

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 23 1985

date entered JAN 23 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Carnegie Free Library

and/or common Eureka Public Library

2. Location

street & number 536 F Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Eureka

N/A vicinity of

state California

code 06

county Humboldt

code 023

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	(Historical Society)
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Library Adm.

4. Owner of Property

name City of Eureka

street & number 531 K Street

city, town Eureka

N/A vicinity of

state California 95501

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Humboldt County Recorder

street & number 825 Fifth Street

city, town Eureka

state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Eureka Heritage Society has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records Mrs. Delores Vellutini, 2424 J Street

city, town Eureka

state California 95501

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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated in the downtown area of Eureka at the northwest corner of Seventh and F Streets, the Eureka Public Library, also known as the Carnegie Free Library, is a well preserved one-story, with mezzanine and basement, symmetrical red brick, concrete and terra cotta structure. The Classical Revival structure, 90 feet wide and 81 feet long is rectangular with an entrance portico on the east, and a semi-circular projection on the west. The structure was designed by Knowles Evans and B.C. Tarver, local architects, and constructed by Ambrose Foster, local builder, in 1904 for \$26,100.88. After 80 years, it still serves the community in library support services. Aside from the loss of the dome and decorative roof cresting, the building has not been significantly altered from its original appearance. ✓

The gabled portico is supported by four terra cotta Corinthian columns. A terra cotta Roman arch over the recessed entrance is flanked by two vertical rectangular windows with inset arches. The horizontal frieze above the columns displays the name "Eureka Public Library". The frieze and cornice were constructed of sheet metal. The terra cotta Corinthian pilasters at all corners of the building, along with the horizontal frieze and cornice continuing around the building, unify the design.

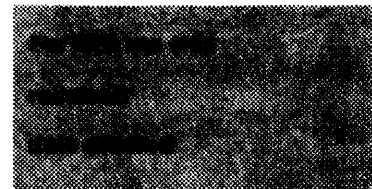
Flanking the portico on either side are three rectangular windows with transom lights. The north and south elevations of the building are divided by six windows of the same design. The semi-circular projection on the west elevation (the exterior of the interior circular stack room) is divided by seven similar windows. The window sills and transom bars are granite. The transom sash is divided in a geometric design by wooden muntins.

The large number of windows allow for a great amount of natural light in the interior of the building. Large glass surfaces in the interior walls pass the light on into the central lobby area, making a very pleasing, well-lighted interior.

The main floor is six feet above the sidewalk grade at the front entrance. The entrance steps, buttresses and caps are constructed of local Mad River granite. The recessed entrance porch, the vestibule and lobby floors are laid with a very

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fine ceramic Roman mosaic tile. Over the lobby is a low domed skylight, and a circular mezzanine with a graceful wrought iron balustrade. Eight Ionic columns rise from the lobby floor supporting the domed area. These columns are faced with redwood. The walls of the lobby are covered with finely detailed redwood wainscotting. The Ionic theme is carried out throughout the interior trim.

Two curving stairways reach from the basement to the main floor and the mezzanine. One large rectangular room lies south of the lobby, and two square rooms lie north of the lobby. Open to the west of the lobby is a large circular stack room. A third stairway leads from the stack room to the basement. The basement rooms are laid out basically the same as the first floor, with the addition of two restrooms and a furnace room. The basement floors and walls are concrete. Windows are placed in the basement walls under each main floor window.

The building is framed with Oregon Pine. The interior walls of the main floor and basement are finished with lathe and plaster, trimmed and panelled with redwood. The sash doors are solid redwood fitted with bronze metal hardware. All windows and door casings are constructed of solid redwood.

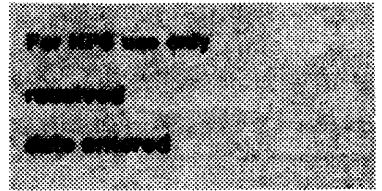
The landscaping consists of lawn, low shrubs, and a bricked area with benches at the southeast corner of the lot.

Structurally, the building has not been altered. The integrity of the original design has been maintained. ✓

The hipped and gabled roof was originally covered with tin and California slate. This has been removed and reroofed with a built-up roofing system on the flat section and with a composition asphalt shingle on the hipped and gable section. The latest roofing was completed in 1974 and is still in good condition. The large outer tin and corrugated glass dome has been removed. In 1954 a low skylight was designed and installed over the inner cathedral glass dome. The galvanized iron ornamentation

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originally on the roof has also been removed. In 1956 repairs were made to the cornice and gutters. Extreme care was taken to preserve the design.

The basement windows originally extended approximately three feet under ground elevation, with exterior wells for additional light and maintenance purposes. Because of continuing water problems, the lower three feet of the windows were built up with concrete blocks and water sealed in 1977. The wells were filled with soil and are now part of the planting bed.

In the interior of the building the original hanging light fixtures have been removed and replaced with fluorescent lamps.

In 1983 the exterior trim and window casings were repainted and screens replaced.

Knowles Evans and B.C. Tarver submitted the winning plans. On July 23, 1902, a contract was awarded to Ambrose Foster of Eureka for construction in the amount of

¹The first Carnegie grant in California was awarded to San Diego in 1899, followed immediately by grants to Oakland and Alameda. Another grant was awarded in 1900, followed by six in 1901. When the program ended in 1917, Carnegie funds had been used to construct 142 library facilities in California.

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/ 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Library
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates Dedicated October 1, 1904 **Builder/Architect** Ambrose Foster/Knowles Evans & B.C. Tarver

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Eureka Public Library, the "Carnegie Free Library" is significant for its role as the city's public library, built by one of California's earliest Carnegie Library grants. The elegant Classical Revival structure (1902–04) is a handsome and rare example of its type of architecture in Eureka and the surrounding area and is significant in the excellence of its construction, and in the use of finely detailed redwood panelling native to this area in the interior.

The Rogers Act enabling cities to levy taxes in support of public libraries became law on March 18, 1878, and the City of Eureka immediately chose to finance a free public library. The Eureka Free Library was founded on May 11, 1878, edging out San Francisco and Oakland by about two weeks. The significant event in the library's history is the building and dedication of the Carnegie Building.

The library was first housed in rented rooms. In 1901, Reverend J. H. Wythe, Jr., became interested in procuring a donation from Andrew Carnegie and approached the Humboldt County Chamber of Commerce with the idea. On August 16, 1901, George Kellogg, Secretary of the Humboldt Chamber of Commerce sent a letter to Andrew Carnegie at Skibo Castle, Scotland, petitioning funds for a permanent building. The Carnegie Corp. responded on October 3, 1901, offering to donate \$20,000.00 for the construction of a building if the City of Eureka would agree to provide a suitable site, and support the library thereafter.¹ The 7500 citizens of Eureka contributed \$8,125.00 to the library fund and the \$5,700.00 site was chosen by popular vote on January 17, 1902.

A competition was held for plans for the building and locally prominent architects Knowles Evans and B.C. Tarver submitted the winning plans. On July 23, 1902, a contract was awarded to Ambrose Foster of Eureka for construction in the amount of

¹The first Carnegie grant in California was awarded to San Diego in 1899, followed immediately by grants to Oakland and Alameda. Another grant was awarded in 1900, followed by six in 1901. When the program ended in 1917, Carnegie funds had been used to construct 142 library facilities in California.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.33
 Quadrangle name Eureka Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	1 0	4 0 1 7 4 0	4 5 1 9 0 6 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification Humboldt County Assessors Parcel No. 1-111-03.
 The nominated property occupies the southeast quarter of Block 77, City of Eureka, and is 120' x 120' in size. Recorded in Book 78, Deeds, Page 200, Humboldt County Records, Eureka, California. Boundaries encompass the building and its historic lot.

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Naomi Nelson
Administrative Assistant/Deputy City Clerk (Assisted by Marian Ledgerwood)

organization City of Eureka date November 29, 1984

street & number 531 "K" Street telephone (707) 443-7331

city or town Eureka state CA 95501

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 Kathryn Guattieri

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 12/12/85

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

for Allison Byer Keeper of the National Register

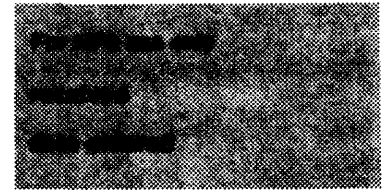
date 1-23-86

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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\$20,840.75. The corner stone was laid on September 27, 1902. On October 1, 1904, the building was dedicated and opened to the public. The total cost, including the lot, was \$31,800.88. Ambrose Foster was a very prominent, highly professional builder. Among others, he constructed the Eagle House, the Puter residence, both significant Victorian structures in Eureka, and in partnership with James Willison, constructed the Fern Bridge across the Eel River, a historic bridge still in use.

The Carnegie Free Library became a bright spot where several generations found a doorway to the world through the services provided. There was a newsroom where people could read the latest stories of the changing world and a children's room with large low tables and small chairs where the young learned that the library and the books it contain hold the keys to knowledge and the mysteries of the world. Younger children who had not yet learned to read could spend hours looking through the stereoscope viewers at things and places never dreamed of. There was a central reading room where students searched texts for answers to scholastic assignments, and a basement archive containing items from the past.

The Eureka Public Library continued to serve the citizens of Eureka until in 1972 it merged with the Humboldt County Library. As the Carnegie Building was too small to house the combined collection, the public services are housed in the library area in the Humboldt County Courthouse. The library administrative services are conducted in the Carnegie Building.

On May 11, 1978, in the Carnegie Building, the Eureka-Humboldt Library celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the first free library in the State of California.

The Humboldt Historical Society has rented 1200 square feet of space in the building for office space and to house their artifacts. The society has approximately 4200 members, and is extremely interested in the preservation of this historic structure.

The location on the outskirts of the downtown area is very good. Diagonally across the intersection of Seventh and "F" Streets, is the Eureka Inn, another historic

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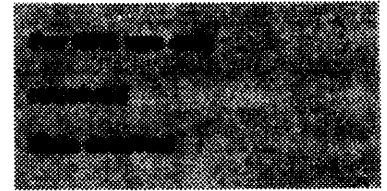
structure placed on the National Register in August, 1982. Adjacent on the north side of the library is the Eureka Theatre building, a Streamline Moderne structure built in 1931.

The library building is also significant for its architectural value. The Classical Revival design exemplifies styling considered appropriate for American public buildings of the early 20th century. This handsome structure with its Classical pediment has been recognized as significant in the Eureka Heritage Survey and in A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California by Dr. David Gebhard, et. al.

To those who grew up using the Carnegie Library as an educational and entertainment center in a time before television and mass media communications, it is more than a building: it is an integral part of their lives. Without question, the Carnegie Free Library building is significant to the Eureka and Humboldt County areas.

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Siegel, Allen G., Libraries are a Tradition Here, Friends of the Redwood
Libraries, May, 1978

Eureka-Humboldt Library Historical Newspaper Files

The Daily Humboldt Standard - September 26, 1902
September 23, 1904
September 28, 1904

The Times Standard - October 3, 1970
February 2, 1978
May 7, 1978

Overland Monthly Magazine - January, 1903

Eureka City Directory - Herald Printing Company, 1904

Carnegie Library Files

Eureka City Hall Files

Eureka Historical Society Files

Eureka Heritage Society Files

Correspondence dated February 3, 1984, from E. Wayne Lamoreaux, City Manager,
Barstow, California, (Native Eureka)

Architects Interviewed - Coleen Van Fleet, 1/24/84, and E.J. Pola, 1/31/84

Gebhard, et. al., A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California,
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Held, Ray E., The Rise of the Public Library in California, 1973.

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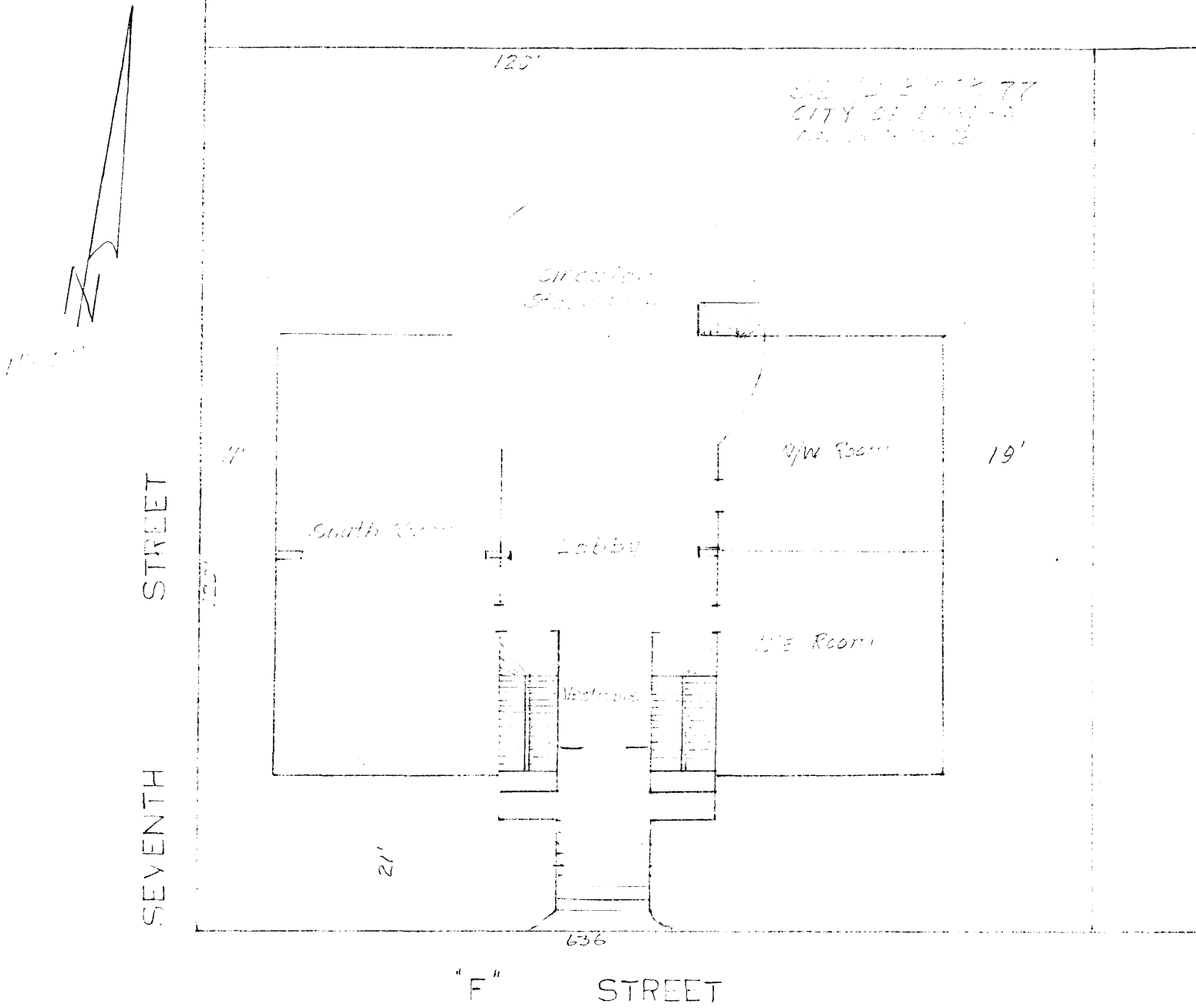
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MAIN FLOOR PLAN
CARNEGIE FREE LIBRARY

CITY OF EUREKA

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