

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Architecture of Olof Hanson, 1895-1901

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Faribault: Quality of Life, 1855-1945

C. Geographical Data

Corporate limits of the City of Faribault, Minnesota

N/A

☐ See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Signature of certifying official

Ian R. Stewart

Date

6/26/90

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

Minnesota Historical Society

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

Date

Beth Boland

8/9/90

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Section number E Page 1CONTEXT: *QUALITY OF LIFE, 1855 -1945*

This structure is recognized for its importance to Faribault within the *Quality of Life* Context as developed in the 1986 *Faribault's Historic Contexts Final Report*, as defined by the 1987 *Faribault Historic Sites Survey, Phase I: Identification*, and further refined in the 1988 *Faribault Heritage Preservation Commission Planning Report*. The *Quality of Life* context encompasses the community's aesthetic development as demonstrated through the built environment. The context describes the activities, institutions and structures which represented the community's aspirations for physical beauty and culture as expressed through craftsmanship, art and architecture. The context begins in 1855, the year Faribault was platted, and ends in 1945, with the end of World War II and the accompanying post-war growth.

There are many factors which make a particular place unique or favored. Faribault, Minnesota, is a community which partially through fate and partially through insightful planning achieved a high standard of civic pride. Early practices of social justice and tolerance in Faribault did much to effect the enduring social and economic prosperity of the community. Locating on the Straight River the early residents had easy access to high quality limestone deposits within a mile of the Faribault settlement. This indigenous natural resource, combined with the development of major religious and state institutions and their need for facilities, served as a draw for master craftsmen and designers to Faribault.

As the community and its institutions grew, so did civic and personal pride. This high quality of life was expressed visually in the built environment of Faribault. The fine architecture which flourished from the 1860s to the early 1900s was not, however, limited to public or ecclesiastical architecture; the architecture of private homes displayed the same pride and sophistication as their more imposing neighbors. The same citizens that were building

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elaborate Italianate commercial blocks on Central Avenue were also building exquisite, highly refined Italianate and Queen Anne homes in Faribault's residential neighborhoods.

The built environment of Faribault represents the desire of Faribault residents to forge a physical setting that would speak a visual language of civic pride for the self-proclaimed "Athens of the West". That language would articulate Faribault's appreciation of education, professionalism, prosperity, culture and beauty.

The development of a network of railways through Faribault, (1865, 1882, and 1901) contributed to the quality and kinds of building materials available, especially in terms of finished lumber and plate glass. The technological development of mass produced lathe and jigsaw architectural detailing that grew out of the post-Civil War industrialization of the 1870s and 1880s also arrived in Faribault via the rails and was incorporated into the exuberant and classical detailing of Faribault's Victorian architecture.

Olof Hanson, a 1881 graduate of the State School for the Deaf, was to return to Faribault in 1893 to teach at the Deaf School. However, Hanson's fame, as a masterful designer and the nation's first deaf architect, was to begin with his private architectural practice in Faribault from 1895 to 1901.

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Olof Hanson was born on a farm in Fjelkinge, Sweden on September 10, 1862. While a youth in Sweden, Olof lost the hearing in his right ear after prolonged exposure to the frigid winter cold. A year later Olof's father died and the Hanson family, headed by Olof's older brother, Hans, came to Minnesota in the spring of 1875. In May of that year, Olof lost the hearing in his other ear and remained totally deaf for the rest of his life.

Olof's early Minnesota years were spent on the family farm in Willmar reading Swedish books and newspapers: "I devoured them eagerly" he recalled in an autobiographical sketch in the May 5, 1932 issue of *The Companion*, a magazine by and for the deaf. However, a family friend informed Jonathon Noyes, Superintendent of the School for the Deaf in Faribault, of Olof's condition and Noyes began a correspondence with the Hanson's which ended in Olof's admission to the school in February of 1878. "A new world opened to me. I was given books to study geography, arithmetic, history, natural philosophy, etc. I wore out two or three Swedish-English dictionaries." During his years at the Deaf School Olof learned to read, speak, sign and partially read lips in English.

In 1881 Olof graduated and began his college years at Gallaudet College in Washington D.C. In his second year of college Olof, being methodical by nature, set out to determine his vocation in life. He settled on three career possibilities: engineering, surveying and architecture. After receiving little vocational encouragement from the engineering and surveying offices he visited, Olof interviewed an architect who told him that he could succeed in the architectural profession if he truly had the ability. His vocational path was set. Through a junior year roommate Hanson was to secure his first drafting position as a summer employee of E.T. Mix & Co., Architects in Milwaukee.

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In 1886 Hanson graduated from college with a B.A. degree and began working as a draftsman for a Minneapolis architect. After three years of drafting and a move to Omaha with the architectural firm, Olof decided to study architecture in Europe. During his ten month tour of Europe's architecture and cultures, he attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. His tour was however not totally devoted to the arts and architecture for Olof visited various European schools for the deaf and prepared papers on their work and methodology which he submitted to the Minnesota educational authorities. After returning to the States in 1890 Hanson secured work as a draftsman in Philadelphia working on the Pennsylvania Institute for the Deaf. With completion of that project he returned to Minnesota where he worked in drafting positions in Duluth and Minneapolis.

The economic depression of the early 1890s took its toll on the building trades, and Olof found himself unemployed. Knowing of Hanson's vocational state Dr. Jonathon Noyes in 1893 offered Olof a teaching position at the Deaf School. He remained in that position for two years until the economic climate improved and he was able to begin a private architectural practice in Faribault. Before and during his professional practice in Faribault Olof "prepared plans for twenty-four residences; eighteen store buildings and hotels; two churches, and ten school and institutional buildings." Hanson's architectural career in Faribault was to prosper between 1895 and 1901.

Olof Hanson architecture still standing in Faribault includes, but is not limited to:

105 1st Avenue NW	Jonathon L. Noyes House	house	1896
628 2nd Avenue NW	Thomas H. Quinn House	house	ca. 1895
403 2nd Street NW	C.S. Batchelder House	house	ca. 1897
14 3rd Street NW	Mathieu Building	commercial block	1897
319 3rd Street NW	Frank A. Berry House	house	1896

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609 4th Avenue NW	German Methodist Church	church	1901
127 4th Street NW	C.H. Klemmer & Sons	commercial block	1895
112 6th Street NW	Episcopal Rectory	parsonage	1897
126 Central Avenue N	J.N. Lang Store	commercial block	1895
201 Central Avenue N	Kaul Block	commercial block	1896
326 Central Avenue N	Syverson Building	commercial block	1901

While Hanson's commercial block designs, as originally built, displayed architectural competence and contextual sensitivity, it is through his residential designs that Hanson best demonstrated significant stylistic interpretation. Like most architects of the time, Hanson responded to the stylistic desires of his clients. His residential examples, consequently, displayed a rich rendering and blending of a variety of popular turn-of-the-century styles that include Queen Anne, Shingle, Classical Revival and Colonial Revival.

With a successful business established, Hanson was offered a partnership with Frank Thayer, an architect in Mankato. In hope of experiencing professional growth Hanson accepted the Thayer offer and moved to Mankato in 1901. He and Thayer then moved to Seattle in 1902 to set up a new practice on the west coast. Thayer soon became ill and retired from professional practice leaving Olof to fend for himself in his new environment. In Hanson's words, "Seattle was growing, but there were plenty of architects looking for business, and a deaf young man in a strange city did not have much of a chance." During this time Hanson's interest in serving the deaf community grew and in 1909 he started a Bible class for the deaf at Trinity Episcopal Church. Hanson worked as a draftsman until the outbreak of the first world war when architectural commissions virtually came to a halt. He returned to the Midwest and secured drafting positions in St. Paul and later Omaha and then returned to Seattle in November of 1918 on Armistice Day.

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Back in Seattle, Hanson found employment as a draftsman at the University of Washington. He eventually filled the chair of Landscape Architect at the University, however, his architecture was becoming less of a driving force and he began to focus on providing spiritual service to the deaf community. Hanson entered the Episcopal seminary and was ordained a deacon in March of 1924, and an Episcopal Priest in 1929. For financial reasons, Hanson continued to work for the University while providing spiritual service to the deaf of Seattle, Tacoma, Vancouver and Portland.

Olof Hanson died in Seattle, Washington on September 8, 1933.

Scholars within the deaf community believe Hanson to be this country's first deaf architect.

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III. Significance

The significance of Olof Hanson's architecture is multi-faceted. For the residents of Faribault his designs, especially the well preserved residential structures, represent some of the finest and well articulated turn-of-the-century architecture in the community; for the deaf community, locally and nationally, his work represents the accomplishments of a man who transcended his physical handicap to achieve professional and spiritual excellence.

Olof Hanson's architecture in Faribault represents a high standard of professional practice and proficiency. His commercial structures, as originally built, placed with the best of commercial architecture in Faribault and his residential designs were exceptionally handsome examples of the eclectic styles in vogue at the turn-of-the-century.

IV. Registration Requirements

1. The building must have been wholly designed by Olof Hanson while he practiced architecture in Faribault, Minnesota between the years of 1895 and 1901.
2. The building must rest on its original foundation and basically retain its original footprint and massing.
3. The building must be substantially intact retaining:
the original exterior finishes and facade treatments,
the fenestration, and
the roof or cornice profile.

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4. The buildings should display high artistic merit through:
the competent interpretation of the fashionable turn-of-the-century
architectural styles,
sensitivity to scale and siting, and
the use of quality materials.

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

See continuation sheet

☒ See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency

- ☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Specify repository: Fort Snelling History Center
Saint Paul, Minnesota

I. Form Prepared By

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The multiple property listing process for Olof Hanson's architecture evaluated all known Hanson designs within the City of Faribault. This evaluation included five commercial blocks, four private residences, the Episcopal Rectory, and one church. Unfortunately all of his commercial blocks have experienced unsympathetic modification through time. The Mathieu Building at 14 3rd Street NW, the J.N. Lang Store at 126 Central Avenue N, and the Syverson Building at 326 Central Avenue N have all undergone extensive "modernization" at the storefront level. The Batchelder & Kaul Store Building, located in the Faribault National Register District, has experienced the partial removal of the corbeled brick cornice, the total removal of a large well crafted round arch side entrance, and the original storefront has been totally obscured with an applied modern stone-like finish. The Klemer Building at 127 4th Street NW has experienced the most change of the Hanson commercial blocks with the removal of a corner tower and the raised namesake cornice, the down-sizing of windows on the second story, and a complete modification of the storefront with "old" brick veneering and modern horizontal windows. Examples of Hanson's commercial architecture may at a future date be recognized through this nomination process if they are returned to their original appearance and conform to the registration requirements.

Hanson's remaining residential structures have gone through less change than his commercial designs. The major exception to this is the Charles Batchelder residence at 403 2nd Street NW. This handsome Shingle Style influenced design has been covered with metal siding obscuring the primary exterior finishes. Fortunately, however, the applied siding appears to follow the contours of the original profile and therefore the modifications are probably not irreversible.

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The German Methodist Church at 609 4th Avenue NW, a fine, intact Gothic Revival structure with Craftsman influences, was moved to its present site from a site west of the downtown.

The historic context was identified as part of the local preservation planning process. In 1985 the Faribault Heritage Preservation Commission began the process based on the Secretary of Interior's "Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation" (1983). Central to the process were the use of "historic context units" as the basis around which preservation strategies and subsequent activities would be organized. From this process eight historic contexts for Faribault have evolved. The work of Olof Hanson, being by a local architect who immeasurably added to the quality of life in Faribault through his architecture and example, would be categorized within the *Quality of Life* Context.

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