

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wisconsin
COUNTY: Milwaukee
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE DEC 30 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
Central Library, Milwaukee Public Library System

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Milwaukee Public Library and Museum

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
814 West Wisconsin Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Milwaukee

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
5th

STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **55** COUNTY: **Milwaukee** CODE: **079**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Milwaukee

STREET AND NUMBER:
200 East Wells Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Milwaukee

STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **55**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Milwaukee County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
901 North Ninth Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Milwaukee

STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **55**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: **1970** Federal State County Local

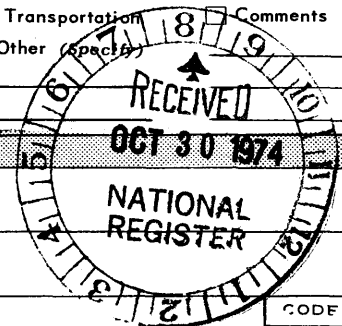
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:
Washington

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE: **20540** CODE: **11**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: **Wisconsin**

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
(Check One)			(Check One)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Altered		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Historic American Buildings Survey data-report states:

"The Public Library and Museum of the 1890s was a U-shaped building three stories (plus basement) in height, its south wing, facing Grand (now Wisconsin) Avenue, forming the 'base' of the U, its sixteen-bay west wing, on Ninth Street, and ten-bay east wing, on Eighth, composing the 'uprights.' Within the courtyard defined by these sections was a small single-story U-shaped structure adjoining the south wing."

Library facilities occupied the east wing, east end of the south wing, and the one-story section, while the museum was quartered in the west wing. A domed, three-story rotunda in the center of the south wing gave access to both library and museum.

Since the first decade of this century the building has been enlarged by additional construction within the original courtyard area and on the north, and it now occupies the entire block-square site bounded by West Wisconsin Avenue, North Eighth, North Ninth, and West Wells streets. On the street fronts the 19th century design remains essentially intact, however. The HABS study gives this description:

"Thoroughly classical in style and spirit, the Public Library and Museum was based, generally, on Italian and French Renaissance prototypes and, more specifically, as regards the south facade, on the east front of the Louvre. It is said, further, to resemble the library at the University of Leipzig and may also reflect the influence of C. B. Atwood's Fine Arts Building. The south (front) elevation is strictly symmetrical, with pavilions at center and corners. There are shallow pavilions near both ends of the east and west elevations... Above the plain walls of basement and first story, south, west, and east elevations are dominated by monumental Corinthian columns and pilasters, which carry a three-part entablature surmounted by a balustrade. Centered above the main entrance is a low dome flanked by terra cotta eagles...the design presents the handsome proportions and rich but refined and beautifully integrated detail characteristic of the best work of its architects."

Major changes have been made on the interiors of both original fabric and early 20th century additions, the most recent of them in the past decade, when the Milwaukee Public Museum moved into a new building nearby and its former quarters were remodelled for use by the library and various agencies and departments of City government. Fortunately, the 19th century entrance rotunda has not undergone extensive alteration and retains its intricate mosaic floor, marble staircases, plaster and stucco ornament, and coffered dome. Also surviving relatively unchanged are the east corridors of the south wing and the original board room, located on the first story, at the east end of this wing.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

I. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1895-99**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This handsome Neo-Renaissance edifice, designed by the local architectural firm of George Bowman Ferry and Alfred C. Clas, was erected as the first permanent headquarters of Milwaukee's Public Library and Public Museum. According to the HABS study, library and museum as public institutions had been established in the 1870s and 1880s, respectively, by the Wisconsin legislature and Common Council of the City of Milwaukee. But, as the report points out:

"Their histories can be traced back a generation earlier...in the case of the former to 1847, when the Young Men's Association was organized, for it was this group's 10,000-volume library that became the nucleus of the Milwaukee Public Library, and in the case of the latter to the 1850s, when the Wisconsin Natural History Society began, as the Society's collection and the efforts of its members laid the groundwork for the Milwaukee Public Museum."

Before completion of this building in 1898-99, the library had occupied rented quarters in various downtown buildings, and the museum had been housed in the German-English Academy and the Exposition Building.

Expansion of the collections and services of both institutions led to construction of major additions to the original fabric in 1909-12, 1913-14, 1931, and 1954-57, creation of more than a dozen neighborhood libraries over the years, and, in the early 1960s, construction of a separate facility for the Milwaukee Public Museum, which had become the fourth largest natural history museum and largest municipally owned museum in the world. The building that library and museum shared for more than sixty years now houses the Central Library of the Milwaukee Public Library System and, in the west wing of the 19th century section, the offices of the Department of City Development and other City agencies.

Architects Ferry & Clas had been chosen in a nation-wide competition held in 1893 under the sponsorship of the Joint Board of Trustees of the Public Library and Public Museum—a competition that brought entries from seventy-four firms and individual architects—among the latter, the young Frank Lloyd Wright. Inspired by Renaissance models and, in all probability, by the buildings at the World's Columbian Exposition, their award-winning design became an early, major example of the Academic Reaction in Milwaukee. It remains one of the community's most beautiful public buildings and was designated as a Milwaukee Landmark in 1969.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The major source on this building is the lengthy HABS data-report, which includes a six-page bibliography. For the building's early history, a key reference is the volume entitled History of Milwaukee Public Library, preserved in the Central Library's Rare Book Room, which brings together eleven 19th century publications, including the instructions for the architectural competition, the architects' specifications, and the Inland Architect's account of the competition. Valuable sources of more recent date are: Milwaukee Writers' Project, History of Milwaukee County, Milwaukee, 1947, 405-412.
 Perrin, Richard W. E., Milwaukee Landmarks, Milwaukee, 1968, 28-30.

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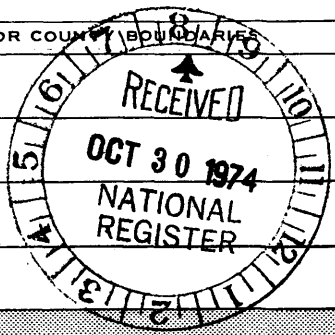
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		U.T.M. Zone 16:	Easting	Northing
NW	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		424,850 E.		
NE	° ' "	° ' "		4,765,400 N.		
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **3.6**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Mary Ellen Wietczykowski, Chairman

ORGANIZATION: **Milwaukee Landmarks Commission** DATE: **Aug. 16, 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:
734 North Ninth Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Milwaukee** STATE: **Wisconsin 53233** CODE: **55**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>James Morton Smith</u> James Morton Smith</p> <p>Title _____ Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin</p> <p>Date <u>Oct. 23, 1974</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>[Signature]</u> Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <u>12/30/74</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>[Signature]</u> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date <u>DEC 27 1974</u></p>
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Wisconsin	
COUNTY	
Milwaukee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	DEC 30 1974

(Number all entries)

CENTRAL LIBRARY, MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

- 6. Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Buildings and Sites (State)
1971
State Historical Society of Wisconsin
816 State Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706 Code: 55

- 11. Donald N. Anderson, Asst. Director, Historic Sites & Markers Division
State Historical Society of Wisconsin
816 State Street 16 September 1974
Madison, Wisconsin 53706 Code: 55

