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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Chadron Public Library
other names/site number NEHBS # DW03-91

2. Location

street & number 507 Bordeaux Street n/a not for publication
city, town Chadron n/a vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Dawes code 045 zip code 69337

3. Classification

| | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing | Noncontributing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | | |
| | | | <u>0</u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing: _____ Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

James L. Johnson May 9, 1990
Signature of certifying official Date
Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
- See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Entered in the
National Register

James L. Johnson 6/21/90

fu Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education-Library

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education-Library

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

roof asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Chadron Public Library is a two-story brick building designed in the Classical Revival style with minimal ornamentation. Constructed 1911-12, it is a representative example of the small town type of libraries built by grants from philanthropist and public library promoter Andrew Carnegie after 1908, in which year he personally began to examine all architectural plans. The 1964 addition is considered a non-contributing element in this nomination.

The Chadron Public Library is situated in a modest and quiet residential neighborhood, one block southeast of the Dawes County Courthouse in Chadron, a town in northwestern Nebraska. This location gives the 36'x56' building an air of prominence and permanence even though there is little in the way of exterior decoration to distinguish the building architecturally.

George A. Berlinghof, a noted Lincoln architect designed the library building. The Black Hills Company of Deadwood, South Dakota constructed it in 1911-12.

The exterior walls are veneered in a cream colored, pressed brick laid in a rusticated pattern. The brick is backed with hollow tile, and the wall rests on a concrete foundation. The waterable and coping are of a cordovan colored pressed brick which provides an attractive visual contrast to the exterior. The cornice is also enhanced with staggered brick patterns. There are two stone plaques or medallions and a lintel inscribed "CHADRON PUBLIC LIBRARY" on the east (front) facade.

There were originally four windows on the north and south side of the building with one over one sash arrangement. In the front, there were two windows identical to those mentioned above, and two more higher up with decorative triangular panes. There was also a glass fan window over the front entrance double doors.

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The interior of the building includes two floors. From the front doors, a broad half flight of steps leads to the main reading room, where the librarian, the card catalogue, and most of the circulating books are located.

A narrow stairway to the left or south leads from the front doors to the basement, where restrooms, office space, a kitchen, and a children's library are now located. Originally the basement was used for overflow collections and for cultural meetings.

In 1964, a major addition was constructed on the rear (west side) of the original building. The two story addition was designed by Kirkham and Michaels of Rapid City and built by the Edward Gutknecht Company of Chadron. It is of tan brick with vertical single pane windows.

At the time of the 1964 addition, the original windows were removed. The openings for the front decorative windows were filled in and finished with stucco. The other windows were replaced with metal-framed insulated windows in an effort to make the building more energy efficient. The second floor of the 1964 addition is an extension of the main reading room. The lower floor serves as a classroom and meeting room. Handicapped access is also provided in the 1964 addition.

The Chadron Public Library, despite the cosmetic alterations to the facade and the substantial addition to the rear, is instantly recognizable as a "Carnegie" type library, and is a structure of which Chadronites are very proud, both for its appearance and for its purpose. The building continues in use as the Chadron Public Library.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education

Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance

1910-1916

Significant Dates

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Berlinghof, George A.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Chadron Public Library is typical of the 1,679 libraries erected in the United States for the purpose of public education (Criterion A) through the generosity of Andrew Carnegie, the wealthy Scottish steel magnate who devoted much time and wealth to establishment of free public libraries around the turn of the century. One of 69 he financed in Nebraska, the Chadron Library reflects the simple, boxy one story design favored for small towns by Carnegie himself after 1908. It is a significant building in Chadron and symbolizes the growth of Chadron during the progressive-activist mayoralty of James W. Finnegan, who spearheaded efforts to secure a state normal school, a new federal building, city hall, and two new brick multi-story schools for the city. The period of significance is derived from the years 1910 through 1916, the beginning and ending dates of Carnegie funding, inclusive of all original construction episodes.

The Chadron Public Library is representative of a very important era in Chadron. Led by three-term progressive Mayor James W. Finnegan (1906-1912), businessman Ben Loewenthal, and Congregational minister G.W. Mitchell, the city enjoyed unprecedented public sector growth. The state-financed Chadron Normal School (Chadron State College), a federal post office and courthouse, the Carnegie-funded Chadron Public Library, city-financed West Ward School (non-extant), and the church-sponsored Assumption Academy were all constructed in this period and gave Chadron an air of permanence, stability, and culture.

The Chadron public library originally opened in August, 1889, just three years after the town itself was founded. The organizers were a physician, a female lawyer, and a businesswoman, the latter two being prominent and progressive suffragists. The peripatetic

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

| | | | | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|---|------|---------|
| A | 1 3 | 6 6 3 5 2 0 | 4 7 4 3 2 5 0 | B | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting |
| C | | | | D | | |
| | | | | | | |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The North one hundred (100) feet of Lot No. Two in Block No. Forty four of the Western Town Lot Company's Third Addition to the Town (now city) of Chadron, in Dawes County, Nebraska.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Legally recorded boundary lines of property on which the Chadron Public Library is situated.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James A. Hanson, Director date January 5, 1990
 organization Nebraska State Historical Society telephone (402) 471-4745
 street & number 1500 R Street state Nebraska zip code 68502
 city or town Lincoln

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collection of over 400 volumes was housed wherever free quarters could be found, and was financed from donations. In 1893, this precarious existence came to an end with the general collapse of the national economy. From 1894 to 1904, the Chadron library association was defunct.

In 1904, the library was revived by public spirited citizens, and in 1907, Mayor James Finnegan, Councilman Ben Loewenthal, and library president G.W. Mitchell drew up a new library constitution calling for a publicly selected board. This was done with the professional advice of State Library Superintendent J.L. McBrien, who spoke to an overflow crowd at the city's opera house.

Mayor Finnegan and Councilman Loewenthal convinced the city council to provide permanent quarters for the library in City Hall. Recognizing the need for permanent public funding for the library, Finnegan induced the city council to pass a 1.5 mill levy for the support of the library.

The mayor then pressed Andrew Carnegie for funds to construct a substantial library for the city. A request from Chadron in 1905 had been denied. Finnegan, in 1910, was able to point to the library's annual budget of \$500, and to the city's general progress, including the new college. Carnegie awarded the city \$5,000 for construction, which began the next year.

Charlotte Templeton, secretary of the Nebraska Library Commission, suggested that a professional architect be employed to design the building to meet Carnegie's specification of "useful accommodation." By happy coincidence, noted Lincoln architect George A. Berlinghof was in Chadron working on Chadron State's "Old Main." For \$100, he produced a set of plans that must have made Carnegie feel very satisfied.

The library was constructed by the Black Hills Company of Deadwood, South Dakota at a cost of \$5300. The \$300 overrun was covered with funds raised by Loewenthal and Finnegan (Mitchell had moved to Neligh in 1910 when the Congregational Academy became Chadron Normal). There was no formal dedication when the library opened its doors for business on February 13, 1912.

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As the collections grew and the public began requesting the use of the unfinished basement for meetings, the library board submitted a second request to Carnegie for funds to complete the work. The 1915 request was denied, but in 1916 Carnegie awarded Chadron \$788.00 if the City Council agreed to increase its support by \$78.80 per annum. This was done, and that date also marks the end of Carnegie Corporation support for the Chadron Public Library.

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Berke, Arnold M. "Steelman's Stacks: Carnegie's Endangered Legacy." Preservation News, August, 1985, p. 7.

Bobinski, George S. Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development. American Library Association, Chicago. 1969.

Denney, James. "UNO Exhibition will Spotlight Carnegie Legacy." Magazine of the Midlands. Omaha World-Herald, March 15, 1987, pp. 14-16.

Dewing, Rolland, et al. Chadron Centennial History. Chadron Centennial Committee, Chadron, Nebraska. 1985.

Griffith, George V. The Chadron Public Library: A Centennial History. Chadron Public Library Foundation, Chadron, Nebraska. 1989.

Runyon, Robert S. Andrew Carnegie and His Gifts that Continue to Grow. University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha. 1987.