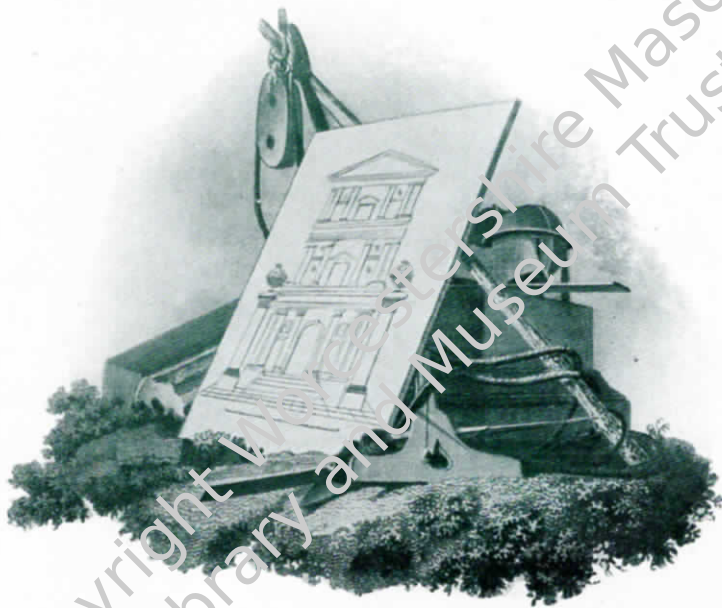


*The
Grecian Masonic Temple.*



*The Abercorn Rooms,
Great Eastern Hotel,
Liverpool Street, London, E.C.*



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New Masonic Temple

THE ABERCORN ROOMS
GREAT EASTERN HOTEL
LIVERPOOL ST. LONDON
E.C.

EXCLUDING the rooms at the Headquarters of the Craft in Great Queen Street, the Masonic Temples of London, properly so called, that is to say, which have been specially designed for and are devoted solely to the solemn ceremonies of the Craft, are but few in number in proportion to the number of Lodges in the Metropolis—some 700—a circumstance frequently commented upon not only by members of the Craft at home but with surprise by Masonic visitors from overseas, especially from the United States of America, where the smallest towns usually have such a Temple.

The Directors of the Great Eastern Railway Company therefore, in view of the large number of Lodges meeting at the Abercorn Rooms of their Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool Street, E.C., came recently to the conclusion (on the recommendation of their Hotel Manager, Mr. H. C. Amendt) that in the interests of their Masonic patrons and of the Craft at large it was desirable to increase the accommodation available for Masonic functions, and to do their part in remedying this state of affairs by the erection of such a Temple as would be worthy of so important a Company and of the serious and dignified purposes of Masonic Ceremonial.

In the Spring of the present year they instructed Messrs. Brown & Barrow (of which firm the Grand Superintendent of Works, Mr. A. Burnett Brown, is a member) to prepare designs, and a contract was entered into with Messrs. Hampton & Sons, of Pall Mall East, for the execution of the work.

For the greater comfort of the Brethren it was decided to place the new Temple on the first floor instead of at the top of the Hotel, where, though the difficulties met with in providing so large a space in a form to meet Masonic requirements and without disincanting the business of the Hotel would have been obviated, the approach would have been much less convenient.

The self-contained Masonic Suite which has been contrived is entered direct from the First Floor landing of the Main Staircase in the Abercorn Rooms.

Passing the outer door, a short corridor, off which is ample lavatory accommodation, leads to swing doors giving entrance to the spacious Ante-room, which is of dimensions to prevent the uncomfortable crowding so often complained of, and is fitted with ample cloak room accommodation. The Temple with Porchway being complete in itself, the style of treatment adopted for the Ante-room which is richly panelled in mahogany has no special Masonic significance, and the only indication to the candidate of the Masonic mysteries to which he is to be initiated is afforded by the view of the closed doors, many panelled and studded, giving access to the Porchway of the Temple.

Communicating with the Ante-room is a Preparation room suitably fitted.

After mature consideration of the various Architectural styles appropriate for Masonic purposes it was decided to adopt that of the early Greek period as being at once elegant, dignified, and noble, both in general line and in detail; rich in decorative

effect; and harmonising with those essentially Masonic Architectural features representing Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, the introduction of which will at once be noticed by the Masonic visitor.

This style has been followed throughout in every detail of the furniture and fittings modified as necessary where adapted to the requirements of Masonic Ceremonial and Ritual.

Through the massive doors already referred to, the visitor gains entrance from the Ante-room to the Porchway of the Temple and at once observes the two brass pillars surmounted by globes, one on the right, the other on the left, being as nearly as possible reproductions of two columns which stood in a similar position in the Temple of King Solomon, and which in their decorative detail are pregnant with meaning to the Freemason.

The walls of this Porchway are lined with Skyros Alpha marble. On the left is a balustrade, which, with the pedestals, is of Tinos marble and from which a view of the Temple is obtained. Owing to insurmountable structural difficulties the floor of the Temple is lower than that of the Porchway, and is reached by a broad flight of easy steps of Istria marble, terminating immediately at the left of the Senior Warden's chair.

This Porchway and the doors thereto are so arranged that not until he has advanced well within has a visitor any view of the Temple, a precaution which will be appreciated by Masons, while the space to be traversed within before reaching the Ceremonial Floor affords Brethren entering during the ceremony a better opportunity of discovering unoccupied chairs than if the entry were level with the floor, thus reducing interruption to a minimum.

The Temple measures about 42 feet by 29 feet irrespective of the organ and Singers' gallery and the Porchway. It will be noticed that with the exception of certain Masonic "working tools," including a representation of the Sacred Volume, modelled in the

ceiling coffer panels, and a symbol in the dome, the somewhat hackneyed use of Masonic signs and symbols in the decorative scheme has been avoided.

The general effect, however, of the style of treatment both structural and decorative, is restfully solemn and dignified while harmoniously rich in wealth of detail and contrasts of colour and material.

The saucer shaped dome has as the central point a Blazing Star, five pointed, of solid glass prisms, which diffuse the rays of powerful electric lights. Around this star rays are modelled in low relief upon the surface of the dome, striking down into the azure colour below, upon which are delineated in their order the signs of the zodiac representing the illimitable firmament, while, uplifted from the East and as if in continuation from the Sacred Volume upon the pedestal of the Worshipful Master, reaching to and disappearing in the Heavens, is the Masonic ladder, upon whose rungs are depicted the peculiar symbols of the great Masonic Virtues—Faith, Hope and Charity.

The walls are lined throughout with carefully selected marbles, the Frieze and Entablature being of Skyros Alpha flanked by columns of delicate Breche Violette, the latter having bronze caps and bases, while the panels between the columns are of quartered Morocco Onyx, of exceptionally beautiful colour and figuring.

At the east end a gallery is arranged with space for singers behind a row of small disengaged columns of Breche Violette marble with bronze caps and bases, between which are seen the gilded pipes of an organ—automatically blown by electric power—which has been specially designed and built by Messrs. Norman & Beard. This gallery and the columns are arranged in apsidal form in order to provide space for the organ without reducing the seating

accommodation, and the dais follows the same line, ensuring a convenient view of all ceremonies by those seated there. Between the columns the rectangular form of the main walls of the Temple will be observed.

Behind the chairs of the Worshipful Master and the Senior Warden are Architectural features designed respectively in the Order appropriate to each office. These are executed in Mahogany richly carved and gilded, and contrast most effectively with the unadorned and severe purity of the marble setting.

Surrounding the Temple are platform tiers of polished teak on the upper of which, including the dais, are fitted stalls, while at stepped lower levels are two rows of chairs. The chairs of the Worshipful Master and of the Senior and Junior Wardens are exceedingly handsome and are well worth inspection; those of the regular officers of the Lodge, each in its due position, are slightly more elaborate than the rest, and in each case the appropriate symbol of the office is carved upon a pediment surmounting the back. All these stalls and chairs are most solidly constructed of mahogany, simple yet striking in form and detail, and the whole are upholstered in Morocco leather of Masonic purple.

The three pedestals are embellished each with details designed in the Architectural orders proper to them, and beside them stand brass candlesticks of symbolic and graceful design fitted with electric candles, and standing on pedestals of mahogany.

The ceremonial floor is of black and white marble.

The problems of warming and ventilation have received close and careful attention, and it is believed that no complaints are likely to be heard on this subject.

In addition to the Central Star already mentioned the Temple is lighted by handsome bronze Tripods with electric flambeaux standing on the Podium in the middle of each wall panel, while

four bronze and Onyx dishes hanging from the ceiling diffuse without diminishing the effective lustre of the groups of lamps they conceal.

The Directors trust that the Temple and appurtenances which they have provided for the use of the Craft will meet with the appreciation of the Brethren, and that both they and the general public will concur in the opinion expressed by eminent Freemasons that a notable addition has been made to the Masonic edifices of London.

The new Temple will be called the
GRECIAN MASONIC TEMPLE
and the old Temple situated in the
sub-basement of the Abercorn Rooms
will henceforth be known as the
EGYPTIAN MASONIC TEMPLE.

