

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

For NPS use only

received JUL 29 1985

date entered SEP 10 1985

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

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

**1. Name**

historic Onamia Municipal Hall

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number Main Street at Birch Street N/A not for publication

city, town Onamia N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Mille Lacs code 095

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Village of Onamia

street & number N/A

city, town Onamia N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 56359

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mille Lacs County Courthouse, Register of Deeds

street & number 635 2nd Street Southeast

city, town Milaca state Minnesota 56353

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society  
Ft. Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

01 912  
Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Municipal Hall in Onamia is a single-story building sited facing north along the main street of the village of Onamia. Built in 1936 as a project of the Works Progress Administration, the building houses four functions: a council chamber, community room, jail, and fire hall. As is typical of arts and Crafts-influenced designs, the interior functions are articulated on the exterior by means of window size and placement, wall materials and the configuration of the roof.

Exterior walls of the building are constructed of randomly-laid fieldstone. The corners of the building, window headers and window frames have squared stones. A small wood-frame, stucco and half-timber-finished section which contains the council room lies on the inside angle of an el plan formed by the community room and the jail sections of the building. A moderately-sloped asphalt-shingled gable roof extends the north-south length of the building. Two gabled projections extend west to cover the jail and council chambers. The building has no basement; its foundation and footings are of poured concrete.

Windows in the community room are six over six divided light double hung sash. The council chamber has four over four divided light double hung sash, while the jail has smaller three over three divided light double hung sash, with bars placed on the interior of the windows. Small divided light windows are also placed in the gable ends. Doors throughout the building are wood, with small glass inserts.

The interior rooms are simply finished. Walls are plastered and ceilings are covered with acoustical tile. Floors in the community room and council chambers are of maple, while in the jail and fire hall the concrete subfloor is left unfinished.

The building has received several alterations since it was built that do not effect its generally excellent integrity. A concrete block, flat-roofed two bay addition built on the south and east sides of the fire hall at the rear of the building leaves the primary facades unaffected. The valley between the transverse gable sections on the west side has been infilled to improve roof drainage. Exterior doors, originally left natural, have been painted white. The interior remains for the most part as built.

## 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1935-36      **Builder/Architect** Works Progress Admin. / Carl Buetow, Arch.

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Unemployment and the provision of relief for the unemployed became major problem areas throughout the country in the early 1930s. Dependant upon tourism, lumbering and the construction trade, northern Mille Lacs County and the village of Onamia were particularly affected by the economic contraction. Programs of direct relief and paid-work programs were instituted on a national scale beginning in 1932. The Onamia Municipal Hall was a project of one of these relief programs, the Works Progress Administration. This building is an unusually well-preserved example of the labor-intensive inexpensive type of construction using local materials favored by the W.P.A.

The economic contraction beginning with the stock market crash in late 1929 was especially severe in the northern part of Mille Lacs County. Tourism, an industry which had grown rapidly during the 1920s after the introduction of all-weather roads into the Mille Lacs Lake area, and the lumbering and construction activities virtually ceased to exist. Banking, retail operations and other service industries were also adversely affected. Relief programs were seen as a means to alleviate unemployment and its consequential hardships. Following the creation of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in 1933 the village attempted to gain financial backing for a much needed community hall. Since the cost to the village under the F.E.R.A. program would have been approximately \$8500, the project was turned down.

Interest in a community hall project was revived following the establishment of the Works Progress Administration in 1935. New, lower estimates of construction costs were obtained. These estimates, along with the possibility that the community would be forced to furnish direct aid to the unemployed should a project not be undertaken, resulted in the local approval of the project.

Work began on the building in November, 1935, and continued until the building's dedication on September 14, 1936. The architect for the project was Carl Buetow, who had designed the city hall at Deerwood and many hospitals, schools, churches and banks throughout the state. In its design and construction, the building reflects the stated W.P.A. program of using inexpensive, local, labor-intensive materials. In the Onamia Building, stone taken from nearby farmfields and the shores of the area lakes provided the major building material. Rather than adopt the P.W.A. Moderne style that was typically used by W.P.A. architects, Buetow selected an Arts and Crafts-influenced design. Although the building lacks ornamentation or other such embellishment, it is nonetheless distinguished by its clear external articulation of the various internal functions.

The village of Onamia has kept the building in a very good state of repair. Minor alterations that have taken place do not diminish the integrity of the building.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Onamia, Minn.

Quadrangle scale 7.5' Series \_\_\_\_\_

### UTM References

A 

1	5	4	4	8	3	0	0
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5	1	0	0	8	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 10, 11 and 12; Block 8; Plat of New Onamia

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas Jenkinson and Norene Roberts

organization Historical Research, Inc. date January 15, 1985

street & number 5535 Richmond Curve telephone (612) 929-2921

city or town Minneapolis state Minnesota 55410

# 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

Russell W. Fridley  
Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7/5/85

For NPS use only

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

Beth Grosvenor  
Keeper of the National Register

date 9/10/85

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Onamia Municipal Hall, Onamia - Mille Lacs County, MN

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Continuation sheet

Bibliography

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