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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Aurora Public Library

other names/site number 029-029-51027

2. Location

street & number 414 Second Street N/A not for publication

city or town Aurora N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Dearborn code 029 zip code 47001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Robert L. Robert

4-19-93

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Delores Byrum

Entered in the National Register

Date of Action

5/27/93

Aurora Public Library
Name of Property

Dearborn Co., IN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: library

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: library

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italian Renaissance

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone

walls BRICK

STONE: limestone

roof ASPHALT

other METAL

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1914-1942

Significant Dates

1914

1923

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Garber, Frederick and Woodward,
Clifford; J. C. Wright & Son;
Morris & Eckel's

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Aurora Public Library
Name of Property

Dearborn Co., IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6	6	8	1	6	0	0	4	3	2	4	9	8	0
Zone	Easting						Northing							

3

Zone	Easting						Northing							

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeffrey L. Huntington, Executive Director

organization Hillforest Historical Foundation date August 1, 1992

street & number 213 Fifth Street telephone 812/926-0087

city or town Aurora state IN zip code 47001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Aurora Public Library

street & number 414 Second Street telephone 812/926-0646

city or town Aurora state IN zip code 47001

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1 Aurora Public Library
Dearborn Co., IN

The Aurora Public Library, designed by the Cincinnati architectural firm of Garber & Woodward in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, has changed little since it was constructed in 1913-14. The only major exterior change to occur in the last 78 years has been the construction of a small rear addition, also designed by Garber & Woodward, in 1923. The building, with its raised site and small landscaped lawn, is located in Aurora's main commercial street. Its physical appearance indicates to all who pass that this is not a commercial building, but an important civic building.

The Aurora Public Library is one story on a raised basement. The original 1913-14 building was T-shape in plan (approximately 54' x 48'); however, the northeast corner was filled in with the 1923 addition. The building is constructed of dark rust colored rugby bricks with red mortar joints and the only variation is that the addition has gray mortar joints. The building sets upon a smooth cut limestone foundation. Creating the rest of the raised foundation of the building is a row of Flemish bond, a band course of projecting vertical stretcher bricks, topped by eleven rows of Flemish bond bricks, and another band of projecting vertical stretchers. Above this area, the wall surface is completely Flemish bond in pattern.

The roof structure is a low pitched hip with ridge and wide projecting eaves with decorative exposed rafters. The rear hip roof intersects below the eaves rather than with the main roof structure. The original roofing material was probably slate, but is currently asphalt shingles on the main roof and the addition in standing seam tin. The only chimney is an exterior type located at the rear of the building which services the boiler system in the basement.

Located in the center of the main facade is a wide stone platform or stoop with eight stone steps and raised brick sides topped with cut sandstone. Originally, two cast iron lamp posts were located on the front stoop; however, these have been removed. There are two exterior stairways to the building's basement, one located on the east side and one on the northwest corner.

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Section number 7 Page 2 Aurora Public Library
Dearborn Co., IN

The main or south facade of the building contains five bays of round arched openings which alternate with four round terra cotta medallions in the spandrel areas. The round arched window top surrounds are created by a row of brick headers and a row of brick stretchers. There are slight reveals and cut limestone sills. The windows are paired wood six light casements, topped by a bottom-hinged round arched wood transom, divided into quarters. Metal storm windows protect the casement windows. Under each opening is a two light top-hinged rectangular basement window. On the three bay east and west facades, the same sized slightly recessed openings are evident; however, to create more interior wall space, only the bottom-hinged, quartered, round arched transoms were actually installed and the rest of the area was bricked during original construction. The north or rear facade currently contains one large window (the other original window now serves as the doorway into the addition) and two sets of paired, one-over-one, double hung, round arched windows.

The main public entrance is located in the center of the front facade. The entrance is a round arched opening, slightly taller than the windows, and it has a decoratively carved limestone arch with bead and reel and enriched water leaf carved detailing and topped by a acroterion of palmettes and two paterae. The arch is supported by brick pilasters, plain stone bases, and elaborately carved stone capitals in a stylized Roman Corinthian order. A stone lintel is inscribed with "PUBLIC LIBRARY." The round arched transom area is evenly divided into five vertical sections. The original pair of doors has been replaced with a modern glass and aluminum door frame with side lights. Above the doorway is a bronze plaque which reads, "ERECTED BY / GEORGIANA E. SUTTON/ IN MEMORY OF / HER FATHER AND MOTHER / 1913."

Like the exterior, the interior of the building has been changed little since the date of original construction. At the entrance of the Aurora Public Library there is a small vestibule with paneled walls and a ceramic tile floor. One proceeds into the main library through a pair of wooden doors which is in axis with the circulation desk. Behind the circulation desk is the librarian's office, which creates the T-shape of the original floor plan. The librarian's office consists of one room with two closets and a powder room attached. The public space on the main

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Section number 7 Page 3 Aurora Public Library
Dearborn Co., IN

floor of the original library has a large reading room with book stacks lining the walls. The original adjustable shelves, with wainscoting backing, and the small baseboard step are still in place. The 1923 addition is located on the northeast corner of the building and is entered through a former window opening. Because the addition was designed by the same architectural firm soon after the main building was completed, it matches almost unnoticeably.

The woodwork throughout the building is very plain. The floors and ceiling have been covered with contemporary materials. The walls are painted in a neutral color; however, the walls originally had a stenciled decorative pattern.

To the right of the circulation desk is an interior stairway to the basement level. Restrooms are located on the stair landing. The basement, which was originally intended as an auditorium and exhibit space, is a large room now devoted to the library's holdings. The only structural members evident in this room are six round cast iron supports with decorative capitals. The area under the 1923 addition is used as a storage room.

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Section number 8 Page 4 Aurora Public Library
Dearborn Co., IN

The Aurora Public Library is significant under Criteria A and C. The library is the best example of twentieth century classical architecture (specifically Italian Renaissance Revival) in Aurora, and is a good example of the work of Cincinnati architects Garber and Woodward. Erected in 1913-14, the Aurora Public Library was (and remains) the first and only public building erected to house the community's library. As such, it played a significant role in the education of the citizens of Aurora. The building also reflects the patrimony of one of Aurora's early prominent families.

The Aurora Public Library is important in the context of early twentieth century architecture in Aurora, Indiana. Located several miles downstream from Cincinnati, Ohio, and Lawrenceburg, Indiana; Aurora was laid out in 1819 as an Ohio River port. Aurora prospered greatly during the mid to late 1800s, when Ohio River trade and transportation shaped Indiana's economy. Hence, Aurora has many fine residences and public buildings from this period. Very few structures of note represent the 1900s in Aurora, the Public Library being one of two classical-inspired buildings from this period. The other is the First National Bank of Aurora on Second Street (1924, architect unknown). The library is the only Italian Renaissance Revival example in Aurora, and features all of the major characteristics of that style.

There has been a long history of a library in Aurora and when the town was laid out in 1819, land was set aside for this purpose and a street, now Fifth Street, was named Literary Street. The first Aurora library was probably a subscription type of lending institution and was housed at various locations throughout the city. The first publicly supported library in Aurora began in 1901 and was housed at the Aurora City Hall. Miss Georgiana E. Sutton, a spinster from a prominent local family and enthusiast for learning and education, died January 18, 1910. Miss Sutton had instructed her brother, Dr. H. H. Sutton, to construct a public library for the citizens of Aurora with funds from her estate in memory of their parents, Dr. and Mrs. George Sutton.

The Sutton family immigrated to the United States from England and settled in Aurora in 1819. The family boasted several doctors, were education advocates, and assisted with the development of the

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public grade schools in Aurora in the 1850's. Georgiana E. Sutton, a lover of books and a world traveler, was involved with many of the literary and cultural activities of Aurora in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In April 1913, the professional design services of the Cincinnati architectural firm of Garber and Woodward were secured and a formal agreement was signed between Dr. H. H. Sutton and the Library Board to construct a library building "costing not less than Ten Thousand Dollars." It is believed from the minutes of the Library Board that J. C. Wright & Sons, a local building contractor, was awarded the construction contract. The building officially opened to the public with much fanfare on Tuesday, October 13, 1914.

Frederick W. Garber and Clifford B. Woodward were in partnership from 1904 to 1933. Garber and Woodward were Cincinnati natives who had attended the Cincinnati Technical School, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.), and were brothers-in-law. The firm of Garber Woodward designed numerous Cincinnati structures in the first third of the twentieth century and was associated with some of America's most important architects, such as Cass Gilbert, John Russell Pope, Samuel Hannaford, and Tietig & Lee. The only other library building which has been attributed to the firm is the Price Hill branch of the Cincinnati Public Library.

The Aurora Public Library's size, massing, and style convey to the average passerby that it is probably a Carnegie funded library; however, it is not. Yet, the library buildings being funded by Andrew Carnegie during this period, greatly influenced the design of the Aurora Public Library.

The Aurora Public Library's interior space is the most basic design advocated by the Carnegie Corporation and literature concerning modern library design of the period, such as Notes on Library Buildings (1911) by James Bertram, and it shows a restraint against excessive detail and promotes an economy of space. Prior to this period not much had been written concerning the design of libraries, especially small ones, and many that had been built were elaborate monumental buildings which considered decoration over function.

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Within a few years of moving into the library, it was decided to add a room on each level at the northeast corner and in 1923 the design services of Garber and Woodward were again utilized. The construction contract was awarded to Morris and Eckels' and the project completed in 1924. This was the last major alteration to the building.

The Aurora Public Library is an important building to the Aurora community, serving generations of people interested in reading and research, and is an outstanding example of early twentieth century Italian Renaissance Revival architecture, library design, and personal philanthropy on the local level.

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Aurora Public Library
Dearborn Co., IN

Major Bibliographical References

Books

Dearborn County Interim Report: Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory. Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 1983.

Langsam, Walter E. A Biographical Encyclopedia of Architects Who Worked in the Greater Cincinnati Area Before World War I. Unpublished, 1992.

Shaw, Archibald. History of Dearborn County Indiana. Indianapolis, IN: B. F. Bowen & Co., Inc., 1915, p. 538-540.

Newspapers

The Aurora Bulletin. October 16, 1914, p.1.

Other Materials

Aurora Public Library Board Minutes Books. April 13, 1913-December 5, 1924. Unpublished.

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Section number 10 Page 8 Aurora Public Library
Dearborn Co., IN

Verbal Boundary Description

In lots number 33 and 34, parcel number 107, City of Aurora, Indiana.

Boundary Justification

This is the historic property boundary.

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Section number Photos Page _____ Aurora Public Library
Dearborn Co., IN

John L. Sutton, Photographer
August 5, 1992

Negatives: John L. Sutton, Box 236, Aurora, IN 47001

Photo #1

Exterior facing north

Photo #2

Elevated exterior facing northeast

Photo #3

Exterior facing northeast

Photo #4

Exterior facing northwest

Photo #5

Addition facing northwest

Photo #6

Exterior facing south

Photo #7

Exterior facing southeast

Photo #8

Front door facing north

Photo #9

Detail of door facing north

Photo #10

Interior facing north

Photo #11

Interior facing south (vestibule)

Photo #12

Interior facing southwest

Photo #13

Interior facing northwest

Photo #14

Interior facing east