to the south lawn, decorative pavers to the area under the covered portion of the porch in front of the south entrance, and a number of examples of work by local artists.

6. Narrative Description of Significance

The building was constructed in 1948 as a Masonic Temple. Many of the members of the Langley Masonic Lodge were key members of the Langley community. Albert Melsen, the lead builder of the structure, played a key role in construction of many of the commercial buildings and several residences in Langley. He also served as mayor for 16 years, and city council for 5 years.

The building is the only example of Georgian style architecture, and one of the few "brick" façade buildings, in downtown Langley.

The city of Langley purchased the building from the Masons in 1992 and renovated it to serve as city hall. It currently acts as the focus of Langley's city government.

Fraternal organizations such as the Freemasons and Yeoman played important roles in Langley's social and community development during the 19th and 20th Centuries. The gestation period of the New Masonic Temple (now City Hall) was long and uncertain. The minutes of Langley's Masonic Lodge 218 compiled by the Lodge historian, Frank L. Wilson, hint at this struggle.

"In 1914 eleven Masons banded themselves together as a Masonic Club, with the intention of forming a Masonic Lodge at Langley, Washington. The meetings were held in a small room on the second floor of a building owned by Mr. Strong, the local undertaker (Coupeville?). The lower part of the building was used as a storage place for coffins."

They were granted dispensation to form a Langley Lodge on May 30, 1916 and rented the Yeomen building on the south side of First Street as a meeting place for \$3 a month.

On July 16, 1917 the Lodge made a "down payment of \$5.00 on an organ from Miss Helen B. Coe," and in December of that year agreed to pay \$7.50 as half the cost of a stove to be shared with the Yeoman. Finances were tight. The treasurer, James C. Langley, nephew of the town's namesake, reported a total of \$20 cash on hand. On February 25, 1918, the balance of \$7.50 was paid to Miss Helen B. Coe for her organ.

On April 6, 1925 the Lodge paid \$150 to Langley butcher, Bro. Henry Weber, for Lodge furniture "constructed by the members after a committee had found that the Lodge could not hope to purchase the required articles because of the high cost... The wood was to be native alder. The trees were selected from a fine stand on land owned by Bro. J. A. Wallingford, who felled them and dragged them to the road. From there they were taken to the mill owned and operated by Bro. Martin Carlson at Sunlight Beach, where they were sawed. The lumber was stored in a vacant building on the farm of Bro. J. V. Peterson and left to dry and season... The complete set consists of three chairs for the East and one each for the West and South, and pews for the members. All pieces are upholstered and very comfortable.... Each piece is solidly built and should easily last as long as this Lodge is in existence."

On June 7, 1926 the secretary was instructed "to write a letter of thanks to Bro. Jacob Anthes for the generous gift of a lot for the site of a Masonic Temple," and almost three years later, on March 4, 1929, a 5 member committee of Bros. Hildreth, McGinnis, Feek, Wilson, and Noble was formed to "be known as the building committee, to look into the building of a Temple, in the future, on our lot."

Promises of money were solicited and discussions were conducted regarding a permanent home for the Lodge. In December, 1936 a committee was appointed to explore purchasing the Yeoman building, and a second committee headed by Albert Melsen was charged with working on "plans, specifications and costs for a new building with power to call for assistants."

With the entry of the U.S. into WW II, efforts temporarily shifted away from discussions of building a new Temple. On May 4, 1942 Bro. Hunziker moved that "money now in our building and insurance funds be invested in U. S. War Bonds." The motion passed, and on August 3, 1942, "Bro. Albert Melsen, as chair of the building committee, gave a favorable report of the scheme of building a Temple on our lot, donated by or late esteemed brother Jacob Anthes... the matter was discussed at length by practically every Brother present, but without definite result."

Construction of the new Temple was finally begun, and on April 5, 1948 "the building committee and finance committee were authorized to cash in the war bonds to go into the building fund. Bro. Grigware gave a complete report on the progress of the new Temple, as to the construction and the balance of money needed to finish the job." The finance committee was authorized to borrow the necessary funds "to complete the Temple for occupancy, such amount not to exceed \$4,000."

On May 17, 1948 Bro. Albert Melsen reported the "the interior work (on the Temple) was going very well, the brick were ordered for the exterior and brick masons hired to complete the job. He appealed for extra help to get everything in readiness for the brick layers and keep them going." Bro. Scott Weimer "was given a hand for his splendid help and work."

On June 6, 1948 Bro. Albert Melsen reported that the new Temple was "nearly completed except for some inside work and the brick laying," and on Dec. 4, 1948, at 6:00 pm a banquet was held and dedication ceremonies of the New Temple were conducted.

7. Major Bibliographical References

1. Wilson, Frank. "Langley Lodge No. 218 .:. &A:.M 1917 – 1967 50th Anniversary." Masonic Temple, Langley, Washington. June 5, 1967. (provided by Charrison Lochaby, Langley, WA).
2. Cherry, Lorna. "South Whidbey and its People, Vol. III. – Langley, the Village by the Sea." South Whidbey Historical Society. Langley, Washington. 1986.
3. City Records. Langley City Hall, Langley, Washington.