

# CO-MASONIC TEMPLE, PERTH



PLACE INFORMATION	
Place name	Co-Masonic Temple
Other names	St. Cuthbert's Lodge No. 408
Place type	Individual building or group

HERITAGE LISTING	
inHerit ID:	8590
State Heritage Register:	
Other Listing:	Municipal Inventory Adopted 13 Nov 1995

SITE LOCATION	
Street address	110 Brisbane St
Locality	Perth
Survey	LOT: 27 D/P: 6645
Vol/folio	1247/681
Reserve	—

SIGNIFICANCE	
Level of significance	<p><b>Considerable</b></p> <p>Very important to the heritage of the locality. High degree of integrity/authenticity.</p>
Management category	<p><b>Category 2</b></p> <p>Conservation of the place is highly desirable. Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place.</p>
Statement of significance	<p>St Cuthbert's Co-Masonic Temple is a fine representative example of the Interwar Beaux Arts style with a notable street presence.</p> <p>The place has continuing historic and social associations with the Co Masonic Association and their events for both men and women.</p> <p>The place has historic value for its association with architect William G Bennett, a prominent architect of the Interwar period.</p> <p>The place is valued by the community for the continuity of its presence in the streetscape which contributes to the community sense of place.</p>

### PLACE USE

<b>Original use</b>	Social/Recreational: Masonic Hall
<b>Current use</b>	Social/Recreational: Masonic Hall
<b>Other use</b>	

### CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

<b>Construction date</b>	1936
<b>Walls</b>	Rendered Brick
<b>Roof</b>	Corrugated metal sheeting
<b>Architectural Style</b>	Inter-War Beaux-Arts
<b>Physical description</b>	<p>The one storey building is symmetrical about the central entry. The prominently massed entrance portico has composite Roman columns and a stepped parapet which are common features of Masonic buildings.</p> <p>Prominent street presence with varying shades of blue as a paint finish to doors, windows and façade.</p>
<b>Condition</b>	Good
<b>Integrity</b>	High
<b>Authenticity</b>	High

### HISTORICAL INFORMATION

When Freemasonry came to Australia in the 1840s, it was no longer a requirement that its members were part of the building trade. Freemason meetings were an opportunity for men of differing religions to share their moral and spiritual values through rituals, lectures, teaching and practices.

The first meeting of St Cuthbert's Co-Masonic Lodge No 408 was held in 1916 by Brother Olive Jay Farmer, at her residence in Meadow Street, Guildford named 'St Cuthbert's'. The Co-Masonic lodge was open to both men and women, its membership swelled to 30 within the first year, and included Edith Cowan, Australia's first woman parliamentarian; Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver MLA, the first woman to obtain a cabinet rank; Muriel Chase, a co-founder of the Silver Chain Nursing League; and, Edith Priest, the Principle Mistress for Cottesloe Infant School.

Meetings of the Co-Masonic Lodge were held at Farmer's residence for the first 10 months, until moving to a rental premises on Hay Street, west of William Street. The building has since been demolished.

In 1919 the lodge moved to the Temperance Hall in Museum Street in Perth, where they remained until 1936 when a purpose-built Masonic Lodge was built at Brisbane Street. While at the Temperance Hall, in 1927, St Cuthbert's Lodge established a Daughter Lodge – Memphis Lodge No. 433 – and from 1928 the two lodges shared the Museum Street Building.

For a short while, St Cuthbert's owned two residential properties in James Street, Perth and intended to convert the buildings into a lodge facility. These properties were later sold, and the money put towards a Co-Masonic Building Fund.

St Cuthbert's Lodge purchased the site on Brisbane Street for £265, and in 1936 employed architect William G. Bennett to design the new lodge. Bennett had only two years previously completed the Nedlands Park Masonic Hall, and designed St Cuthbert's Co-Masonic Lodge as a replica with a number of improvements. A two-storey building with caretaker's cottage was planned, but when tenders were called and came back too high, the plans were reduced and single storey design was accepted, excluding the cottage.

**HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

Bennett was also known for the Peace and Memorial Rose Garden (1948) in Nedlands, Applecross District Hall (1934), and Beverley Infant Health Centre (fmr) (1954).

The foundation stone of St Cuthbert’s Co-Masonic Lodge No 408 was laid on 25 April 1936, by the Rightful Worshipful Brother Stanley Sprott Fisher. The first meeting was held in the Co-Masonic Temple on 2 August 1936, officially opened on 15 August and consecrated on 7 February 1937. At Brisbane Street, St Cuthbert’s continued to share the use of their building with their Daughter Lodge, Memphis.

In the early 1990s the asbestos roof cladding was replaced with corrugated metal sheeting.

The building continues to be used as a Co-Masonic Lodge, at its peak, the Lodge is reported as having 100 male and female members. In 2007, the Lodge was noted to have 25 Brothers.

In an interview with the Perth Voice, the Rightful Worshipful Master of St Cuthbert’s Co-Masonic Lodge reports that in Western Australia, the male-only Freemasons do not want to know about the Co-Masons.

**HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

<b>Historic theme</b>	Cultural Life: Recreation - Arts, Culture and Entertainment	
<b>Associations</b>	William Garnsworthy Bennett	Architect
<b>Sources</b>	Municipal Heritage Inventory 2006. Landgate Aerial photographs 1953-2024.	

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

