

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received **JUL 23 1985**

date entered **AUG 23 1985**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Madison City Hall

and/or common Madison Municipal Building

2. Location

street & number 404 Sixth Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Madison N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Lac qui Parle code 073

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Madison

street & number 404 Sixth Avenue

city, town Madison N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 56256

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lac qui Parle County Courthouse

street & number 600 Sixth Street

city, town Madison state Minnesota 56256

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Minnesota Statewide Historic
title Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983-84 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, Fort Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota 55111

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Madison City Hall and Opera House, built in 1902-03, is located at the north-east corner of Sixth Avenue and Fourth Street at the north end of Madison's business district. The building is situated opposite the Madison Carnegie Library (built 1905-06) and two blocks south of the Lac Qui Parle County Courthouse (1899).

The Madison City Hall is a restrained, Classical Revival building which was designed by prominent St. Paul architects Buechner and Orth and constructed by contractors Olson and Carson Brothers at a cost of \$14,527.* The two story, three bay wide building measures 57' by 129' and has a truncated hipped roof. The hall is faced with brown pressed brick laid on a rough granite block foundation. The building has a projecting central entrance bay topped by a pediment with anthemions and a semi-circular window in the tympanum. The entrance bay has a yellow limestone and pressed metal balustrade at the base of a pair of second story windows, and a rectangular entrance in which new glass and metal doors have been installed. Rising above the central bay is the woodframe base of the building's original bell tower, which has been removed. The city hall has brick corner pilasters, a smooth yellow limestone frieze with raised foliage-like ornamentation, and smooth yellow limestone sills, watertable, and lintels. The side walls of the building each have five large rounded arched window openings with keystones which light the auditorium. Each rounded arched opening contains a pair of double hung windows topped by a large fanlight transom. The exterior of the building is basically intact and in good condition. The rear bay of the hall was altered in 1911 to house Madison's volunteer fire fighting equipment. Other exterior alterations have included installing new windows, new doors, a handicapped-accessible entrance on the south facade and a new roof.

The Madison City Hall and Opera House was originally designed to contain a large auditorium with proscenium stage, seating for over 500 people on the main floor and in an upper balcony, and a few offices. The interior of the building was remodelled by Works Progress Administration labor in the 1930's and again more recently. The building now houses offices in the front portion of the first floor and in the former auditorium balcony area. The auditorium itself is basically intact, although the seating has been removed and the balcony has been enclosed.

*The firm of Buechner and Jacobson was known as Buechner and Orth after Jacobson's death in 1902.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1902-03 **Builder/Architect** Buechner and Orth architect
Olson and Carson Brothers, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Madison City Hall and Opera House, completed in 1903, is historically and architecturally significant as a handsome Classical Revival building which represents the efforts of early community planners and boosters in Madison to erect substantial public buildings at the turn of the century, and is an example of the work of the St. Paul architectural firm of Buechner and Orth. Furthermore, the building is important as the structure which has housed city government in Madison since 1903 and has served a vital social and cultural function in the community since the turn of the century.

The Madison City Hall was built during a public building boom and period of civic pride and boosterism that occurred in the community at the turn of the century. By 1900 residents of Madison were deeply involved in a community rivalry with the town of Dawson, located about eight miles to the southeast. Both towns were platted in 1884 when the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad was constructed through the county, and both were involved in a bitter dispute to become the county seat which culminated in the construction of the Lac Qui Parle County Courthouse in Madison in 1899. For almost twenty years beginning in 1885 the Dawson Sentinel and the Madison Independent and businessmen in both towns engaged in an editorial battle as each town rivalled to become the center of county business, government, and social affairs.

In this competitive atmosphere community planners and promoters, represented by the Madison Townsite Company and various business and civic groups, worked toward the construction of several large public buildings with a level of community planning not often seen in new rural Minnesota communities. Most of the planning was concentrated on Sixth Avenue which contained Madison's commercial district, recently rebuilt after a major fire in 1895. In the heart of the business district a group of businessmen joined forces to construct the Hotel Lac Qui Parle in 1903. At the north end of the district the City built the Madison City Hall and Opera House in 1902-03 and the Madison Carnegie Library in 1905-06. Stretching north from these two buildings was a two block long section containing some of Madison's most impressive Victorian houses and, at the head of the street, stood the Lac Qui Parle County Courthouse. By 1910 Sixth Avenue was a showplace of architectural style and contained a healthy business district and most of the town's important public buildings. At the north end of the street the city hall, library, and county courthouse became the visual and civic focal point of the town.

Madison residents began to vote on bond issues to finance the construction of the city hall in 1901. The architects chosen to design the structure were Buechner and Orth of St. Paul, specialists in the design of public buildings.

The civic building that Buechner and Orth designed for Madison was larger and more expensive than the city hall buildings erected by many rural Minnesota communities of similar size at the time. Although the combination of city hall and civic auditorium was fairly common to civic buildings at the turn of the century, the designation of Madison's building as an "opera house" is indicative of the social sophistication which Madison was attempting to achieve. The building was constructed by contractor Olson and Carson Brothers in 1902 at a cost of over \$14,000, and the opera house interior was decorated by Alonzo Hathaway in February of 1903. The building officially opened on February 16, 1903 with an opera house

9. Major Bibliographical References

Willand, Jon. Unpublished manuscript on Lac Qui Parle County history. Jon Willand, 145 Malcolm Ave. S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota.
 Buer, Micki. Unpublished research on Madison City Hall. Lac Qui Parle County Historical Society, Madison, Minnesota.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Madison Quad.

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UTM References

A

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7	2	1	2	5	0
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4	9	8	7	9	6	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 13-16, Block 25, Original Townsite of Madison.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Granger, Field Assistant

State Historic Preservation Office

organization Minnesota Historical Society

date October 1984

street & number Fort Snelling History Center

telephone (612) 726-1171

city or town St. Paul

state Minnesota 55111

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Russell W. Fridley

title Russell W. Fridley
State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7/1/85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Jayne M. Summers
 Keeper of the National Register

[Stamp]
 National Register

date 8/23/85

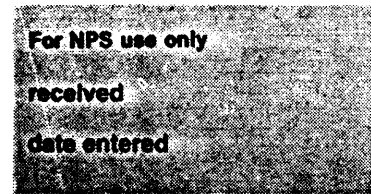
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Madison City Hall

Item number 8

Page 1

Item #8 (Significance) continued:

performance by the Nobles Theater Company. The opera house was frequently used for vaudeville and musical performances by travelling theater groups and local talent, and was the scene of community dances, church and school functions, political meetings, and a variety of social affairs. Stage scenery was purchased from the Flour City Service Company, 502 opera chairs were obtained from Thomas Kane and Company, and the local Mozart Club donated a piano to the facility in exchange for free use of the opera house for a maximum of four concerts per year. In addition to providing a center for cultural and social affairs, the building housed city government and, after 1911, the Madison Volunteer Fire Department headquarters. The bell installed in the hall's bell tower was used to toll the curfew, as a fire alarm, and rang at 7 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m. Today the Madison City Hall is still the center of city government in Madison, and, although the opera house has been altered somewhat, still serves as a public meeting place. The former fire department garage now houses Madison's rescue squad ambulance.

Buechner and Jacobson formed a partnership in St. Paul in 1889. They became one of the state's leading architectural firms at the turn of the century, and designed the Lac Qui Parle County Courthouse in Madison which was completed in 1899. The firm was also awarded commissions for courthouses in Swift County, Douglas County, and Kanabec County and for a number of houses, commercial buildings, schools, and other structures throughout the state. After Jacobson's death in 1902 Charles Buechner formed a partnership with Henry Orth which lasted until Buechner's death in 1924. Buechner and Orth continued as specialists in public building design and drafted plans for the Goodhue, Jackson, Ottertail, and Wilkin County Courthouses.