Tasmanian Heritage Register Datasheet

Tasmanian Heritage Council

134 Macquarie Street (GPO Box 618)
Hobart Tasmania 7001
Phone: 1300 850 332 (local call cost)
Email: enquiries@heritage.tas.gov.au
Web: www.heritage.tas.gov.au

Name: **Rebekah Lodge No. 11**
Status: Permanently Registered
Tier: State

THR ID Number: **12116**
Municipality: West Coast Council
Boundary: CPR11670

Location Addresses
2 CUTTEN ST, QUEENSTOWN 7467 TAS

Title References
80535/3

Property Id
5872545

Rebekah Lodge no.11
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Rebekah Lodge no.11
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Rebekah Lodge no.11 foundation members
Galley Museum, Queenstown

Rebekah Lodge bowls team 1963
Galley Museum, Queenstown

Statement of Significance: (non-statutory summary)

Rebekah Lodge no.11 demonstrates the work of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF), a working-class movement to provide fellowship, unity, a moral code, social respectability and a financial safety net for contributors at a time when government offered few social services. This is a rare example of a Rebekah Lodge hall, that is, the home of an all-female lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF). Outside of Freemasonry, it is an uncommon example of a friendly society that survived into the twenty-first century when government and private health and income insurance schemes had usurped most of its functions. The building may be the only remaining Rebekah Lodge room in Tasmania. The Rebekah Lodge no.11 has a special association with the Rebekah Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF, Grand Lodge of Tasmania).

Why is it significant?:

The Heritage Council may enter a place in the Heritage Register if it meets one or more of the following criteria from the Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995:

a) The place is important to the course or pattern of Tasmania's history.

Rebekah Lodge no.11 demonstrates the work of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF), a working-class movement to provide fellowship, unity, a moral code, social respectability and a financial safety net for contributors at a time when government offered few social services. As with all other friendly societies, temperance and charity were hallmarks of its activities.

b) The place possesses uncommon or rare aspects of Tasmania's history.

This is a rare example of a Rebekah Lodge hall, that is, the home of an all-female lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF). Outside of Freemasonry, it is an uncommon example of a friendly society that survived into the twenty-first century when government and private health and income insurance schemes had usurped most of its functions. It was only the eleventh Rebekah Lodge established in Tasmania. The building at 2 Cutten Street, Queenstown may be the only remaining Rebekah Lodge room in Tasmania.

c) The place has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Tasmania's history.

No Data Recorded

d) The place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of place in Tasmania's history.

No Data Recorded

e) The place is important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement.

No Data Recorded

f) The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social or spiritual reasons.

No Data Recorded

g) The place has a special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Tasmania's history.

Rebekah Lodge no.11 has a special association with the Rebekah Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF, Grand Lodge of Tasmania).

h) The place is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

No Data Recorded

Heritage approval is required for work that will result in changes to the nature or appearance of the fabric of a Heritage place, both internal and external.
Please refer to the Heritage Council's Works Guidelines (www.heritage.tas.gov.au) for information about the level of approval required and appropriate outcomes.
Heritage Advisors are also available to answer questions and provide guidance on enquiries@heritage.tas.gov.au or Tel 1300850332

This data sheet is intended to provide sufficient information and justification for listing the place on the Heritage Register. Under the legislation, only one of the criteria needs to be met. The data sheet is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory of the heritage values of the place, there may be other heritage values of interest to the Heritage Council not currently acknowledged.

Setting:

Rebekah Lodge no.11 is located on Cutten Street in the centre of the township of Queenstown, 25km inland from Tasmania's west coast. The town centre is a relatively flat area nestled within the valley between Mount Lyell to the north-east, Mount Owen to the east, Mount Huxley to the south-east, and the ridges that separate Queenstown from the coast. Cutten Street runs from the southern end of the West Coast Wilderness Railway terminal to the foothills of Mount Owen and Little Owen in the east. Rebekah Lodge is set close to the corner of Driffield Street, which follows the Queen River and the railway line through the town. Development in this central area is largely commercial, with most buildings set close to the street. Many of these retain wide verandahs with supporting posts stretching over footpaths. Structures are predominantly of one or two storeys, but the grand Empire Hotel's (THR#5645) accommodation wings are of three storeys. The architecture varies in material, style and detail, and includes some idiosyncratic variations not common elsewhere in the state.

Description:

The Rebekah Lodge no.11 hall is a small, unprepossessing, functional, symmetrical concrete brick building with a high parapet concealing a flat corrugated iron roof. Wedged between adjacent buildings, the front facade gives no outward clue as to the property's usage. There is one double-sash window on either side of the recessed front door. The building has a concrete foundation, with a concrete lintel over the door and a concrete step beneath the front door. A driveway off Driffield Street serves the rear of the property, where there is a second door with a sloping porch roof. The main room in the hall measures 12 by 5 m. At the back is a kitchen measuring 2.8 by 3.4 m plus a storage room and toilet.

This is a whole of title registration.

History:

Still often described as remote and inhospitable, Tasmania's West Coast has been inhabited and managed by Aboriginal people for at least 35,000 years. The people of the South-West and North-West tribes fished and sealed off the coast and hunted the plains of the area for millennia (Ryan pp.37–38).

The Odd Fellows

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) had its origins in eighteenth-century England. The first Australian IOOF lodge was established in 1836 as a fraternity with sickness and death duties. It was a safety net for ordinary people which combined the group solidarity of a trade union with the customs, rituals and secret oaths of a tradesmen's guild (Blainey 1991, p.3).

In Tasmania early IOOF lodges were typically composed of 'working men who had only begun to develop pretensions of bettering themselves' (Bolger 1973, p.152). That included ex-convicts anxious to improve their social status or position in life. Bolger gives the example of ex-convict JM Davies using Odd Fellowship to help secure a seat in the House of Assembly (Bolger 1973, p.156). Lodges also had a charitable purpose. They emphasised that their objects were to 'succour the indigent, to sympathise with the distress, to wipe the tear of sorrow from the orphan's eye and to cheer and soothe the aching bosom of the widow' (Bolger 1973, pp.153–54).

The origins of Rebekah lodges

The Rebekah Lodge began in the USA as an offshoot of the IOOF. It gave the daughters, sisters and wives of male IOOF members plus single and widowed women the same access to medical benefits that men received from membership. In keeping with charitable actions, the biblical Rebekah was the epitome of kindness:

'Reaching the well of Nahor one evening to fetch water just after Abraham's servant arrived with his tired camels, Rebekah kindly gave him drinking water from her pitcher, drew water from the well for his camels and invited him to spend the night at her father's house' (Blainey 1991, p.97).

The Rebekah degree has four main symbols: the beehive, representing united effort; the moon and seven stars,

representing the universe of God and nature, including the value of regularity and precision in all worthy undertakings; the dove, representing peace; and the lily, symbol of purity of character. The Rebekah creed 'was based on friendship, love and truth' (Independent Order of Odd Fellows).

Establishment of Rebekah lodges in Tasmania

In 1905 the Grand Lodge meeting of Tasmanian Odd Fellows gave Tasmanian lodges permission to open Rebekah lodges ('Ruth Rebekah Lodge' 1906, p.3). The first two inaugurated were in Launceston (Centenary Lodge, no.1) and Hobart (Ruth Lodge, later Pride of the South, no.2) in 1906. In 1911 there were said to be 9131 Odd Fellows Lodges worldwide with a combined membership of 633,660. Of these only 92 lodges with 5680 members were women, or less than 1 percent of Odd Fellows membership ('Friendly Societies: Beaconsfield Lodge' 1911, p.8). Nevertheless, female Odd Fellowship spread slowly across Tasmania during the first half of the twentieth century. Rebekah lodges were opened in Beaconsfield (1911), Burnie (1913 and 1936), Myalla (1925), Zeehan (1927), Wynyard (1930), Swansea (1932) and Bushy Park (1949). In each case the Rebekah lodge was a counterpart to a male lodge and inaugurated by that lodge's officers.

Establishment of the Queenstown Rebekah Lodge

By the late 1940s the friendly society movement was 'losing its momentum almost everywhere in Australia', as government social welfare schemes were introduced and a new generation of Australians turned away from lodges (Blainey 1991, p.129). Tasmania bucked the trend to some extent, with Freemasonry expanding in the post-war period. Queenstown was fertile territory for friendly society membership, with the Ancient Order of Foresters (AOD), Druids (UAOD), Australian Natives Association (ANA), Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes (RAOB) and both the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows (MUOOF) and IOOF. The Queenstown IOOF had celebrated its fiftieth birthday by the time it initiated Rebekah Lodge no.11 in 1947 ('West Coast news: Queenstown Lodge's half century' 1947, p.4). The new lodge began with 34 women members and 15 associate members ('New lodge at Queenstown' 1947, p.3).

Building its own premises

Queenstown friendly societies met in the 'lodge rooms', aka the Masonic Hall at 21 Cutten Street (THR 7841), which in the years 1915–95 was owned by the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company. The exception to this rule was the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes (RAOB), which after forming in 1939 erected the first RAOB temple in Tasmania at 17 Bowes Street in 1947 ('First RAOB temple dedicated' 1947, p.7). It was built cheaply by dismantling and moving a disused weatherboard theatre from Zeehan, to which was added a concrete-brick frontage ('Lodge planning new home' 1946, p.4).

This cheap build may have been the inspiration for the Rebekah Lodge no.11's move to erect its own premises. In 1958 lodge members Yula and Ida Ewington were among five people who bought 3.3 perches of land at 2 Cutten Street. This was part of one rood granted to Robert McKay, Richard Sampson and Gilbert Tennent McKinlay of Launceston in 1897 (vol.76, folio 119). In 1901 this trio sold Lot 3 (3.3 perches) to drapers James Rolfe Sly and Joseph Benjamin Dooley and upholsterer Herbert Wesley Elliott (vol.122, folio 20), who must have been representatives of the Christian Brethren. The Gospel Hall built on the property served religious and social functions before and after it was converted to a meeting-room in about 1910 by the Lyell Caledonian Society. From then until 1929 it was known as the Caledonian Hall. In the meantime the property had been transferred to labourer George McClure, ironmonger John Sullivan Kennedy and general storekeeper and baker Andrew Lawson (transfer no.38197), who were presumably also trustees for the Christian Brethren. The Gospel Hall appears to have been a small, symmetrical, gabled, Carpenter Gothic structure with a front entrance in a central porch. It abutted a cottage on one side and a shop and office owned by the Mount Lyell Company on the other. In 1939 it was still owned and occupied by the Gospel Hall trustees, being described now as a church and exempted from rates ('Assessment roll' 1939, p.2045). It was still in use in 1942 but not listed on the assessment roll in 1945. Whether it was omitted simply because it was exempted from rates is unclear. It is possible that the Queenstown Rebekahs bought an old Gospel Hall cheaply and remodelled it for their own purposes, giving it a new concrete brick front façade and replacing the old gabled roof structure.

Activities of Rebekah Lodge no.11

Among the lodge's founding members were Noble Grand Yula Ewington (1916–2013), Ida Ewington and Pat Hull (1921–2011), who was later entered on the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women for her service to the West Coast community. In the late 1940s the lodge supported the Tasmanian Sanatorium Aftercare Home, St Ann's Eventide Appeal, the Society for the Care of Crippled Children and sponsorship of a children's picnic at Easter. It often joined the men's chapter in supporting specific causes. In 1954 the lodge held its seventh birthday celebration with a dinner at the RAOB Hall ('West Coast news GM inspects Queenstown IOOF lodges' 1954, p.9).

In 1962 the IOOF still had 7000 members in Tasmania, the elderly nature of whom dictated the highest IOOF death rate in the country (Blainey 1991, pp.130–31). However, in 1976 the Fraser Federal Government allowed competition with Medibank, and the door opened for the IOOF again. By the end of the 1980s the IOOF was one of the largest financial institutions in the country (Blainey 1991, p.147).

Beyond the half century

By the 1990s some friendly societies had morphed into a modern form of health insurance. In 1993, for example, the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Odd Fellows (MUIOOF) merged with another friendly society, the Australian Natives Association (ANA), to become health insurer Australian Unity. Other societies became defunct. Rebekah Lodge no.11 celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1997. Participants included the only founding member still resident in Queenstown, Pat Hull, and Beverly Mee, who was awarded the Honorary Veterans Jewel for 40 years of service ('Rebekah Lodge celebrates first fifty years' 1997, p.3).

The survival of Rebekah Lodge no.11 into the twenty-first century testifies to the strength of its fellowship and members' commitment to charity work. In 2001 the lodge received an Australia Day Award from the West Coast Council for its community service over more than half a century. Recent projects at that time included resettling Timorese people in their homeland, supporting the Ronald McDonald House for cancer sufferers and crocheting rugs for the elderly ('Award for Rebekah Lodge' 2001, p.6).

In 2004, when the lodge used a $4000 state government grant to refurbish its premises, it was one of only four surviving Rebekah Lodges in Tasmania ('Lodge gets grant for $4000 facelift' 2004). On the other hand, service organisations which also did charitable work, Rotary and Lions, appeared to be thriving, with 104 Tasmanian clubs between them and a combined membership of more than 2750 (Hood 2005, p.314; Roney 2005, p.216). Of the other old friendly societies, only the Freemasons (56 lodges with more than 2300 members) (Yaxley 2005, p.146) and the Buffaloes (RAOB) appeared to command much vigour.

Comparative analysis: surviving Odd Fellows and friendly society buildings

There appear to be no other surviving Rebekah Lodge buildings in Tasmania, but at least six former Odd Fellows halls survive:

THR 768 Former Ulverstone Odd Fellows Hall, 19 Main Street, Ulverstone 7315

THR 1231 Oddfellows Hall, 14 Circle Street, New Norfolk 7140

THR 3656 Oddfellows Hall, 54 Gilbert Street, Latrobe 7307

THR 4560 Former theatre, 95–99 St John Street, Launceston 7250 (converted into a Manchester Unity Order of Odd Fellows [MUOOF] hall)

THR 4791 Oddfellows Hall, 93 Emu Bay Road, Deloraine 7304

THR 8212 Upper Derwent United Hall, 489 Gordon River Road, Bushy Park, 7140

Comparative analysis: surviving friendly society buildings outside the Odd Fellows

The RAOB are conspicuous by their absence from the THR.

Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes' (RAOB) Hall, 17 Bowes Street, Queenstown 7467

Currie RAOB, 34 Main Street, Currie, King Island 7256

Geeveston RAOB, 7 School Road, Geeveston 7116

Irishtown RAOB Hall, 604 Irishtown Road, Irishtown 7330

Moonah RAOB, 32 Peronne Avenue, Moonah 7009

Newstead RAOB, 11 Birch Street, Newstead 7250

Penguin RAOB, 2 Ironcliffe Road, Penguin 7316

Smithton RAOB, 54 Goldie Street, Smithton 7330

Zeehan RAOB, Wilson Street, Zeehan 7469

THR 5126 Druids Hall, 38 Marlborough Street, Longford 7301 (former Good Templars/Rechabites/Druids Hall)

THR 5164 Longford Municipal Hall, 67 Wellington Street, Longford 7301 (former Foresters' Hall)

THR 5516 Rechabite Hall, 1 Gay Street, Oatlands 7120

There are at least 24 surviving Freemasons halls/temples in Tasmania, 5 of them on the THR:

Currie Masonic Hall, 30–32 Main Street, Currie, King Island 7256

Deloraine Masonic Hall, 89 Emu Bay Road, Deloraine 7304

Devonport Masonic Hall, 11 Edward Street, Devonport 7310

Dorset Masonic Hall, 38 King Street, Scottsdale 7260

Exeter Masonic Hall, 10 Murray Street, Exeter 7275

Fingal Masonic Hall, 3 Brown Street, Fingal 7214

George Town Masonic Hall (Lodge Lauriston), 49 Cimitiere Street, George Town 7253

Glenorchy Masonic Hall, 3 Peltro Street, Glenorchy 7010

Lenah Valley Masonic Hall (now a veterinary clinic), 8–10 Colebrook Street, Lenah Valley 7008

Lindisfarne Masonic Hall, 205 Gordons Hill Road, Lindisfarne 7215

Lodge Heather, 64 Robin Street, Newstead 7250

Longford Masonic Hall, 11 William Street, Longford 7301

North West Masonic Centre, 108 Bird Street, Montello 7320

Oatlands Masonic Hall, 3 Gay Street, Oatlands 7120

Penguin Masonic Hall (Lodge of Peace), 12 Ironcliffe Road, Penguin 7316

Roland Masonic Lodge, 56 High Street, Sheffield 7306

Ulverstone Masonic Hall, 10 Patrick Street, Ulverstone 7315

Whitemark Masonic Hall, 1 James Court, Whitemark, Flinders Island 7255

Wynyard Masonic Hall, 42 Hogg Street, Wynyard 7325

THR 3686 Masonic Temple, 15 Hamilton Street, Latrobe 7307

THR 3882 Masonic Hall Chambers, 39–39A Brisbane Street, Launceston 7250

THR 7490 Masonic Temple, 3 Sandy Bay Road, Hobart 7000

THR 10281 Franklin Masonic Hall, 3348 Huon Highway, Franklin 7113

THR 7841 Masonic Hall, 21 Cutten Street, Queenstown 7467

References:

‘Assessment roll for the Municipality of Queenstown for the year ending 30 June 1940’ 1939, *Tasmanian Government Gazette* 3 July 1939, p.2045.

‘Award for Rebekah Lodge’ 2001, *Western Herald*, no.514, 9 February 2001, p.6.

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Bolger, Peter 1973, *Hobart Town*, Canberra, ANU Press.

‘First RAOB temple dedicated’ 1947, *Mercury* 22 January 1947, p.7.

‘Friendly Societies: Beaconsfield Lodge’ 1911, *Examiner* 29 July 1911, p.8.

Hood, Robin 2005, ‘Rotary’, in (ed. Alison Alexander) *The companion to Tasmanian history*, Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania, p.314.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows: the Sovereign Grand Lodge website, accessed 14 April 2025. https://odd-fellows.org/about/rebekahs/

‘Lodge gets grant for $4000 facelift’ 2004, *Advocate*, 3 August 2004, p.32.

‘Lodge planning new home’ 1946, *Advocate* 22 October 1946, p.4.

‘New lodge at Queenstown’ 1947, *Examiner* 27 June 1947, p.3.

‘Rebekah Lodge celebrates first fifty years’ 1997, *Midweek Western Herald*, no.260, 9 July 1997, p.3.

Roney, Tony 2005, ‘Lions clubs’, in (ed. Alison Alexander) *The companion to Tasmanian history*, Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania, pp.216–17.

‘Ruth Rebekah Lodge’ 1906, *Tasmanian News* 28 April 1906, p.3.

Ryan, Lyndall 1996, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW.

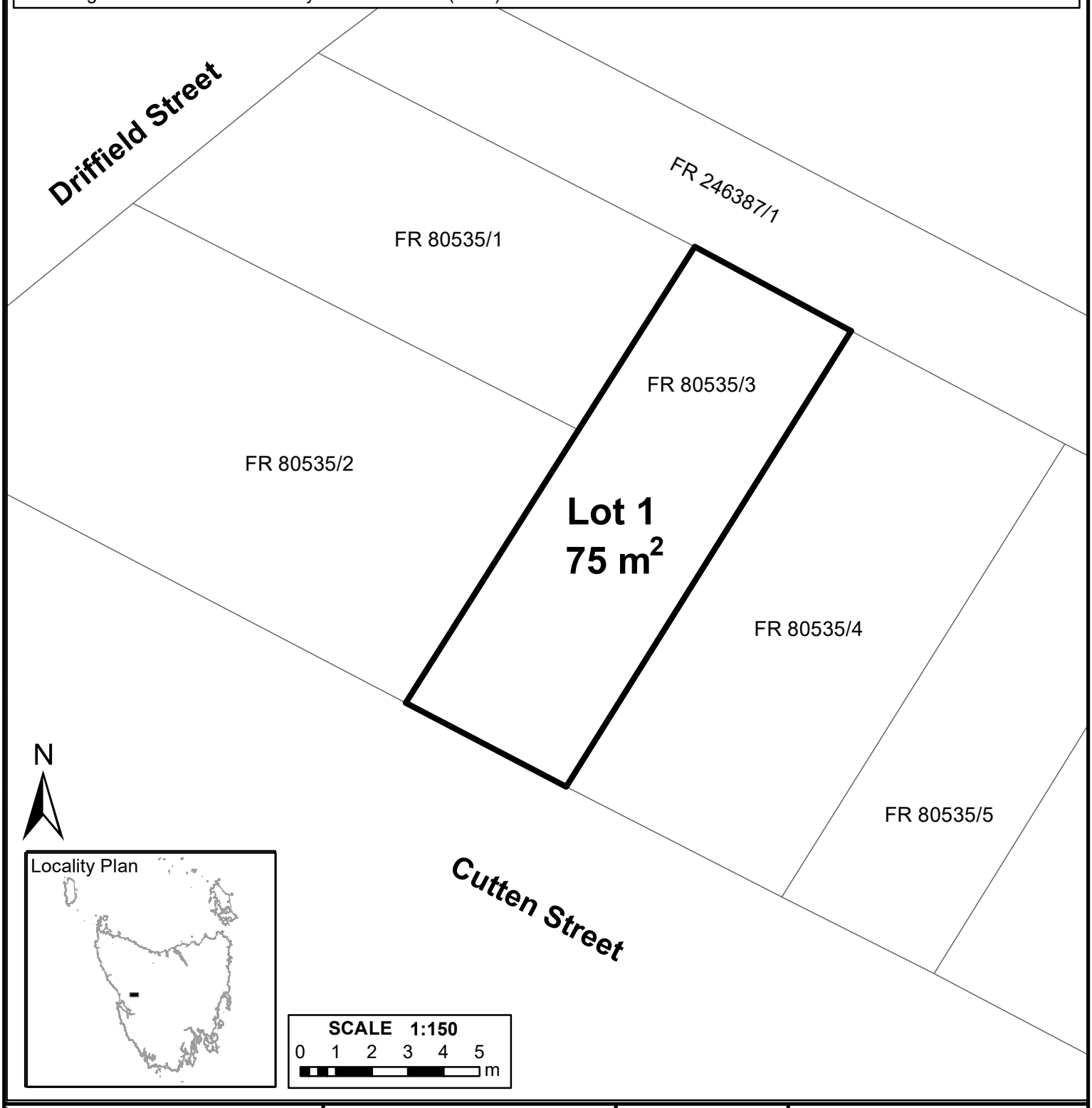
‘West Coast news: Queenstown Lodge’s half century’ 1947, *Advocate* 7 March 1947, p.4.

‘West Coast news: GM inspects Queenstown IOOF lodges’ 1954, *Advocate* 27 July 1954, p.9.

Yaxley, Murray 2005, ‘Freemasonry’, in (ed. Alison Alexander) *The companion to Tasmanian history*, Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania, p.146.

Note

1. Lot 1 represents the registered boundary for "Rebekah Lodge No. 12", #12116 on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.
2. Lot 1 is the whole of parcel FR 80535/3, the boundary of which is marked by a heavy black line and described below.
3. All boundaries are parcel boundaries unless otherwise stated, details of individual land parcel boundaries may be accessed through the Land Information System Tasmania (LIST).



TASMAP: GORMANSTON - 3834	GRID: MGA94 / ZONE 55	DATUM: AHD	CONTOUR INTERVAL: N/A

No.	PRODUCTION / AMENDMENT	AUTHORITY	REFERENCE	DRAWN	APPROVED	DATE
1	Production	THC	12116	AW	S. PARRY	15 APR26

Tasmania

Rebekah Lodge No. 11

2 Cutten St, Queenstown

PREPARED BY
HERITAGE TASMANIA

Tasmanian Heritage Council

GDA

CENTRAL PLAN REGISTER

p.p. Surveyor General: _____

Date Registered: 21 APR 2026

CPR 11670