

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



604

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 Eldon Carnegie Public Library

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 608 West Elm Street not for publication

city or town Eldon vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Wapello code 179 zip code 52554

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.)

Patricia Orlertins
Signature of certifying official/Title

4-25-96
Date

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): _____

Edson H. Ball
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
5/30/96

National Register

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

- Ownership options: private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- Category options: building(s), district, site, structure, object

Contributing/Noncontributing counts for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/library

EDUCATION/library

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival

foundation STONE/limestone, walls Brick, roof TILE, other

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property or 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Period of Significance

1913-1945

Significant Dates

1913

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Wetherell and Gage

Guthrie and Holst

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 565220 4529960
Zone Easting Northing

3 Zone Easting Northing
4 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 Jo Eddy

organization Eldon Historic Preservation Commission date Sept. 20, 1994

street & number RR 1 Box 81 telephone (515) 652-3158

city or town Eldon, state Ia zip code 52554

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 City of Eldon

street & number Elm Street telephone (515) 652-7510

city or town Eldon state Iowa zip code 52554

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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Eldon, Wapello County, IA

Narrative Description

The Eldon Carnegie Public Library is located in the middle of the block on Elm Street in the city of Eldon, Wapello County, Iowa. The library was constructed between 1912 and 1913. It is a one-story, essentially rectangular, brick building constructed in a Classical Revival style. The building faces north on a 66 x 132-foot lot. It has a hipped roof of red vitrified tile and a raised rock-faced stone basement. The roof has ridge finials and tile flashing. A projecting gabled entrance sits atop the nine concrete steps. The raked fascia board on the gable end extends slightly above the roof line. The frieze board on this gable end is decorated with eleven diamond shaped tiles. The entry door has a transom with three panes and is flanked by plain pilasters with decorative stone Corinthian capitals which support an entablature with "Free Public Library" inscribed in the frieze which is also made of stone. Each pilaster has a wrought iron lamp bracket attached to it for lighting the entryway. Above the entablature is an arch of bricks with a stone medallion inscribed "A.D. 1912". A decorative tile lies on each side of the arch. The building catches natural light on all sides from triple double-hung windows with transom sashes above. Beneath the windows on the facade the header panels are flush and there is one diamond-shaped tile centered in each panel. The sills all around the building are made of stone. The water table is made of concrete. On the northeast side of the facade is the cornerstone, made of concrete and inscribed, "Carnegie Library".

The interior is one uninterrupted rectangular space set up in the small library style suggested by James Bertram in his "Notes on Library Buildings" that was sent out to each community that was promised Carnegie funds. The vestibule does not project into the interior of the building. The librarian's office is formed behind the central delivery desk by shelf partitions. The adult and children's reading rooms, as well as the reference room are also partitioned with bookshelves. A wooden pew-like seat that matches the woodwork and shelving is built in under the windows to the right and left of the entrance door. A built-in magazine rack lies to the immediate left as you enter. The stairs leading to the basement are located in the librarian's office. The basement includes a vestibule, assembly room, boiler room, coal room and committee room. A small toilet is located under the stairway. The

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Eldon, Wapello County, IA

basement draws in some natural light from the six small double-hung windows on each side of the building. There are five steps leading to the basement vestibule on the north side and there is also an exit door from the basement in the back of the building

The grounds include a well-kept flat lawn. Hedges are adjacent to the northern foundations. A gravel drive to the right of the lawn and a small gravel parking area between Elm street and the front walk accommodate library patrons. A concrete sidewalk extends from each corner of the block and is continued to the front steps of the library and also to the front steps leading to the basement entrance. An antique street light in the center of the parking area provides light as well as period authenticity to the building although it was placed there around 1917, a few years after the building was dedicated. The property is in excellent condition and has had little alteration since its construction.

The library furniture is original and the light fixtures are probably original as well. The one exception is the light over the delivery desk which has been replaced with a fluorescent light. An iron hand rail has been placed down the center of the front steps and the outside front door has been replaced. Also, the door to the librarian's office has been removed to reduce interference with the computer equipment. The original shades from the lamps are gone. The vestibule has its original tile floor. The pine floor in the main library rooms have been carpeted. One source suggests that the main library floor was originally tile. The toilet wasn't installed until 1919, though provisions for one had been drawn in the original floor plans. The brick chimney, which is on the rear of the western slope of the roof, was originally stone capped but now has a metal hood. The wall between the coal and boiler rooms was removed and replaced with one made of cement blocks. A modern furnace has replaced the coal furnace. Historical photos show hedges on the east side of the building that are no longer there, whereas the present hedges on the north side are not seen in these photos.

The neighborhood surrounding the library was originally residential and church properties, though the lots were small with the intention of accommodating small businesses. The neighborhood has remained essentially the same, with the exception of one business located on the northwest corner of the block.

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Eldon Carnegie Library
Eldon, Wapello County, IA

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Eldon Public Library is locally significant under both National Register Criterion A and C. It is historically significant under the former because of its long term contributions to the educational and recreational growth of the residents of Eldon and immediate vicinity. Also, it is architecturally significant as perhaps the best example of Classical Revival design influence in the community and as a very good example of the design skills of the architectural firm of Wetherell and Gage, an important Des Moines firm that designed at least nine other Carnegie libraries in the state in addition to Eldon.

The period of significance begins with the library's dedication in 1913, and ends in 1945, the arbitrary 50-year cut-off date for National Register eligibility, although the library continues on in its original capacity today.

In the early 20th century the little town of Eldon was looking forward to continuing growth as a railroad town. When the library was built in 1912-13 Eldon had a growing population. The town was incorporated in 1872. Between the years of 1873, the first year Eldon was listed in the census, and 1920, the town had increased in population from 350 to 2100. The Big Four Fair grounds were located here and provided a place of entertainment for the four adjoining counties of Wapello, Van Buren, Jefferson and Davis. The traveling Chautaugus were also held on the fairgrounds in an effort to educate and entertain the population. In 1912 Theodore Roosevelt came to Eldon and gave a campaign speech at the Big Four grounds. Many other politicians and lecturers spoke from the stage of the McHaffey Opera House in Eldon. In this atmosphere of growth and cultural and educational interest it seemed the time was right for a permanent library.

Women's study groups, lodges, and sewing/recreational groups in Eldon felt that Eldon would benefit from the advantages of a library, especially the young people. A group of ladies were able to secure enough funds through fund raisers and contributions to rent an upstairs room in a local business building and open Eldon's first library in 1906. In 1908 the library association was incorporated under the state laws and at that time support was secured from the city for maintenance of the institution. In 1911 correspondence was

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Eldon, Wapello County, IA

begun with Andrew Carnegie in hopes of securing a donation with which to construct a permanent library building. When all of his specifications were met, he agreed to donate \$7,500 and the plans went ahead for the construction of the building.

The architectural firm of Wetherell and Gage drew up the plans. This firm through the years drew up the plans for ten Carnegie libraries in Iowa, including Eldon, Oskaloosa, Bloomfield, Osceola, Bedford, Boone, and Cherokee. Frank Wetherell was associated with several different partners over the years and was jointly responsible for many public buildings, houses, and churches in the state. The firm he established in Des Moines continues as Wetherell and Ericsson.

The contract for the construction of the building went to Guthrie and Holst of Albia, Iowa. The cornerstone was laid with the appropriate ceremonies on November 23, 1912. The dedication service was held May 9, 1913 at the Eldon Christian Church. An address was given by Senator J. F. Webber of Ottumwa, Iowa. The reception was held in the new library building.

The Eldon Library has served the community well over the years as a resource for study and recreational reading materials. But it has also served the community in other ways. A display of Indian artifacts, antique guns and political buttons were donated to the library in 1916 and remained for the public to enjoy until they were stolen in a break-in a few years ago. The basement rooms also served as meeting rooms for the Woman's Club, community Bible study, 4H sewing class, etc. In 1918 barrels were placed on the library grounds as a place for the community to donate nuts that were used for making gas mask filters for the army. In the late 1930's and early 1940's the National Youth Organization met in the library basement and sewed articles of clothing and comforters to be sent to the war-torn nations overseas. In 1947, the library board gave the Eldon Board of Education permission to use the basement rooms as a kindergarten but this never came about. For many years a Story Hour has been held one day a week during the school year for preschoolers. The Eldon Library is a place the community has always counted on for the edification of the public.

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Eldon Carnegie Library
Eldon, Wapello County, IA

Bibliography

Published and Unpublished Histories:

Bobinski, George S.

1979 Carnegie Libraries: American Library Association

Sterling, Ruth

1986 Wapello County History. Sutherland Printing Company
Inc./Publishing.

Waterman, Harrison L.

1914 History of Wapello County, Iowa. Chicago: S.J.
Clarke Publishing.

Newspapers:

The Eldon Forum

1912 August 22, article giving the dimensions and description
of planned library.

1912 November 21, article announcing the upcoming corner-
stone laying ceremonies.

1912 December 19, article giving the history of the library
in Eldon.

1913 February 20, article concerning the progress made
on the library building construction.

1913 May 15, article announcing the library dedication.

Maps:

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1919.

USGS Map.

Other Sources:

Eldon Public Library Board Minutes, 1906-1922 and 1940-present.

Personal correspondence with John Wetherell, grandson of the
architect who drew up the plans for the Eldon Carnegie Library,
dated July 1994.

Personal communication with Myrtle Flint, 30-year member of
the Eldon Library Board and witness to the laying of the
cornerstone in 1912.

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Eldon Carnegie Library
Eldon, Wapello County, IA

Bertram, James
1911 Notes on Library Buildings.

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Eldon Public Library property consists of Lots 29, 30, and 31 in Block 37, of the Original Town Plat for the town of Eldon.

Boundary Justification

The boundary consists of the legal description of the entire property including the building and adjacent lawn area and parking lot that has historically been associated with the library since 1912.

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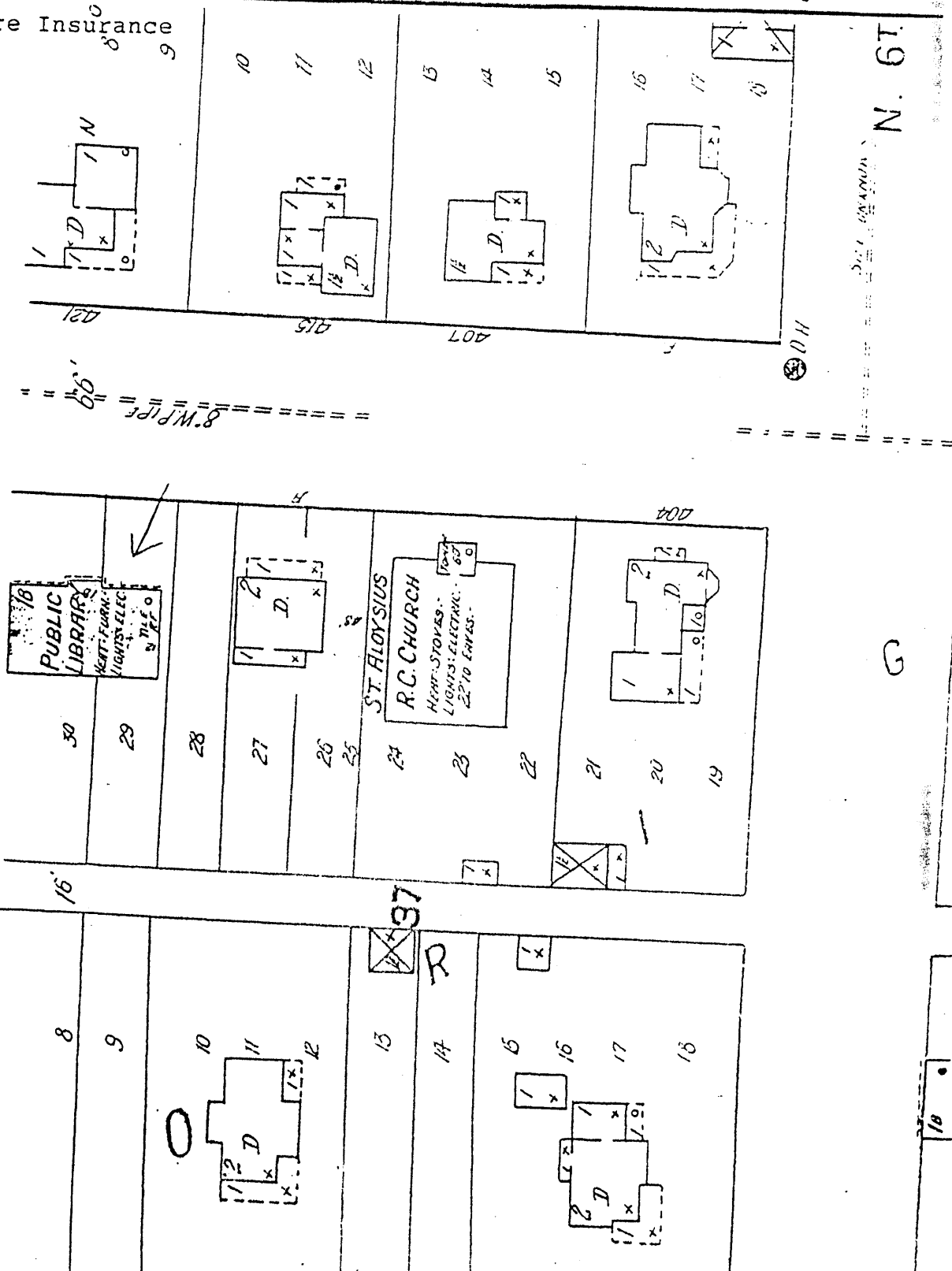
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Eldon, Wapello County, IA

1919 Fire Insurance
Map

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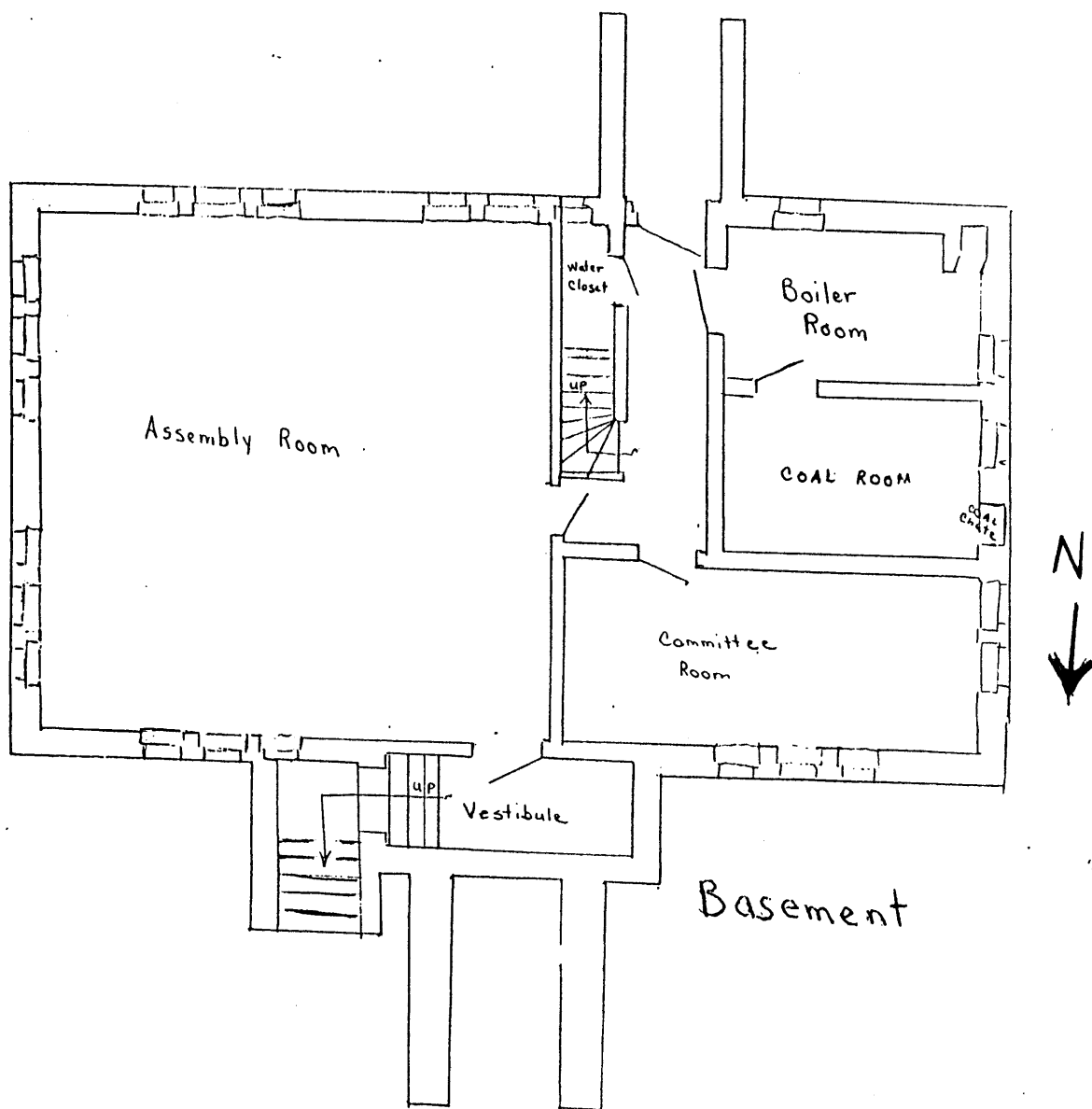
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Eldon Carnegie Library
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Floor Plan
(Redrawn from architect's original plans)



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Floor Plan
(Redrawn from architect's original plans)

