

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

## 1. Name

historic The Crane Memorial Public Library

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 40 Washington Street \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Quincy \_\_\_ vicinity of

state Massachusetts 02269 code 025 county Norfolk code 021

## 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Library

## 4. Owner of Property

name City of Quincy

street & number City Hall

city, town Quincy \_\_\_ vicinity of state Massachusetts

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

street & number

city, town Dedham state Massachusetts

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title National Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date October 18, 1972  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records National Park Service

city, town Washington state DC

# 7-1-1910 Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The following description was extracted from Henry Russell Hitchcock's text on Henry Hobson Richardson and was used in the National Register nomination:

The Thomas Crane Memorial Library of 1881-1882 was Richardson's simplest library plan. The building is constructed in random ashlar of Milford granite, with red Longmeadow sandstone trim. A moderately steep pitched roof with eyelid dormers runs between the parapeted gables on the east and west ends. A sandstone water table caps the two foot high battered foundation. Seen from the south "the whole building... forms a single low mass whose outline is not broken by the gable over the entrance. This gable is asymmetrically placed about two-thirds of the way across the facade from the west. Beneath the left side of the gable, a round circular stair tower projects from the wall. Visually as well as structurally, its conical roof interrupts the wall of the gable, while the lines of its roof parallel the slopes of the gable. A low and broad arch over the entrance fills most of the remaining wall to the right of the tower. The battered wall of the tower breaks into the decorated voussoirs at the spring of the arch. The impostes are formed by a red sandstone course that encircles the building about two feet above the water table course. Because the sills of a number of the library's windows cut into this course, it is called the "sill" course. A third sandstone course, called the "eave" course, follows the eave line across the front facade and tower. It continues across the gable ends of the building but, because of the lower eave line of the rear (north) facade, it does not appear there.

On the front (south) facade the fenestration is fairly simple. There are only three window groupings. A horizontal band of windows opening into the stacks is situated under the eave course and runs the length of the wall to the left of the stair tower. The rectangular windows in this band are separated by alternating single and triple engaged colonettes. The eave course forms a continuous lintel above them. A narrow molded course below the sills is extended in ashlar around the stair tower. To the east of the entrance arch, between the "sill" course and the eave course, is a large stone mullioned panel window made of four narrow vertical lights topped by two rows of square lights. A cluster of three Romanesque arched windows is centered in the gable. A single narrow window with quoin-like surrounds has been placed on the south side of the stair tower, between the "sill" course and the course under the stack windows. A large block of red sandstone above the entrance arch bears the inscription "Anno Domino MDCCLXXXI."

The west facade of the library is asymmetrical. The rear slope of the roof is longer than the front, forming an asymmetrical gable. Two narrow courses run across the gable near its apex. A small square window is centered between them. Below each are two Romanesque arched windows with quoin-like surrounds and an engaged column separating the lights. A band of six narrow windows is set just off center between the "eave" and the "sill" courses. The band is divided twice horizontally.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1881–1882 **Builder/Architect** Henry Hobson Richardson (1838–1886)

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

H. H. Richardson was the most important architect of his day and the first native American to attain truly international stature. This giant of a man, both literally and figuratively, died at forty-seven at the height of his powers. His influence was tremendous, especially on his immediate successors, Louis Sullivan, and through Sullivan, the young Frank Lloyd Wright. The Crane Memorial Library, commissioned in May 1880, is the best of the five libraries he designed. It was dedicated on May 30, 1882.

On February 20, 1880, Albert Crane of New York offered the town of Quincy a library dedicated to his father, Thomas Crane (1803–1875), a New York dealer in Quincy Granite. Draper Hill, Jr. gives this account of the elder Crane:

Thomas Crane was born in 1803 on Georges Island in Boston Harbor. In 1810, the Crane family moved to Quincy where Thomas attended school and then trained as a stone-cutter. Crane went to New York in 1829 and with other young journeymen started a cooperative stone yard. By 1835, he had bought out his partners and controlled the business. A fire that same year leveled a large section of commercial New York and created a huge market for the Quincy granite, the material in which Crane dealt. Among buildings Crane helped construct are the New York Custom House and the old Grand Central Station.

As he prospered, Crane's influence in New York grew. He served as a bank director and insurance company official and was a frequent arbiter of industrial disputes. Crane was a close friend of Horace Greeley and an ardent supporter of that famous editor in the antislavery movement. Though New York became his home, Crane for many years spent part of each summer in Quincy and continued to visit the town frequently until his death in 1875.<sup>3</sup>

The Crane family picked the architect, perhaps at the suggestion of Charles Francis Adams, Jr., chairman of the Quincy Public Library Trustees and also chairman of the Building Committee. Adam's brother, Henry, was also a close friend of Richardson. On April 12, Crane, Richardson, Adams and the town's selectmen met in Quincy to discuss the architect's fee. Construction began in December, 1880.

Hill Continues:

Richardson's plans were carefully worked out with respect to function and in designing buildings of the same type he frequently resorted to similar spatial arrangements. He had already tackled the problems of library design in the Winn Memorial Library (Woburn, 1878) and the Ames Memorial Library



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In 1908, William Aitken was commissioned to do the stack addition that projects from the facade, replacing the original gable. Three Romanesque arched windows occupied the same position on the original gable as do those on the south facade. Below them is a band of five tall windows with quoin-like surrounds divided by narrow stone mullions. Two triple windows with similar surrounds breaks the "sill" course west of the gable.

The east facade has been altered slightly by a single story, pitched roof passageway which connects the original Crane Library and its 1908 addition with the larger addition constructed in the 1930s. The passageway enters the east wall of the original Richardson building at its south side. A triple window resting on the "sill" course was removed when the passageway was added. On the north side of the wall, also resting on the "sill" course, is a large single window. Above the eave course the fenestration is identical to that on the west facade. The building's only chimney is an extension of this wall through the roof line just to the rear of the ridge pole.<sup>1</sup>

In 1908 an addition, the gift of the Crane family, was made to the rear by architect William M. Aiken, who had worked in Richardson's office. This wing houses additional stacks in a design matching Richardson's in scale, materials, and detailing. In 1939 the Albert Crane Memorial wing was built to the southeast with funds provided in the estate of Albert Crane and augmented by a Work Projects Administration grant. This wing nearly doubled the size of the library. In design it copies the original, although modifications were required to permit improved lighting. Otherwise, the original Richardson building remains largely unchanged.

The interior of the Library was more sumptuous than those of the earlier libraries. The general treatment of the stack room was, however, similar, as was also the general distribution of the plan. The most elaborate feature was the fireplace in the reading room. This was of wood, not stone, and rather confused and "Eastlake" in design. The elaborate carving, based on the flora of Quincy, is much less archaeological than that on the exterior. This fireplace was at the time enormously admired. Even the clumsy twisted colonnettes flanking the chimney breast were frequently imitated...

The most interesting decorative work was done by La Farge in the windows. The somewhat murky opalescent panels, with monograms and publishers' devices, which are now in the windows at the rear of the new stack, were pieced out with new work when they were reinstalled in 1908. (The publishers' devices have since been disproved as the work of John La Farge.) These are conspicuously a product of the "Brown Decades" in colour, although they harmonize well with the rich medium-brown woodwork. The later Crane Memorial Window to the left of the fireplace is in La Farge's pictorial Tiffany church window manner. In the window to the right of the fireplace is a small panel which is perhaps La Farge's most beautiful work in glass. It is

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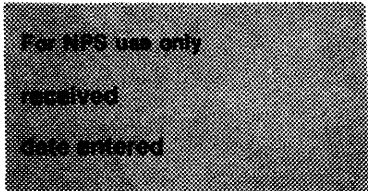
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at once like a mosaic and like a relief. The flesh of the figures is, for example, of rough-surfaced pink quartz. The effect is a jewel of Byzantine splendour, quite unlike any glass work of any other period.<sup>2</sup>

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(North Easton, 1879). The same architectural elements used there appear in the Crane Library and in later plans for the Billings Library (Burlington, Vermont) and the Converse Library (Malden, Massachusetts) as well: granite and brownstone material; the Syrian arch with a tower at one side; a high row of windows illuminating the stack area; and a plan specifically related to the functions of a library. The Crane Library is outstanding among Richardson's five designs for its overall simplicity and the success with which these architectural elements are combined.<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted that even a small town library, donated by the son of a wealthy "local boy" made good, was the result of the collaboration of some of the great artists of the day. Both the painter John La Farge and the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens served Richardson and embellished his building and created for a brief period that marriage of the arts that William Morris tried to bring about in England.

Henry Hobson Richardson was responsible for the architectural style called the Romanesque Revival. It was his Trinity Church in Boston which began the movement. It was the type of unified structure in a consistent system of construction and decoration that was later codified in this American "style" and was provoking European interest as well. For the first time this interest was stylistic and not merely technical and Trinity was written up in British architectural magazines upon its completion in 1877. Thus Richardson was the first American architect whose genius was recognized during his life on both sides of the Atlantic. Trained in France, he returned to the United States at the close of the Civil War and developed the latest European ideas adapted to the needs of American clients, workmen, and materials. In time he became the strongest, most intensely creative, and most influential architect of his time.

Most of Richardson's libraries were designed to house not only books, but were also community cultural centers, art museums, natural history collections, as well as lecture halls. They reflect the late nineteenth-century flowering of popular education in this country paralleled by the Chataqua and other mass cultural movements. They also served as memorials to men who had helped to build small-town America.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Hitchcock, Henry Russell, *The Architecture of H. H. Richardson and His Times* (M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, 1961), p. 210.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>3</sup>Hill, L. Draper, Jr. *The Crane Library*, Quincy: Trustees of the Thomas Crane Public Library, 1962. p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5.

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Verbal Boundary

A certain parcel of land with the buildings thereon situated in Quincy as shown on a plan entitled "Compiled Plan of Land of the Thomas Crane Public Library" dated January 25, 1985 by Adelbert D. Ward, City Engineer. Said parcel of land being bounded as described as follows:

Southwesterly by Washington Street - 365.13 feet;



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Westerly by a curved line at the intersection of said Washington Street with Coddington Street - 43.91 feet;

Northwesterly by said Coddington Street as shown on said plan - 241.95 feet more or less;

Northerly by a curved line at the intersection of said Coddington Street with Spear Street - 44.61 feet more or less;

Northeasterly by said Spear Street - 249.63 feet more or less;

Southeasterly by land now or formerly of Libero P. Marini and Eleanor Marini - 56.06 feet;

Northeasterly by land now or formerly of Libero P. Marini and Eleanor Marini - 54.57 feet;

Northeasterly by land now or formerly of Libero P. Marini and Eleanor Marini - 43.20 feet;

Southeasterly by land now or formerly of Bogoljub Petrovic et ux Rose Petrovic - 28.99 feet;

Southwesterly by land now or formerly of the Sonar Realty Trust - 33.97 feet;

Southeasterly by land now or formerly of the Sonar Realty Trust - 148.60 feet;

Containing 99,189 square feet.

The small structure bounded by Marini, Petrovic, and Sonar Realty Trust is not included in the landmark.

TEMPLE ST.

CODDINGTON

ST.

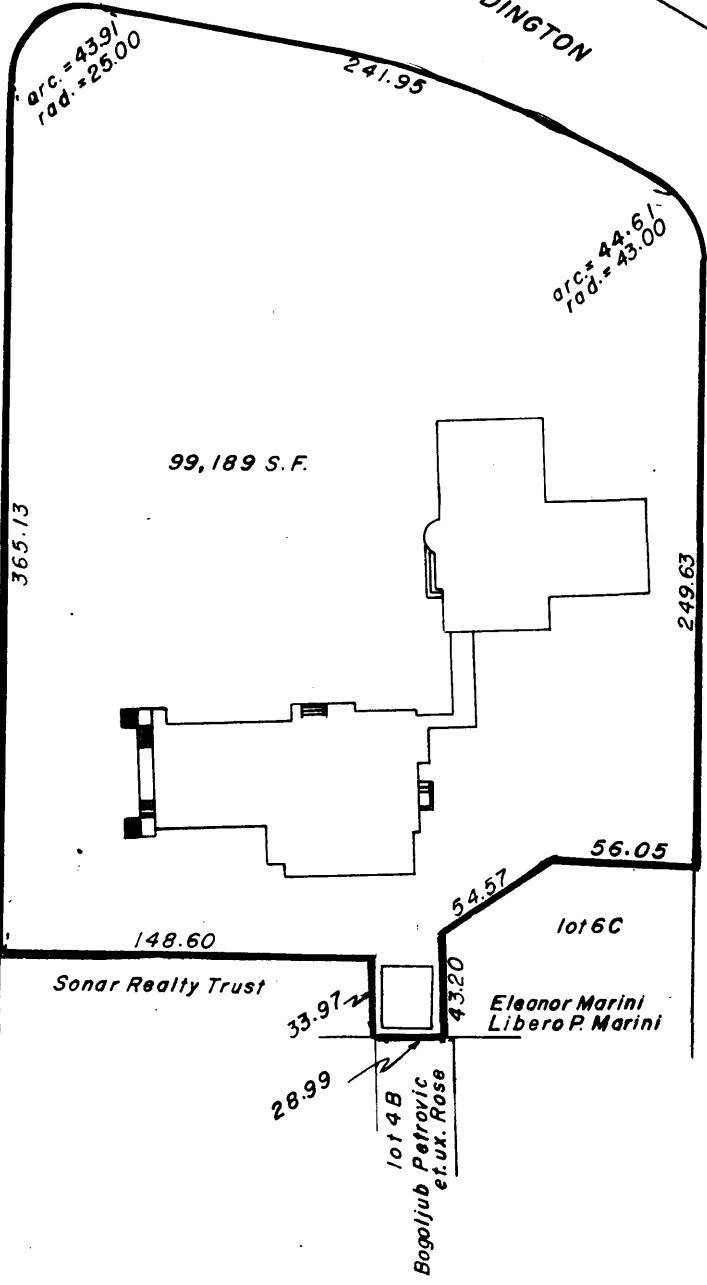
ST.

MAPLE ST.

ST.

WASHINGTON

SPEAR



**COMPILED PLAN  
 LAND OF THOMAS CRANE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
 QUINCY MASS.**

**JANUARY 25, 1985  
 50 FEET TO AN INCH**



CITY ENGINEER Adelbert D. Ward