

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

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

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received FEB 14 1986
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Owensboro

Continuation sheet Multiple Resources/Carnegie Item number Page 1

Name: Carnegie Free Public Library (DAOB 41)

Location: 901 Frederica

Owner: City of Owensboro
Owensboro, KY 42301

Classification: Building
Specific Dates: 1909

Description: Perched on the corner of Frederica Street and Ninth Street, the Owensboro Art Museum is a fine example of Beaux-Arts architecture, a style befitting its original use as a Carnegie Library. The elegance and symmetry of the structure starts with a stone walkway leading up to the building from Frederica Street. The walkway, along with the stone benches and urns, creates a courtyard effect. The completely symmetrical front has a slightly projecting central portico containing the main entrance to the building. The handsomely carved wood doorway is topped by a panel reading FREE TO ALL and a sandstone triangular pediment. An arched window rises above the doorway to provide light for the interior front hallway. The corners of the central portico are defined by double sandstone pilasters on each side. Single Ionic columns also rise two-stories on each side of the front entrance. The columns and pilasters support a monumental frieze with the words CARNEGIE PUBLIC LIBRARY carved into it. Also carved into the frieze is ANNO MCMIX. The frieze is topped by dentilled molding and a sandstone cornice. A simple brick parapet wall rises above this. The symmetrical side wings of the central portico are punctuated only by single, deeply recessed windows at the first and second floor levels. The windows have simple sandstone sills and lintels. The monumental frieze and cornice continue running across the front of the building. The symmetrical design continues on the second principal facade on the Ninth Street side of the building. This side of the structure is flush to the sidewalk and rests on an extensive stone foundation. Piercing this side wall at regular intervals are three identical window bays. These bays have triple rectangular windows on the first floor and an arched window resting on carved panels on the second floors. The central window bay is slightly recessed and contains two-story Ionic columns that divide the window sashes. The sandstone frieze and cornice from the front of the structure continues on this side of the building. The opposite side of the building has a three-sided central projection that contains the interior main staircase. The original window bays of the projection have been enclosed for interior gallery space. The rear of the building is strictly utilitarian in design with window spaces for offices and storage areas. The interior space of the building has been adapted for gallery space.

Significance: The Carnegie Building is a fine example of Beaux-Arts architecture and reflects the community's continual interest in cultural enrichment. In 1903 the Business Men's Association solicited a \$30,000

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donation from Andrew Carnegie for a library building. City budgeted funds were added to public contributions to buy the lot at 9th & Frederica St. It was constructed in 1909 and converted to the Area Museum in 1968 when the library moved to a larger building. Nine years later it became the home of Museum of Fine Art when the Area Museum moved to another facility. The two-story, yellow brick structure was constructed in 1909 on a portion of the front lawn of the Hampton Smith House. The classical detailing of the structure is common to the other Carnegie Libraries constructed in America after the turn-of-the-century.

Acreage: Approximately .162 acre.

Verbal Boundary Description: The Carnegie Free Public Library is designated on the Owensboro Metropolitan Planning Commission's Computerized Land Use File - Census Tract 5, Traffic Zone 22, Block Number 203; Parcel Number 11.

UTM References: (Owensboro East) 16/490100/4179880

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* Census Tract 5
Traffic Zone 22
Block Number 203
Parcel Number 11

Site includes only one building on
lot. 128' x 55'.

* Information taken from the Owensboro
Metropolitan Planning Commission's
Computerized Land Use File.

