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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).

1. Name of Property

historic name Waterloo Public Library, East Side Branch other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 626 Mulberry Street not for publication city, town Waterloo vicinity state IA code IA-19 county Black Hawk code 013 zip code 50703

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private, public-local (checked), public-State, public-Federal. Category of Property: building(s) (checked), district, site, structure, object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing (1), Noncontributing (0) buildings, sites, structures, objects. Total (1, 0).

Name of related multiple property listing: Multiple Properties Nomination, Waterloo, Iowa. 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. Signature of certifying official: James E. Faulstich, Chief, Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Iowa. Date: July 13, 1988.

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. (checked) determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:). Signature of the Keeper: Beth Roland. Date of Action: 11/29/88.

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Education-library

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Classical-Revival

foundation stone

walls stone

roof composition

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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)

Period of Significance
1906

Significant Dates
1906

Education/Architecture

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Ralston, John G., Architect

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet 9.2

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	5	5	5	4	8	1	0	4	7	0	5	1	7	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Original Plat Waterloo East, all of Lots 1 and 4, Block 28 except southwest 28' of Lot 4.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Contains only subject building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By Research/writing by Barbara Beving Long, Midwest Research

name/title James E. Jacobsen, Chief
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date July 13, 1988
street & number 600 E. Locust telephone 515-281-4137
city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50309

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2**Waterloo Public Library, East Side Branch****Description**

One of the few stone buildings in Waterloo, the library exhibits characteristics typical of Carnegie libraries of the early twentieth century: small rectangular shape, raised basement, steep entry steps, ample windows. A prominent feature is the high central mass oriented from front to rear which sits astride the lower hipped roof mass. The facade is especially well-proportioned and the use of detail restrained and well-handled. This building is an example of the Property Types, Industrial Era Institutional Buildings and Works by Local Architects as set forth in the Multiple Properties Cover Document, Historical and Architectural Resources of Waterloo, Iowa.

Designed by one of Waterloo's most important architects, John G. Ralston, the library is an excellent example of the many important public commissions Ralston received in the early decades of the twentieth century. Ralston designed both the east and west side Carnegie libraries in Waterloo, as well as Carnegie libraries in other northeast Iowa communities, including Traer and Waverly. According to records from the Ralston office, he also designed a library for Bolivar, New York.

The Waterloo libraries share certain characteristics with other Ralston libraries. All feature ample windows grouped in three's, raised basements, compact rectangular shape, a prominent central entry, and a crisp, well-proportioned handling. The two Waterloo and the Waverly libraries have hipped roofs. Only the east side Waterloo library is entirely of stone; the others are brick with contrasting stone trim. All combine Ralston's fine handling of classical detail, which is then interpreted in an early twentieth century manner. Even the east side Waterloo library, the most classical of the group, has a starburst pattern in transoms.

The relative simplicity of the smooth stone wall surface and simple windows draws attention to the distinctive entry. (Although termed "Bedford, Indiana sandstone" in contemporary newspaper accounts, the stone is Bedford limestone.) Of particular interest is the central portico with paired smooth Ionic columns, then an entablature which connects with the main mass capped by an elaborate parapet. Above the portico the raised gabled portion features a fine thermal window and more classical ornamentation, including acroteria and egg-and-dart motifs (the latter reappears in the interior).

A stone course separates the raised basement from the main story. The windows, which are original, are double-hung and wood frame. Main story windows feature a decorative pattern in the panel above the double-hung portion. This star-burst motif is also used above the double entry doors and in the thermal window.

The elegant use of classical motifs continues in the interior--as does the semi-circular shape of the thermal window. A barrel vault surmounts the inner lobby, or delivery area, making an unexpected and fine space. Decorative plasterwork--bands of

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classical designs in three patterns--call attention to the barrel shape. Heavy and broad dark varnished oak square columns and woodwork continues throughout the main floor, as ceiling molding, window and door frames, and fireplace mantle. Other original features include the interior double doors (with beveled glass), colored mosaic tiles in entry, marble stair steps, and brick fireplaces.

With its larger size compared to many Carnegie libraries in smaller towns, the library is separated into distinct rooms. The main delivery area is directly in front of the entry steps; behind this space are the book stacks. Office space flanks this rear area, and large reading rooms are on either side of the entry or delivery space.

The library is located on the northwesterly corner of East Fifth and Mulberry Streets. Across from it are the more recent county courthouse and also city hall. The area is in the midst of the principal commercial area of the city's east side. Most buildings are two-to-four stories.

To meet increasing demands fifty years after the library's construction, a light tan brick and stone addition was added to the northwest end in 1962. The Waterloo architectural firm of Deuth & Gibson designed the addition. The design respects the color, proportion, and mass of the original, and is clearly from a later period. County agencies now use the addition and recently expanded their offices into the front basement quarter of the original library, which is otherwise vacant. In this recently renovated portion, the woodwork has been stripped, the fireplace brick painted, and a wall added to create a small kitchen.

Changes to the original and now vacant library have been minimal. They include: part of the woodwork (perhaps stored in basement) removed at the inner lobby, northwest fireplace covered over and mantle removed, information desk removed, metal doors added for access to the addition, and some bookshelves removed. The side rear entry to the basement (southeast corner) has been enclosed. Metal book stacks and fluorescent lighting were added in 1949-50. The 1980 Office of Historic Preservation library survey information states that the roof is slate; it is presently covered with asphalt shingle. The shingle is deteriorating and appears to have been in place more than seven years.

Historical Significance

The Waterloo Public Library, East Side Branch, is an excellent example of the Property Type, Industrial Era Institutional Buildings in Waterloo (see pp. 16-18 and 40-41, Multiple Properties Nomination). Buildings of this property type are associated with the civic and institutional development of Waterloo during the industrial era, 1892-1917. As a relatively unaltered representative of the institutional buildings from Waterloo's industrial period, the library calls attention to another facet of industrial-generated growth and development--provision of increased civic services. It is also a choice example of the important commissions Waterloo architect John G. Ralston received during the industrial era (see pp. 25-27, 43-45 in Multiple Properties Nomination).

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The library illustrates the parallel development and provision of public services in Waterloo, a product of the intense east-west rivalry. In addition, the library shows the increasing responsibilities the City assumed as population and industry grew and required additional services and amenities during the industrial era. Finally, it is directly associated with progressive attempts at reform and intellectual improvement.

The largely unaltered building also calls attention to the national Carnegie endowment program that brought free public libraries to hundreds of communities, including an unprecedented two for Waterloo. The two libraries stand as prominent symbols of the competitiveness that has raged between residents on either side of the Cedar River since the pioneer settlement period. This community spirit in some cases resulted in healthy development for the entire city, as enthusiastic boosters vied to bring improvements to Waterloo. But it also caused discord, wasted time on squabbling, and brought inefficiency as dual services and businesses sometimes resulted.

Bickering over location of the library began in 1902 when the Carnegie Foundation offered the city \$30,000 for a library building. Residents of each side of town wished to have the new building on their respective side of the river. The situation was at a standstill when in 1903 the mayor suggested a mid-river library be built on the Fourth Street bridge, then under construction. Such a distinctive site was more expensive, but this added cost was used to resolve the impasse.

In 1904 Carnegie offered the city \$40,000 for one mid-river building or two \$20,000 libraries. The City Council chose the latter. On February 23, 1906 dual dedications were held. It should be noted that there was some precedent for two libraries in Waterloo, for two sets of book collections had been maintained in the pre-Carnegie period in Waterloo. The west side library (now law offices) has been altered, changing the distinctive Carnegie-formula appearance, notably the steep entry steps.

Both Carnegie libraries were designed by local architect John G. Ralston, who received most of the major commissions in the city that went to local architects. George Dunham was superintendent of construction for the \$24,390 east side library and C.E. Atkinson of Webster City was the contractor. The noted local stoneworks, Moline & Lawson, cut the letters over the door. Michael Paint Company had the contract for finishing and decorating the interior, but there is no reason to suspect that Ralston did not design the interior.

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Sources

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- Interview with Glen Ralston, retired architect and son of John G. Ralston, June 5 and 6, 1985.
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