

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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received **OCT 2 1979**
date entered **NOV 14 1979**

1. Name

historic James Memorial Library

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 621 1st. Avenue W _____ not for publication

city, town Williston _____ vicinity of congressional district 1

state North Dakota code 38 county Williams code 105

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Williston

street & number 22 E. Broadway

city, town Williston _____ vicinity of state North Dakota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Williams County Courthouse

city, town Williston _____ state North Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" 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

The James Memorial Library was designed by R.S. Frost, a Minot architect and constructed by W.W. Horton of Williston at a cost of \$15,690.00. The buildings style is perhaps best described as Beaux-Arts Classicism inasmuch as it exhibits two recurring characteristics of the style: paired columns and arched windows, but its simplicity of line, minimal use of sculptural decoration, and pedimented portico might classify it as a Neo-Classical Revival structure. The building is constructed of cream-colored Hebron brick in a "cross" shape; much of the architectural detail is of limestone: round pillars, pilaster bases and caps, string course, pediment, window sills (except at basement level), decorative banding at the springline and entablature.

The facade is of five bay width; the central bay projects from the facade and is faced with a pedimented portico of paired Tuscan columns, one square with a shaft of brick, and the other round with a limestone shaft. The frieze bears the title James Memorial Library and the dentilled cornice supports a pediment, also dentilled, containing a sculptured limestone shield upon which stands the letter "J" in high relief. The door is framed within a round guaged arch from which extends at the springline a slightly projecting decorative band of limestone. This band extends around the facade and sides of the building broken only by windows, also with guaged arches, and pilasters at the various corners of the building. The limestone plinth forming the portico floor extends around the structure's entirety, serving at the same time as plinth for pilaster bases at each corner of the building and as a string course. The portico entablature, is recreated on the two flanking bays in brick and extends along both side walls to the rear of the building. A double band of corbelling runs immediately beneath the architrave on the flanking facade bays and three bay side-walls - a feature which enhances the play of light and shadow on bright days and tends to widen the flanking facade bays, which are of less width than the facade's projecting center bay and somewhat dwarfed by it. Windows at basement level are square but symetrically arranged beneath the first floor round arched windows.

The low-hipped roof is covered with standing seam metal sheathing; originally it was covered in metal in a curved title pattern. A dome sits atop the roof; its octagonal base has a dentilled cornice. An original pommel finial has been removed.

A major visual intrusion is a flat-roofed two story brick wing attached to the northwest corner of the original building in the mid-1960's. The addition's two horizontal bands of windows set in heavy aluminum frames and the glass-fronted two story entry are not aesthetically compatable with the original structure. The wind addition is not an irreversible alteration, however, and is visually unobtrusive to the interior of the original structure. One other addition is a low shed-roofed concrete block addition at the southeast corner of the original building, which provides exterior access to the basement.

The interior contains much of the original rich detail. From the front vestibule, access to the basement is by a handsome oak staircase along the south wall. The main reading room is entered through glass and panelled oak double doors, and this room is separated from an open stack area by four marble columns along the west wall of the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED	OCT 2 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

reading room. A librarian's office and a maintenance closet are adjacent to the stack area along the south wall. A major feature of the reading room is the coved ceiling, richly decorated with a wide plaster cornice banding in bead-and-reel, anthemion, egg-and-water leaf, and other beaded moldings. On the ceiling proper is a narrow band of half-round plaster molding in a water leaf motif. Centered within the large ceiling panel is a vaulted dome with a stained glass skylight. The skylight and vault bases are accented by wide bands of oak; the banding at the vault base contains regularly spaced sockets for incandescent lights.

The basement contains a cloakroom, restrooms, kitchen, furnace room, and a large assembly room with coffered ceiling. Now used as storage and workroom, the room retains a large fireplace on the west wall and a stage platform across the south wall.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" 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 1911 **Builder/Architect** R.S. Frost(architect) W.W. Horton (builder)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The James Memorial Library is both architecturally and historically important to the Williston community. The subdued Beaux Arts Classical theme of the structure provides a measure of artistic and architectural diversity to the community, and the richly finished though highly functional interior spaces have been a major center of culture and entertainment in the community since 1911. For some time after its construction the building served as the site for public meetings, banquets, receptions, and other social events, as well as one of the finer libraries of western North Dakota.

The Library was built by Arthur Curtiss James as a memorial to his father, D. Willis James. The elder James had been a major stockholder in the Great Northern Railway, and President James J. Hill of the Great Northern had named Williston in his honor. The Civic League of Williston had long attempted to interest the City Council in securing a Carnegie Library for the city, but had failed in these efforts. On the suggestion of James J. Hill, the Civic League approached the younger James with a proposal to construct a public library as a memorial to his father. Arthur James then provided funds for the purchase of land, construction and furnishing of the building, and purchase of books, with the provision that a permanent maintenance fund would be established by the community.

In later years the small Williston community found it difficult to provide necessary funding for operation of the institution, and James continued to support it financially. Between 1920 and 1936, in the midst of local and national depressions that closed many similar institutions, James contributed some \$8,000 to the library. In 1957 the James Foundation granted the library an additional \$15,000. Arthur James could well afford this philanthropy, having built upon his inherited fortune until at one time he was the largest single holder of railroad stocks in the nation. James was also prominent in other corporate and business concerns, humanitarian efforts, and in social circles of the eastern seaboard.

The James Memorial Library continues to stand not only as an artistic and architectural contribution to the Williston community, but also as a monument to the role of the James family in the history of the city and the dedication to cultural and educational advancement of the community itself.

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Wonder of Williams: A History of Williams County, North Dakota by Ben Innis. published by the Williams County Historical Society, 1972.
Williston Herald, Williston, North Dakota, Thursday, March 2, 1911.

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Williston East

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 7.5'

UMT References

A

1	3	6	0	2	3	6	0	5	3	3	3	6	8	0
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

Lots 1, 2, and 3 of Block 7 of Bruegger's Addition to the Townsite Plat of Williston.

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kurt Schweigert, Architectural Historian

organization State Historical Society of North Dakota date September 21, 1979

street & number Liberty Memorial Building telephone (701)224-2672

city or town Bismarck state North Dakota 58505

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Sam E. Henry

title N.D. State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/24/1979

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

William H. Brannan
Keeper of the National Register

date 11-14-79

Attest: *William H. Brannan*
Chief of Registration

date 7/7/79