

HISTORIC NAME: Liberal Union Hall COUNTY: Brown  
 CURRENT NAME: CITY/TWP.: Hanska  
 LEGAL DESC.: O.P. B8, L10-12 ADDRESS: Broadway & Main, NE

CLASSIFICATION:	CONDITION:	SIGNIFICANCE:	THEME/S:
Building <u>X</u>	Excellent _____	Local <u>X</u>	Primary <u>Social/Humanitarian</u>
Structure _____	Good <u>X</u>	State _____	Secondary <u>Religion</u>
Object _____	Fair _____	National _____	Others _____
District _____	Deteriorated _____		

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_ Restricted X PRESENT USE:  
 VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_ Community Center  
 OCCUPIED: Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_

DATE CONSTRUCTED: 1910 ORIGINAL USE: Hall  
 ORIGINAL OWNER: Liberal Union ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Christ Moe

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: City of Hanska Hanska, MN 56041	ACREAGE: Less than one acre <u>X</u>
LOCAL CONTACT/Org.: City of Hanska Hanska, MN 56041	UTM REFERENCE: 15 / 380540 / 4889290 Hanska Quad.
FORM PREPARED BY: Dennis Gimmetad .	
DATE: January 1979	

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Liberal Union Hall in Hanska is located at the edge of the central business district on Broadway and Main Streets.

The nearly square building is constructed on a stone foundation, and utilizes gray brick upper walls and rock-faced concrete blocks below the water table. Both bricks and blocks were manufactured on the site by the builders of the hall. The hipped roof is broken by a corner entrance tower with paired arched openings on the sides and a domed top. At the street level of the tower are two sets of double doors with semi-circular transoms. A double set of concrete steps with heavy ornamental side rails was added to the entrance area during the 1920s. Simple two-over-two windows are utilized at both the main and basement levels; the front (Broadway) facade also includes a large central window.

The main level of the building includes a complete auditorium with stage and balcony, a foyer, and a library room. Interior features (including shelving and books in the library, a 1951 painted stage curtain, and a pressed tin ceiling of uncertain date), are in good condition. A social hall is located in the basement.

**Significance:**

The Liberal Union Hall was constructed by a local Hanska group, the Liberal Union, which was organized for the purpose of providing a social and cultural center for the city. Although officially an independent organization, the Union was closely affiliated with the Nora Unitarian Church, located east of Hanska in Linden Township. Motivating force behind the project was Dr. Amandus E. Norman, pastor of the church, who served as the first president of the Union Board. Financial support came from local contributions and from a loan by the American Unitarian Association. The Nora Church had been established during the 1880s (nearly two decades before the railroad arrived and the townsite of Hanska was platted) and was one of three Unitarian congregations organized in Minnesota by Norwegian intellectual Kristofer Janson. Charter members of the congregation had separated from the nearby Lake Hanska Lutheran Church because of doctrinal disagreements, and, in a manner atypical of most Lutheran Church splits, affiliated with the more liberal Unitarian organization rather than forming, simply, another Lutheran congregation.

Builder of the hall was Christ Moe, son of Johannes Moe, who had been the spokesman of the original dissident group and who made the initial contact with Janson.

Significance - continued

The hall has been utilized for a variety of both public and church events, including dances, theatre, school classes, movies, concerts, athletic events, and as a meeting place for various organizations. The Nora Church assumed management of the hall in 1950, when the Liberal Union was dissolved, until 1978, when the City of Hanska acquired the building. The City intends to adapt the lower level of the building for use as a senior citizen's center. The auditorium has most recently been utilized by a Brown County theatre group, the Pioneer Players, for a full season of productions.

The Liberal Union Hall is significant as a well-preserved, continuously utilized community center, and for its long-term associations with a regionally unique religious group.