

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Braden Lodge No. 201

Other names/site number Braden Hall

Name of related multiple
property listing

N/A

(Remove "N/A" if property is part of a multiple property listing and add name)

2. Location

Street & Number: 1586 Kansas Street

City or town: Memphis State: Tennessee County: Shelby

Not For Publication: ☐ N/A Vicinity: ☐ N/A Zip: 38109

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official:

Date

Title:

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal
Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private ☒
Public – Local ☐
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Stone; Concrete; Asphalt; Wood; Metal

Narrative Description

Braden Lodge No. 201 is a ca. 1900 two-story rectangular plan building located in a residential neighborhood at 1586 Kansas Street in south Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee. The building was originally built of rusticated stone with an irregular plan. A ca. 1955 cast concrete enclosure of the northwest corner front porch and addition resulted in the current plan. The building has a front gable asphalt shingle roof with most windows infilled with concrete or wood. The ca. 1955 cast concrete section was designed to match the original rusticated stone, but subtle differences indicate the architectural evolution. The lodge building is the only resource on its rectangular lot. The property retains integrity to convey its significance under Criterion A.

Site Features and Setting

Braden Lodge No. 201 is set on a 0.192-acre rectangular lot measuring 60 ft. by 140 ft. The predominantly flat lot is set at a higher grade than Kansas Street. An eight-step concrete staircase with metal pipe railings provides access from a concrete sidewalk to the west façade of the building. A metal chain-link fence is along part of the south property line while wood privacy fences line the north and east property lines. Mature trees are located at the rear southeast corner of the property. A recently planted, large bush is in the front yard, just southwest of the building. The surrounding neighborhood is residential with single-family homes and vacant lots.

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Braden Lodge No. 201, ca. 1900, ca. 1955 (Contributing Building)

Exterior Summary

Braden Lodge No. 201 is a two-story building originally built ca. 1900 with an irregular plan featuring a one-story porch.¹ The porch was enclosed ca. 1955 and a second level addition was built above it, resulting in the building's current appearance and rectangular plan.

While the ca. 1955 changes used cast concrete designed to match the original rusticated stone in size and pattern, the newer section has subtle differences and a visible seam that indicates where the original porch was located. A slightly projecting ashlar string course is present on the original section of all elevations, below first-level openings, but the string course was not replicated on the enclosed section. The mortar of the original section is beaded, but the newer section has flatter, less uniform mortar joints. The cast concrete section has lighter-colored aggregates that give a slightly speckled appearance.

The building's entire foundation is stone. There is a front-gable asphalt shingle roof with shingle siding (possibly asbestos) in the gable fields. The majority of the building's windows were enclosed with textured concrete ca. 1980 or covered with wood or metal, as is typical with masonic lodges in Tennessee to ensure the organization's rituals are kept secret. The pattern of openings is noted on each elevation's description below. All windows have concrete sills or lintels, unless otherwise noted.

Façade (West Elevation)

The first level of the façade (west elevation) has an off-center, non-historic metal six-panel entrance door. A header row and three courses of grey bricks are above the door, as well as a light socket. The door is located within the ca. 1955 enclosed section. The door is accessed via seven concrete steps, which were widened at an unknown date. The pattern of newer cast concrete versus the original stone foundation indicates that the original porch access was located at the northwest corner of the building. On the original south side of the façade, one first-level window has been enclosed with textured concrete.

The second level has two windows, one in each section. The north window is 1/1 wood with wood casing but no sill or lintel. The south window is 1/1 wood with a wide wood casement trim. A louvered attic opening is centered in the gable field. Some of the gable field cladding has fallen, revealing wood underneath (Photos 1-2).

South Elevation

The south elevation has four window openings on each level. The first level windows have been infilled with textured concrete, while the second level windows have been covered with corrugated metal sheets (Photo 2-3).

East Elevation

A four-panel metal door is centered on the first level, flanked by windows infilled with textured concrete. The second level has three window openings, all infilled with textured concrete; the centered window is significantly smaller than the others (Photos 3-4).

¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps for Memphis, 1907, rev. 1951, page 919, Library of Congress; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps for Memphis, 1927, Volume 6, page 919, Library of Congress; Aerial Image of Memphis, 1938, 1949, 1971, 1981, Shelby County Register of Deeds, Memphis, Tennessee. Aerial Images of Memphis, 1957, 1971, HistoricAerials.com.

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North Elevation

The north elevation is comprised of the original section on the east and the enclosed section on the west. The original section has two windows on each level. The first level windows have been filled with textured concrete. The second level windows are partially covered with corrugated metal sheets. The enclosed area only has one window on the second level, covered with corrugated metal sheets. Mechanical equipment and pipes are affixed to this elevation (Photo 4).

Interior

Unless otherwise noted, all floors and trim are wood. Interior walls differ throughout and are noted in the room descriptions. Ceilings are typically drywall panels, and some rooms have unfinished sections. The floorplan appears to reflect alterations made during the Period of Significance when the lodge members converted a former private residence into their hall, which necessitated large meeting rooms.

First Floor

The façade's entrance opens into a foyer. The east wall is the original exterior stone with the original entrance opening, now with a five-panel wood door that is likely not original. An infilled transom is above the door. The south wall is original exterior stone. The west and north walls are painted concrete block. A wood staircase with a dogleg landing occupies the majority of the north side of the room. A closet with five-panel wood door was built below the upper section of the staircase. Wood beadboard is above the door. Most of the ceiling is unfinished. The floor is poured concrete (Photos 5-6).

The north doorway opens into a hallway oriented north to south. The north end of the hallway is angled and leads to a bathroom, which has a non-historic vinyl floor patterned to resemble wood. Half of the ceiling is unfinished and some pipes are exposed. This bathroom is within the ca. 1955 enclosed section, so the south wall is the original stone exterior while the north wall is painted concrete block. The other walls are drywall. The bathroom has a simple wood door. A wide lintel above the door suggests that this door was installed at a previous window location.

The south end of the hallway leads to a door opening with one wood step leading to a stage. The opening has a molded surround, which has been partially removed where the hallway's east wall was added. The east wall has an open doorway with painted transom that accesses the largest room on the first level.

At the east end of the largest room is a wood stage with wood baseboards and crown molding (Photo 7). The remainder of the room has mostly wood plywood flooring with some historic wood on the north side. Two wood, braced support columns appear to indicate where a wall may have once been. The ceiling is finished with drywall panels. The majority of walls appear to be plaster with wood baseboards and crown molding. The north wall is wood beadboard with one opening and two doorways, one with a five-panel wood door and the other with a four-panel wood door (Photos 8-9).

The last room is equal in depth to the aforementioned room, but not as wide. Interior wall finishes have been removed, leaving painted stone exterior walls. A closet with a five-panel wood door is on the west wall. The ceiling is mostly finished with drywall panels. Window openings are evident in this room, showing that the wood 1/1 windows are extant (Photos 10-11).

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Second Floor

The second floor is accessed via the wood staircase at the northwest corner of the building. The staircase has a banister with turned wood spindles (Photo 12). Walls in the staircase include original stone, plastered concrete, and drywalled partitions. One of the few uncovered windows is at the top landing, on the west wall. On the south wall is a five-panel wood door with molded wood surround (Photos 12-14).

The door leads into a hallway. The east wall is original stone and there are two doors leading to the second-floor meeting space. One door has five panels, while the other is plain. At the south end of the hallway is a narrow two-panel door leading to a closet. Part of the ceiling is unfinished (Photo 15).

The Meeting Room comprises the majority of the second floor. It has a finished drywall ceiling with one small section missing. Two doors on the north wall lead to a small bathroom and a closet. Other than its large open size, the defining characteristic of the meeting room are the three wood stages with lecterns. Window openings are evident from being covered with plywood, some with painted images on them (Photos 16-19).

Integrity

Braden Lodge No. 201 retains its integrity from the Period of Significance. The building has not been moved and retains integrity of location. The setting is the same as it was historically. The Masonic Lodge retains its integrity of materials, design, and workmanship from the Period of Significance. The building retains its stone and concrete exterior and pattern of window openings. Enclosure of several windows reflects the building's use as a masonic lodge where rituals must be kept secret; this was a common alteration when masonic lodges used spaces that were not purpose-built for their ceremonies. The interior of the building retains numerous historic materials including wood floors, trim, and plaster walls. The space used for rituals on the second level is intact with its large open space. The building was directly associated with important social history, and it retains the physical characteristics to convey that history, thereby ensuring the lodge building also retains its integrity of association and feeling.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

N/A

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

ca. 1944-1976

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Braden Lodge No. 201 is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Black Ethnic Heritage as it relates to Social History. Braden Lodge No. 201 was a Black fraternal masonic organization that fulfilled an important social need for its members. The lodge hall was used as a safe place for meetings and public service projects amidst the era of discrimination and segregation that negatively affected the Black community's ability to access the full benefits of citizenship and services available to white Memphians. The property was also used by Braden Lodge's sister organization, the Order of the Eastern Star No. 115, for the same types of social purposes. The Period of Significance is ca. 1944 to 1976, beginning with the year the lodge moved to the nominated property and ending at a default 50 year-cutoff mark due to the lodge's ongoing importance.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Freemasonry in the United States traces its routes to the earliest era of the English colonies. The first Grand Lodge of Freemasons had been established in London in 1717, and a lodge in North America followed in Boston in 1733. At its most basic level, Freemasonry was a fraternal order, intended to promote Enlightenment ideals of universalism, moral integrity, brotherhood, charity, and mutual support. However, those ideals did not always cross lines of race and ethnicity.²

Black freemasonry was essentially established in 1775 when fifteen Black men were initiated into Lodge No. 441, a British Army regimental lodge in Boston, after having been previously rejected from white American lodges. After the British left Boston, the men continued to meet. Their lodge was known as African Lodge No. 1, led by abolitionist Prince Hall. Lodge members had limited authority. They could bury their dead but could not perform any formal masonic duties.³

Following the Revolutionary War, many of the American white freemason lodges cut ties with the Grand Lodge of England, leading to the establishment of grand lodges at the state-level. Per the normal procedures of Freemasonry, new lodges had to be granted a charter from an existing lodge. Prince Hall and his fellow members attempted to secure a charter for an independent lodge from American lodges, but all attempts were unsuccessful. In 1784, they approached the Grand Lodge in England and secured a charter for the United States's first Black masonic lodge, the African Lodge No. 459.⁴

In the early nineteenth century, the Black Masonic brethren began to form Grand Lodges at the state level. On August 31, 1870, two lodges from Nashville and one from Pulaski, Tennessee met in Nashville and established the Prince Hall Grand Lodge for the State of Tennessee.⁵ The Grand Lodge has played a central role in granting charters for new local lodges, such as it did when it granted a charter for the formation of Braden Lodge No. 201 on June 23, 1910.⁶ The Grand Lodge is headquartered in Memphis, historically at the

² Peter P. Hinks and Stephen Kantrowitz, eds., *All Men Free and Brethren: Essays on the History of African American Freemasonry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), xi-3.

³ "The History of Prince Hall: The Father of Black Masonry in the United States," The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F&AM for the Jurisdiction of Oklahoma, Inc., accessed February 15, 206, <https://www.mwglofokpha.com/history-of-prince-hall.html>.

⁴ Hinks and Kantrowitz, eds, *All Men Free and Brethren*, xi; "The History of Prince Hall: The Father of Black Masonry in the United States."

⁵ "History of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee," Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Tennessee, accessed February 15, 2026, <https://mwphgltn.org/grand-lodge-of-tennessee/>.

⁶ Warrant of Constitution, June 23, 1910. From the Collection of the Braden Lodge No. 201, Memphis, Tennessee.

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Masonic Temple at 198 S. 4th Street, just off Beale Street, the historic commercial center of Black life in Memphis. The temple was used by multiple lodges who did not have their own. That block was within the Beale Street Urban Renewal area and was cleared in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1970, the Grand Lodge moved to 253 South Parkway West, a few streets over from Braden Lodge.⁷

Early History of Braden Lodge No. 201 and Move to 1586 Kansas Street

Braden Lodge members initially met at a non-extant, two-story wood-frame building at the southwest corner of Horn Lake Road (now Kansas Street) and Silverage Avenue. It is unclear whether Braden Lodge owned the property. Frequent descriptions of the building as ‘Braden Hall’ suggest that Braden Lodge No. 201 was the major operator of the building, though documentation clearly shows that they opened the building up to multiple other lodge organizations for their meetings or collaborated on events.⁸

By the early 1940s, for reasons that are currently unknown, Braden Lodge members were meeting in members’ homes and looking for a new meeting place. In 1944, the lodge moved to its current location at 1586 Kansas Street.⁹ The nominated building was likely built as a residence for Dr. Daniel W. Fields (1870-1928), a prominent Black dentist, around 1900.¹⁰ At the time, the house fronted Horn Lake Road (later renamed Kansas Street) and was on approximately five or six acres of land. Fields and his wife Maria (or Mariah) had at least ten children at the time. Besides his work as a dentist, Fields was also prominent as manager/superintendent of Mount Carmel Cemetery, a Methodist leader, a real estate investor, director of the Solvent Savings Bank, and was involved in other civic ventures.¹¹

⁷ “Prince Hall Lodge Sets Dedication,” *The Commercial Appeal*, April 12, 1970; Jefferson Riker, “MHA Flicks Switch for ‘Blue Light’ Restoration,” *The Commercial Appeal*, February 21, 1968; Jerry L. Robbins, “For Sale: 27 Acres of Cleared Land-All Downtown,” *The Memphis Press-Scimitar*, January 27, 1975.

⁸ Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, July 11, 1920; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, January 27, 1921; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, June 26, 1921. Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, February 6, 1921.

⁹ Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, December 27, 1942; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, January 3, 1944; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, November 10, 1944. Leadership at the time of the move included J.C. Carr as Worshipful Master and H.M. Strong as Secretary.

¹⁰ Shelby County Property Records are unclear as to when the Braden Lodge No. 201 formally took ownership of the property or when the building was constructed. The property was originally part of a large 1200+ acre property owned by the Kerr Family, which was subdivided and platted in 1857, as recorded in Shelby County Register of Deeds Book 7, Page 387-88. Dr. Daniel W. Fields purchased six acres from portions of Kerr Tract Logs 59 and 60 in 1898, as recorded in Shelby County Register of Deeds, Book 255, Page 464. The 1900 Memphis City Directory first lists Fields as living on Horn Lake Road (originally treated as an extension of Kansas Street and accordingly later formally renamed Kansas Street). Later directories gave an address of 1590 Kansas Street, and the 1918 Memphis City Directory specifically described Fields’ residence as located at the northeast corner of Kansas Street and Fields Avenue. Cross-referencing with available maps, such as the 1927 Sanborn Map of the City of Memphis and 1930s aerial images available from the City of Memphis, shows that the building now known as Braden Lodge No. 201 was the only house in this vicinity. The large size of the building and use of stone as opposed to wood-frame used for most other, smaller buildings in the area suggests that it was owned by a wealthy person at the time of construction. Therefore, all evidence indicates that the building was originally a private residence for Fields.

¹¹ G.P. Hamilton, *The Bright Side of Memphis: A Compendium of Information Concerning the Colored People of Memphis, Tennessee, Showing Their Achievements in Business, Industrial and Professional Life and Including Articles of General Interest in the Race* (Memphis, 1908), 56-57; “Negro Sunday-Schools,” *The Commercial Appeal*, April 13, 1902; “Negro Y.M.C.A. To Be Organized Sunday at LeMoyné Institute,” *The Commercial Appeal*, October 20, 1906; “Solvent Savings Bank Shows Rapid Progress,” *The Commercial Appeal*, December 9, 1926; “Negro School Has Flag-Raising,” *The Commercial Appeal*, May 5, 1917; U.S. Federal Census, 1910, 1920.

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The Fields family lived at the house on Kansas Street until 1919 when D.W. Fields subdivided the property into residential lots, advertising the lots as “high and beautiful” with “easy terms.”¹² The subdivision appears to have been done to pay off debts from a mortgage that was taken in 1914 and defaulted on in 1918.¹³ After this date, Memphis City Directories list a variety of residents at the property. Property records after the Fields era are unclear as to when the Braden Lodge organization formally took ownership of the property, but newspaper records substantiate the property’s use as a masonic hall by the end of 1944.

Significance of the Braden Lodge No. 201

Black civic societies and lodges have played an important role in African American social life. The existence of discriminatory laws, such as those mandating slavery before the Civil War and segregation afterwards, placed barriers that prevented many Black Americans from full attainment of citizenship and access to benefits afforded to white Americans. As a result, the Black community often turned to itself for social and financial support. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Black Tennesseans formed a variety of organizations to support their needs, such as fraternal lodges (including those associated with the Freemasons), benevolent societies, and insurance societies. The exact mission and membership rules of each organization differed, but in general they allowed their members to meet in a safe place to promote community ties, and many provided social safety nets, such as a monetary benefit to address unexpected illness or death. Many societies also promoted efforts to legally eliminate discrimination, contributing to the modern Civil Rights movement of the twentieth century.¹⁴

Braden Lodge No. 201 fulfilled this social role in numerous ways for Black Memphians, particularly those in the south Memphis area. The building provided a private space in which masons could meet, practice their rituals, and build or strengthen community ties. The hall provided a space for annual addresses by leaders from the Grand Lodge. Women were not allowed to be freemasons, but an auxiliary organization known as the Order of the Eastern Star had been created in the nineteenth century. The Braden chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star (O.E.S.) No. 115 also used Braden Lodge throughout the period of significance for its social programs, to host annual addresses from leadership at the Grand Lodge, and for carrying out assistance for burial of members. The men and women’s groups frequently collaborated on events. Annual events included

¹² “Just Open,” *The News Scimitar*, September 26, 1919; D.W. Fields Subdivision Plat, Book 7, Page 101, Shelby County Register of Deeds, Memphis, Tennessee.

¹³ “Trustee’s Sale,” *The News Scimitar*, December 31, 1918.

¹⁴ Leigh Ann Gardner, *To Care for the Sick and Bury the Dead: African American Lodges and Cemeteries in Tennessee* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2022), 18-21. Gardener points out that it is often difficult to research Black lodges in Tennessee due to difficulty accessing records. Historically, due to discrimination, the activities of Black societies were not often recorded in community sources like newspapers, or at least not to the same degree as their white counterparts. Additionally, records of Black societies were not saved in archives to the same degree that societies associated with the white community were saved. It was therefore up to each society to save records, but not all were able to do so in a systematic way, and many were affected by membership turnover or circumstances outside of their control. The Braden Lodge No. 201 is one such example. According to current members, their records were destroyed by a flood in the 1980s. The lodge’s original Warrant of Constitution, which is framed and displayed on the building’s upper level, was the only internal record to survive. Therefore, the lodge’s history and importance have been pieced together using other sources as well as oral history from descendants of deceased members as well as current members.

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meeting at the hall before attending St. John's Day services at nearby churches, as well as other memorial services at the hall.¹⁵

Braden Lodge historically provided an avenue for mortuary benefits, which assisted with the funeral and burial of its members. Lodge notices often reminded members to pay their dues, including for mortuary assistance. When a member passed away, the pooling of mortuary dues allowed the lodge to extend financial assistance to cover funeral and associated costs, which could be quite high.¹⁶

While available documentation appears to indicate that this assistance program gradually fell out of favor as other options arose from Black-owned insurance businesses in Memphis, the lodge continued to play a key role in supporting final arrangements for its members.¹⁷ For example, members of the Braden Lodge and O.E.S. chapter planned numerous funerals for members at Braden Hall. The hall also frequently served as a gathering place for members before funerals. Members also served as pallbearers and performed Masonic funeral services.¹⁸ After members have passed away, surviving members often looked after their family members, particularly their widows.¹⁹

Braden Lodge No. 201's hall on Kansas Street played an important role socially beyond its own organization and associated O.E.S. chapter. Historically, masonic lodges, both white and Black, often did not have their own dedicated buildings, instead meeting in rented or leased spaces within larger buildings. Around the turn of the twentieth century, many white lodges embarked on campaigns to build their own buildings or bought buildings that they adaptively reused for lodges.²⁰ While even white lodges could have difficulty raising the funds to build or purchase their own building, Black masons were at a greater disadvantage due to systematic discrimination. As a result, lodges who were able to purchase or build a lodge often opened their doors to other organizations in the community. At Braden Lodge No. 201 on Kansas Street, numerous events

¹⁵ Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, May 5, 1945; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, June 4, 1952; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, December 4, 1952; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, June 23, 1946; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, June 22, 1947; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, June 27, 1948; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, November 18, 1945; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, November 11, 1945; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, February 17, 1946; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, July 15, 1951.

¹⁶ Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, January 6, 1924; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, October 23, 1927.

¹⁷ Examples of Black-owned financial institutions around this time included Universal Life Insurance Company (NR Listed 7/24/2007), Solvent Savings Bank and Trust Company, and Tri State Bank (NR Listed 2/11/1971).

¹⁸ Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, February 17, 1946; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, July 19, 1947; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, November 2, 1947; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, January 22, 1948; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, July 9, 1948; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, July 1, 1949; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, September 1, 1949; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, January 23, 1951; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, November 10, 1951; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, August 19, 1953; Lodge Notices, *The Commercial Appeal*, September 25, 1960; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, November 27, 1960; Lodge Notice, *The Memphis Press-Scimitar*, November 5, 1953; Lodge Notice, *The Memphis Press-Scimitar*, January 25, 1954; Lodge Notice, *The Memphis Press-Scimitar*, March 28, 1956; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, July 20, 1947; "Stewart," *The Commercial Appeal*, July 7, 1956; "Scott," *The Commercial Appeal*, August 21, 1971; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, October 17, 1965.

¹⁹ Timothy Netter-Echols, Letter to the Tennessee Historical Commission, April 2025. On file in the Braden Lodge file, Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville, Tennessee.

²⁰ William D. Moore, *Masonic Temples: Freemasonry, Ritual Architecture, and Masculine Archetypes* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 119-147.

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occurred that were open to all local masonic members, and other groups used the building on a regular basis for their own events or meetings.

Other O.E.S. chapters, such as the Unity Chapter No. 233 and South Fort Pickering Chapter No. 43, frequently used Braden Hall as a gathering place, particularly before attending funerals for members. In at least one instance, a non-masonic organization, Burvester Tabernacle No. 60, used the hall to meet to plan the funeral of a member.²¹ Additionally, the South Fort Pickering Chapter No. 43 O.E.S. met at the hall to observe Esther Day in 1953, which was an annual event that was held at different lodges throughout south Memphis.²²

Beyond their own individual events, masonic organizations frequently collaborated at Braden Hall. On an annual basis for many years, all O.E.S. chapters in south Memphis met at the hall prior to attending Palm Sunday service at area churches, such as Mt. Moriah Baptist Church on Florida Street. The lodge notice one year noted that they were asked to meet at 12:30 p.m. and the service was at 3 p.m., suggesting that the meeting at the hall may have included a meal or at the very least socializing.²³

Events at Braden Hall make clear that the property and organization had a close relationship with area churches, which has been recognized as another pillar of Black communities throughout the South, especially during the era of segregation. The collaborations therefore brought together major players in Black social life. For example, in 1948, a lodge notice called members to gather at Braden Hall for a Candle Light March to the Martin Temple C.M.E. Church at 65 South Parkway. The following year, the lodge again called members to march to Martin Temple. Both events may have been associated with festivities for Easter services.²⁴ Additionally, in 1954, the Memphis Youth for Christ, Colored group was chartered and held regular evangelistic services on Saturdays at the Braden Hall. This was the first Black group for this international organization, which was founded in New York in 1940.²⁵

Braden masons and O.E.S. members also participated in numerous cornerstone laying ceremonies for area churches. Cornerstone ceremonies are among the most public of freemasonry ceremonies, serving as a way to express commitment to the shared purpose of bettering the community.²⁶ Among them was for Greater Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church and Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church (both in 1945) and Bethel

²¹ Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, December 22, 1949; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, April 1, 1951; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, June 17, 1951; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, October 11, 1959; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, August 10, 1960; Lodge Notice, *The Memphis Press-Scimitar*, May 12, 1953; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, November 12, 1961; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, September 13, 1957.

²² Lodge Notice, *The Memphis Press-Scimitar*, October 31, 1953. Lodge notices in other years note the location of the event would occur at other locations, such as the Masonic Temple on 4th Street in 1952, Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, November 1, 1952.

²³ Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, April 10, 1960; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, March 26, 1961. Lodge Notices, *The Commercial Appeal*, April 3, 1966; Lodge Notices, *The Commercial Appeal*, March 18, 1967; Lodge Notice, *The Memphis Press-Scimitar*, March 24, 1956.

²⁴ Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, March 14, 1948; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, April 10, 1949.

²⁵ "In Memphis, First Negro 'Youth for Christ,'" *The Memphis Press-Scimitar*, August 6, 1954; "Religion: Youth for Christ," *Time Magazine*, February 4, 1946, accessed June 24, 2026, <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,776614-1,00.html>.

²⁶ "Cornerstone Ceremony," Grand Lodge of Oklahoma, accessed June 24, 2026, <https://gloklahoma.com/cornerstone-ceremony/>.

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Presbyterian Church at 1060 Mississippi Boulevard in 1947.²⁷ Another notable cornerstone laying ceremony occurred down the street at Warren Methodist Episcopal Church (later Warren United Methodist Church). Members of the Warren family belonged to Braden Lodge, including Henry Warren who was the Worshipful Master (Presiding Chairman) of Braden Lodge at the time.²⁸

While many masonic organizations experienced declining membership in the latter half of the twentieth century, the Braden Lodge brethren have continued to make positive impacts in the community, such as through charitable giving in the 1950s to 1970s, including under the leadership of Cassell Hughes.²⁹ Today, lodge members participate in annual community cleanup days, which seeks to give back to the south Memphis community. Leadership in recent years have recruited members from the Armed Forces and law enforcement as well as those that had a drive to serve others.³⁰

According to current masons in Memphis, Braden Lodge No. 201 is one of the oldest, if not only, Prince Hall Masonic Lodge that still owns a historic lodge. As explained earlier, many of the earlier lodges such as Braden Lodge's original building and the Masonic Temple on S. 4th Street are no longer extant. Other lodges that were known to have historically owned a lodge building, such as Lincoln Lodge No. 19 and Antioch Lodge No. 151, no longer have their historic building. Therefore, this building is one of the few, if not only, places associated with the significant history of Black Prince Hall freemasonry in Memphis. The brethren of Braden Lodge No. 201 are seeking National Register of Historic Places listing to recognize that history. They intend to use that legacy as a landing place for their future endeavors of restoring the building and continuing to make impacts in the community.³¹

²⁷ Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, June 24, 1945; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, July 29, 1945; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, August 9, 1947.

²⁸ Cornerstone of Church and information provided by Braden Lodge No. 201; Lodge Notice, *The Commercial Appeal*, May 7, 1950.

²⁹ "Christmas Brightened by Gifts from Public," *The Commercial Appeal*, December 20, 1947; Terry Keeter, "\$3 Million in Holdings Exempted from Tax," *The Commercial Appeal*, September 6, 1975.

³⁰ Timothy Netter-Echols, Letter to the Tennessee Historical Commission, April 2025.

³¹ Information provided by Timothy Netter-Echols of Braden Lodge No. 201 including numerous letters of support, including from members and officers at other lodges in Memphis, all on file at the Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville, Tennessee. In particular, a letter from Willie Flynn provided information on other lodges in Memphis since the 1970s. Flynn was initiated into freemasonry in the 1970s and therefore can speak to other lodges in the city at the time.

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9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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The Commercial Appeal, multiple dates.

“The History of Prince Hall: The Father of Black Masonry in the United States.” The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F&AM for the Jurisdiction of Oklahoma, Inc. Accessed February 15, 2026, <https://www.mwglofokpha.com/history-of-prince-hall.html>.

The Memphis Press-Scimitar, multiple dates.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):		Primary location of additional data:	
☐	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)	☒	State Historic Preservation Office
☐	previously listed in the National Register	☐	Other State agency
☐	previously determined eligible by the National Register	☐	Federal agency
☐	designated a National Historic Landmark	☐	Local government
☐	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	☐	University
☐	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	☒	Other
☐	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository: Braden Lodge No. 201, Memphis, Tennessee	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A			

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.192 **USGS Quadrangle** Southwest Memphis 404-SE

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

A. Latitude: 35.104308 Longitude: -90.064815

B. Latitude: 35.104296 Longitude: -90.064374

C. Latitude: 35.104139 Longitude: -90.064381

D. Latitude: 35.104145 Longitude: -90.064821

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundary corresponds to the legal boundary of Shelby County Parcel 035079 00029. The boundary is depicted on the enclosed boundary map. The latitude/longitude coordinates noted above correspond to the approximate corners of the boundary.

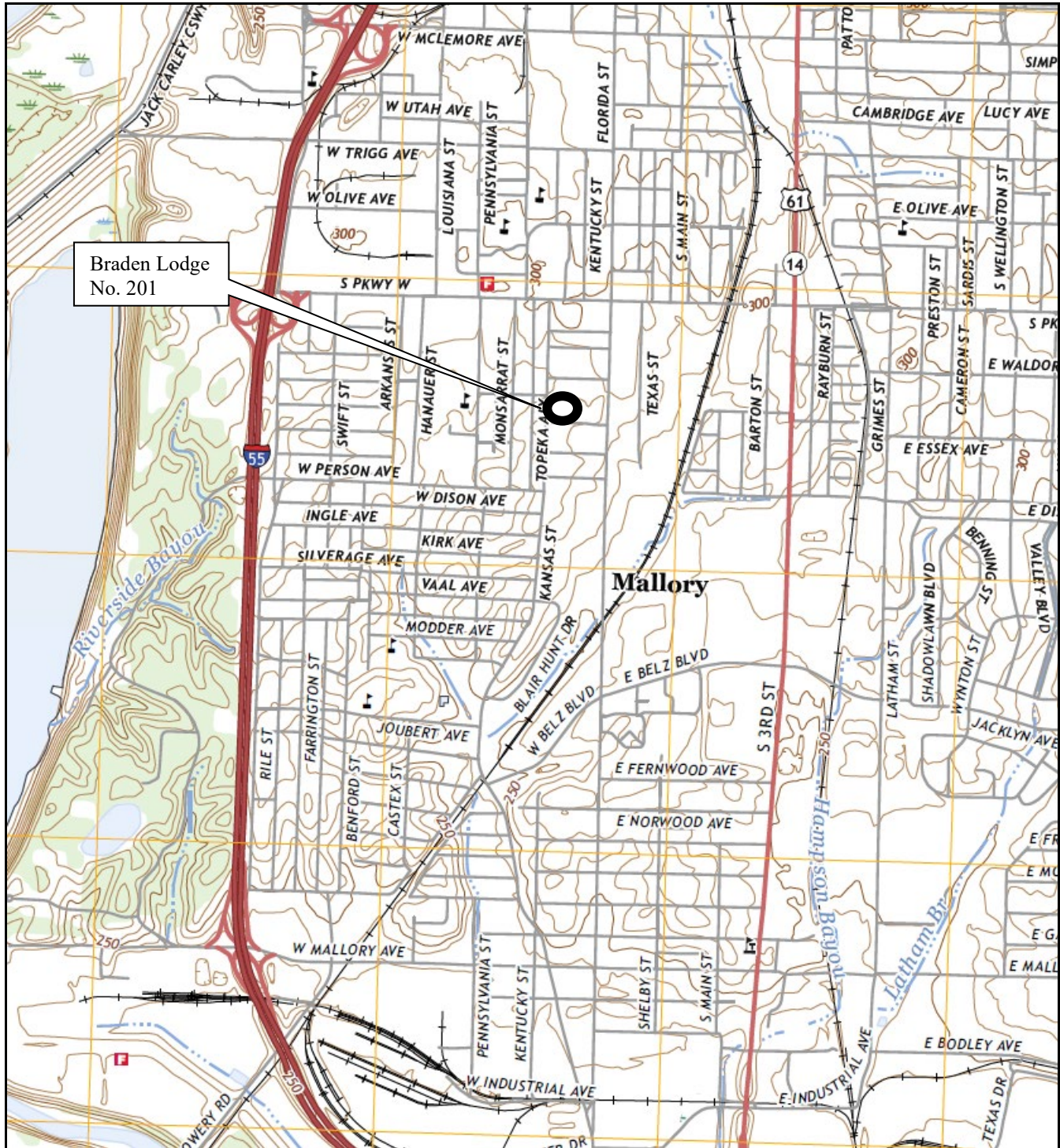
Boundary Justification

The boundary encloses the historically significant Braden Lodge and its associated land. The boundary follows the property's historic legal and current parcel boundary.

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Topographic Map



The location of Braden Lodge is marked by a circle on the map.
Original Map Scale 1:24,000. Map Courtesy of the United States Geographic Service. N

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Boundary Map



The National Register Boundary is depicted by the bold blue box, overlaid on 2024 aerial imagery. The latitude/longitude coordinates are also noted. Map Courtesy of the Shelby County Register of Deeds.

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11. Form Prepared By

Name	Dr. Rebecca Schmitt		
Organization	Tennessee Historical Commission		
Street & Number	2941 Lebanon Pike	Date	May 2026
City or Town	Nashville	Telephone	615-818-4476
E-mail	Rebecca.Schmitt@tn.gov	State	TN Zip Code

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Photographs** (refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints. Photos should be submitted separately in a JPEG or TIFF format. Do not embed these photographs into the form)
- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. can be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps. They can also be embedded in the Section 7 or 8 narratives)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Braden Lodge No. 201

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Braden Lodge No. 201

City or Vicinity: Memphis

County: Shelby

State: Tennessee

Photographer: Rebecca Schmitt

Date Photographed: September 4, 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 19. Façade (West Elevation). Photographer facing east.
- 2 of 19. Oblique View of Façade (West Elevation) and South Elevation. Photographer facing northeast.
- 3 of 19. Oblique View of South and East Elevations. Photographer facing northwest.
- 4 of 19. Oblique View of North and East Elevations. Photographer facing southwest.
- 5 of 19. First Level, Foyer with view of Staircase and Closet. Photographer facing northeast.
- 6 of 19. First Level, Foyer with view towards Hallway and Room 1. Photographer facing east.
- 7 of 19. First Level, Room 1, view of Stage. Photographer facing southwest.
- 8 of 19. First Level, Room 1, view from stage towards Room 2. Photographer facing northeast.
- 9 of 19. First Level, Room 1, view from stage towards the east side of Room 1. Photographer facing east.
- 10 of 19. First Level, Room 2. Photographer facing northeast.
- 11 of 19. First Level, Room 2. Photographer facing south.
- 12 of 19. Staircase landing between the First and Second Levels. Photographer facing southeast.
- 13 of 19. Second Level, Staircase Banister. Photographer facing northwest.
- 14 of 19. Second Level, view towards Hallway. Photographer facing south.
- 15 of 19. Second Level, view towards end of Hallway. Photographer facing south.
- 16 of 19. Second Level, Meeting Room. Photographer facing northeast.
- 17 of 19. Second Level, Meeting Room. Photographer facing south.

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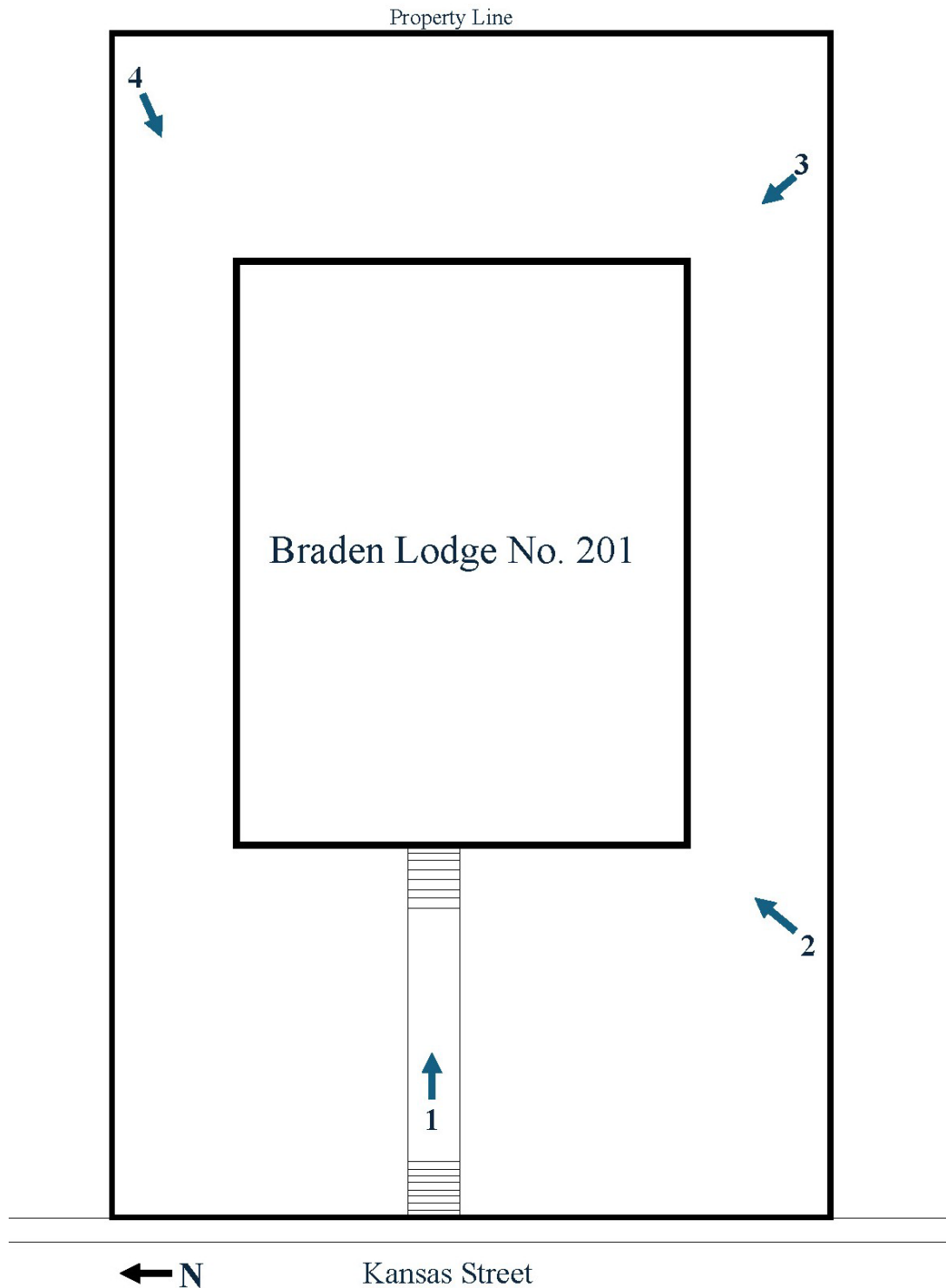
18 of 19. Second Level, Meeting Room. Photographer facing southwest.

19 of 19. Second Level, Meeting Room with view toward Restroom and Closet. Photographer facing northwest.

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**Site Plan with Photos Keyed
Not to Scale**

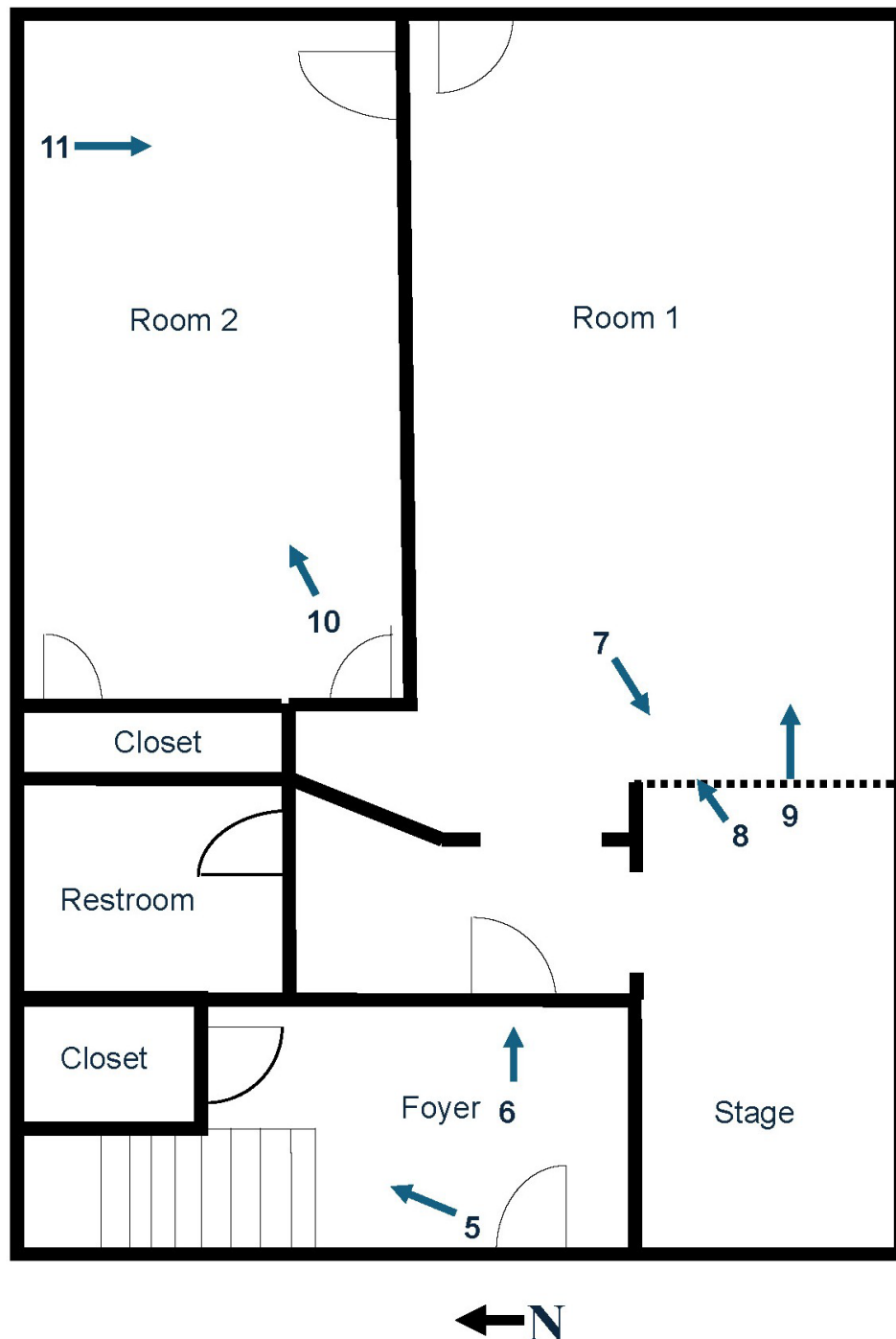


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**Floor Plans with Photos Keyed
Not to Scale**

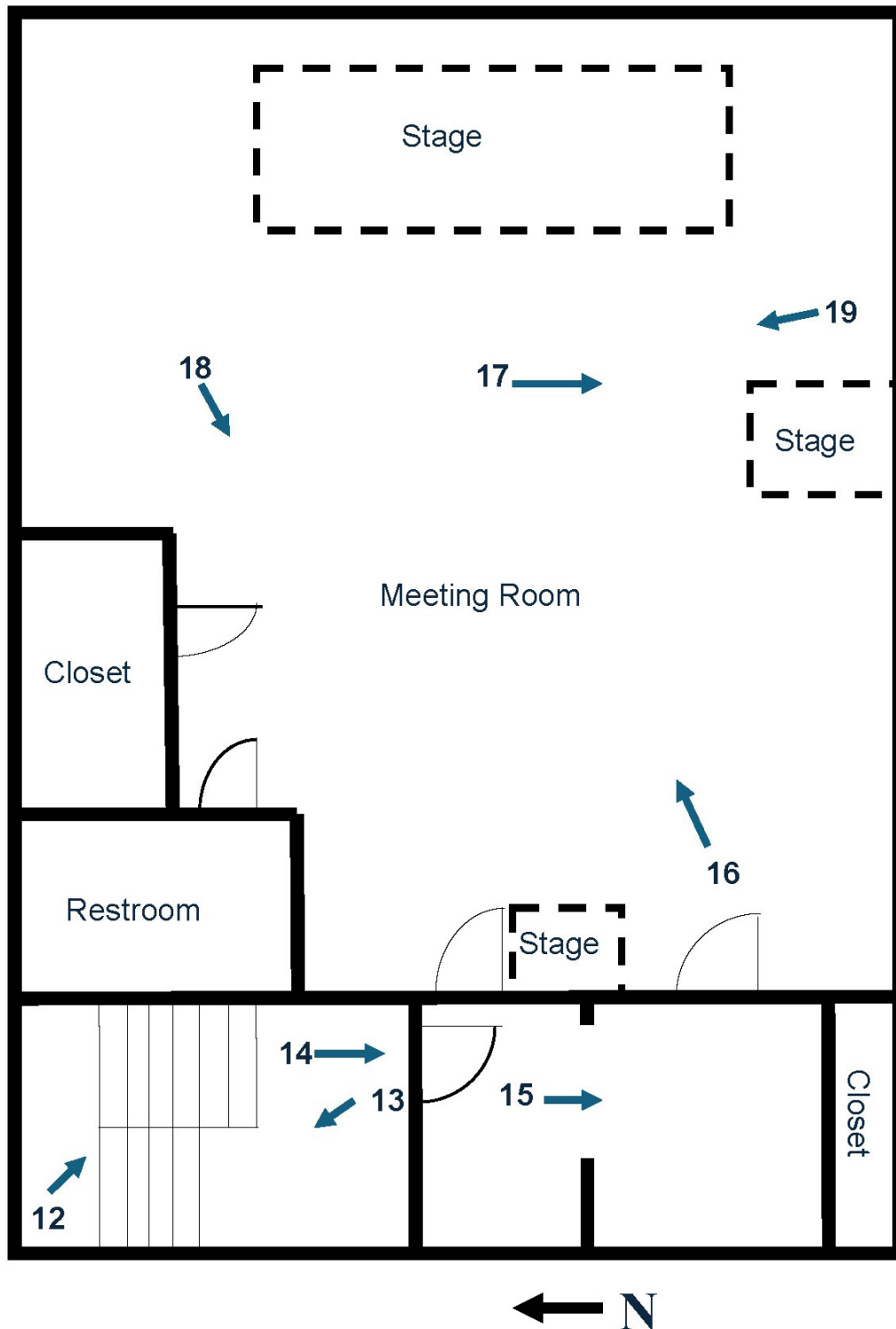
First Floor



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Second Floor



Property Owner(s):

(This information will not be submitted to the National Park Service, but will remain on file at the Tennessee Historical Commission)

Name Braden Lodge No. 201, c/o Timothy Netter-Echols

Street &

Number

1753 Farrington Street

Telephone

City or Town

Memphis

State/Zip

TN/38109

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