

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

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by **SHPO**

**Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bloomfield Public Library

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 107 North Columbia [N/A] not for publication

city or town Bloomfield [N/A] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Davis code 051 zip code 52537

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally see continuation sheet for additional comments).

Steve King 18 Aug 2015
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historical Society of Iowa

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Edson H. Beall 10-13-15
Date of Action

Bloomfield Public Library
Name of Property

Davis County, IA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/Library

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/Library

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Tudor Revival
Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other STONE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Bloomfield Public Library
Name of Property

Davis County, IA
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1913-1965

Significant Dates

1913

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Wetherell, Frank E.

Ennis, C.W.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Bloomfield Public Library
Name of Property

Davis County, IA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 [115] [51419121410] [415111141319]
Zone Easting Northing

2 [115] [01010101010] [01010101010]
Zone Easting Northing

3 [15] [0000000] [00000000]

4 [15] [0000000] [00000000]
 See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant mollynaumann@outlook.com

organization Bloomfield Public Library Board of Trustees date February 2015

street & number 167 West Alta Vista telephone 641-777-3318

city or town Ottumwa state IA zip code 52501-1437

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Bloomfield Public Library Board of Trustees ATTN: Beth Sullivan, Library Director

street & number 107 North Columbia telephone 641-664-2209

city or town Bloomfield state IA zip code 52537

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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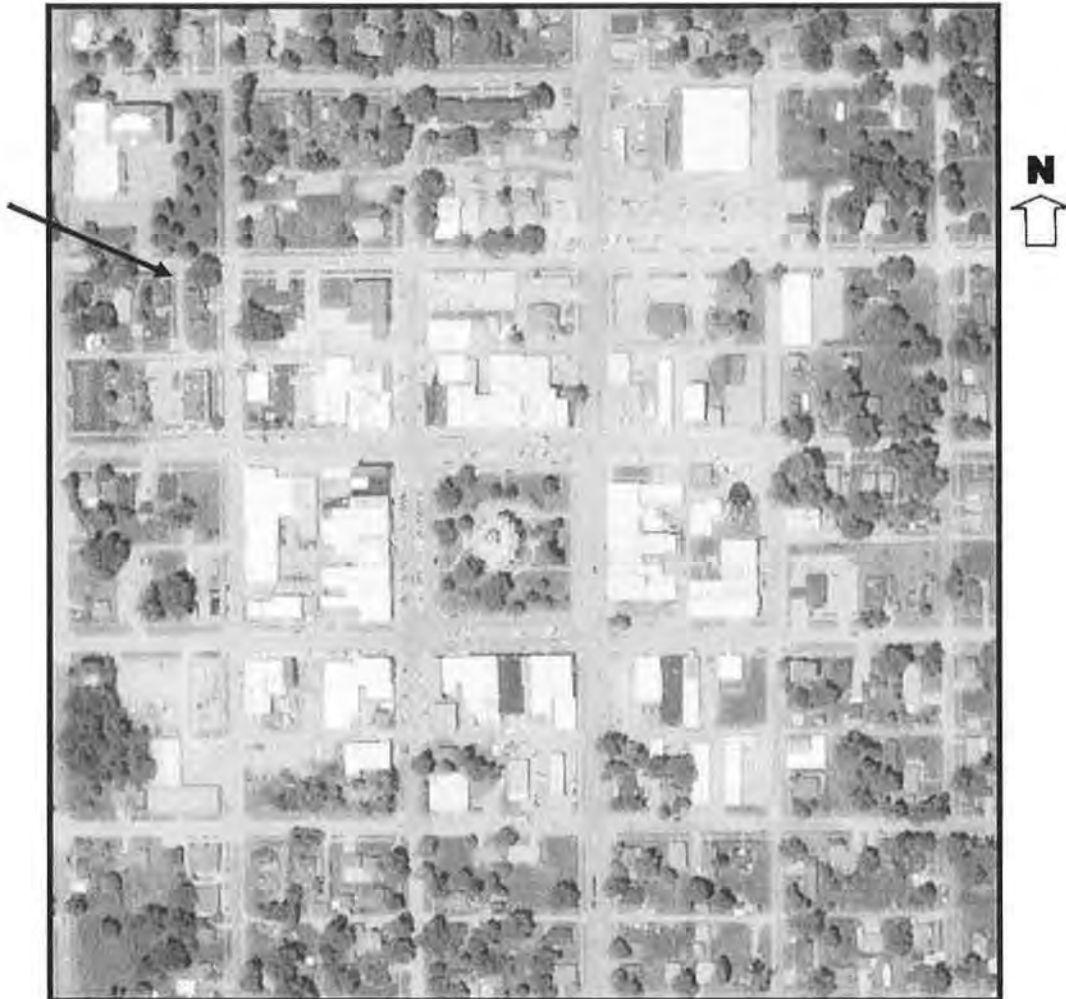
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Bloomfield Public Library
Davis County, Iowa

Section number 7 Page 1

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The Bloomfield Public Library (1913) is located at 107 North Columbia Street, one block west and one block north of the Bloomfield Public Square (NRHP), across the street from the former elementary school.



2013 aerial map of Bloomfield
Courthouse is seen in center of the Square
Arrow indicates Bloomfield Public Library
Large white roof building northwest of library is former school
(Iowa Geographic Map Server)

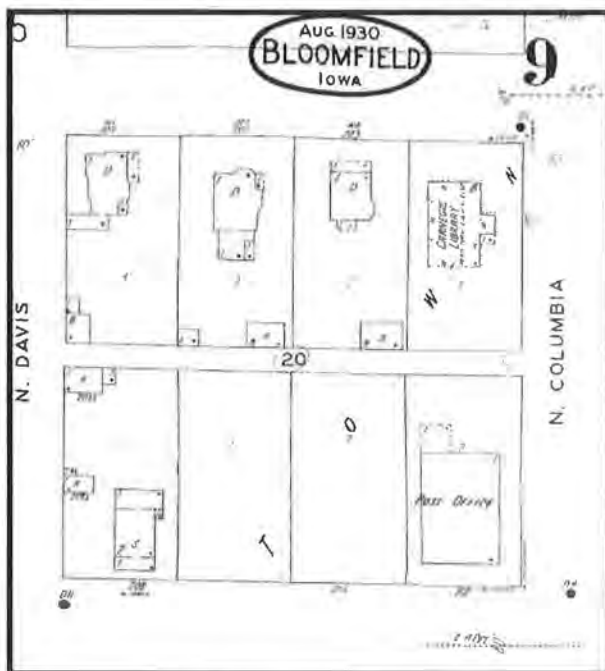
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Bloomfield Public Library
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The building is located on the west side of the street facing east. It was originally surrounded by a residential neighborhood on all sides. However, sometime between 1930 and 1948 the U.S. Post Office was constructed on the lot to the south. With this exception, the neighborhood remains residential.



Left: 1930-48 Sanborn map shows the relation between the library and post office.

Right: Detail of 2013 aerial photograph shows library surrounded by green lawn with curving ramp on the NE corner.

Exterior

The library was designed by Frank E. Wetherell of the Des Moines firm of Wetherell and Gage. This single story brick building rests on a high brick foundation. It is rectangular in shape, measuring fifty-seven feet by thirty-five feet with side gable entry. It features a symmetrical façade on the east elevation. The exterior is of tapestry brick ranging in color from light orange, to orange, brown, and charcoal, with limestone trim. In the "Specifications" Wetherell wrote

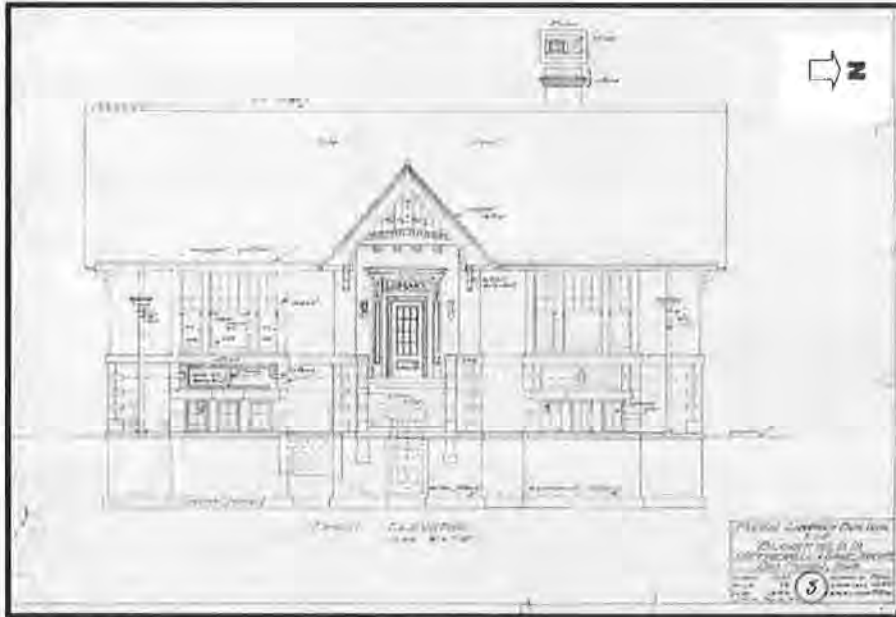
All exposed brick walls shall be faced with the best quality cherry red sand mould brick, all to be laid in Flemish Bond with dark headers. Every sixth course shall be bonded to the backing with full length headers. Four shades of brick will be thoroughly mixed and used for the stretchers and the headers shall be the darkest shade that will work with the others. (*Specifications for the Bloomfield Public Library, August 10, 1912*)

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Bloomfield Public Library
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East elevation (façade) drawn by Frank E Wetherell, August 10, 1912
(Courtesy of Bloomfield Public Library)

The front entrance projects out eight feet, creating a vestibule on the interior. Stone steps lead up to the entry door which is capped with a classical cornice supported by brackets. The gable of this vestibule features a Tudor Revival vergeboard with pendent, with a half-timbered gable end. The entrance is flanked by a large triple window on each side. These windows feature a broad center section, and all three sections have multi-light top sash. The limestone beltcourse serves as the sill for the façade windows. These windows extend out from the wall by seven inches, thereby providing corners that can be enhanced by stone quoins. Directly below the façade windows is a rectangular panel of herringbone brick patterning. Below this decorative panel are three rectangular basement windows with a very plain stone surround. All four corners of the building, and the two corners of the entrance vestibule, have limestone quoins from the beltcourse to ground level. Just to the left (south) of the front entrance is a set of steps leading down to an entrance to the basement. These steps are now covered (protected) by a shed roof. Originally the building featured a red tile roof with exposed rafter ends, but the tile was replaced at some point by the current roof of red asphalt shingles. In 1995 an ill-designed ramp providing handicapped accessibility was constructed at the northeast corner.

Both the north and south elevations feature decorative Tudor vergeboards with half-timbering. There are three windows on the main level of the south elevation and two on the north (due to the location of the stairway and side entrance). These windows are almost square, with twin multi-light sash, and feature a brick segmental arch with stone keystone, corner blocks and sills. The limestone

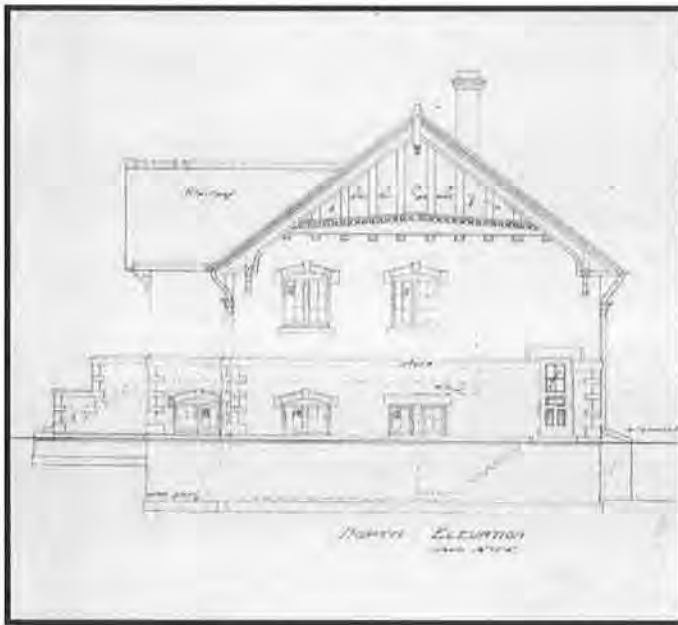
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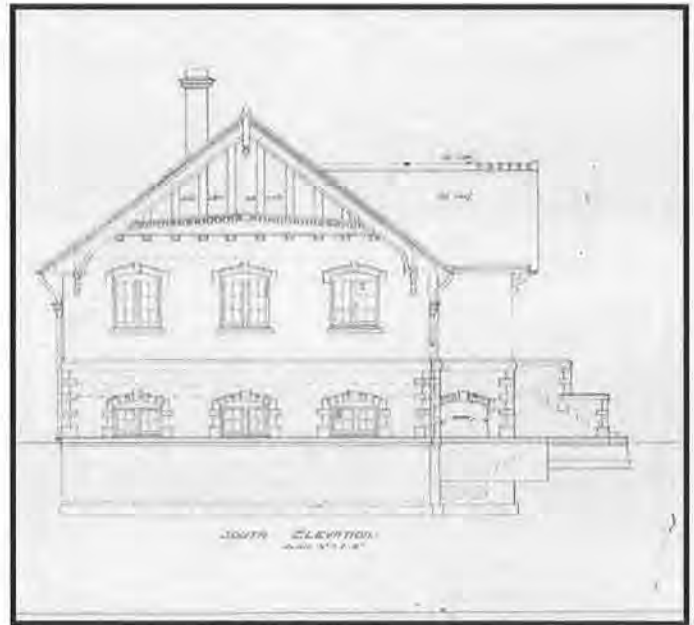
Bloomfield Public Library
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beltcourse continues around all four sides of the building, with the quoined corners highly visible on the sides and rear of the building. A limestone watertable is found on the side and rear elevations, creating the sills for the basement windows. These windows on the south side are more elaborate than those on the north, with the south windows having not only a brick segmental arched top with stone key and corner blocks, but also limestone surrounds. On the north side the east window has the segmental arched top, but the window to the west has a simple stone lintel, as does the side door.



North Elevation



South Elevation

Drawings by Frank E Wetherell, August 10, 1912
(Courtesy of Bloomfield Public Library)

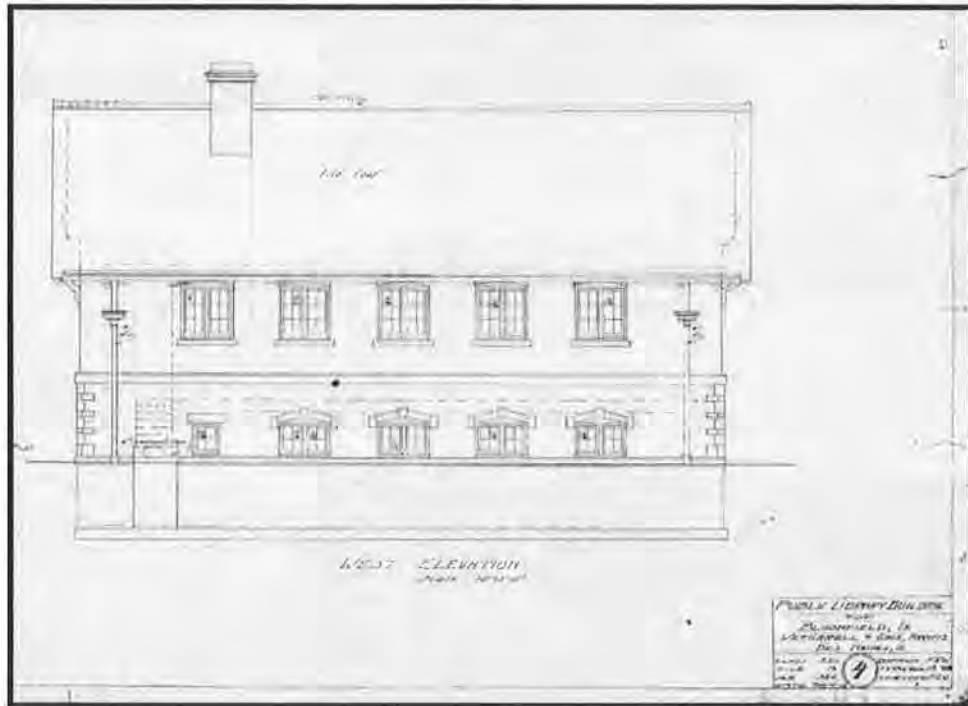
The rear (west) elevation features five windows on each level, with those on the main level having flat, unadorned tops, while those on the basement level have the segmental arches with limestone keystone and corner blocks. The northern-most basement window has a simple stone lintel. The limestone beltcourse continues to separate the basement and main levels. A brick chimney pierces the roof on the rear elevation.

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West (rear) Elevation
Drawing by Frank E Wetherell, August 10, 1912
(Courtesy of Bloomfield Public Library)

Interior

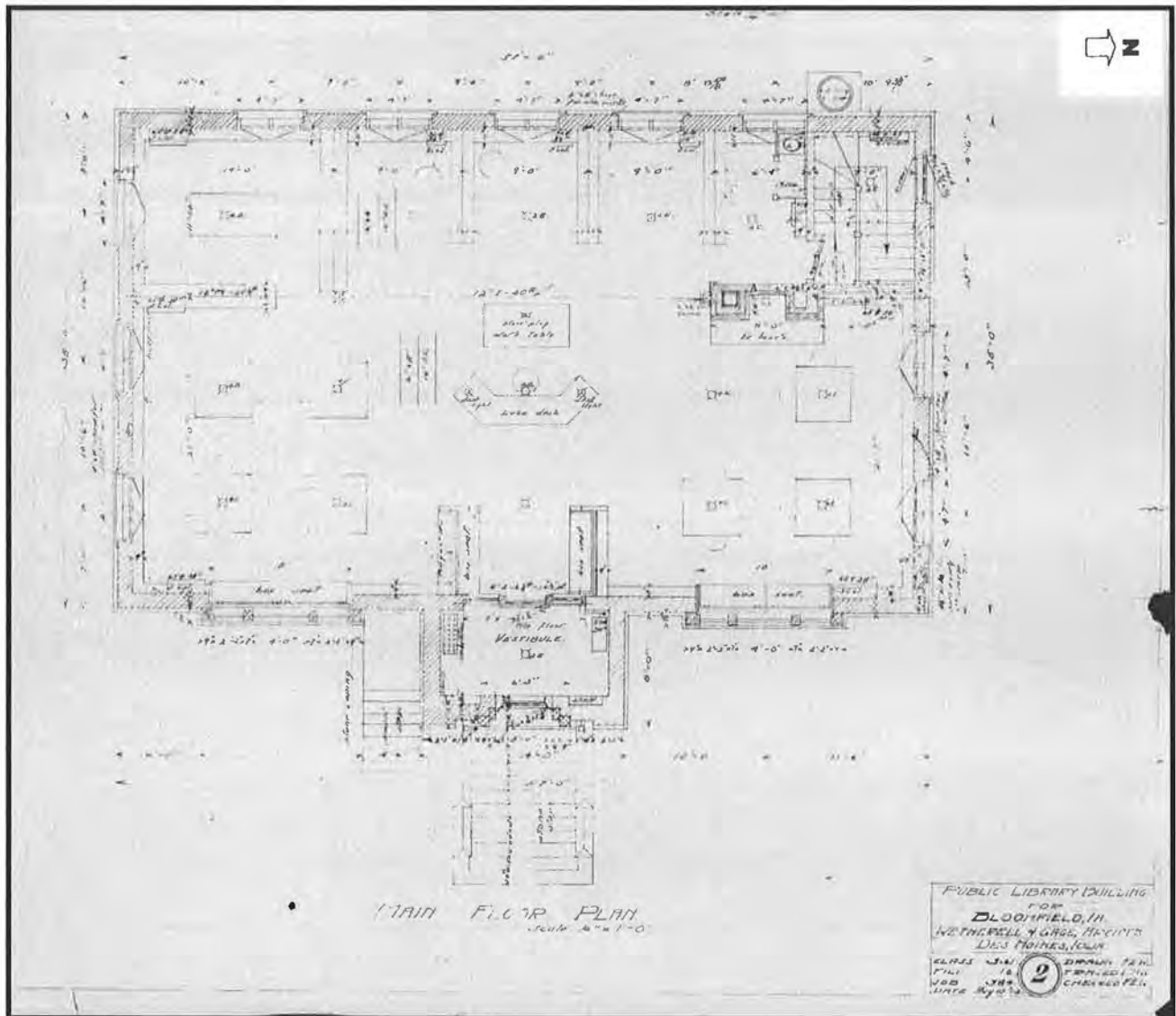
The interior of the main floor is one large room with stairs to the lower level located in the northwest corner. Just as the front entrance is the major focus of the façade, that entrance is also highlighted on the interior. The door from the vestibule into the library proper features a very simple cornice across the multi-light sidelights and door, with built-in bookcases and benches on each side. The circulation desk is located in the center of the room facing the entrance. All oak trim on this level has been maintained, including the circulation desk. Oak crown moulding surrounds the room at ceiling level, and a wood beam runs across the middle of the space from north to south. This beam is supported by square wood piers with simple capitals. An oak picture rail surrounds the room at the top of the windows level. An office for the director has been created near the northwest corner using partitions that do not extend to the ceiling. The north half of the room is anchored by the brick fireplace located in the center, facing east. Vertical oak framing defines bays, or corners along the walls. Original shelving is found in the front half of the room, while seven sets of new shelving are located along the west wall.

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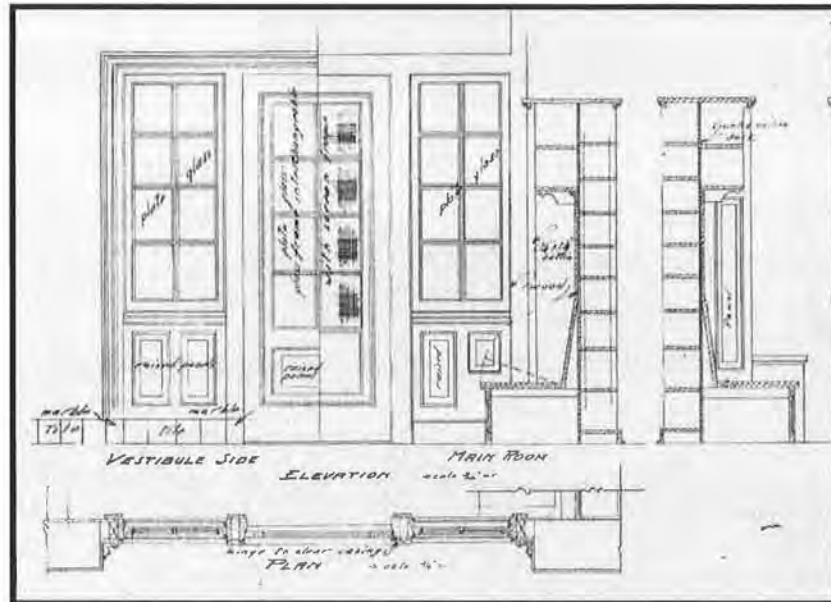
Drawing of main floor
Note location of circulation desk, fireplace, shelving, tables and chairs
Drawing by Frank E Wetherell, August 10, 1912
(Courtesy of Bloomfield Public Library)

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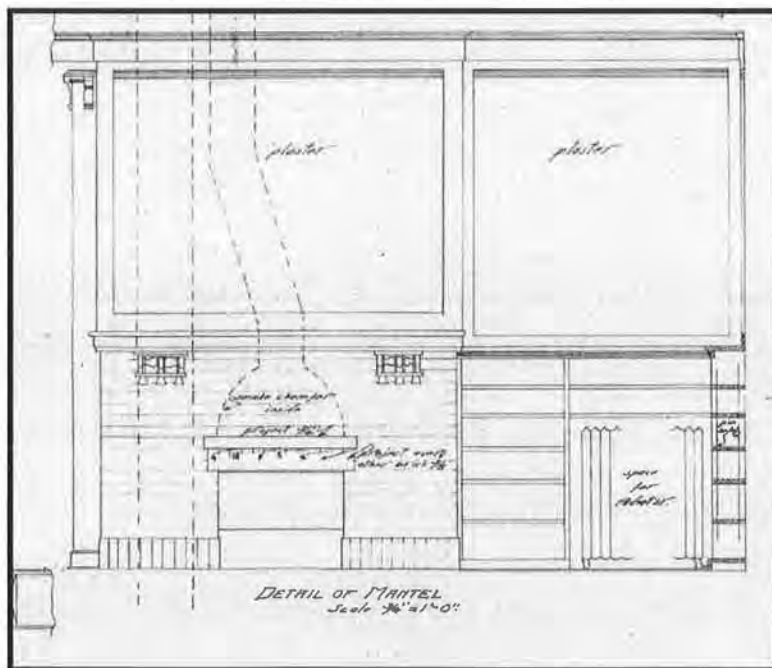
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Frank E Wetherell drawings of interior details, August 10, 1912
Entrance at top, fireplace and mantel at bottom
(Courtesy of Bloomfield Public Library)

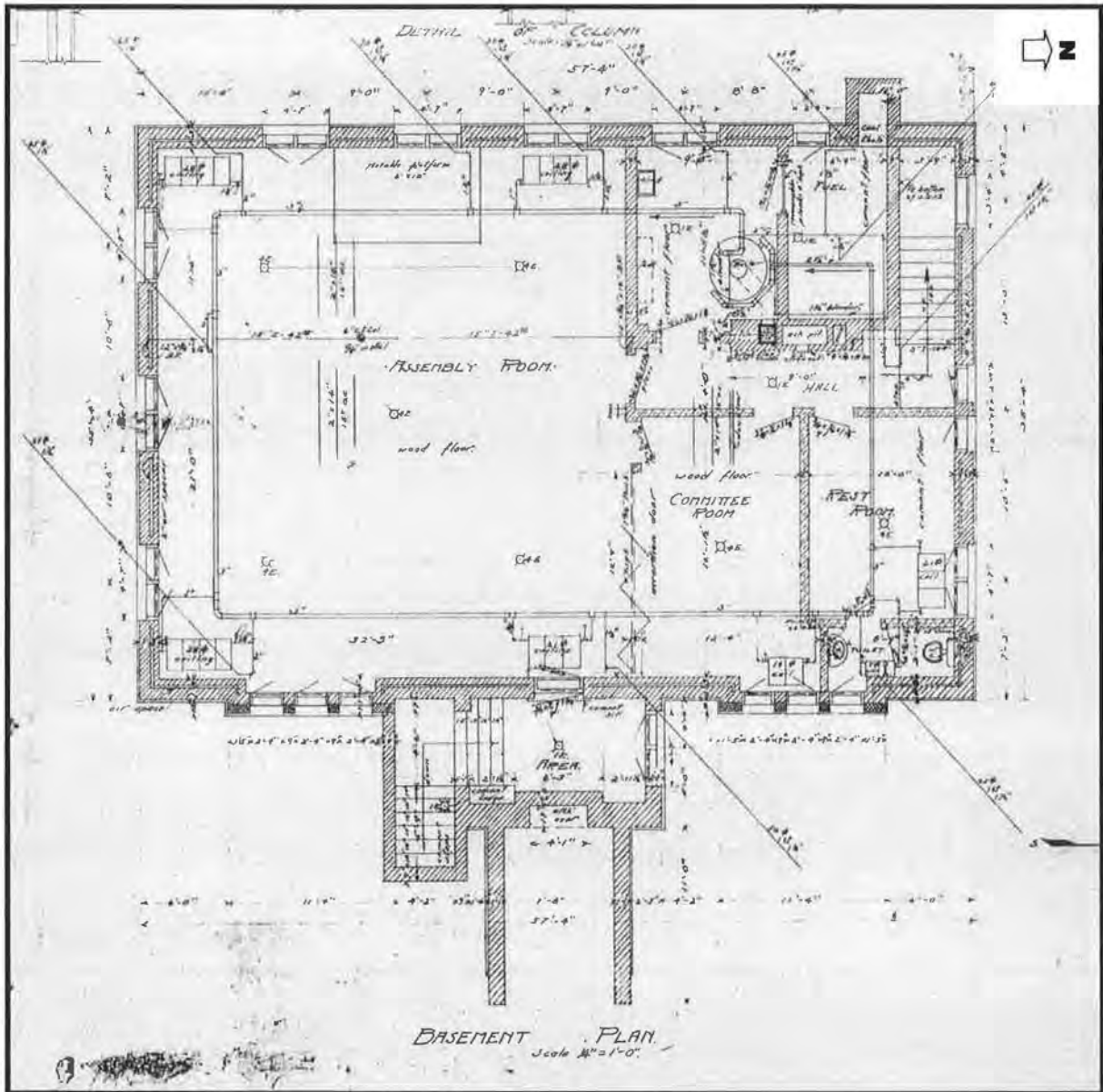


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Drawing of basement floor plan
Frank E Wetherell Drawing, August 10, 1912
(Courtesy of Bloomfield Public Library)

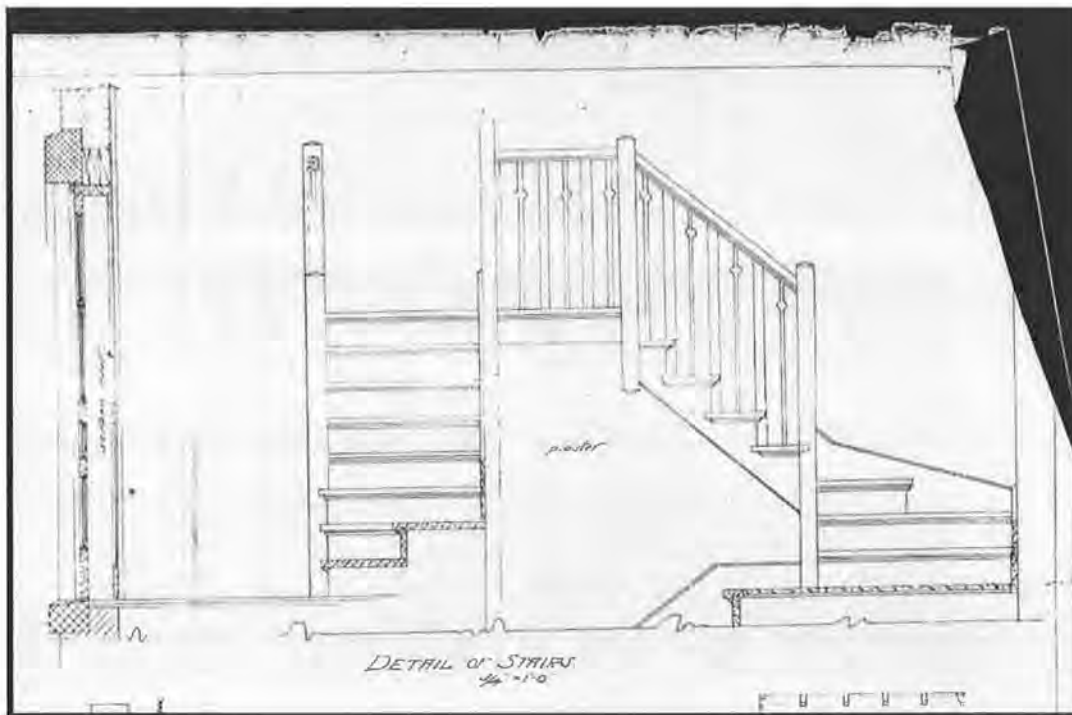
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As with most libraries of the period, the basement was designed to contain not only the necessary mechanical systems and the restroom, but also meeting space. The meeting area could be accessed from the exterior under the main entrance, and by a door located on the north elevation. Today the area originally designated as "Assembly Room" is occupied by the children's department, and a portion of the room has been set aside as office space with pegboard panels. The exterior walls of the room are covered with modern paneling, perhaps with insulation behind the panels. The room shown as "Committee Room" with a folding door separating it from the larger room, is now a separate room used primarily for storage. The restroom remains in the northeast corner, and the boiler room remains along the west wall. Stairs in the northwest corner lead to an exit door on the landing on the north side, and continue upstairs to the main floor. Wetherell designed the railing for these stairs as carefully as he designed the entrance area. The original railing remains in place today.



Detail of stairway railing
Frank E Wetherell Drawing, August 19, 1912
(Courtesy of Bloomfield Public Library)

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Integrity

The integrity of this library has been maintained to a remarkable degree, meeting all seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service.

Location. This building is located on the original lot purchased by the City of Bloomfield in 1912 for this purpose.

Design. The original design of this building is clearly visible and would be readily recognized by both the architect, Frank E. Wetherell, and the builder, C.W. Ennis. The intrusive handicapped accessible ramp will be removed during the future rehabilitation of the building. Plans have not yet been drawn for a new ADA accessible entrance or for replacing the door leading to the current ramp.

Setting. The setting of this building remains the same, surrounded by a residential neighborhood, with a former elementary school building across the street to the north. The only real change would be the construction of the U.S. Post Office on the lot to the south.

Materials. The original materials are highly visible except that original flooring has been covered with carpet, and the interior walls of the children's room in the basement have been paneled.

Workmanship. The existence of this building in its present condition speaks to the quality of the original workmanship. Decorative details on both the interior and exterior remain in place.

Feeling. This building illustrates the eclecticism of design styles often seen on early twentieth century buildings, a blend of Classical Revival and Tudor Revival, with the symmetry of the former.

Association. This building is typical of many Carnegie-funded libraries in smaller communities: Brick exterior with limestone trim, high foundation, and symmetrical façade with stone steps leading to the entrance.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Bloomfield Public Library (1913) at 107 North Columbia is one of 101 Carnegie libraries in the state of Iowa and is locally significant under Criterion A as an illustration of the importance of the public library movement in terms of education, and as a leveler of social class by providing services to all regardless of social position or finances. Additionally, it provides insight into what a community faced when it was decided to build a public library. It is of local significance under Criterion C as an example of typical library design found in small county seat communities executed in brick with limestone trim, and as one of twelve public libraries in Iowa that were designed by well-known architect Frank E. Wetherell of Des Moines.

Criterion A:

Until the late 19th century, if you wanted to borrow a book from a library in an Iowa community you needed to be a member of the Library Association or to pay a subscription fee to the library. It was the women who usually took the lead in establishing a library in their community. They would hold fund-raisers, make pleas for donations of books, and staff the library reading rooms.

The first government supported library in the U.S. opened in Boston in 1848. The public library movement spread, and the American Library Association published the first issue of *Library Journal* at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. In 1884 Melvil Dewey established the first U.S. library school at Columbia University. (Krutzy, p 110)

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie watched this slow development of the public library as an institution.

Early in his extraordinary life, Carnegie wrote of the obligation of the wealthy to use their surplus income to benefit fellow citizens (eventually he gave away ninety percent of his own wealth). Carnegie had definite ideas about how the money should be dispersed. In an essay titled "The Best Fields for Philanthropy," he listed libraries as second only to universities among seven areas worthy of donation by the wealthy. True to his word, Carnegie eventually spent forty million dollars constructing library buildings in the United States. (*Ibid.*, pp111-112)

Although he funded some public libraries prior to 1898 (including the Fairfield, Iowa Public Library, 1892-93, that was the first Carnegie library west of Pennsylvania), the major funding period of the Carnegie Foundation was 1898 to 1917. The general pattern of providing funds for a local library began with a citizen writing a letter to the Foundation requesting funds for such a building. James Bertram, Carnegie's personal secretary, would reply and explain the conditions that had to be met before a grant could be made. These were: the community had to provide a site for the library; the city had to guarantee that they would provide a certain amount of money (usually ten percent of the grant)

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for maintenance annually; and, the city agreed that it would be a free public library, open to all. After, 1908, a sketch plan of the proposed building that indicated a workable plan also had to be approved.

When the Iowa Library Commission was established in 1900 there were 48 free public libraries in Iowa. By 1903 that number had grown to 73, an increase of 25 in just three years. 1903, which was the peak year for Carnegie grants nation-wide, was also the peak year for Carnegie grants to Iowa communities. Of the one hundred and one Carnegie libraries funded in the state of Iowa twenty-two, nearly one quarter, were funded that year. These communities were: Algona, Ames, Carroll, Chariton, Charles City, Cherokee, Council Bluffs, Glenwood, Indianola, Iowa Falls, Jefferson, Le Mars, Marengo, Marion, Monticello, Mount Vernon, Perry, Shenandoah, Spencer, Storm Lake, Vinton, and Waverly. (Klingensmith, 8-4) Ultimately, Andrew Carnegie funded the construction of 1,679 libraries in 1,412 towns across the United States. Almost half of the 1,679 Carnegie libraries in the U.S. are in the Midwest. With 101 Carnegie libraries, Iowa ranks sixth in the number of Carnegie libraries constructed.

Unlike many communities, in Bloomfield it was not women that initiated the campaign for a library. In November 1911 the Commercial Club of Bloomfield (a relatively new organization) discussed what they believed were Bloomfield's greatest needs: A creamery, an auditorium, and a free public library. It is interesting that a creamery and a library were treated as equals. Several months earlier the club had applied to Andrew Carnegie for funding to build a library. On November 21, 1911 Bloomfield Mayor H.C. Leach received the following letter:

Dear Sir,

Responding to your communications on behalf of Bloomfield, - If the City agrees by Resolution of Council to maintain a Free Public Library at a cost of not less than One Thousand Dollars a year, and provides a suitable site for the bilding [sic], Mr. Carnegie will be glad to giv [sic] Ten Thousand Dollars to erect a Free Public Library Bilding [sic] for Bloomfield.

It should be noted that the amount indicates is to cover the cost of Library Bilding [sic] complete, redy [sic] for occupancy and for the purpose intended. Before any expenditure on bilding [sic] or plans is incurred, Mr. Carnegie's approval of proposed plans should be secured, to obtain which plans and sketch plans for inspection.

Respectfully yours,
(s) Jas. Bertram
P. Secretary

There were several perceived benefits from a free public library: that it would help provide a democratic education for all; that it would provide a good moral example; and, there was always the strong sense of basic civic pride. A special election was necessary as the people of Bloomfield needed to show that they were willing (and wanted) to have a library. The election was set for December 30, 1911 and a public notice was published in the newspaper. (*Bloomfield Democrat*, Nov 30, 1911) A public meeting was scheduled at the courthouse to hear Miss Tyler, secretary of the Iowa State Library

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Commission, explain why a library was important to the community. Following her presentation Miss Tyler took questions from the audience, some of which were surprising. A sampling of the questions includes the following.

Q – Is the gift of Mr. Carnegie absolute?

A – Yes. As soon as the building is completed it becomes the absolute property of the city.

Q – Does Mr. Carnegie get a commission on the sale of books for the library?

A – The question is ridiculous. Mr. Carnegie has absolutely nothing to do with the purchase of books in anyway. That is entirely a matter for your city library commission.

Q – Does the Library commission get a salary?

A – No. The statutes of Iowa are mandatory that the commission shall act without compensation.

Q – Do high school students use public libraries?

A – Yes, indeed. The use of books by high school students is almost universal. It improves the high school course very much.

Q – Suppose that the people of a town desire to close the library after it has been in operation for a few years. Can they do so?

A – Yes. The library is the property of the city, and the city can do with it as it pleases.

Q – Will a levy of \$1000.00 a year be sufficient to meet the expenses of a Carnegie library at Bloomfield?

A – Yes. The town of Lorenz, Ia. Has a Carnegie library and their tax levy only nets them \$380.00 a year. Of course the expense of a library at a small town like Lorenz will be much less than in a town the size of Bloomfield. (*Bloomfield Democrat*, Dec 14, 1911.)

Despite the information provided by Miss Tyler, rumors continued to fly around Bloomfield, most saying that libraries were not good for their towns and many towns wished they could get rid of them. Based on these rumors, contact was made with several Iowa towns, and even Greencastle, Indiana, asking what their experiences had been with their public libraries. Belle S. Hanna, Librarian, Greencastle, Indiana, responded to a letter from Bloomfield City Attorney Ellsworth Rominger in part, as follows:

Greencastle, Ind.

Dec. 13. 1911

Dear Sir:

Your letter just received, and read with great surprise. We surely would like to know where your influential citizen got his information. Certainly not from anyone who knew the facts of the case as to our library. The truth is our library is one of the most popular institutions of our town and the one in which the most pride is taken. If there has ever been any objection to it, we have never heard of it. It is used so much for general reading, for school and high school work, and for college work, that our citizens do not think they could do without it. Lately it has enlarged its influence by sending our cases of books in the schools of the township and both teachers and pupils are delighted with the plan. It is now a free library for every citizen of the township and many books are being loaned to the families of the surrounding country. (*Bloomfield Democrat*, Dec 21, 1911)

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Two Bloomfield gentlemen, E.S. Stockham and Frank Young, made a trip to Ottumwa to meet with a member of the Ottumwa Library Board, Mr. Heidel, and to ask him about some of the negative comments swirling around Bloomfield. He assured them that Carnegie had given the \$50,000 to the City of Ottumwa to construct the library, and had asked only that the city provide a lot for it and \$5000 per year in operating expenses. At no time was the idea of buying books from Carnegie ever mentioned, and he had never contacted them after the library was completed. "Mr. Heidel said that the library was patronized by all classes of people. It is used very much by the public school and high school students and considered a great help to them." (*Bloomfield Democrat*, Dec 21, 1911)

On December 26 a final meeting was held at the courthouse to discuss the question of building a library. Stockham and Young reported on their visit to Ottumwa, and letters were read from libraries across the state (as well as the one from Ms. Hanna in Indiana), speaking positively about their libraries and the important role they were playing in their communities. (*Bloomfield Democrat*, Dec 28, 1911)

After all the negativity and public meetings, the first issue of the *Democrat* in the New Year carried a headline "The Library Election: Carries for Library by a Majority of 291 Votes." The ordinance establishing the public library and library board (commission) was approved by the city council in early January 1912, and members of the board were appointed shortly thereafter. S.F. McConnell was selected to serve as the first board president. One of the other new board members took her job very seriously. Belle H. Steckel was vacationing in Galveston, Texas, and was staying just a half block from their library in which she spent an hour or two every day. In April 1912 she wrote McConnell,

I am having a rare privilege of studying our new problem. If you have come to a conclusion about the site of the library this hint is superfluous – otherwise a building built with the special thought of library purposes is much more desirable than remodeling an old home. The librarian must have over sight of the reading room, the children's room and the book shelves and this is made possible only by a proper arrangement of the interior.

There are many more complications than I thought and a library to be efficient must be started right. I have had access here to handbooks on libraries and to the ear of their fine librarian and find that training and special fitness is absolutely necessary for a Librarian. All the books have to be classified – which is a difficult and expensive process so it wants to be done correctly at first. The librarian here, a man, said "don't choose anybody because she is a relative of somebody on the board or don't choose from among your applicants unless there is special fitness and efficiency." It seems to me after the building the most important thing is the choice of the Librarian – and that ought to be done in time that she may attend summer school. You notice I say she, the consensus of opinion being that women are much more faithful and willing to tend to the details of the trust, especially in a smaller library.

.....

I hope I don't appear officious in writing this letter but I am getting more and more interested in the matter and consequently have no desire to be a figurehead even if I am over a thousand miles from home. I expect to reach home the 28th and will bring as many pointers as I can. (Letter from Belle Steckel, Apr 14, 1912)

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Bloomfield Public Library
Davis County, Iowa

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The newspaper articles and Steckel's letter provide rare insight into the many questions and concerns that towns faced when confronted with the idea of a public library. The negative attitude towards the establishment of a library in Bloomfield is not something that has been found to this degree in other Iowa communities. Whether this is an accurate assessment or whether newspapers in other towns failed to record it is unknown.

In May 1912 the Library Board began considering various sites for the new building, and ultimately recommended to the city council that the lot known as the Rawlings property should be purchased. "This property is on the corner of West Locust and Columbia streets, just across the street from the public school building." (*Bloomfield Democrat*, May 30, 1912)

The Des Moines firm of Wetherell and Gage was selected as the architect for the building with construction beginning in the fall, continuing through the winter of 1912 and spring 1913



Bloomfield Public Library under construction, 1912
(Courtesy of Bloomfield Public Library)

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National Park Service

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The library was formally opened on August 8, 1913, with a reception in the building during the afternoon and the Library Dedication Ceremony at the Methodist Episcopal Church that evening, complete with the requisite speeches and music provided by the Harmonic Quintet. The major address, "The Library as a Factor in Education," was given by Prof. H.C. Brown.

One year later the following editorial appeared in the *Bloomfield Democrat*.

Does a Library Pay?

After a year's experience with their new library at Bloomfield, the *Bloomfield Democrat* has the following concerning its work and influence:

At the time the Bloomfield Library was built there was considerable discussion as to whether the venture would be a profitable one to the city. It was generally conceded that the city needed the library, and that it was a good thing to have. If the books were read. Some of our citizens thought that the books would not be generally used, and that the young people, the children of the school in particular, would not appreciate the opportunity of reading, free of charge, the world's best literature.

Last week Mrs. Hinkle, our librarian, published the first full year library report. We believe it answers all of the Doubting Thomases fully.

The number issued in twelve months was 7,749. The percentage of people taking out books during the year was 33 per cent of the population of Bloomfield. The total number of readers taking out books was 762. This is an average of more than ten books to the person.

Can anyone further question the advisability of conducting a free library in the light of these figures? (*Bloomfield Democrat*, no page, no date)

The library quickly became part of the community, with the assembly room in the basement being used by a number of organizations for their regular meetings. Among these groups were the Commercial Club (the initiator of the public library movement in Bloomfield), the Women's Civic League, W.C.T.U., Davis County Chautauqua Board, Boys' Department of the Y.M.C.A., Bloomfield Ministerial Association, and the Rural Mail Carriers' club. (*Des Moines Register*, Jun 23, 1916) During World Wars I and II these public rooms in the basement were used by the Red Cross as headquarters for sewing, knitting, etc. (*Ottumwa Courier*, Mar 5, 1958)

The location of the library, across the street from the elementary school, proved to be good for both teachers and students. Classes could come across the street for a project, and students could easily stop in the library on their way home. The use by children grew to the point that the children's department was moved downstairs into the Assembly Room. This location also provided an exterior entrance located under the front steps.

Between 1913 and 1958 there were only three librarians: Mary Hinkle (19 years), Florence Botta (24 years), and Mrs. John Sager who began in 1956. One Library Board member, Mrs. Buell McCash, served for 39 years, (1919-1958). The library collection grew over the years through gifts from

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Historic photographs of the Bloomfield Public Library
Above from 1923, below from 1946



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Bloomfield Public Library
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individuals as well as organizations. One of the first to donate shortly after the library opened was the Honorable J.B. Weaver, Jr of Des Moines who donated The Universal Anthology, thirty-three volumes containing stories of ancient, medieval and modern times, and a sixteen volume set of the works of Balzac. The Masons, Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias were among the organizations supporting the library over the years. By 1958 the total number of books loaned annually had risen to 8,495 by adults and 6,055 by children, for a total of 14,550, double the number from 1914. It was estimated that 66 percent of the population had a library card.

It is interesting to note that the library which had originally created so much disagreement within the community, became a destination for other communities around the state contemplating the building of such a facility.

Criterion C

Public library design had become somewhat standardized by 1912. The majority of public libraries were in county seat communities, and many were in towns of more than 25,000 population. The larger the community, the larger the library. Many, if not most, of the Carnegie libraries built across the country in the first decade of the twentieth century were Classical Revival or Neo-Classical in design. They usually were built on a high foundation and featured a symmetrical façade with a massive set of steps leading up to the front entrance. The material most often used for these was limestone, with both the material and the style re-creating the majesty of the ancient world. The libraries were built as free-standing structures and were often one of the most imposing buildings in town. As the size of the community diminished, so too did the size of the library and the building materials used. Brick became the material of choice in smaller communities. The trim varied from stone to wood, again dependent on the size of the town. As the twentieth century entered its second decade, additional styles were introduced in library design, such as the Tudor Revival elements found on the Bloomfield Public Library. However, the symmetry of classical design remained, as did the high foundation.

When the architectural firm of Wetherell and Gage was selected in the spring of 1912 to design the Bloomfield Public Library, Frank E. Wetherell took the lead in the design. Wetherell felt confident working with this building type as he had already designed several libraries across the state of Iowa, beginning in 1900 for the town of Corning. He then designed a building for his hometown of Oskaloosa in 1903, followed quickly by Winterset and Cherokee. 1912 found him designing libraries for both Bloomfield and the small town of Eldon. Most of his libraries were in county seat communities, but a few were built in much smaller towns such as Alden and Eldon. His early buildings followed the Classical Revival style typical in Carnegie libraries. By 1912 he was exploring different styles, but keeping to the symmetrical façade he had used earlier. The Bloomfield Library is a good example of this. He added Tudor details to an otherwise simple Classical design. While retaining the symmetrical façade with simple Classical cornice above the entrance, stone belt-course and water table with stone quoins, keystone and corner stones, he added the decorative vergeboards, half-timbering in the gable ends, and

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Bloomfield Public Library
Davis County, Iowa

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exposed rafter ends from a different style. The high foundation allowed a set of stone steps to lead up to the main entrance.

His use of Tudor Revival details on this building was in keeping with the growing popularity of the style across the country. While large Tudor residences were being constructed for wealthy patrons, the smaller English Cottage type was being used in middle class neighborhoods. The use of this style for a smaller library, located in a residential area was logical and helped the building blend into its surroundings. In an undated library publication/brochure, the Bloomfield building was described as being in the "cottage style." Although a boiler in the basement provided heating for the building, a fireplace was designed for the main floor to add to the "homey" atmosphere.

The decision to use tapestry brick for the exterior was another nod to current fashion. From the 1890s on brick of various colors became available. Many buildings were constructed using gray or buff colored brick. It became quite popular to mix the colors of brick, creating a "tapestry" effect. In the case of the Bloomfield Library, Wetherell specified that four colors of brick be selected, resulting in the light orange, orange, brown and charcoal tapestry that is found on the exterior. He had strong opinions on the color of mortar to be used as well. In a letter dated October 22, 1912 to S.F. McConnell, the library board president, he said,

Dear Sir:-

We have had the matter up to Mr. Ennis regarding the laying of the face brick in red mortar and are very much opposed to his using the colored mortar at all as we feel thoroughly well satisfied that the building would be so much better in appearance if the white mortar was used.

We have asked Mr. Ennis to lay up a small sample panel when he gets to a point where he is able to do so, so that you can see what it will look like.

We trust that this will be satisfactory to your building committee and board.

Yours very truly,
Wetherell & Gage

C.W. Ennis of Grinnell (or Toledo), Iowa was a well-known contractor in the state he and Wetherell had worked together on other projects. It is not known if they had disagreements like this on other projects.

The design of the interior follows what had become a pretty much standardized floor plan with the circulation desk in the center, where the librarian could see into all the corners, stacks for books to the back of the room, and reading tables in the front half. The original location of the children's area has not been determined. Wetherell specified that the double hung sash was to be of #1 stock western pine and the flooring of yellow pine. The entrance vestibule was to have a tile floor. Wetherell was charged with the design of the complete building, including furniture. His drawings included benches to

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National Park Service

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Bloomfield Public Library
Davis County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 20

be built in, but other items such as tables and chairs were specified and he made note that a certain number of child sized chairs were needed as well.

An interesting development during construction had to do with the heating system. As designed, the boiler in the basement was to heat only the main level. No heat or heat ducts were provided in the basement in either Wetherell's plans or in Ennis' bid. When the library board brought this to their attention, the board was told that it would be prohibitively expensive to add such ductwork to the project. No mention was made as to how this problem was alleviated (if at all).

There have been only two significant changes to Wetherell's original 1912 design. The first is the removal of the red clay tile roof and replacement with the present red shingles. It has not been determined exactly when this occurred, but the use of red shingles does, at least, retain the roof color chosen by Wetherell. The second change is highly visible and visually intrusive in terms of design. Like all public buildings, the Bloomfield Public Library is required to provide handicapped accessibility. In 1995 the Bloomfield Public Works Director had a wood frame ramp constructed at the northeast corner of the building. It turned out that the ramp did not meet A.D.A. requirements, the slope was too great. At a public meeting of both the city council and the library board, it was explained that they didn't have enough money and there wasn't enough room to extend it out farther and the Historical Society told them how it had to look, and "Everybody didn't get exactly what they wanted for Christmas." (*Bloomfield Democrat*, Nov 22, 1995) The ramp remains in place, but will be removed during the planned rehabilitation and expansion of the library.

Conclusion:

The Bloomfield Public Library (1913) at 107 North Columbia is one of 101 Carnegie libraries in the state of Iowa and is locally significant under Criterion A as an illustration of the importance of the public library movement in terms of educations, and as a leveler of social class by providing services to all regardless of social position or finances. Additionally, it provides insight into what a community faced when it was decided to build a public library. It is of local significance under Criterion C as a good example of typical library design found in small county seat communities executed in brick with limestone trim, and as one of twelve public libraries in Iowa that were designed by well-known architect Frank E. Wetherell of Des Moines.

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Bloomfield Public Library
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- Klingensmith, Samuel J. and Jacobsen, James E. "Public Library Buildings in Iowa." A thematic National Register of Historic Places nomination prepared for the Iowa Office of Historic Preservation, Iowa City, IA, March 1983.
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Ottumwa Public Library, 1984
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- Sanborn Insurance Maps: 1907, 1913, 1930, 1930-48
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- Witt, John M. The Carnegie Libraries of Iowa. Washington, MO: Robidoux Books, 2003.

Correspondence

- Letter from Jas. Bertram, Personal Secretary to Andrew Carnegie, to Bloomfield Mayor H.C. Leach, November 21, 1911
- Letter from Belle H. Steckel to S.F. McConnell, Library Board President, April 14, 1912.

Newspapers

- Bloomfield Democrat*. No page or column noted on any of the clippings in the library files.
"Carnegie Library; Bloomfield Has a Chance to Have a Public Library," November 9, 1911

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National Park Service

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Bloomfield Public Library
Davis County, Iowa

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-
- "Carnegie Library: Immediate Prospect for City of Bloomfield," November 30, 1911
 - "Notice of Special Election," December 7, 1911
 - "Library Meeting Held," December 14, 1911
 - "The Public Library Election," December 14, 1911
 - "Library Mass Meeting," "Sample Official Ballot," December 21, 1911
 - "Discusses the Library," December ?, 1911
 - "Bloomfield Needs a Free Public Library," several letters pro and con, December 28, 1911
 - "The Library Election," December 28, 1911
 - "Knocks the Library," letter from "T.W." December 28, 1911
 - "The Library Election: Carries For Library by a Majority of 291Votes," January 4, 1911
 - "Ordinance No. 197, City Council Passes Ordinance Establishing Library," January 18, 1911
 - "Section of Ordinance is Illegal," January 25, 1912
 - "Paving Resolution, Also Amends Library Ordinance," April 18, 1912
 - "Library Board Organizes," May 2, 1912
 - "Recommend Library Site," May 30, 1912
 - "Library Now Open," August 14, 1913
 - "Does a Library Pay?," no specific date, 1914
 - "Bloomfield Library: One of the Neatest Library Buildings in Iowa," December 16, 1915
 - "Mrs. McCash Retires from Board After 39 Years of Continuous Service," October 2, 1958
 - "Our Library Will Miss Mrs. McCash," Editorial, October 2, 1958
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Des Moines Register. "Bloomfield Library Unique and Useful," June 23, 1916

Ottumwa Courier. "Carnegie Gave Bloomfield Its Library," March 5, 1958

United States Department of the Interior
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Bloomfield Public Library
Davis County, Iowa

Section number 10 Page 23

GEOGRAPHIC DATA:

Verbal Boundary description:

Original Town, Block 20, Lot 1

Boundary Justification:

This is the lot purchased by the City of Bloomfield from WW Rawlings & Harriett Rawlings, husband & wife, on July 25, 1912 for the sum of \$1500.00, specifically as the site for a new library.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Bloomfield Public Library
Davis County, Iowa**

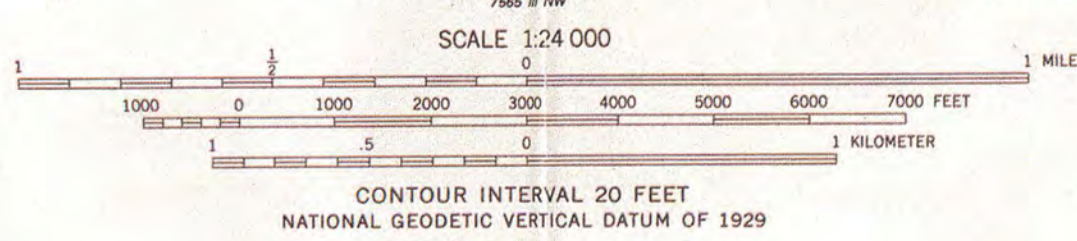
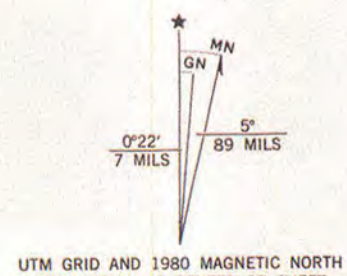
Section number Photos Page 24

The photographs submitted with this nomination were taken by Molly Myers Naumann in September and November 2014. The images were captured at 24.1 MP, and were printed on HP Premium Plus photo paper using HP Vivera ink.

0001	Façade (east elevation) to W
0002	East and north elevations, with ADA ramp, to SW
0003	North and west (rear) elevations to SE
0004	West and south elevations to NE
0005	South and east (façade) elevations to NW
0006	Detail: decorative brick panel below triple window on façade to NW
0007	Detail: main entrance with stone steps, half-timbering & vergeboard to W
0008	Interior: Sidelights and built in benches with book shelves at entrance to E
0009	Interior: Main floor, Circulation Desk and stacks to W
0010	Interior: Main floor with stacks to SW
0011	Interior: Main floor with fireplace and reading area to NW
0012	Interior: Main floor with reading area and book shelve to N
0013	Interior: Basement with children's area and office to SW
0014	Interior: Detail of stair railing to SW



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1974. Field checked 1976. Map edited 1980
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Iowa coordinate
system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 2 meters north and
15 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
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A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

USGS
Historical File
Topographic Division

BLOOMFIELD NORTH, IOWA
SW/4 OTTUMWA SOUTH 15' QUADRANGLE
N4045-W9222.5/7.5

1980

DMA 7565 IV SW-SERIES V876

Bloomfield Public Library
107 N. Columbia
Bloomfield (Davis Co.) IA
IS 549240 4571439

JUN - 3 1980

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Saturday - 10:00am - 6:00pm
Sunday - 12:00pm - 5:00pm

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Thursday	10:00-5:00
Friday	10:00-5:00
Saturday	10:00-5:00

WORKS
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The Bloomfield City Council will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday night, Iowa Theatre. The council will hear a presentation of the schematic design of the Bloomfield Downtown Streetscape. The council

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Bloomfield Public Library
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: IOWA, Davis

DATE RECEIVED: 8/28/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/17/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/02/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/13/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000721

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10.13.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered to
the National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
CULTURAL AFFAIRS

MARK SWAN - DIRECTOR
800-383-6888, 515-281-4300

TERESA BRAYSHAW GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR
RECEIVED 2280

AUG 28 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

August 25, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmarks
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The following National Register nomination(s) from Iowa are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

- Fort Dodge Junior High School, 416 South 10th Street, Fort Dodge, Webster County
- Fort Dodge Senior High School, 1015 5th Avenue North, Fort Dodge, Webster County
- Miller, Alex and Ola (Viola) Babcock, House, 429 S. Marion Ave., Washington, Washington County
- Washington Junior High School and Jefferson Grade School, 751 2nd Avenue South, Clinton, Clinton County
- Grant Vocational High School, 346 2nd Avenue SW, Cedar Rapids, Linn County
- Bloomfield Public Library, 107 N. Columbia, Bloomfield, Davis County
- Gobble & Heer/Spurgeons Building, 51 East Broadway, Fairfield, Jefferson County
- St. Joseph Hospital Historic District, 312 E. Alta Vista Ave. & 317 Vanness Ave., Ottumwa, Wapello County
- St. John's Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Historic District, 1207 Indigo Ave., Hampton, Franklin County
- Old Main Street Historic District Boundary Increase and Amendment, Main Street between West 1st and 4th Streets, Dubuque, Dubuque County
- Seminary Hill residential Historic District, Clarke Drive, North Main, Madison streets, and Madison Park, Dubuque, Dubuque County
- Upper Iowa Street Historic District, Iowa Street between West 11th and 12th streets, Dubuque, Dubuque County
- Washington Residential Historic District, 1100's - 1900's blocks, White, Jackson and Washington streets, Dubuque, Dubuque County

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Foster Hill

Elizabeth Foster Hill
National Register