



**Mayor's Award  
"Exterior Commercial Rehabilitation"  
225 Main Avenue  
Masonic Temple**

Designed by Charles A. Dunham, and constructed in 1879, the Masonic Temple is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is the oldest commercial building in downtown Brookings. The second floor of the building was designed for the Masonic Lodge, and the Masons continue to use this as their headquarters today.

The Masonic Temple was built on the popular arcaded block concept. This Late Nineteenth Century building marks the edge of the business district. Reminiscent of the Romanesque tradition, the two-story structure is covered with ornamental brick and cut stone.



The original large arched second floor windows have stone sills. A Masonic insignia is carved in stone and set in to the front of the second story.

The first floor of the building opened as a general merchandise store and over the years (as documented in the Brookings County Records) has been home to many other businesses:

- 1879: C.A Skinner General Store
- 1885: Hocking and Hoskin – Restaurant
- 1894: ½ Masonic Lodge Hall; New
- 1894: ¼ Restaurant; Fred Harvey
- 1895: C.A. Skinner General Store – North Half
- 1900: The Hub
- 1902: C.E. West Furniture Store
- 1908: Grover Furniture Store
- 1910: Davis & Company – Furniture & Undertaking
- 1918: Sellers & Bartlings – Furniture & Undertaking
- 1924: E.Z. Poole – Dray line Office
- 1927: Nolan Phonograph Shop
- 1929: Grimm’s Department Store
- 1933: Rude Brothers Furniture & Undertaking
- 1950: Rude’s Funeral Chapel & Undertaking
- 2014: Trendz Consignment Studios



The corner turret that once predominantly marked the intersection of 3rd Street and Main Avenue was removed and capped due to significant damage sustained from a high-wind storm during the 1930’s. In 1954, the front of the building was covered with stone, the doors were replaced and a garage was added to the rear of the building.



The most recent restoration of the Masonic Temple was prompted by the desire for change. For the Masons, the time had come to bring more activity to the southwest corner of Main Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The main level of the building that served as home to Rude’s Funeral Chapel for sixty-four years, no longer effectively provided for the business due to interior space constraints and changes in the

downtown. In looking at historical photos, the Masons realized the presence this building once had along Main Avenue and desired to bring the building back to its original grandeur. The recreation of the signature large storefront windows, the centered front recessed entrance, the fourteen foot high interior ceiling, and the original



wide-plank hardwood floors were all signature elements of the building's past which have once again been realized.

The work completed to date is potentially Phase I of a two phase project. The Masons desire to fully reconstruct the other missing architectural features of the building; those being the transom windows of the main level along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and the reconstruction of the signature



corner turret. The upper transom windows of the main level are actually still present within the wall. Currently, they are covered with brick on the exterior and insulation/gypsum board on the interior.

The expense of Phase II is of course an obstacle to overcome, and the Mason's intend to apply for grants (such as the Deadwood Grant) to assist with funding the Phase II restoration effort.

Preservation of the exterior of the building by the Masons is also worthy to mention. Many buildings built pre-1900's have structural issues requiring major repair due to neglect and continuous exposure to the freeze/thaw cycle. However, due to the Mason's care-taking, this building is in great condition. There are no major structural cracks with the exterior masonry façade and the original upper level wood windows (130 plus years old) have very little (if any) wood rot.

On December 12, 1894 for the building's dedication, the *Brookings Register* reported, "The Masonic Temple will, for many years to come, stand as a monument to their abilities." The Masonic Temple has unequivocally stood as a testament to this statement.