

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 5 1976
DATE ENTERED MAY 28 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Tomah Public Library

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

716 Superior Avenue

---NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Tomah

--- VICINITY OF

Third

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Wisconsin

55

Monroe

081

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Tomah - Library

STREET & NUMBER

819 Superior Avenue; P.O. Box 151

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Tomah

--- VICINITY OF

Wisconsin 54660

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

At The Library, 716 Superior Ave., Tomah, WI 54660
and Monroe County Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Sparta

Wisconsin

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Wisconsin's Historic Preservation Plan, Volume II: The Inventory

DATE

1975

---FEDERAL STATE ---COUNTY ---LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Madison

Wisconsin 53706

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Tomah Public Library was constructed in 1916 and has remained essentially unchanged since its original construction. The exterior form is a simple rectangular solid, measuring 33 by 68 feet, capped with a hipped roof having generous overhangs.

An emphasis for the horizontal is achieved through both the use of the overhangs of the roof and a terra cotta frieze surrounding the building just below the roof overhang. The frieze is executed in a foliated design very reminiscent of the designs of Louis H. Sullivan. The frieze contains high windows of the main library floor on either end elevation; however the reading room windows on the front facade are much larger, reaching almost from floor to ceiling in broad bays. All of the windows are glazed with leaded glass panes, noted as "art glass" by the architects. The entrance to the library is through a protruding vestibule at a landing elevation almost midway between the lower floor and the main reading room. The library originally contained a lecture room and classroom at this lower level, that have since been converted to a young people's collection.

The exterior of the building is a deep red brick, with raked joints emphasizing the horizontal; horizontality being an essential characteristic of prairie architecture. The building base is of concrete, while trim at both the front and side entrance is of carved stone. The roof is covered with a green glazed clay roofing tile, sloping to an integral galvanized iron gutter and formed fascia of the same material. While the original design drawings, dated January 5, 1916, show a stucco soffit, it is evident that this was actually constructed with beaded boards, probably an economy move when built.

Concessions to modern improvements have been made in the replacement of single bulb incandescent light fixtures with fluorescent fixtures, and an unfortunate replacement of original wood doors glazed with leaded glass by narrow line aluminum doors. Otherwise the building remains true to its original design.

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 type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input 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 1916 ~~BUILDERS~~/ARCHITECT Claude (Louis W.) and Starck (Edward E.)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Tomah Public Library is recommended for architectural significance as it represents a fine example of Prairie style architecture applied to a public building and designed by a firm of statewide importance.

Public buildings had traditionally been executed in monumental forms utilizing Greek or Roman designs. Occasional examples may be found in other styles and it is of some significance that a limited number of libraries, usually in small communities, were designed by Claude and Starck in an innovative manner utilizing forms associated with Prairie architecture.

The firm of Claude (Louis W.) and Starck (Edward F.) is an important one both in the history of the City of Madison, where their office was located, and in the regional expansion of the library construction program dating from about 1903 through 1921. During this period some 35 libraries in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, and Washington were designed by the firm. Much of the program was financed through the Carnegie Foundation, as was the Tomah Library.

The firm developed a simple, compact and attractive series of schemes that appealed to Library Boards and Commissions. A substantial number of these departed from Classical designs, and one design in particular that is found at Evansville, Merrill, and Rochelle, Illinois (all on the Register or nominated for it), represents a refreshing, original concept. Clothed in deeply raked brick courses, richly foliated ornamental terra cotta frieze ornamentation and generous overhangs from a hipped roof form with clay roofing tiles distinguish this from little classical temples.

The Tomah Library is an excellent example of this style representing the design characteristics just mentioned, as well as the simple functional plan that was found in many of the Carnegie libraries, and indeed, seemed to meet with favor in small libraries within Wisconsin.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

National Register of Historic Places, Inventory-Nomination Forms for Libraries in Merrill, Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.
Prairie Architecture in Madison, Influences, Forms and Form-Givers, Gordon D. Orr, Jr., AIA, unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin (1971).
The Prairie School, Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries, H. Allen Brooks, University of Toronto Press, 1972.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1.0
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	7,0,0	2,0,0	4,8	7,2	4,5,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				
C							D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

City of Tomah-Library, A. W. Gibbs subdivision, lots 4, 5, and 6 of block 11.

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

Gordon D. Orr, Jr., AIA

ORGANIZATION

American Institute of Architects

STREET & NUMBER

2729 Mason Street

CITY OR TOWN

Madison

DATE

December 2, 1975

TELEPHONE

608/238-1683

STATE

Wisconsin 53705

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer Signature

James Houston Smith

TITLE

Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

1/29/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting *Wayne F. Rogers* DATE *1/29/76*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Charles [Signature]* DATE *5-24-76*

CLERK, OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER