

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

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 Washoe County Library - Sparks Branch

other names/site number Sparks Justice Court

**2. Location**

street & number 814 Victorian Street  not for publication

city or town Sparks  vicinity

state Nevada code NV county Washoe code 031 zip code 89431

**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.)

Ronald A. Jones 1/31/92  
Signature of certifying official/Title 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:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	<u>for</u> Signature of the Keeper <u>Christine A. Lee</u>	Date of Action <u>3/9/92</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____	_____

**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	
One		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
One		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
Thematic Nomination of the Architecture  
of Frederick J. DeLongchamps

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**  
None

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/Library  
GOVERNMENT/Government Office

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION and CULTURE/MUSEUM

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/  
Mediterranean Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Not visible  
walls brick  
roof Terra cotta  
other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more 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  
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

**Period of Significance**

1931-1942

**Significant Dates**

1931

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Frederick J. DeLongchamps, Architect  
Rousch and Belz, Builder

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

University of Nevada, Reno  
University Library, Special  
Collection Department

Washoe County Library - Sparks Branch  
Name of Property

Washoe County, Nevada  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 1	2 6 3 4 6 0	4 3 7 9 5 9 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

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 Ana Beth Koval, Patricia Lawrence-Dietz and Lucy Scheid

organization Rainshadow Associates date September 1984

street & number P.O. Box 352 telephone (702) 849-1438

city or town Carson City state Nevada zip code 89702

### 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 Sparks

street & number 431 Prater Way telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Sparks state Nevada zip code 89431

**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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The Sparks Branch of the Washoe County Library is a one story, brick structure influenced by the Mediterranean Revival style. The building was designed by the prominent Nevada architect Frederic Joseph DeLongchamps (1882-1969), and built by Rousch & Belz Contractors in 1931 as the Sparks Branch of the Washoe County Library. The structure remained a library and Justice Court building until 1965, when the library was moved to a larger building and the City of Sparks Justice Court expanded to fill the whole building. The interior was remodeled around this time to suit its new use. Current plans call for using the building as a railroad museum and restoring the interior.

Site

The Sparks Branch of the Washoe County Library is prominent on the northwest corner of B Street and Pyramid Way; the intersection of a major east/west route with the major north/south artery. The Sparks Branch is located in the downtown, core, commercial area, surrounded by buildings that vary in size, style, and date. It is setback approximately fifteen feet from the street. It is surrounded by patterned brick paving blocks rather than concrete sidewalk. Concrete planter boxes in a variety of shapes and sizes are located in front of the building, on the east side and in back. Two small benches are situated on both the east and north sides of the building. The area between the building and the parking lot is landscaped with young trees and plants.

Exterior

The Sparks Branch of the Washoe County Library is a rectangular building, one-story in height, resting on a high basement. Its colorful exterior is brick laid in Flemish bond, with dark red headers and light red stretchers. Brick quoins highlight the corners and a wide, brick beltcourse separates the basement and first floor levels. Facade and side walls are articulated at the main floor level by wide strips, suggestive of pilasters which separate the window bays. A low-pitched, red-tiled, hipped roof with overhanging eaves and brackets crowns the building.

The facade is symmetrical and dominated by a central, gabled pavilion. The semi-circular arched, main entrance is reached by twinned, L-shaped staircases with wrought iron balustrades. A curvilinear keystone highlights the entrance. Flanking the entrance are the original, ornate, light fixtures. The double door entry is recessed and topped by a multi-light, semi-circular arched window.

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Access to the basement level is through a rectangular entrance under the L-shaped staircases. Recessed, double doors open into the basement. Original light fixtures hang from vestibule walls. Directly above the basement entrance is a rectangular panel decorated with sculptural ornamentation consisting of a wreath flanked by torches. Rear access to the basement level is provided through a small, multi-paneled, wooden door with screen door, and protected from the elements by a modest, gabled roof, entry porch. This porch appears to be a recent addition.

Facade and side wall, main floor windows are tall and rectangular, have twelve lights, and a hinged lower section to allow for ventilation. Four such windows pierce the facade and three pierce each side wall. Rear windows are primarily tall and narrow and fixed with fourteen lights. All have flat, brick lintels and projecting brick sills. The basement level is pierced with small, square, multi-light windows, each covered with a screen or storm window.

Exterior alterations have been few. Other than the porch already mentioned, the only other alteration has been to the doors; the original main door and basement front door have been replaced by contemporary, metal framed, double glass doors.

**Interior**

The original interior is not available to view. It has been covered. The original ceiling is hidden behind the added, drop acoustical ceiling. Numerous paneled partitions divide the interior space into small offices.

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The Sparks Branch of the Washoe County Library is eligible for the National Register under criteria A and C. With its distinctive, red tiled roof and dramatic, semi-circular arched entry, the building is an example of the Mediterranean Revival style unique in Sparks. The prominent, corner site adds to its visual importance. The structure was designed by Frederick Joseph DeLongchamps (1882-1969), a preeminent Nevada architect, who designed numerous major buildings in Nevada, particularly in the Reno/Sparks/Carson City area. The library is the oldest extant government building in Sparks and, as a library, was a major cultural center from 1931 until it was changed to serve exclusively as a justice court in 1965.

**Architectural Significance**

The Sparks Branch of the Washoe County Library is a pleasantly imposing and attractive, Period Revival building deriving its style elements from the Mediterranean. It is colorful and highly visible with its dark and light red brick exterior and contrasting flat and recessed surfaces. The red tiled roof, semi-circular arched entry, wrought-iron railings, and small paned windows are particularly characteristic of this style.

A modest building, the Sparks Branch is an important, visual landmark that contributes to the City of Sparks' character and image. It is one of the most designed buildings in Sparks and one of only two, Mediterranean Revival buildings in Sparks. It is also one of only five non-residential buildings designed by Frederick J. DeLongchamps that are still standing in this city. Of the other four DeLongchamps buildings, three are schools, designed in 1916, 1924, and 1938; the fourth is the Catholic Church which will also be nominated to the National Register.

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The Sparks Library is significant because it was the first public library and also the "first gift" to Sparks from Washoe County. As the public library, the building served as a meeting place for many civic organizations in Sparks. Previous to the new library, Sparks residents used the Old Carnegie Library on South Virginia Street in Reno, some five miles distant.

The first library in Sparks was the Men's Railroad Library built in 1905 and destroyed by fire in 1908. The library was not public; it only served the male employees of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

The bill proposing a new Washoe County Library and the Sparks Branch was introduced by Assemblyman E. C. Mulcahy of Sparks, approved by the Senate, and signed by Governor Balzar in 1929. The bill did not specify what type of building or where the Sparks Branch would be located, so in January of 1930 the Lions Club investigated the feasibility of moving the Old Carnegie Library from Reno to Sparks. After months of debate, it was decided that moving the building would not be successful and that a new building would have to be erected. The site was chosen for reasons of economy by the Board of Library Trustees in 1930 from lots that the county had purchased many years earlier. These lots were originally purchased for a Justice Court building which was never built. It was decided that the ground floor of the new library would be set aside for the offices for the Justice of the Peace and the Constable.

The construction was contracted by Rousch and Belz, built according to the plans of Frederic J. DeLongchamps at the cost of \$20,000 and furnished for \$2,300. Construction began in July of 1931 and the building was formally opened January 1, 1932. H. W. Miles, Mrs. Carrie E Devine, and Mrs. Martina Spencer were the librarians. The library served as a cultural center for Sparks. Its prominent location and the lack of other public buildings contributed to its importance in the community. In 1965, the present library was built; the spaces vacated of library appurtenances were dedicated to the Justice Court. Plans are underway to move the Justice Court to a new building and to use the old venerable library as the Sparks Railroad Museum. A park created for large, railroad artifacts has already been completed behind the building.



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Bibliography

Sparks Tribune, March 22, 1929, January 6, 1930, March 14, 1930, September 10, 1930,  
October 6, 1930, October 29, 1930, November 14, 1930, November 17, 1930,  
November 21, 1930, July 29, 1931, August 5, 1931, August 7, 1931, August 19, 1931,  
December 4, 1931, December 7, 1931, December 14, 1931, December 30, 1931.

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Parcel # 32-194-10

Original Townsite of Sparks, Robison's Addition, Block 1, Lots 1-5, 20-24.

The boundaries contain the site historically associated with the building.