

Masonic Landmarks

In a May 2007 quarterly notice of The Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, the Premier Lodge of Research of the United Grand Lodge of England, there is a Question and Answer item of which the following is one question and one answer].

What is the definition of a Masonic landmark?

The answer depends on which Masonic jurisdiction one belongs to, some jurisdictions actually define specific Masonic landmarks: for example I recall reading a list published by one Grand Lodge that had over fifty landmarks.

The word "landmark" is defined in any good dictionary, but "Masonic Landmarks" are much more difficult.

The late Brother Harry Carr, Past Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge and a man of very wide Masonic knowledge, said that the best writers on this subject are unanimous on two essential points:

- A landmark must have existed from the time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary.
- A landmark is an element in the form or essence of the Society of such importance that Freemasonry would no longer be Freemasonry if it were removed.

If these two qualifications are used strictly to test those things that can be admitted as landmarks it will be found that very few items will pass this rigid test.

He (Brother Carr) then gave his ideas of acceptable landmarks that would conform to this test, namely:

1. That a Mason must profess a belief in a Supreme Being;
2. That the Volume of the Sacred Law is an essential and indispensable part of the lodge, to be open in full view of the brethren when the lodge is at labor;
3. That a Mason must be male, free-born and of mature age;
4. That a Mason, by his tenure, owes allegiance to the Sovereign and to the Craft,
5. That a Mason believes in the immortality of the soul.

I would stress that Masonic landmarks are not defined by the United Grand Lodge of England as they are in some jurisdictions.

The Grand Lodge of Iowa A.F. & A.M. also does not define Landmarks.