

**KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS HALL
840 NORTH PARK STREET / 1800 QUADRA STREET**



Original Owner: Knights of Pythias

Historic Name: Castle Hall / Knights of Pythias Hall

Architect: Bresemann & Durfee

Date of Construction: 1912

Current Name: now consolidated with the Glad Tidings Pentecostal Church, 1800 Quadra Street

Description of Historic Place

The Knights of Pythias Hall is a two-storey masonry building with Classical Revival detailing, situated mid-block on the north side of North Park Street in the North Park neighbourhood of Victoria. The front façade is capped with a projecting metal cornice, and is clad with high-fire two-tone brick and glazed terra cotta arches that frame the first and second storey windows. The original structure has now been consolidated with the Glad Tidings Pentecostal Church, with a large addition built to the east of the original building.

Heritage Value of Historic Place

The Knights of Pythias Hall, constructed in 1912, is significant for its association with the Order of the Knights of Pythias, an international, non-sectarian fraternal order. Organizations such as this were vitally important to the establishment and stability of early Victoria society. It was within such organizations that people met for business and companionship, for assistance in settling in a new environment, and aid in times of trouble. Founded as a non-sectarian fraternal order in Washington, D.C. in 1864 by Justus H. Rathbone, the Knights of Pythias promoted friendship, charity and benevolence. In 1882, the Order was introduced to Victoria by Brother Walter Scott Chambers, with the first lodge instituted in 1883 as Far West Lodge Number 1. Indicative of the order's growth, this large hall was built during the Edwardian era, situated at the eastern edge of downtown in close proximity to the rapidly growing residential areas of the city. At the time, both Blanshard and Quadra Streets were

developing as major north-south axes, providing convenient access to the Hall, which was also known as Castle Hall.

The Knights of Pythias Hall is additionally significant as a sophisticated example of the work of architects Emanuel Joseph Bresemann (1881-1971) and Morien Eugene Durfee (1885-1941). Bresemann was born in Tacoma, Washington and had a prolific career in San Francisco. There, Bresemann met Wisconsin-born Durfee and subsequently the two formed a partnership. After opening an office in Seattle in 1908, the firm set up branch offices in both Victoria and Vancouver. Among their most notable commissions was the First Congregational Church on Quadra Street, North Park, built in 1912. The Knights of Pythias Hall displays the firm's proficiency with the Classical Revival vocabulary that was reached the height of its popularity during the Edwardian era. This also a notable example of terra cotta ornamentation, used here in an unusual colour that highlights the two-tone brick cladding.

The Knights of Pythias Hall has been consolidated with Glad Tidings Church, contributing to the social vitality of the North Park neighbourhood. It symbolizes the continuing community character of North Park, which developed as a Garden City suburb and continues today as a mix of residential, commercial and recreational uses.

Character-Defining Elements

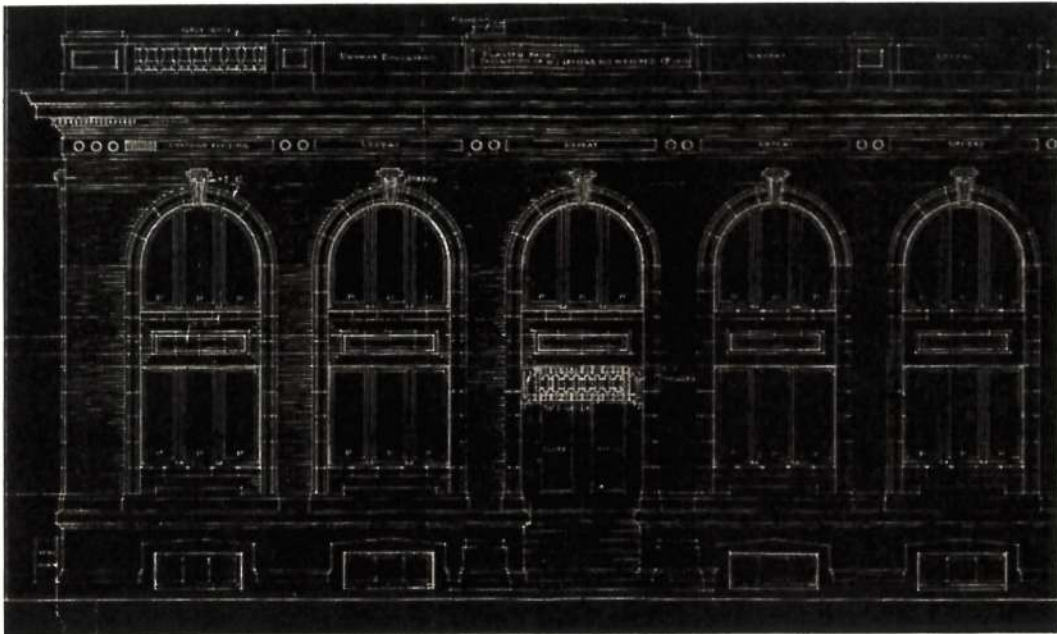
Key elements that define the heritage character of the Knights of Pythias Hall include its:

- location mid-block on the north side of North Park Street, in the North Park neighbourhood
- continuous community use
- institutional form, scale and massing as expressed by its two-storey height plus full basement, built to the front and side property lines, rectangular plan and flat roof, and an elaborate façade treatment that returns on the side facades for one full bay
- construction materials including: tan and brown high-fire, iron-spot brick; light-orange coloured glazed terra cotta window surrounds, keystones and spandrel blocks; and sheet metal ornamentation
- Classical Revival style details such as: round-arched window surrounds with keystones; and projecting metal cornice with dentils and running ornament
- triple-assembly window openings with heavy wooden mullions; and double-height windows at the sides with fanlight transoms





Knights of Pythias Hall, collection Rick Coleman



Front Elevation 1912, City of Victoria Plans