

HISTORIC NAME: Mankato Public Library and Reading Room

COUNTY: Blue Earth

MAY 20 1980
JUL 28 1980

CURRENT NAME:

CITY/TWP.: Mankato

LEGAL DESC.: City of Mankato, Lots 7 and 8, Block 27.

ADDRESS: 120 South Broad

CLASSIFICATION:	CONDITION:	SIGNIFICANCE:	THEME/S:
Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Excellent _____	Local <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Primary <u>Education</u>
Structure _____	Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	State _____	Secondary <u>Architecture</u>
Object _____	Fair _____	National _____	Others _____
District _____	Deteriorated _____		

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes No _____ Restricted
 VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes No _____
 OCCUPIED: Yes No _____

PRESENT USE:
 Art Center, Office Space

DATE CONSTRUCTED: 1902-03

ORIGINAL USE: Library

ORIGINAL OWNER: City of Mankato

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Jardine, Kent, & Jardine,
 New York
 J.B. Nelson & Co., Mankato

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: City of Mankato
 City Hall
 Mankato, MN 56001

ACREAGE: Less than one acre

LOCAL CONTACT/ORG.: Blue Earth County Historical Society
 606 South Broad, Mankato, Minnesota 56001

UTM REFERENCE:
 Mankato West 7.5
 15 / 420000 / 4890560

FORM PREPARED BY: Dennis Gimmetstad
 DATE: January 1980

DESCRIPTION:

The Mankato Public Library and Reading Room is located on South Broad Street on the edge of the downtown commercial district.

The one-story symmetrical building, constructed in 1902-03, is executed in the Renaissance Revival style. The main portion of the structure is a flat-roofed rectangle with a central entrance pavilion facing South Broad Street. The base is constructed of rusticated limestone with a smooth-faced water table. The building is given a strong horizontal emphasis by a wide cornice and low brick parapet and by the regularly-spaced repetitive semi-circular arches over paired windows on the front and sides. Carved stone is used on the entrance pavilion for a name plate and for trim on the fenestration, including two rectangular windows with diamond-shaped panes, two roundels, and a large arch over the main entrance culminating in a console with garland swag. Entrance ornamentation also includes a cartouche with flanking consoles over the main doorway. Ornamental use of brick includes relief banding on the entrance pavilion and simulated quoining at the corners of the main section.

The rear portion of the building consists of a large semi-circular wing nearly as wide as the main section. This area is of similar materials as the front and side facades, and includes large regularly-spaced rectangular windows.

The basic features of the interior of the library remain intact. The upper floor is currently vacant; the lower level is in use as a community art center.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Mankato Public Library and Reading Room is significant as a component unit of the Carnegie Library phenomena and for its imposing design and extensive use of local materials. The City of Mankato received a Carnegie grant in 1901 and agreed to furnish a site and maintenance for the building. According to an article in the Mankato Free Press, Carnegie's representative on the project hired the New York firm of Jardine, Kent, and Jardine to design the building despite protest by the Western League of Architects, who advocated a local architect. However, the local contracting firm of J.B. Nelsen and Company was hired for the construction, and the stone, cement, lime, and brick used in the building were locally produced. The Renaissance Revival design of the building is a departure from the usual columned Neo-Classic style of most Minnesota Carnegie buildings, and the ordered detailing of the unaltered exterior make the building an important element in the rapidly changing fringe of the downtown Mankato commercial district. The building functioned as a focus of community educational activity until a new regional library facility was constructed in the mid-1970s.

MAY 20 1986

Mankato Public Library and Reading Room

Mankato, Minnesota
Blue Earth County

Bibliography

Hughes, Thomas. History of Blue Earth County, and Biographies of Its Leading Citizens. Chicago: Middle West Publishing Company 1909(?)
pp. 217-18

Larson, Drew. "Stylistic and Structural Trends in Selected Mankato Commercial and Public Architecture from 1890 to 1920." Unpublished M.S. Thesis, Mankato State University, 1971. pp. 39-40.