

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
JUL 15 1975	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	SEP 11 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

called 9-24-75
minn. agreed to name below
St. Paul Public ~~Library~~ Hill Reference Library

AND/OR COMMON

St. Paul Public Library/James J. Hill Reference Library

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Fourth Street at Market

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th

STATE

Minnesota

VICINITY OF

CODE
27

COUNTY

Ramsey

CODE

123

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC
 PRIVATE
 BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
 IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
 YES: RESTRICTED
 YES: UNRESTRICTED
 NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER: library

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of St. Paul

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

VICINITY OF

STATE

Minnesota

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Ramsey County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

15 West Kellogg Blvd.

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

STATE

Minnesota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Statewide Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Minnesota Historical Society - Building 25, Fort Snelling

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

STATE

Minnesota

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The St. Paul Public Library and the James J. Hill Reference Library, built in 1917 as one building housing two libraries, is a fine product of the public spirit of the City of St. Paul and James J. Hill. Designed by architect Electus D. Litchfield, New York City, with the aide of Charles C. Soule, Brookline, Massachusetts, national library expert and adviser, this building is an excellent example of North Italian Renaissance architecture.

The building is of a symmetrical design with seven bays and two pavillions. The exterior walls are constructed from Tennessee marble. Flat and smooth, these cream colored walls serve as a neutral background for the Palladian entries, arched windows, dentilated band courses, garland and swag freize, and the heavy dentilated cornice, which created the rich Renaissance front of the building. The Palladian entries are graced with Etruscan columns and lined with coffered ceilings. Semi-circular sculptural niches are located in the interior walls of the entries. The entries are topped with an arched molding with an egg and dart motif and cartouches containing the initials of the respective libraries. Double stairways lined with a balustrade approach the entries; while single scroll topped walled stairs lead directly into the building. The entire building and grounds are surrounded by a balustrade.

The east wing of the building contains the James J. Hill Reference Library, a two story, oblong chamber reminiscent of a Roman temple. The chamber, finished in Kettle River sandstone, is lined with two levels of Ionic columns, the bottom columns fluted and the top columns plain. Three narrow aisles lined with a repeating scroll decoration at the base of bronze railings provide access to books which line the walls. These aisles are reached by a low groin-vaulted staircase. A coffered ceiling forms a large skylight which sheds a soft light throughout the room. The beams of the ceiling are painted with classical designs. The library retains most of its original furnishings.

The east wing (James J. Hill Library) and the west wing (reference rooms for the St. Paul Public Library) are connected by the main circulation room of the St. Paul Public Library. A coffered ceiling, painted with classic motifs, adorns this high one-story chamber. The walls are finished in Kettle River sandstone as they are throughout the building. The walls are decorated with sculptuary inset panels. The west wall contains an entrance portal with a dentilated cornice flanked by Doric pilasters. Large arched windows line the north and south walls of the chamber. Modern stacks are located at the east end of the room.

The main floor of the west wing of the public library contains a small reference room at the north end, separated from the stacks located in the south end by an aspe containing Corinthian columns. The ceiling is beamed and painted with the Greek alphabet and roundels depicting characters from classical mythology.

The second and third floors of the public library are reached by a marble stairway with a brass railing. The walls of the stairway are decorated with a swag and garland freize.

(see continuation sheet)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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The second floor of the west wing also contains a small reference room at the north end. The reference room is separated from the stacks in the south end by three groups of four Corinthian columns. The ceiling in the reference room is made of cast plaster and painted with brightly colored floral patterns.

The basement rooms, completed after the main rooms of the public library, are decorated in the art deco style. The central area of the basement contains the childrens' and young adults' section and the west wing is used for storage space and physical plant.

The exterior of the building has not been altered since its construction in 1917. The Tennessee marble retains its cream and white color and the carved architectural detail is in excellent condition. The windows have recently been replaced by brown metal frame windows which retain the character of the Renaissance building very well. The interior of the building also remains essentially unaltered. Modern stacks and lighting have been installed in the St. Paul Public Library section. However the majority of the spaces in the Public Library and the James J. Hill Reference Library retain their original classical design.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The St. Paul Public Library and the James J. Hill Reference Library is a significant building in St. Paul both architecturally and historically. Architecturally it is an excellent example of the Northern Italian Renaissance architecture which flourished in the United States from the 1850s to the early 1900s. The James J. Hill Library, which retains its original design and furnishings, is an excellent example of a turn of the century library -- a classical temple of learning. The location of the libraries is also architecturally significant in St. Paul. Situated across from Old Federal Courts Building and separated from it by Rice Park, this area forms an important visual element in downtown St. Paul.

Historically, the building, in particular the James J. Hill Reference Library, is significant as an example of the philanthropy of the late James J. Hill. Mr. Hill, often known as "The Empire Builder" was a very prominent and influential figure in St. Paul's early history. As founder of the Red River Transportation Company and developer of the Great Northern Railway system, he amassed large sums of wealth. He used this wealth to endow various cultural and educational institutions in St. Paul; the James J. Hill Reference Library being one of these institutions. Cooperating with the City of St. Paul, and in part financially enabling the city to build the libraries, the reference library was opened in 1924.

The James J. Hill Reference Library is thus historically significant because it was endowed by one of St. Paul's most wealthy and influential citizens in the late 1800s. As such, it sheds important light on the historical balance between the tremendous growth and wealth experienced in St. Paul during this time and the cultural, and architectural development.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Henneman, Carl, "Library to Note 50th Year" St. Paul Dispatch, Oct. 2, 1967.
 McLain, M.S., "Great Reference Library as Enduring Monument to James J. Hill"
The Minneapolis Journal, June 11, 1922.
 No author, "Builder of the Hill Reference Library" Fergus Falls Tribune, June 31, 1930.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM OK w m 9-28-75

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 5	4, 9, 2, 3, 7, 0	4, 9, 7, 6, 5, 1, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Andrea M. Gilmore, Research Intern (approved by Charles W. Nelson)

ORGANIZATION

Minnesota Historical Society

DATE

25 June 1975

STREET & NUMBER

Building 25, Fort Snelling

TELEPHONE

612-726-1171

CITY OR TOWN

St. Paul

STATE

Minnesota

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Russell W. Fridley 7/2/75

TITLE

Russell W. Fridley, State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE 9/1/75
ATTEST: <i>[Signature]</i>	DATE SEP 8 1975
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	