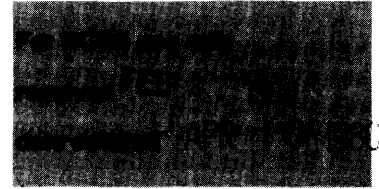


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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

historic Oconomowoc City Hall

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 174 East Wisconsin Avenue _____ not for publication

city, town Oconomowoc _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district Ninth

state Wisconsin code 55 county Waukesha code 131

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

4. Owner of Property

name City of Oconomowoc

street & number 174 East Wisconsin Avenue

city, town Oconomowoc _____ vicinity of _____ state Wisconsin 53066

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Tax Assessors Office, City Hall

street & number 174 East Wisconsin Avenue

city, town Oconomowoc _____ state Wisconsin 53066

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1978 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street

city, town Madison _____ state Wisconsin 53706

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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Oconomowoc City Hall is located on the corner of East Wisconsin Avenue and St. Paul Street in Oconomowoc, a small city in southeastern Wisconsin. The immediate area is commercial in nature, with a variety of small nineteenth and twentieth century buildings averaging two stories in height. Although altered considerably from the original appearance, the City Hall is still imposing in size and in the boldness of its forms.

Two stories high plus attic and tower, the Oconomowoc City Hall is regular in plan. The cream city brick building (now painted) is set on a low cut-stone foundation. The design is composed of a series of distinct masses, with simple, oculus-cut gable ends alternating with gable slopes at the roofline. Within the gable-end portions, one on the far north of the front facade to the left of the center tower and two on the east side facade, a pair of recessed arches encloses windows lighting the tall second story. A single, large oculus pierces the peak of the gable overhead. First-story paired double-hung windows with transoms correspond to the two window units overhead. Slightly recessed between the gable-end sections, the sloped-roof sections are filled with similar windows, with the addition of a single, transomed window between each pair to the sides. A gabled dormer marks the included sloped bay on the roof of the east facade; its timbered left half and chimney-filled right are still visible despite the paint cover. The most prominent feature of the design, the tall clock tower in the center of the front facade, rises a full story above the roof ridge. A triple-arch motif encloses three, double-transomed lancet windows under the front clock face. The slope of the gable to the left has been filled in, presumably to provide additional room space in the attic inside.

With painting of the building, the decorative contrast of cream and orange brick has been lost. Originally, orange brick trimmed the arches and oculus in the gable-end bays, and accented projecting courses of brick between stories and window transoms. The most serious decorative loss was the horizontal striated effect on the tower, and the steep, pyramidal peak with vertical orange timbering below. Orange wood framing once marked the first-story entrance in the tower, matched by paint on the panelled recessed door inside.

Although much-altered on the exterior, the interior of the City Hall remains largely intact. Original window and door mouldings and blocks are still in place. Some of the pressed-tin ceilings are still visible, although others are hidden by acoustical tile. The simple wood stairways in the front and rear are still used, and wood wainscoting still lines the halls. The most striking interior feature, eighteen orange and tourquoise stained-glass transoms brighten the rooms. Despite installation of some wood partitions, all original masonry walls are in place. Some rooms have been given over to different uses, but the original plan with its jail cells; police, marshall's and clerk's offices; judges' chambers and courts; and health department is evident. Court functions are now carried out in the old auditorium, stage, ticket office, and dressing rooms. The Oconomowoc City Hall, then, was designed to be the city's full-service governmental and civic headquarters, housing all city offices and functions.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
___ 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1886¹

Builder/Architect

George B. Ferry²

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Distinguished both as a striking romantic revival design and as an all-encompassing city administrative center, the Oconomowoc City Hall is significant in the areas of architecture and politics/government.

Architecture

Designed by well-known Wisconsin architect George B. Ferry (1857-1918), the Oconomowoc City Hall is an imposing late nineteenth century building conceived in the Romanesque manner of American architectural giant H. H. Richardson. The 1886 work pre-dates Ferry's partnership with Alfred C. Clas, with whom he did his best-known works.

Born and education in Springfield, Massachusetts, Ferry studied at MIT before settling in Milwaukee. In 1890, Ferry entered into partnership with Alfred C. Clas (1859-1942). Until Ferry's death dissolved the association in 1918, the firm was one of the leading design houses in Wisconsin in the late nineteenth century, executing a number of commissions in Milwaukee and throughout the state which were to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Although a number of their buildings were designed in the English "country church Gothic" manner and in the Richardsonian style, the architects' most distinctive buildings were large-scale residences in various versions of the English Queen Anne, and grand-scale civic buildings in the NeoClassical-Beau Arts vein. The best-known are the Captain Frederick Pabst Residence (1907) and the Milwaukee Public Library (1893-97) in Milwaukee, and the State Historical Society (1900) in Madison, all listed in the National Register.

Politics/Government

The first activity held in the newly completed city hall was the meeting of the Farmer's Institute in 1887.³ Since this time, the city hall has served as the major center of community activity. In addition to the standard operations of the mayor and police, the city hall also served for years as the headquarters of the fire department, the municipal court and the city clerk. In more recent times the city hall has been the site of local art festivals.⁴ In the last year, the popularity of the old city hall has been made evident by the activities of many citizens to prevent its demolition. The intensity, and comparative success of their efforts is perhaps the most telling evidence of the high regard that is held for the building.⁵

¹Cornerstone on building.

²Record of Proceedings, City of Oconomowoc; Wisconsin Free Press, June 28, 1886.

³Wisconsin Free Press, January 15, 1887.

⁴Jean L. Johnson, Illustrious Oconomowoc (1978), p. 312. For a listing and calendar of functions held at the city hall, see Oconomowoc, a pamphlet prepared in 1960 by the city League of Women Voters, a copy of which is in the collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁵Oconomowoc Enterprise, August 9, October 11, 25, and November 22, 1979.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Zimmerman, H. Russell, The Heritage Guidebook, Inland Heritage Corporation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1976.
Oconomowoc Enterprise, August 9, 1979

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property c. 0.22

Quadrangle name Oconomowoc East

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

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 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated building is located on Lots 9 and 10 of the City Assessor's Plat No. 3, at the northwest corner of the intersection of East Wisconsin Avenue and St. Paul Street.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara McGarvey, Margaret Wagner

organization Concerned Citizens Group of Oconomowoc date October 1979

street & number 314 Silver Lake Street telephone (414) 567-3740

city or town Oconomowoc state Wisconsin 53066

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Richard Murray

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin date 2/20/80

For HCERS use only

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

W. Ray Luce
 Keeper of the National Register

date 4/10/80

Attest: *Kristin J O'Connell*
 Chief of Registration

date 4/9/80