# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

**NAME**

**HISTORIC**

- Ottawa Library

**AND/OR COMMON**

- Carnegie Free Library

## LOCATION

**STREET & NUMBER**

- 5th and Main

**CITY, TOWN**

- Ottawa

**STATE**

- Kansas

**CODE**

- 20

**COUNTY**

- Franklin

**CODE**

- 037

## CLASSIFICATION

**CATEGORY**

- **DISTRICT**
- **BUILDING(S)**
- **STRUCTURE**
- **SITE**
- **OBJECT**

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY

- OTHER

## OWNER OF PROPERTY

**NAME**

- City of Ottawa

**STREET & NUMBER**

- City Hall

**CITY, TOWN**

- Ottawa

**STATE**

- Kansas

**ZIP**

- 66067

## LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.**

- Register of Deeds

**STREET & NUMBER**

- Franklin County Courthouse

**CITY, TOWN**

- Ottawa

**STATE**

- Kansas

**ZIP**

- 66067

## REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**TITLE**

- Historic Preservation Survey

**DATE**

- 1978

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**

- Ks. State Historical Society

**CITY, TOWN**

- Topeka

**STATE**

- Kansas

**ZIP**

- 66612
DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
GOOD
FAIR

DETERIORATED
RUINS
UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
MOVED
DATE

Describle the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The old Carnegie Free Library in Ottawa is a rectangular two-story yellow brick building. It is located in the northwest corner of the city park. A shallow two-story temple portico frames the main entrance on the west. A one-story semi-circular projection at the east serves as an extension of the main reading room.

A raised foundation capped by a cut stone wortetable supports the brick walls. The foundation is built of coursed, rough-pitched limestone. The fenestration is regular with the window openings accentuated by raised brick surrounds above stone sills. The hip roof is covered by standing seam metal roofing which has been painted red.

On the exterior, classical detailing is evident in the entrance portico and the wall cornice. Original detailing also remains in the interior, including wood columns and trim in the reading room.

Alterations

Generally, the historic integrity of this building is excellent. Only minor features have been changed. In 1972 the "Carnegie Free Library" sign was replaced. The new sign is located on the lower frieze rather than above the columns. Anodized aluminum storm windows have been added. Alterations to the main stairway and other interior rooms include the introduction of acoustical ceiling tile and modern decorative treatments.
The old Carnegie Free Library in Ottawa, through its association with Andrew Carnegie's attempt to promote cultural enrichment, represents an important aspect of American history at the turn of the twentieth century. Characteristic of the taste in design during this period for classically detailed civic structures, the building is also a late example of the work of Kansas architect George P. Washburn.

A $15,000 grant from Carnegie financed the construction of the library. Mrs. R. A. Wasson and Mrs. R. S. Black had solicited the gift in 1902 on behalf of the Ottawa Library Association which had been active since 1873. In accordance with Carnegie's customary procedure when making such gifts, the city had to agree to provide a site and accept the obligation of spending annually an amount equal to 10% of the gift for maintaining the library before the grant was advanced.

The city proposed to erect the building in the city park. Because of a deed restriction which stipulated that any change in use must have unanimous consent, it was necessary to gain written approval for the proposed library from all owners of property adjacent to the park.

Grants from the Carnegie Corporation for libraries were awarded as early as 1886, but the number of donations increased dramatically from 1898 to a peak in 1903 when the Ottawa Library was built. Carnegie's purpose was to contribute to civic advancement through cultural enrichment. His philanthropy (finally amounting to $56 million for 2,509 libraries) was an impressive and successful attempt to affect American life on a broad scale. The program ended in 1917. Eventually, there were 59 Carnegie libraries in Kansas. As late as 1967, forty-four were still in use.

The Ottawa Library opened in the fall of 1903. It was designed by the office of George P. Washburn (an Ottawa resident) in what was termed at the time as a "free classical" style. Because of this and the constraints of a modest budget, the building is detailed simply. A feature of this design which may reflect Washburn's hand is the distinctive hemicycle. The usual Carnegie Library had a simple rectangular plan.
In its first year of operation, the library circulated 24,434 books. For some time after its opening, however, the library leased extra rooms to women's clubs, doctors, and others.

Early in 1979, a library advisory committee called for the construction of a new, larger facility for Ottawa. The report recommended preservation of the original building, but with an alternative use.

THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO FUTURE AMENDMENT.
Bibliography:


Beisel, Mark L., Stephen J. Mudrey, and Ivan D. Veldhuizen, "Carnegie Library Architecture," History of Architecture IV-Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS.


Ottawa Herald. October 27 and 28, 1903.

*Reflections of Franklin County and Chautauqua Days*. Ottawa, KS. (1961).
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

QUADRANGLE NAME: Ottawa South

ZONE EASTING

NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The nominated property is approximately one-half acre in size; it is located in the northwest corner of Block 111, original plat of Ottawa, also known as City Park. Beginning at the southeast corner of Fifth & Main Streets, the boundary follows Fifth Street east approximately 110 yards, then south 110 yards, then west 110 yards to Main Street.

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Julie A. Wortman, Architectural Historian
Dale Nimz, Historic Preservation Department

ORGANIZATION: Ks. State Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER: 120 West 10th

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka

STATE: Kansas

CODE: 66612

DATE: 10-1-80

PHONE: 913 296-3251

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: [Signature]

TITLE: Executive Director, Ks. State Historical Society

DATE: 10-14-80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST: [Signature] M SOLOMON

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

DATE