United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received FEB 7 1983 date entered

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

1. Nam	e				
historic	Lancaster Mun:	icipal Building			
and/or common		y Hall/Grantland Thea	iter		
2. Loca	ation				
street & number	206 S. Madison	57.		not for publication	
city, town	Lancaster	vicinity of			
state	Wisconsin co	de 55 county	Grant	code 043	
3. Clas	sification				
Category district _X building(s) structure site object	Ownership X public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered X N/A	Status X occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted X yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational _X entertainment _X government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other:	
4. Own	er of Prope	rty			
name	City of Lancas	ster, Louis T. Belsca	mp, Mayor		
street & number	206 S. Madisor	ı Street			
city, town	Lancaster	vicinity of	state	Wisconsin 53813	
5. Loca	ation of Leg	al Description	on		
courthouse, regis	stry of deeds, etc. Gra	int County Courthouse			
street & number	126 W. Maple S	Street			
city, town	Lancaster		state	Wisconsin	
6. Repi	resentation	in Existing S	Surveys		
title Wis. Inv		Diagonal has this proj	perty been determined el	ligible? yes _X_ no	
date	ventory of Historic 1976	riaces no uno proj		te county local	
depository for su		listorical Society of		locality local	
, <u>5</u>		Library Doctety Of			
city, town	Madison		state	Wisconsin 53706	

7. Description

Condition excellentX good fair	deteriorated ruins	Check one unaltered X altered	Check oneX original sit moved	ite date
fair	_ unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Lancaster's Municipal Building is approximately two stories in heights, plus a raised basement fully visible on the north-end office portion of the building, and the additional height of the theater space on the south. A one-story, three-bay former fire station at the southeast (rear) corner now serves as the police station, while a newer one-story fire station, with large overhead door, was added at the southwest (front) corner. The theater staging rises a full story at the southeast (rear) corner behind the flat roof of the theater. Behind the newer fire station addition, a small aluminum addition fills out the building plan to a rectangle some one hundred forty-by-one hundred feet in size. The amber "Ohio matt brick" walls are trimmed with white terra cotta, forming a coping along the rooflines; water table at the first-story level of the north offices; borders defining the center office entrance, and dimensions of the theater facade and mezzanine colonade; and capitals on the brick pilasters between office windows and theater colonnade.

Regularly-spaced windows in three stories along the office walls are rectangular, double-hung with wood frames; a double-hung window and fixed pane above light the stairwell above the office entrance in the center of the front facade. Framed by a shallow brick projection defined by terra cotta borders, the central first-story entrance is enclosed by transom and sidelights, and is marked with an inscription stone overhead reading "City Hall." Inscription stones identify the entrances to men's and women's rest rooms in the basement on the north side of the building, and the present fire department at the south end of the front facade. Two of three overhead doors in the former fire station have been enclosed with wood panels. The only substantial alteration to the building has been redesign (1945)² of the theater entrance to include a box office in the south end of the entrance, replacement of the double doors in the remaining two openings, and installation of an aluminum and neon canopy. (Originally, the entrance was composed of three double doors, each with a single panel of glazing and transoms, and a similar style canopy with ornament patterned to match the terra cotta trim on the building.)

Despite small additions to the southwest and southeast corners and minor changes in use, the interior plan and most of the decoration of the original building appear to be original.3 Inside the "City Hall" entrance a dog-leg stair against the front (west) wall leads to the first-floor hall and offices and second-story meeting hall. Floors are terrazo, and walls are divided, "Prairie School-style" by oak moldings, into broad bands of painted plaster. Wide oak doors with single glass panes are covered by transoms. Front-to-rear (west-to-east), the north office end of the interior includes a city clerk and treasurer's office; mayor's office, storage, and vault; and city council chambers. While the offices walls have been paneled and the ceilings covered with composition tiles, the council chambers retain their "Prairie" decoration of plaster and oak. On the second story, the large open meeting room is also "Prairie" style, with folding wood room dividers and brown brick fireplace against the east wall. The basement still includes men's and women's rest rooms, adjacent to the former fire station (now police and senior citizens center); the interior finish is utilitarian in character. (continued)

¹Fennimore Times, March 19, 1924.

 $^{^{2}\}mathrm{Building}$ Inspection Records, City of Lancaster.

 $^{^3}$ Based on inspection of site and blueprints, held by the City of Lancaster.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1799 1800–1899 X 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture X architecture art commerce communications		law literature military music	e religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	19231	Builder/Architect C	laude & Starck ¹	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

As a multi-purpose civic building rendered as a distinguished Prairie School design, the Lancaster Municipal Building represents both a type and period of construction. The surviving Prairie School interior decoration in the office portion and Neoclassical scheme of the theater contribute to the significance of the building, as does its association with important twentieth century Wisconsin architects (Louis) Claude & (Edward) Starck.

The dual nature of the building, offices and entertainment, is expressed on the exterior; two-story terra cotta-trimmed pilasters mark the rise of the office block, while a terra cotta border and colonnade suggest the interior proscenium and mezzanine of the The design by Madison architects Louis W. Claude (1868-1951) and Edward F. Starck (1868-19??) corresponds in style to their Prairie School works of the early twentieth century, but differs in type from the library and residential commissions for which they were better known. Partner Louis Claude was a graduate of the general program at the University of Wisconsin, and worked for Madison architects Conover & Porter as well as Chicago's D.H. Burnham & Co. and Adler & Sullivan. Edward Starck apprenticed with Edward Townsend Mix of Milwaukee after completing high school, and then worked for Handy & Cady of Chicago and David R. Jones of Madison. Active from 1894-1929, the firm's listed works include libraries in Wisconsin Dells (1912), Evansville (1908), Tomah (1916), Merrill (1910), Durand (1907), and Baraboo (1903); the Lincoln School (1915), William Collins House (1911), George Lougee House (1907), and Adolphe H. Kayser House (1902), all in Madison. While the combination of municipal offices, meeting room, and theater is not unique in Wisconsin, it is uncommon. (Probably the Lancaster building was inspired by the precedent set by the Richland Center City Auditorium of 1912 - NRHP 1980 - in neighboring Richland County, for whose construction special state enabling legislation was passed).

The Lancaster Municipal Building was a long-awaited replacement for a city hall that had been demolished; construction of a new building had been postponed since the pre World War I period. After debate within the building committee about whether the building ought to include a simple community auditorium or all "modern theater features," a vote decided in favor of the latter. (Reluctance to commit more funds for the more elaborate facility was due to concern that "...experience [had] shown that municipal theaters [were] 'white elephants'..." to which it was difficult to attract quality entertainment and willing patrons.) The total cost of building, equipment, and site was reported to be \$130,000; it boasted fire-proofing throughout, a complete system of fan ventilators, and a theater in ivory, gold, and blue with eight hundred seats, sixteen boxes, and stage with full loft and "retiring rooms" for ladies and

²Blueprints. (continued)
Grant County Herald, Wednesday, March 8, 1922.

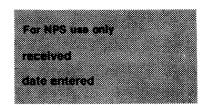
Ibid.

Fennimo	ore Times,	March 19	, 1924							
<u>Grant</u>	County Her	ald, 1922	-1924		/Prairi	ie Sch	ool Revi	iew, Vol	. XIV, 1	981.
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city or town	Madison				state)	Wiscons	sin 537	06	
12. Sta	ate Hi	storic	Prese	ervatio	on O	ffice	er Ce	ertific	catio	<u> </u>
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Keeper of th	e National R									
Attest:					4.4.6.1		date			
Chief of Reg	istration									

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Only cosmetically altered, the interior of the theater retains its plaster-finish lobby, and ornamental plaster auditorium. The classically-inspired decoration (including swags, garlands, laurel moldings, classical friezes and borders, and pilasters with composite capitals), originally painted in ivory and gold, is now yellow and orange. The forty-by-sixty-foot eight hundred-seat auditorium, proscenium, and forty-by-twenty-six-foot stage appear to be intact. A few Art Deco wall sconces have been installed in the lobby, probably at the time that the outdoor box office was added.

The building is located opposite the southeast corner of the courthouse square, with commercial construction to the north and west, and a residential area to the south and east. The site includes service parking to the rear (east) and little vegetation.

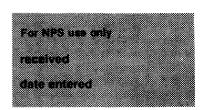
⁴Ibid.; Grant County Herald, May 3, 1922.

⁵Blueprints.

1

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gentlemen. A committee of three was appointed by the mayor to care for the "home of the city's family," which was available for use free-of-charge to non-profit local groups and at a cost of \$8.00 per hour (for electricity and janitor) to other groups.

Fennimore Times, March 19, 1924

⁵Grant County Herald, May 3, 1922.