United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name *Library Park*

historic Belleville Village Hall and Public Grounds

and/or common The Library Park (preferred)

2. Location

street & number ~~That parcel of land~~ bounded by Vine, Main, Park and ____ **not for publication**
Pearl Streets

city, town Belleville ____ **vicinity of** **congressional district** 2nd

state Wisconsin **code** 55 **county** Dane **code** 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	_X_ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
_X_ building(s)	___ private	_X_ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
_X_ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	_X_ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	_X_ other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Village of Belleville, William Hoenisch, Village President

street & number 312 Pearl Street

city, town Belleville ____ **vicinity of** **state** Wisconsin 53508

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dane County Courthouse

street & number 210 Monona Avenue

city, town Madison **state** Wisconsin 53709

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places **has this property been determined eligible?** ____ yes _X_ no

date 1979 ____ federal _X_ state ____ county ____ local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town 816 State Street, Madison **state** Wisconsin 53706

7. Description

Condition

___ excellent   ___ deteriorated

_X_ good   ___ ruins

_X_ fair   ___ unexposed

Check one

___ unaltered

_X_ altered

Check one

_X_ original site

___ moved   date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Library Park is a parcel of land measuring 264 feet by 297 feet, in the center of which stands the old village hall/library, constructed in 1894. This two-story, thirty foot square structure is built of cream brick manufactured at Watertown some 50 miles to the northeast. An asphalt-shingled mansard roof with jigsaw brackets tops the building. Originally, the roof was covered with cedar shingles and a belltower. Segmental dormers filled with Queen Anne sash intersect the slope of the mansard. A segmental arch is visible on the west facade, the opening having been bricked in to the present door. The small porch to the east of this opening was added about 1900. A stone tablet with the inscription "Village Hall erected 1894" is prominently placed in the upper center of the facade.

The interior of the old village hall/library is plain, consisting of a single large room on each floor. The first floor originally housed the hand-pulled fire engine and was later used for storage by the village. The second floor was once divided into two rooms; the east room was used for village board and community organization meetings while the west room was used as the library. In 1925, the wall was removed to allow expansion of the library which occupied the building until 1979.

Over the years several other structures were built on the park grounds, including a band pavilion, hitching post, cannon, waterworks pump house, cast iron fountain, and a wooden war memorial. All of these have been removed with the exception of the pump-house built in 1913 on the site of the original well dug in the 1850s. Other than this, the park is a simply landscaped square with the old village hall/library in the center, a drinking fountain on one corner, and the flag pole and events board along the footpath. Present plans are to restore the old village hall/library and the park to their original appearance as much as possible, converting the hall into a village museum.

8. Significance

Period

___ prehistoric		
___ 1400–1499		
___ 1500–1599		
___ 1600–1699		
___ 1700–1799		
X_ 1800–1899		
X_ 1900–		

Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

___ archeology-prehistoric   ___ community planning   ___ landscape architecture ___ religion
___ archeology-historic   ___ conservation   ___ law   ___ science
___ agriculture   ___ economics   ___ literature   ___ sculpture
___ architecture   ___ education   ___ military   ___ social/
___ art   ___ engineering   ___ music   humanitarian
___ commerce   ___ exploration/settlement ___ philosophy   ___ theater
___ communications   ___ industry   ___ politics/government   ___ transportation
   ___ invention   X_ other (specify)
Civic development

Specific dates 1894[1]   **Builder/Architect** Al Fuller, John Wall[2]

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Library Park has served the governmental and social needs of the village of Belleville for nearly one hundred years. While the park is still used today, the old village hall stands vacant having once served as fire department, village meeting place, and until recently, the library. As such, the Library Park is a reminder of the civil development of the village of Belleville.

Belleville, a small community on the Sugar River on the southern edge of Dane County, was platted in 1851 as a result of the efforts of John Fredericks, Hermann Evarts, and John Mitchell. The village was platted in a grid around a central village green, known as the "Public Grounds." This plat was similar in design to that of the founders' eastern hometowns.[3] In the early days the "grounds" were used for limited grazing with a shallow well dug on its northern edge that provided a public source of water. When the railroad came through Belleville, the "grounds" became a "tent city" for the laborers who used the spot as a base of operations.

Belleville grew rapidly following the arrival of the railroad, and, by the 1890s there was a need for a village hall as the elected officials were cramped for space in the second floor of H. E. Story's building on Main Street. In September, 1894, the village board moved into the newly-constructed "watertown"-cream brick building on the square which was to serve as village hall/library, and fire department. Construction was completed the following year.[4]

Many community organizations gathered in the hall for their meetings, among them the Republicans and Democrats. The Village Board met there monthly to discuss such matters as the fate of the new bridge over the Sugar River, poll taxes, dog licenses, or the appointment of the Village marshall. The hall was also used for the meetings of the Belleville Advancement Association, the Businessmen's Association, and the Library Board. Government functions remained in the village hall in Library Park until 1923 when a new village hall and fire station were built.[5]

The old village hall continued to serve the community after government functions moved elsewhere. In 1895, the library had transferred its books from its old premises to the upper floor of the new village hall. The library was open Wednesday and Saturday nights and farm families used their shopping trips as a chance to exchange reading materials for the next week. During the school year, teachers from the rural schools often brought their students to the library to supplement their own meagre collections.[6]

From the beginning, the village hall on the square became the center of attraction in the park for picnics, celebrations, band concerts, meetings, picture-taking and just plain "get-togethers." Commencement was held here for students graduating from the high school and the park was always the scene of the 4th of July celebrations. Ice cream and lemonade socials were held here as well, sponsored by the Ladies Auxiliary.[7]

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property ___1.8___
Quadrangle name __Belleville, Wisconsin__

Quadrangle scale __1:24,000__

UTM References

A |1,6| |2,9,3,0,4,0| |4,7,4,8,0,7,0|
  Zone Easting   Northing

B |_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_|
  Zone Easting   Northing

C |_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_|

D |_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_|

E |_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_|

F |_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_|

G |_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_|

H |_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_| |_,_,_,_,_,_|

Verbal boundary description and justification

That parcel designated as public grounds in the original plat of the Village of Belleville, which parcel is of the block size 264'x297' situated between blocks 17 and 18 of said original plat.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title   Michael R. Matucheski, Preservation Assistant, Historic Preservation Division

organization   State Historical Society of Wisconsin date   September, 1980

street & number   816 State Street   telephone 608/262-3390

city or town   Madison   state Wisconsin 53706

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national   ____ state   _X_ 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature   *Richard Kinney*

title   Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin   date 12/8/80

For HCRS use only
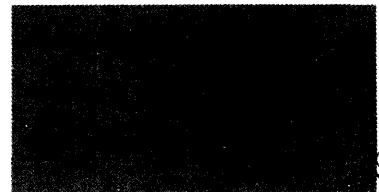   I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Beth Grosvenor   date 1/26/81
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *Linda Flint McClelland*   date 1-26-81
Chief of Registration

GPO 938 835

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

The village square concept continued to be expressed in Belleville throughout the 1930s
and 1940s. Farm and village families gathered in the park for free movies on summer
Saturday evenings that were sponsored by village merchants. Before the development of
the lake park, the Belleville Community or School Fair was held on the library grounds.
Tents and stands would be placed around the grounds with cattle to be judged tied to the
horse railings.[8] Since World War II, fewer public functions have been held in the park.
Movies were shown until the late 1950s when television revolutionized family entertainment.
A rebirth of the park came with the bicentennial celebrations in the 1970s. At this time,
questions arose concerning the future of the library building. In March, 1979, the
library moved to a new site, leaving the village hall vacant. Current plans are to restore
the building and operate it as a museum.

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1) Sugar River Recorder. Weekly issues from April 13, 1894 through January 25, 1895
    detail the development of the village hall.

2) Sugar River Recorder, October 5, 1894. Lists Fuller as the foreman and Wall as
    the bricklayer.

3) C. W. Butterfield, History of Dane County, Wisconsin. Chicago: Western Historical
    Company, 1880, p. 867 and Atlas of Dane County, Wisconsin. Madison: Harrison &
    Warner, 1873.

4) Belleville--"Beautiful Village" 1851-1976, compiled by Senior Citizens for the
    Belleville Community Club. Belleville, Wisconsin, 1976, p. 194.

5) Ibid., pp. 186-187.

6) Ibid., p. 195. Also, "Oral History of the Belleville Public Library" as told by
    Velma Heesly, the first librarian, to Phyllis Wegner, February 20, 1976, a transcript
    of which is filed with this office.

7) Belleville--"Beautiful Village" 1851-1976, p. 101 and p. 194.

8) Belleville Recorder, May 22, 1945.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (continued)

Atlas of Dane County, Wisconsin. Madison: Harrison & Warner, 1873.

Belleville--"Beautiful Village" 1851-1976, compiled by Senior Citizens for the
Belleville Community Club, Belleville, Wisconsin, 1976.

Belleville Recorder, May 22, 1945.

Butterfield, C. W. History of Dane County, Wisconsin. Chicago: Western
Historical Association, 1880.

Sugar River Recorder. Weekly issues April 13, 1894 through January 25, 1895.

Transcript of "Oral History of the Belleville Public Library" as told by Velma
Heesly to Phyllis Wegner, February 20, 1976.