

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

With basement, the Dwight T. Parker library is a two-story rectangular building augmented by a projecting center "portico" on the front (west) and projecting stack to the rear. The red brick exterior walls are overhung by wide eaves with large wood brackets under the hipped red clay tile roof. Terra cotta colonettes, arches, and bracketed sills surround the three round-headed windows to each side of the entry and paired windows on the north side; the pedimented frontispiece and coping on the projecting entry are also of terra cotta. Windows in the upper walls of the south side and rear elevations are half-size rectangular fixed sash; those at the basement level are small rectangular double-hung sash. A concrete water table marks the ground line, and a single brick chimney rises through the southeast (rear) slope of the roof.

Inside, the plan is regular, with a central oak circulation desk facing the vestibule. Walls in the reading rooms in the north and south arms (originally adult and children's rooms) are the original painted plaster, spanned by oak shelving between the long oak-framed windows. Vertical oak moldings divide wall surfaces between reading rooms, entry, the east stack, and around window reveals; horizontal moldings define a broad band of wall between shelving and the coved ceilings, suggestive of the architects' Prairie School manner. Moldings, a simple oak mantle, and green tile facing cover the chimney breast in the center of the south wall in the former adult reading room. Original oak library tables and chairs, and wicker arm chairs are still in use. Suspended florescent ceiling lights have been installed. The basement-level lecture room has been used as a children's library since 1974, when the walls were paneled and the ceilings were lowered; that remodeling was the only substantial change made to the building. The basement also includes a magazine room, storage, and custodial rooms.

The site on Fennimore's main commercial thoroughfare is open and well-tended. To the rear (east) of the building, the neighborhood is residential, while small-scale (largely altered) older commercial buildings lie to the north, south, and opposite the library.

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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1923¹ **Builder/Architect** Claude & Starck¹

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Mediterranean-Classical Dwight T. Parker Public Library in Fennimore is architecturally significant as a fine representative of early twentieth-century Period design and of the small-scale library (usually Carnegie) type of construction. The careful proportions, quality materials, and the character of the interior reveal the predilections of its architects Louis W. Claude and Edward F. Starck, Wisconsin architects well-known for both Prairie School and small library designs. Further, the library certainly figures among the most significant of the small number of potential historic resources surveyed in the small Wisconsin city of Fennimore.

With features typical of both early twentieth-century Wisconsin libraries and of its designers, the Dwight T. Parker library is a fine composition incorporating elements of Neoclassical and Mediterranean modes. Crisp terra cotta details and the red tile roof effectively accent the simple brick form; inside, clean wall surfaces with oak moldings and appointments and the tile fireplace offer a simple but comfortable environment evocative of the Prairie School leanings of architects Claude & Starck. Active from 1894-1929, the Madison firm established a state-wide reputation for the design of small libraries, many of which were designed in the Prairie style; those and other types of commissions figure among the best Prairie School works in Wisconsin. Partner Louis Ward Claude (1868-1951) was a graduate of the general science 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 F. Starck (1868-19??), after completing high school, apprenticed with well-known Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix, Handy & Cady of Chicago, and David R. Jones of Madison. Claude & Starck works listed in the National Register include libraries in Wisconsin Dells (1912), Evansville (1908), Tomah (1916), Merrill (1910), Durand (1907), and Baraboo (1903); and the Lincoln School (1915), William Collins House (1911), George Lougee House (1907), and Adolphe H. Kayser House (1902), all in Madison.

Historical Background

At an October 1922 meeting of the women who maintained the local library, announcement of a proposal to construct a library building "came as a complete surprise to all present."² Since its establishment when the town was organized in 1849, the growing collection had been kept in a room at the Methodist Church or at the old Fennimore House.³ The donor of the building, "well-known banker" Dwight T. Parker, intended the building, planned "with an adequate site," to be "one of the beautiful points of interest in the city of Fennimore."⁴ When the city accepted title to the property at its completion in 1924, it agreed to provide an annual appropriation for support and

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Cauffman, Betty Lou, et. al., Fennimore-Then and Now, 1830-1980, Josten Printers, 1980.

Fennimore Times, 1922.

/Prairie School Review, Vol. XIV, 1981.

Orr, Gordon D., Jr., FAIA, "Louis W. Claude: Madison Architect of the Prairie School."

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Fennimore

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	15	6	9	11	2	10	15	4	17	6	11	4	11	10
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 1, Lots 2 and 3, Byerly's Addition.

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By (continued)

name/title Diane H. Filipowicz/Architectural Historian

organization State Historical Society of Wisconsin date October 1982

street & number 816 State Street telephone 608/262-2732

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 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

Richard Mueney

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

date 1/24/83

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 3/10/83

J. Nelson Byrum
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Dwight T. Parker Public Library, Fennimore, Grant County, Wis.
Continuation sheet

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maintenance; at his death in 1934, Parker added a trust fund of \$10,000 to his original gift of \$35,000 for the building's construction.⁵ With the depletion of those funds, the city assumed the total cost of operation.

Parker, born in Lancaster in 1856, was a Fennimore resident from 1895-1934.⁶ He was raised in nearby Boscobel, and graduated from Beloit College and the University of Wisconsin. Parker was a friend of Robert M. LaFollete and "a pioneer in the Progressive movement in the state."⁷ An organizer of the State Bank of Fennimore in 1895 and its president in 1896, Parker was later appointed to the State Banking Commission in 1923.⁸ He served as Fennimore village president from 1916-18, and was "connected with many local business enterprises."⁹

¹ Blueprints.

² Fennimore Times, Wednesday, October 11, 1922.

³ Fennimore Then and Now, 1980, p. 122.

⁴ Fennimore Times, Wednesday, October 11, 1922.

⁵ Fennimore Then and Now, p. 122.

⁶ (Madison) Capitol Times, December 1, 1934.

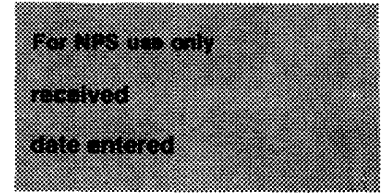
⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Fennimore Times, Wednesday, May 16, 1923.

⁹ (Madison) Capitol Times, December 1, 1934.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Dwight T. Parker Public Library, Fennimore, Grant County, Wis.

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Form Prepared By (continued)

Research Assistance by:

Betty Lou Cauffman/Director
Dwight T. Parker Public Library
925 Lincoln Avenue
Fennimore

January 1982
608/822-6294
Wisconsin 53809