United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Date listed 5-15-2014
NRIS No. 14000180
Oregon SHPO

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Oregon City Carnegie Library

other names/site number Oregon City Public Library

2. Location

street & number 606 John Adams Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Oregon City ☐ vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Clackamas code 005 zip code 97045

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ **national** ___ **statewide** X **local**

Signature of certifying official/Title 3-5-14 Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [ ] Private
- [X] public – Local
- [ ] public – State
- [ ] public – Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [X] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
1		site
	1	structure
	1	object
2	2	**Total**

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: library
RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation
LANDSCAPE: park

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: library
RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation
LANDSCAPE: park

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:
Classical Revival; American Renaissance

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK
roof: ASPHALT: Built-up
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Oregon City Carnegie Library is located on Oregon City's second level atop a bluff that separates the eastern section of the city from the historic downtown to the west. In 1851, Dr. John McLoughlin donated four city blocks atop the bluff to residents for use as public parks. The Carnegie Library sits near the center of one of the four donated blocks, now known as "Library Park" or "Carnegie Center." The Oregon City Carnegie Library is a rectangular, American Renaissance building with Georgian Revival ornament. Paired pilasters and a central pedimented portico divide the façade into a central block and wings. The library is a single-story, red and yellow brick masonry building atop a full basement. Its prominent public entrance is flanked by yellow brick columns and pilasters. The façade is symmetrical with bands of wood-framed windows north and south of the central entry. The building displays a full entablature with block modillions. The contributing park site is primarily covered in grass with concrete walkways and mature trees, many of which were planted at the time the Carnegie Library was built.[1] South of the library sits modern play equipment, including a non-contributing concrete fountain known as the Carnegie Spraypark (1929), a slide, and swing set.

The building is in excellent condition. A 2002 renovation removed a non-compatible addition on the primary façade dating from 1963. In 2010, the public library relocated from a larger space back to the Carnegie building, restoring the building's original use. The building once again expresses integrity of design, materials, workmanship, site, location, feeling and association.

Narrative Description

SETTING

The Carnegie Library sits in the center of Library Park, a contributing resource. The park is one-block square, flanked by 7th Street on the north, Jefferson Street on the east, 6th Street on the south, and John Adams Street on the west. Library Park is now surrounded by large, graceful residences and churches from the late 19th- and early-20th centuries. Seventh Street, on the park's northern boundary, acts as a traffic corridor for cars moving east and west atop the bluff.

The library and neighboring residences contribute to the McLoughlin Conservation District, which features three of Oregon City's oldest residences, the Ermatinger House (1845), the McLoughlin House (1846), and the Barclay House (1849). The McLoughin Conservation District is bound by the bluff to the west and Van Buren Street to the east. The district is bound by Clinton Street on the south, and by 14th Street on the north.[2] The library is within sight of many notable historic buildings within the district. The impressive Atkinson Memorial Church, constructed in 1924, sits across 6th Street to the south; the Ermatinger House (1845) and the Oregon City Fire Station (1923) sit across John Adams to the west; commercial buildings line up along 7th Street; and a quiet row of historic residences faces the park from the east.

[1] Larry Potter, Parks Maintenance Manager for Oregon City, interviewed by the author by phone, July 17, 2013.

[2] The McLoughlin Conservation District was designated in 1986, after residents began to fear for the historic building stock in the neighborhood atop the bluff. It includes many city landmarks, including three that were moved from their original locations downtown: the aforementioned McLoughlin and Barclay houses, which are both part of the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, and the Ermatinger House. A map of the district and details concerning a possible future National Register District are available on the city's website, currently accessible at http://www.orcity.org/planning/mcloughlin-conservation-district [accessed July 28, 2013].

Library Park is well-manicured, covered primarily in grass, with mature shade trees. The park includes curving concrete pathways that draw pedestrians through the park from the bordering sidewalks. West of the primary façade, visitors walk up a curvilinear concrete path that is flanked by green lawns. The path narrows and then widens again as it approaches the wide concrete stair of the library. Contemporary metal benches with wood slat seats face the library. Similar benches face 7th Street. Planting strips flank the library's entry stairs, and a large modern planter sits at the building's southwest corner. A modern book depository sits near the planter.

The park differs in character north and south of the library. On the north, pathways radiate out from the library toward sidewalks through a peaceful, park-like setting with mature oak trees and occasional cedar and aspen. The trees were planted at the time the library was constructed, though some have been replaced in recent years due to disease. The site slopes up to the northeast corner. A historical marker sits near the northwest corner of the property, attached to a large rock. It reads: "OREGON CITY WAS THE BIRTHPLACE OF EWIN MARKHAM / APRIL 23, 1852 / POET LAUREATE OF OREGON/AUTHOR OF THE WORLD FAMOUS 'THE MAN WITH THE HOE' / PUTTING INTO WORDS MILLET'S MASTERPIECE IN ART / THIS MARKER WAS PLACED HERE ONE CENTURY LATER / APRIL 23, 1952". South of the library, the park is devoted to play equipment. Curving paths lead from the library around a concrete spray fountain to a swing set and slide in the park's southeast corner. Bark shavings cover the ground. A bench faces the playground and the library from the park's southeast corner.

A modern, U-shaped, concrete ramp runs along the library's south wall to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This ramp, paired with a stair, leads to the children's library installed in the building's basement.

East of the library is an attached concrete pad and park land primarily covered in grass. As the grade rises to the northeast, a retaining wall provides a barrier between the sloping ground and the concrete pad. A non-contributing brick structure dating from 2002 sits northeast of the library on the pad. It is square, constructed of red brick, with double doors and no roof. It was designed to provide a compatible, unobtrusive screen for trash and recycling cans.

Metal light poles are located throughout the park. Four stand at the building's corners, lighting walkways, and four stand at the park's corners. It's unclear whether these fixtures are original.

EXTERIOR

The building is rectangular, designed as a central block with wings. It sits on a concrete foundation and is faced in red brick with yellow brick accents. The wide primary façade faces west. The brick is known as "Newberg Red" and was provided by the Newberg Brick and Tile Company in Yamhill County, Oregon. Trade magazines mention that it was a popular product used on nearby public buildings, including a high school in Hillsboro, a high school in Heppner as well as the Portland Van & Storage Company building and the University Club building in Portland.[3]

Primary Façade

The building is approached by seven narrowing concrete steps that lead between half walls of red brick to a small stoop before the building's paired entry doors. The stair's flanking red brick walls are capped in concrete, providing flat ledges for large, glazed planters on either side of the stair. Three metal handrails radiate from the stoop. The stoop and stairs shelter under a shallow, projecting, pedimented portico. The portico is supported by paired brick columns. The columns are square, made of yellow brick, and are supported by the stair's flanking walls. The columns support a full entablature consisting of a yellow brick architrave, an unornamented frieze, and a painted, sheet metal cornice with large block modillions. This cornice extends

[3] "Trade Notes," *The Pacific Coast Architect*, Vol. 4, No. 1, October 1912, 87.

around the building. It also extends across the bottom of the projecting pediment. The pediment includes block modillions in the gable. Metal letters in the frieze of the pedimented portico spell out "CARNEGIE CENTER."

Above the building's cornice, a short parapet wall hides the built-up roof on all elevations, giving the building a decorative cap. The parapet wall is made up of alternating courses of red and yellow brick. The building's corners include engaged columns that project slightly. They are topped by an extra course of yellow brick with small dentils. The roof is nearly flat and features an original red brick chimney.

The library's primary entrance displays paired entry doors made of wood with tall, fixed-light windows flanked by sidelights that consist of wood panels topped by tall, fixed-light windows. Yellow brick pilasters flank the entry. Doors and sidelights are topped by transom windows featuring wood muntins in a Union Jack pattern.

The façade's north and south corners are ornamented with paired yellow brick pilasters. A yellow brick belt course and architrave emphasize the horizontal lines of the western elevation. North and south of the entry are identical bands of four windows each. They consist of paired, double-hung, one-over-one-light, wood sash windows, flanked by single-light wood windows, separated by large, decorative wood mullions. Each band is topped with transoms with wood muntins in a Union Jack pattern. The windows sit atop yellow brick sills.

Further ornamentation on the primary façade includes two metal sconces with glass globes that light the entry stair. A metal plate has been set into the northwest corner. It reads "Gift of Andrew Carnegie, 1912."

South Elevation

The building's design is unified by its red brick wall surfaces, ornamented with yellow brick pilasters and horizontal bands of yellow brick. The south elevation features paired pilasters atop slightly projecting red brick pedestals at the corners. The belt course and architrave continue on this elevation, as does the sheet metal cornice with block modillions, and parapet wall above. This elevation steps back near the northeast corner of the building. Pilasters are applied only to the wall's primary plane. The south elevation faces the modern playground equipment and spray fountain.

The south elevation was altered in 2002 with the addition of a concrete, U-shaped ramp and stairs that slope from west to east along this elevation toward secondary entry doors to the basement level. The ramp is screened by a metal fence of one-inch-square, vertical rods. The fence is topped by decorative metal work. Basement entry doors are paired, swinging, wood doors with central windows. These doors shelter under a metal awning with exposed rafter tails supported by square wooden posts and knee braces. Metal and glass sconces with lighted globes are installed beneath the awning.

Fenestration differs between the primary and secondary elevations. Central to the south elevation's primary plane is a band of five identical, one-over-one-light, wood-framed windows. These are shorter than windows on the primary façade and are separated by brick rather than wood mullions. They appear to be shorter in order to accommodate tall bookcases along the interior walls.

Fenestration along the stepped-back portion of the south elevation consists of two basement windows and two one-over-one, double-hung, wood-framed windows on the first floor that match those on the primary elevation in design and proportion. They sit atop a yellow brick sill, and include Union Jack patterned transoms above. Basement windows are one-over-one-light, double-hung, wood-framed windows set into concrete window wells. They are covered by installed, wire mesh cages.

East Elevation

The library's east elevation is the least ornamented. The eastern third of the building steps back from both the south and the north facades and includes no pilasters or columns. The wall is clad in red brick with yellow brick cornice details, belt course, and parapet.

The east elevation includes two secondary entry doors, one accessing the first floor and one accessing the basement. The first floor door is reached by a set of narrow concrete steps leading north. The stairs lead to a small stoop before a single wood door on the first floor with transom windows above. The door and its staircase are shielded by a tiered, red brick wall. The wall is capped in concrete and includes a yellow brick-trimmed drain. The door and stoop shelter under a metal awning similar to the one on the south elevation. It includes no posts but is supported by wooden knee brackets and features visible rafter tails.

The second entry door is located below the first. It is accessed by a concrete stair leading down south from behind the brick wall. The stair is partially screened by a fence of square, vertical metal rods, similar to fencing installed along the south elevation. The stair to the basement door is concrete, and the door is metal.

Fenestration on this elevation is similar to that on the south elevation. North of the door is a band of five, one-over-one-light, wood sash windows. These are separated by red brick mullions and share a single yellow brick sill. South of the door is a single, one-over-one-light, double-hung, wood sash window. These windows are placed high on the façade in order to accommodate book cases along the interior wall. Below each of these windows is a basement window. Basement windows are one-over-one, double-hung, wood sash windows in concrete window wells covered in metal mesh screens.

A non-contributing, 2002 structure screening trash and recycling bins sits northeast of the building. The structure is square, made of red brick, and sits atop a concrete foundation. It includes two wooden hinged doors that face east.

North Elevation

The north elevation also steps back on the eastern third of the building. The wall surface on the stepped-back portion is clad in red brick with a yellow brick cornice, parapet, and belt course details. A secondary entry door to the first floor faces east where the wall steps back from the primary plane. As on the east elevation, a concrete stair is screened by a red brick wall capped in concrete. The single, hinged door is wood with a glass panel, similar to the library's primary entry doors. It is topped by two square transom windows. The door is topped by a lintel of yellow brick. This elevation differs from the south and east elevations in that it does not provide access to the basement.

A pair of one-over-one-light, double-hung, wood-frame windows sits in the stepped back portion of the north wall. These share a yellow brick sill.

On the north elevation's primary plane, paired yellow brick pilasters define the east and west corners. These are identical to pilasters on other elevations. As on the south elevation, the wall features a central band of five, one-over-one-light, double-hung wood sash windows. The windows are separated by mullions of red brick. They share a yellow brick sill. They are short enough to accommodate bookcases on interior walls. Only one window accesses the basement level on this elevation. It is a sliding vinyl window above a wooden sill. A wire mesh screen has been installed over it. Unlike other basement windows, this one ends above grade. It does not include a window well.

INTERIOR

First Floor

The library's first floor is approximately 3,690 square feet in size. It is rectangular and is split by a north-south dividing wall that separates the main room from the research library, which is located in the eastern third of the building. The library is entered from the central entry doors on the west elevation. These lead into a freestanding interior vestibule of dark stained wood. The vestibule includes large, wood-framed glass panels and terminates below the library's ceiling. A second pair of wood doors leads from the vestibule into the main library. These, like the entry doors, are made of wood with glass panels. They include push bars and remain open during library hours. Doors include brass kick plates.

The main room features the library's primary collection of books and music, as well as a circulation desk directly north of the vestibule along the building's northwest wall. Temporary, modular partitions define private office space for librarians in the building's southwest corner. In the center of the library is a sitting room before an original fireplace. The fireplace is installed against the north-south dividing wall that separates the main library from the research library. The fireplace is clad in red brick and is topped by an original wooden mantel adorned with block modillions. In the south of the main room is a stair to the children's library in the basement. It is defined by a plastered half wall topped in wood paneling.

The floor of the library is hardwood. The walls are plastered and painted. Permanent wood bookcases are installed along the north wall. The plastered ceiling includes boxed beams and is adorned with a hardwood cornice and picture rail. Freestanding bookcases and Arts & Crafts furnishings complete the main room. These include a rug, a sofa, and easy chairs set before the fireplace. Furnishings are not original to the building.

In the east third of the building is the research library. It includes a librarian's stand-alone desk and permanently-installed, lockable bookcases with glass doors along the east wall. Wooden bookcases also line the room's north and west walls. Computer desks are located in the research library's north half, and a large library table sits in the center of the room. The research library also provides access to the building's elevator. Along the research library's south wall are the elevator and a private door to offices for the librarians, storage, and a private bathroom that are accessible both from the research library and through a door in the main library. The public enters the research library from an opening in the dividing wall just south of the fireplace.

A renovation in 2002 altered the configuration of the library stairs. They are now installed along the main portion of the library's south wall. The stairs are hard wood and the 180-degree, flat turn staircase enters the basement near the exterior doors on the south elevator. The basement's southwest corner includes separate men's and women's restrooms, along with a family restroom. The bathrooms were reconfigured and new fixtures were installed during the 2002 renovation.

Basement

The library basement encompasses approximately 3,420 square feet. Services, including the bathrooms, stairs, and water fountain, are clustered near the south wall in an enclosed vestibule that sits between the exterior swinging doors and a second set of swinging doors that access the children's library. The children's library is an open room with carpeted floors, wood boxed beams and posts, and a low ceiling. Bookcases are generally free-standing. A circulation desk is located west of the entry doors. Temporary, modular dividers are used to define private office space for librarians in the main room's southwest corner. This floor also includes break rooms, a small kitchen and storage for library staff, as well as access to the building's new elevator. These uses are located in the eastern section of the building, below the reference library.

Alterations within the Historic Period:

1929: A fountain with concrete wading pool was installed south of the Carnegie Library.[4]
1937: Partial excavation of the basement.
1941: The library replaced its hand-stoked wood furnace with an oil furnace.[5]
1950: Record cases and enclosure doors were installed to protect the Oregon Collection.
1951: Hand rails were installed along the steps on the west elevation.

The library's main room was reconfigured at an unknown date. Historic photos dated 1936 show that double doors were once installed in the dividing wall between the main library and the research library. Also, the

[4] Jane Altier, *Historic Resource Inventory Form for the Oregon City Public Library*, May 1982. Inventory forms can be accessed through the Oregon Historic Sites Database.
[5] Oregon City Library Board Minutes, 1916-1955, held by the City of Oregon City.

public opening between the main library and the research library once existed on the north side of the original fireplace. It has since been relocated to the south side.[6]

Library association minutes reference general maintenance and improvements, including the repair of a leaking roof and the addition of new bookcases. It is no longer clear which bookcases may be original. No other significant alterations or additions occurred in the historic period.

Alterations outside the Historic Period:

1963: During a renovation, the City of Oregon City installed a large addition on the primary façade, enclosing a new entrance with stairs to the basement.

2002: A restoration removed the incompatible addition from 1963 and removed the added stair.[7] The entry was restored to its original design. The restoration also exposed and restored existing materials, changed interior configurations to improve traffic flow between the main floor and the basement, and updated systems including public bathrooms. Projects included:

- Enlarging the basement entry on the south elevation to accommodate two hinged doors. This alteration, along with a new concrete ramp, helped the building meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Installing a new elevator between the first floor and the basement.
- Installing a new staff kitchen in the basement.
- Shifting interior stairs. Original stairs were oriented east-to-west in the location of the current elevator. Stairs are now oriented north-to-south and sit south of the current elevator; they are easily accessible from the basement entrance. Though this change slightly alters historic traffic patterns, the stair is located near its original location and retains its historic use.
- Adding a staff bathroom to the main floor.
- Reconfiguring and enlarging bathrooms on the basement level.
- Removing window air conditioning units on the basement level.
- Exposing and refinishing original wood floors on the library's main floor.
- Removing the dropped ceiling in the basement to expose original wood beams.
- Installing a new built-up roof and adding bracing to the library's parapet wall.
- Applying new metal letters spelling "Carnegie Center" to the frieze on the primary façade.
- Removing and reusing or storing some bookcases, trim pieces, doors and windows.
- Installing a new brick enclosure to screen trash bins near the northeast corner of the building.

2002: With its primary façade restored, the building was reopened as an art gallery, coffee shop and basement daycare.[8]

2010: The building was restored to its historic use when the Oregon City Public Library moved back into the building. The library is currently considering a compatible addition. Plans are not complete but suggest the addition will be located along the east wall.

In spite of recent alterations to the interior, the building expresses its original character through the retention or in-kind replacement of all character-defining features on the exterior. The building retains excellent integrity of design, materials and workmanship. The Carnegie library also remains in its original location on a contributing site dedicated to the people of Oregon City in 1851. It retains its original setting, feeling and association.

---

[6] Historic photos, ca 1936, photographer unknown, held by the City of Oregon City and published online, www.orcity.org/library/oregon-city-carnegie-library-100th-anniversary [Accessed July 29, 2013].

[7] Slusarenko Architecture, PC, *Carnegie Center Renovation Plans, Oregon City, OR, November 1, 2000.*

[8] Rebecca Nielson, *Oregon City Historic Resources Survey Form for the Oregon City Public Library*, April 6, 2002. Inventory forms can be accessed through the Oregon Historic Sites Database.

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.)

- [X] 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.
- [X] 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY
EDUCATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1913 - 1962

Significant Dates

1913: Date of Construction

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

McClaran, Elmer E.: Architect
Shelley, Robert: Builder

Period of Significance (justification)

The beginning date of the Period of Significance is 1913, the date the building was constructed and dedicated to public use. The Period of Significance extends to 1962 due to a major renovation in 1963 that changed the appearance of the building such that its integrity was affected. It has subsequently been returned to the appearance it had from 1913 through 1962.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraphs (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The locally significant Oregon City Public Library is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Education; Criterion A: Social History; and Criterion C: Architecture. The library is significant as an excellent example of a Carnegie Library, a public library constructed with funds provided by steel magnate Andrew Carnegie and designed with guidance from Mr. Carnegie's representative, James Bertam, to provide educational opportunities to the local public. The library is also an excellent example of a public building constructed in the American Renaissance style with Georgian details. The building's Period of Significance is 1913, the date of construction, through 1962, the year prior to a renovation that added an unsympathetic addition. That addition has subsequently been removed and the building now retains the appearance it had through the first 50 years of its existence.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Education

Oregon City, as an early site of western settlement, was the location of both the first public lending library in Oregon and the earliest Oregon State Library. From the settlement era, Oregon City's civic leaders tried, with variable success, to provide citizens with a free collection of educational materials available for their personal use. With the dedication of the 1913 Carnegie Library in Oregon City, the city realized a goal its residents had been pursuing since the 1850s: a free, public, lending library open to the entire populace of the city. Since 1913, the Oregon City Public Library has expanded its public education efforts, growing its collection and offering special educational events for children and adults. In approximately 1938, the Carnegie Library further expanded its mission, sharing its building with the county library system, which opened a branch in the Carnegie building's basement.[9] The Oregon City Public Library gains a portion of its significance from its 100-year history as a free and accessible public resource devoted to public education.

Criterion A: Social History

The Oregon City Carnegie Library is also eligible under Criterion A for its association with important trends in social history. The library was built with a $12,500 grant from philanthropist and steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie's financial donations built libraries throughout the United States between 1886 and 1919. He provided grants for design and construction wherever a public entity could ensure that they met two basic requirements: they could provide ten percent of the grant every year for maintenance and staffing; and they could provide a city-owned site for the library building. Oregon City met these requirements and became one of the first libraries built to specifications outlined in a construction booklet released in 1911 by Carnegie's secretary, James Bertram. The Oregon City Carnegie Library is important as the local representation of the nationwide movement for free public libraries in cities of all sizes spearheaded by Carnegie and Bertram.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Carnegie library in Oregon City is also eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as a regional example of American Renaissance style that relies heavily on the features of Georgian Revival architecture. The library's peaceful park setting, its symmetrical façade, its prominent, pedimented entry, and its classical ornament make it unique among Oregon City public buildings. The building also compares favorably to other Oregon Carnegie libraries, few of which enjoy such a fine location. Though it was neither the largest, nor the most expensive, the Oregon City library was highly-ornamented, constructed with great attention to detail, and with high-quality materials. Clad in locally manufactured brick in two colors, the Oregon City Carnegie Library was designed by Portland architect Elmer E. McClaran to express the importance of its mission through refined classical ornament. The building's interior spaces were designed to

[9] The Oregon City Public Library retains minutes of the Oregon City Library Board between 1916 and 1955. However, key sections of the board minutes have been removed from the log books. These include the minutes from the period between August 1937 and July 1938. Minutes from 1938 and beyond suggest that the Clackamas County Public Library moved into the Carnegie's basement during this period.

be airy, open and inviting. The Oregon City library is one of the first to be designed to the 1911 specifications provided by Carnegie and his representative, James Bertram, for the efficient and pleasing design of library spaces. It responds to guidelines perfected by Bertram while he worked with communities throughout the United States to refine the best ideas about how a library's interior should be designed. Though each Carnegie library is unique, Carnegie's philanthropy helped a codified design emerge amongst libraries in small and medium-sized cities across the U.S. The Oregon City Carnegie Library is significant as a local expression of this nationwide trend.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Libraries in Early Oregon

As one of the first and most prominent settlement sites in Oregon, Oregon City was an active participant in the movement to establish an American presence in the West. The pioneers who settled Oregon City prized education. This is evidenced by the speed with which they founded schools and the Oregon Territory's first lending library.

Oregon City is mentioned as the site of the first circulating library in the Oregon Territory in numerous state and territorial histories, but the roots of the claim may lie in W.H. Gray's *A History of Oregon.*[10] In it, Gray claims that the idea of forming a circulating library originated at the same time the young settlement began to consider a provisional government:

> *A consultation was held at the house of Gray to consider the expediency of organizing a provisional government. In it the whole condition of the settlement, the missions, and Hudson's Bay Company, were carefully looked at, and all the influences combined against the organization of a settlers' government were fully canvassed. The conclusion was that no direct effort could succeed, as it had already been tried and failed, from the combined influence of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Roman Catholic and Methodist missions. To the writer, who up to this time had not fully understood all the causes of the failure, it was doubtful. Two plans were suggested; one, at least, might succeed. The first was to get up a circulating library, and by that means draw attention and discussion to subjects of interest to the settlement, and secure the influence of the Methodist Mission, as education was a subject they had commenced. We found no difficulty in the library movement from them, only they seemed anxious to keep from the library a certain class of light reading, which they appeared tenacious about. This was not a vital point with the original movers, so they yielded it. The library prospered finely; one hundred shares were taken at five dollars a share; three hundred volumes of old books collected and placed in this institution, which was called the 'Multnomah Circulating Library;' one hundred dollars were sent to New York for new books which arrived the following year.*[11]

A history prepared by the Works Progress Administration notes that "Multnomah Circulating Library" was then incorporated by an act of the Oregon Provisional Legislature in August 19, 1845. According to the WPA researchers, the library was the second corporation authorized in Oregon.[12] The petition for the library was signed by the foremost men in the Willamette Valley, including A. L. Lovejoy, co-founder of Portland; Sidney W. Moss, author, businessman and philanthropist; and Hugh Burns, founder of Multnomah City. Though the

[10] William Henry Gray, *A History of Oregon 1792-1849 Drawn From Personal Observation and Authentic Information* [Portland: Harris and Holman, 1870].
[11] Ibid., 260.
[12] Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Oregon, *A History of Clackamas County Libraries* [Clackamas County Libraries Association, 1941]: 3.

provisional government supported the idea of a lending library, there were not sufficient financial resources to keep it alive. According to Jim Scheppke's history of libraries in Oregon, "Oregon saw a number of subscription libraries formed in mid-to-late 19th century, some of which came and went." Scheppke specifically cites the Multnomah Circulating Library.[13] According to the WPA history, "when this library passed out of existence is not known. The last mention of it is found in the federal census of 1850."[14]

Oregon City was not only the site of the first lending library in the territory, but the site of the first law library for the state of Oregon. By the time Oregon was granted statehood in 1859, Salem was the newly minted capital city. However, the roots of the state library system reach into the era in which Oregon City was the capital city of the Oregon Territory. When an act of Congress created the Oregon Territory on August 4, 1846, it included an appropriation of $5,000 for a library to be maintained at the seat of territorial government. This was not meant to be a lending library of popular titles, but a law library for the management of the new territory. Salem was named the territorial capital in 1852 and the library moved to Salem as well. In 1855, the first capitol building in Salem was destroyed by fire, and the library with it, "except for the few books that were checked out."[15] The library's collection was painstakingly rebuilt. "On June 3, 1913, the legislature passed a bill to create the Supreme Court Library, under the direction of the Oregon Supreme Court, and including all of the law books and legal reference materials of the former Oregon State Library."[16]

With the demise of the Multnomah Circulating Library and the loss of the law library, Oregon City functioned without a public library for a number of years, though private lending libraries managed by churches and educational institutions still worked to meet the local need. By the first decade of the 20th century, a new effort was underway to provide educational opportunities to the working populace of Oregon City. According to local historian Vera Lynch, "A group of business men organized into a Reading Room Association to open a free library. B. T. McBain, superintendent of the Willamette Pulp and Paper Company, was the first president. E. G. Caufield was vice president; Kenneth Stanton, secretary; the Bank of Oregon City, treasurer; and Eugene Hedges, a later president, was a charter member."[17] This group was the precursor to the Oregon City Library Board, the board that would, in 1912, request funds from Andrew Carnegie to build a new public library. The board chose the new Masonic Building (1907) as the location of the city's lending library and located on the third floor in 1909. They charged $12 a year as a membership fee to pay for the new library and hired Mrs. Edith Truscott as the first librarian.[18] When the doors were opened to the public on December 13, 1909, visitors found a furnished room with 469 books, 14 weekly and monthly magazines, and 26 newspapers.[19]

The early years of the 20th-century were a time of growth and prosperity in Oregon City and elsewhere. By the time the reading room opened, Andrew Carnegie was already funding public libraries in Oregon. By 1911, Carnegie libraries had been completed in Eugene (1906), Baker (1909), and The Dalles (1910).

The reading room's early popularity led the City of Oregon City to ask residents to vote for new taxes to assist in the maintenance of a free library. When the tax was approved by 1911, Oregon City could then meet one of the two primary requirements of a Carnegie library; it could raise ten percent of the construction cost annually for maintenance and staffing. The city would then have to meet the more difficult requirement of providing a site for the new library. B. T. McBain wrote a letter to Andrew Carnegie detailing the city's efforts and received a formal application from Carnegie's secretary, James Bertram. "On December 27, 1911 a response was

---

[13] For the history of Oregon libraries, which begins in Oregon City, see: Jim Scheppke, "Origins of the Oregon State Library, written on the occasion of the celebration of the State Library Centennial, January 27, 2005" http://www.oregon.gov/OSL/Pages/OriginsByJim.aspx.

[14] Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Oregon, *A History of Clackamas County Libraries* [Clackamas County Libraries Association, 1941]: 3.

[15] WPA, *Clackamas County Libraries*, 4.

[16] : Jim Scheppke, "Origins of the Oregon State Library, written on the occasion of the celebration of the State Library Centennial, January 27, 2005" http://www.oregon.gov/OSL/Pages/OriginsByJim.aspx [Accessed May 20, 2013].

[17] Vera Martin Lynch, *Free Land for Free Men: A Story of Clackamas County* [Portland: Artline Printing, Inc., 1973]: 330.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

received through Mr. Bertram offering $12,500.00 for a building, with final plans for the building requiring approval by Mr. Carnegie. The only other conditions to obtain the money were a guarantee from the city for $1,250.00 in annual maintenance, and a city owned location for the building."[20] Choosing a site proved challenging.

Citizens argued that that the library should join the recently moved McLoughlin House, which sat near the edge of the bluff on a public square donated to the residents by Dr. John McLoughlin in 1851. Others argued that the library should remain downtown where it could have a positive influence on the local industrial workers who languished on Main Street after work. The Oregon City Commission eventually decided to place the library in a different public square donated to the city by Dr. McLoughlin. A resolution was passed in 1912 for a library at the center of what is now known as Library Park. The library was to be the jewel of the park, replacing a band stand that appears briefly in the center of the block on the 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

Elmer E. McClaran was chosen as the architect for the project, and Robert Shelley of Portland was chosen as the builder. A September 22, 1912 newspaper article published a description of the building:

> "*In the basement will be the work room, fuel and heating apparatus, fumigating room, etc. On the second floor will be a vestibule eight feet six inches by ten feet and the main delivery room with shelves will open into this, this room to be 68 x 37 feet. The lecture room will be 20 x 34 feet and the librarian's office 12 x 20 feet. At the rear will be a small hallway 6 x 8 feet. Among the comforts of the delivery room will be the beautiful fireplace, four feet wide, with front of which will be of pressed brick. The exterior of the building will be of red brick with white trimmings. There will be twenty white brick columns, and fronting the building facing John Adams Street will be a veranda. The panel doors of the vestibule are to be beautified with plate glass windows near the top. The building will cover a plot 58 x 68 feet and will be one story. The basement will be 60 x 20 feet and six inches.*"[21]

Though construction took longer than expected, a grand opening was held on June 21, 1913 and the library was declared open to all residents of Clackamas County.[22] While the library was designed to provide educational opportunities to the entire region, this eventually proved expensive and difficult, and Clackamas County prepared to build its own library system in order to adequately serve small communities with new branch libraries.

Oregon City's library history is tightly entwined with that of Clackamas County. Oregon City was managing its own membership-funded library as early as 1909, but a countywide system was more difficult to fund, as communities were smaller and at some distance from one another. The State of Oregon got involved when the state librarian, Cornelia Marvin, began to advocate for a countywide system in 1913. She spoke to the Oregon City Library Board about sharing the new Carnegie building, but little progress was made at that time. It was partly the Depression of the 1930s that finally led to the establishment of a county library system. A history provided by the WPA quotes Gladstone librarian Marceline Hammond: "'The Depression,' Mrs. Hammond relates, 'sobered people down and they began to think. When they began to think, they began to ask for reading materials. Consequently a demand for libraries with their storehouse of information became insistent.'"[23]

---

[20] Karin Morey, *Oregon City Public Library*, not yet published, 63.
[21] Karin Morey, *Oregon City Public Library*, not yet published, 68.
[22] Note that the other change to original plans is that yellow or buff brick was used instead of white for the accent color.
[23] Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Oregon, *A History of Clackamas County Libraries* [Clackamas County Libraries Association, 1941]: 5.

Though there were no funds available to start the program, a county library was eventually established under the direction of the State Emergency Relief Agency, or SERA.[24] Hammond approached SERA with the idea of founding libraries in small communities and staffing them with women who needed work to survive the Great Depression. This pilot project was successful enough to convince both SERA and the state librarian to expand the program. According to *A History of Clackamas County Libraries*, the enthusiasm of Harriet Long, the state librarian at that time, "contributed to the growth which has resulted in its becoming a county-governed institution."[25]

The Clackamas County Library functioned first out of the Oregon City Library's basement. The early years of the Oregon City Carnegie Library saw very little change in the building or its function, but as early as 1920, the Oregon City Library Board was proclaiming its support of a county library system.[26] At that time, the board noted in its regular meetings that libraries were successful public education tools and that the Carnegie library had ample space to host the county library. Talks continued throughout the 1920s, while the Carnegie library continued to grow its collection and accept gifts of books and furnishings from individuals and from civic groups like the Oregon City Women's Club.

In 1935, SERA planned to excavate a portion of the Carnegie library's basement, possibly to provide greater space for the county library. The Portland firm, Jones and Marsh, provided plans for the excavation, and the WPA completed the work in 1937. By 1938, the Clackamas County Library was functioning in the expanded basement of the Oregon City Public Library. During the Great Depression, SERA and the Works Progress Administration were successful in keeping both libraries staffed and keeping the building in good repair.

In the 1940s and 50s, library board minutes show progressive growth. Oak bookshelves were regularly added to handle the overflowing collection. Enclosed record cases were provided for the Oregon Collection in the research library in 1950, the same year the building was converted from a wood to an oil furnace. Other alterations were minor. The roof was replaced in kind in 1952, the same year the library became the site for the founding of the Oregon City Historical Society. The Clackamas County Library vacated the basement in 1962 and renovations to the building were completed in 1963.

A 1984 newspaper article in the *Portland Oregonian* noted that by 1985, the library building that was meant to help educate a population of 7,000 was now educating a population of 40,000.[27] The Carnegie Library served as the Oregon City Public Library until 1995 when it was determined that the 6,500 square foot building was overcrowded and could no longer meet the needs of a growing population and a growing collection. The Carnegie building was transformed into an art gallery with a café in 2002. A daycare located in the basement. The city library moved its collection to a larger building, a former hardware store located further east. In 2010, that building was sold to a grocery store chain and the Oregon City Public Library prepared to move again. The Carnegie building still offered the most advantageous site, and the city library put some of its resources in storage and reoccupied the building in 2010. It is currently considering plans for expansion.

Throughout the 20th century, the Carnegie library continued to fulfill its mission to serve as an educational center for the City of Oregon City. The library continually grew its collection, offered lectures by noted thinkers and speakers of the day, and developed numerous programs to serve its children's population, including story times and other events to inspire in children a love of reading.

---

[24] Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Oregon, *A History of Clackamas County Libraries* [Clackamas County Libraries Association, 1941]: 8-9.

[25] Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Oregon, *A History of Clackamas County Libraries* [Clackamas County Libraries Association, 1941]: 6-9.

[26] Oregon City Library Board Minutes, 1920, held by the City of Oregon City.

[27] "Classic Carnegie library speaks volumes for Oregon City," *Portland Oregonian*, September 12, 1984.

Andrew Carnegie and Public Libraries

The Carnegie Library is significant for its association with one of the most far-reaching and successful philanthropic movements in America. Andrew Carnegie provided funds for communities large and small to build their own public libraries. As part of the progressive era in America, the construction of Carnegie libraries throughout the United States offered phenomenal opportunities to children and adults who had little or no access to free educational reading materials. In Oregon City, the construction of a public library was the end result of decades of effort by early civic leaders who looked for ways to improve the quality of life for children and adults throughout the county.

Andrew Carnegie's history is well known. He was born in Scotland and moved to the United States in 1846 when a wave of industrialization ended his father's career as a weaver.[28] Carnegie's education was cut short, but he was industrious and progressed through a series of jobs, first as a delivery boy, then as a personal secretary and telegrapher before landing a position as a Superintendent on the Pennsylvania Railroad. He made profitable investments in oil and in new uses for steel. He then launched the successful Carnegie Steel Company. He sold the company to J.P. Morgan in 1901 and retired at a very young age with a very large fortune. In a series of essays, he identified both the responsibilities of the very wealthy, and the ways in which those riches should be devoted to the public good. In an 1889 essay, he identified the seven most valuable gifts the wealthy could bestow upon the public: universities, libraries, medical centers, public parks, meeting and concert rooms, public baths and churches.[29] The article poses the question: "What is the best gift that can be given to the community?" It then answers it: "A free library occupies the first place, provided the community will accept and maintain it as a public institution."[30]

According to author George S. Bobinski, Carnegie's library philanthropy occurred in two phases. The first, referred to as the "retail" phase (1886-96), saw the construction of libraries and other public gifts in six Pennsylvania cities in which Carnegie's industry was based. The "wholesale" phase lasted from 1898 to 1919 and expanded this philanthropy to fund library buildings throughout the United States. Bobinski claims that Carnegie ultimately donated $39,172,981 to the construction of library buildings in 1,406 communities.[31]

A community had to meet simple thresholds in order to receive a grant for a new public library. It had to own a piece of land on which the library could be built, and it had to provide a budget equal to ten percent of the cost of construction for staffing and maintenance every year. Style and design were left up to the applicant in the early years, and projects that went over the construction budget often asked for and received additional funds.

Carnegie libraries are a unique class of buildings in the United States. They were constructed for a very specific use, but few architects in small communities had any previous experience designing libraries. During the wholesale era of Carnegie library construction, architects were experimenting with unique spatial challenges related to storing and displaying library collections. They were also designing for communities that wanted to combine library spaces with additional amenities like meeting rooms and community event spaces.[32] This was discouraged by Carnegie and his associates as it led to cost overruns and hybrid designs that did not fully accommodate the needs of a good library. Over time, the Carnegie program began to provide greater oversight to designers in an attempt to improve library design across the country.

---

[28] The following is a short history of Andrew Carnegie and his philanthropic efforts as presented by author George S. Bobinski in his well-respected work on the history of Carnegie libraries, *Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development* [Chicago: American Library Association, 1969]. Though he is known for his national effort to provide public libraries to cities big and small, Carnegie was a complex figure with complex motivations. He is also known, for instance, for encouraging his managers to break the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers during violent protests at his Homestead mill in Pennsylvania in the 1890s. He has been featured in numerous histories that provide nuanced views of his impact on the United States.

[29] Andrew Carnegie, *"The Best Fields for Philanthropy," The North American Review,* Vol. 149, No 397, Dec. 1889, 689.

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] George S. Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development* [Chicago: American Library Association, 1969]: 13-14.

[32] Bobinski details a number of design challenges and mistakes that appeared in library plans and resulted in cost overruns and requests for added funds; architects were not yet clear on the proportions and requirements of a library space.

The Carnegie class of buildings grew more consistent and cohesive after 1911, when Carnegie's secretary, James Bertram, got deeply involved in the design of the buildings' interior plans in order to avoid repeated mistakes. As Bobinski explains, "Conferences with leading authorities from the library and architectural professions brought about agreement on certain standards in library architecture. The result was a leaflet entitled, 'Notes on Library Buildings,' which was sent from 1911 on as a guide to each community along with the promise of funds. These 'notes' and 'judicious pressure on architects and communities' usually resulted in a desirable building."[33] As noted by Abigail Van Slick in her book, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture 1890-1920*, "the planning ideas Bertram espoused were presented in the 'Notes' both in text and in schematic drawings. The ideal Carnegie library was a one-story rectangular building with a small vestibule leading directly to a single large room."[34] Van Slick further notes that in addition to book storage, the ideal library "provided reading areas for adults and children and facilities for the distribution of books... Bertram even went so far as to suggest ceiling heights (nine to ten feet in the basement; twelve to fifteen feet on the first floor) and the placement of windows (six feet from the floor, to allow for shelving beneath)."[35] These guidelines were followed exactly in the final design of the Oregon City Public Library.

If Bobinski's timeline is correct, the Oregon City Public Library is one of the first to be designed with the added guidance of Bertram's *Notes*. Neither the *Notes* nor the grant obligated the library's owners to build in any particular style so Bertram can take no credit for the library's Georgian façade. However, minutes from the Oregon City Library Association, along with sample plans included in Bobinski's text, suggest that the library's floor plan is an excellent example of a harmonious design constructed under the watchful eye of Bertram. This is further supported by the architectural plans held by the City of Oregon City, in which the library's main floor is reworked in page after page of plans.

The design of the Oregon City Carnegie Library may be based on one of the floor plans provided by the Carnegie Corporation as part of Bertam's *Notes*. The plan calls for a single story, rectangular building atop a daylight basement. It includes stairs to a central entry, an enclosed vestibule, and reading rooms on either side of the vestibule. The plan incorporates a stair matching the library's current configuration, and includes a reference room behind the stair in the southeast corner of the building. This allows for a large adult reading room on one side of the entry, a centrally placed librarian's desk, and a smaller children's reading room with offices and stair on the other side of the entry.

These plans appear to have provided guidance to E. E. McClaran in his design, but the Oregon City library now differs from these plans in several ways. In Oregon City, the circulation desk has changed locations and is not centrally located. Also, a dividing wall and fireplace do not appear in Bertam's plans. The model basement plan, however, appears to meet the Oregon City library's plan nearly exactly.

Style: The American Renaissance

The Oregon City Carnegie Library is significant not only for its associations with social movements, including public education and the social history of the Carnegie library era. It is also significant for its architectural qualities. The Oregon City Carnegie Library is one of four in Oregon designed in the American Renaissance style, a popular choice for Carnegie libraries, although each library is different.[36] The four documented city libraries in the American Renaissance style include one each in Medford (1912), Coos Bay (1914), Ashland (1912), and Albany, Oregon (1914). Oregon City's library is an excellent example of an American Renaissance-style public building and unique in Oregon City for its design, which exhibits decorative brickwork in red and yellow, paired pilasters at each of the building's primary corners, and brick columns and pilasters flanking its prominent entry with pedimented portico.

---

[33] Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries*, 58.

[34] Van Slyck, Abigail A. *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture 1890-1920* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995]: 37.

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Note that the Oregon City Carnegie Library is one of four identified American Renaissance Carnegie libraries in the Oregon Historic Properties Database; there may be others in the state not yet documented.

In her book, Van Slyck notes that classical ornament, including the pedimented portico found on the Oregon City library, was common in libraries across the country before and during the Carnegie era. While some have attributed this emphasis on classicism to Carnegie and his associates, historians like Van Slyck argue that designers were responding to other cultural trends, including a new set of professional standards that were under development and spread through the academic institutions that were training new architects. The training of librarians in the late-19th and early 20th centuries was also progressing independently of Carnegie's influence. While librarians were learning cataloging and reference work, for instance, they were also absorbing the idea that a good library worked closely with a community's children, with its schools, with a system of branch libraries, and with traveling libraries to reach underserved populations.[37] These were all guiding principles for the Oregon City library.

In this same era, architectural designers were being trained by their late 19th century predecessors in classicism. As Van Slyck notes, "the classical orders and the written rules governing their requisite components, proper proportions, and appropriate deployment provided a theoretical baseline against which professionals could assess one another's designs."[38] Van Slyck notes another guiding factor. The great proliferation of Carnegie libraries supported a new set of companies who produced furnishings for them, including the Arts and Crafts-inspired tables and chairs that graced libraries across the country. According to Van Slyck, "After the turn of the century, Library Bureau catalogues also began to address aesthetic issues that they had previously ignored... sales literature increasingly adopted the rhetoric of the Arts and Crafts movement, with lofty statements about 'purity of design, structural excellence and perfect finish'."[39]

This may explain why Carnegie libraries like the one in Oregon City are formal and classical on the exterior, while the interior furnishings, including the fire place and the tables and chairs, were designed with an Arts and Crafts simplicity.

It's likely that the Carnegie library in Oregon City owes its Georgian character not to Carnegie himself, but to architect Elmer E. McClaran, who was a prolific and popular Portland designer. Little is known about McClaran's early background and training.[40] He appears as a builder in Portland as early as 1902, and was a practicing architect by 1904. He was registered as a licensed architect under a new licensing law in Oregon in 1921.[41] He prepared plans for numerous high-profile projects throughout Oregon in the first two decades of the 20th century, including a number that are listed in the National Registers of Historic Places. The Julian Hotel in Corvallis, remodeled by McClaran in 1910-11, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 under criteria A, B and C as a "locally distinctive example of period architecture in the Georgian style."[42] The First Presbyterian Church in Corvallis (1909) was designed in partnership with John Bennes in the Gothic Revival style popular with Presbyterian congregations of the early 20th century.[43] McClaran also designed Valley Hospital in Klamath Falls, which was built in the "Georgian vein" according to a successful 1988 nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.[44] McClaran also designed one historic landmark building in Portland, the streetcar-era commercial building known as the Dupey Block on N. Denver Street, constructed in 1910.

---

[37] Van Slyck, Abigail A. *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture 1890-1920* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995]: 46.

[38] Van Slyck, *Free to All*, 47.

[39] Van Slyck, *Free to All,* 51.

[40] Richard Ellison Ritz, *Architects of Oregon: A Biographical Dictionary of Architects Deceased – 19th and 20th Centuries* [Portland: Lair Hill Publishing]: 278.

[41] Ritz, *Architects of Oregon,* 278.

[42] Robert A. Nisbet Jr., *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form for the Julian Hotel*, September 8, 1983. Inventory and nomination forms can be found online through the Oregon Historic Sites Database.

[43] Mary Weber, *Oregon Inventory of Historic Properties Historic Resources Survey Form for the First Presbyterian Church of Corvallis*, April 27, 1984. Inventory and nomination forms can be found online through the Oregon Historic Sites Database.

[44] LouEllyn W. Kelly, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Valley Hospital of Klamath Falls,* March 15, 1988. Inventory and nomination forms can be found online through the Oregon Historic Sites Database.

Though little of McClaran's early history is known, he was a popular topic of newspaper articles in the *Portland Oregonian* in the early 20th century. He was a founding member of the Rosarians, a civic booster group that not only welcomed visitors to Portland but promoted the city over state lines. On December 29, 1914, according to an article in the *Morning Oregonian*, a large contingent of Rosarians traveled by train to the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. Their goal was to dedicate the Oregon building at that year's world's fair.[45] McClaran was the organization's musical director.

In Oregon, other Carnegie libraries have been built in the American Renaissance Style, with regional variations. This is partly due to the era in which they were constructed as noted above, but also due to their formal use as public buildings. Classical proportions and classical ornament were considered appropriately grand and impressive for public buildings of all kinds, not just libraries. Architectural historian Rosalind Clark explains the local popularity of the American Renaissance in her book, *Oregon Architecture*:

> "*In many cities around the country, architects formed clubs based on Beaux Arts principles to study and promote the ideals of the American Renaissance. In 1907, the Portland Architectural Club was formed. Its publications and exhibits, which displayed photographs and drawings of buildings in the American Renaissance style, helped to spread the ideals of the movement. In 1911, the Portland club, which had only about thirty to forty members, joined the Pacific Coast Architectural League with members from San Francisco, Southern California, and Washington, as well as Oregon. Although it only lasted until 1915, the league was very influential in creating a taste for Greek, Roman, Italian, French and English Renaissance buildings.*"[46]

According to Carnegie historian George Bobinski, Oregon ranks 22nd amongst the 50 states in terms of dollars spent on Carnegie library construction. $478,000 was donated to build libraries in the state. This funded 32 libraries for 25 communities in Oregon. Of those, only four have been individually recognized with a listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Two of them, like the Oregon City Carnegie Library, are constructed in the American Renaissance style. The Carnegie Library in Coos Bay was constructed of dressed stone in the classical vein of the American Renaissance in 1914. The Medford Carnegie Library was constructed in 1912 in buff brick in the classical mode of the American Renaissance. The Gresham Carnegie Library was constructed in the Tudor Revival style in 1912-1913. The Dalles Carnegie Library, built in 1910, was expressed in "Beaux Arts Classicism" and clad in red brick.

These buildings share some strong characteristics with the Oregon City Carnegie Library. All are a single story atop a daylight basement. All are rectangular in plan with ornamented, projecting entries. They include bands of windows on their primary and secondary facades, and some include parapet walls around a flat roof. Some of these similarities can be attributed to Bertram's influence, as he emphasized an efficient use of space and preferred a rectangular room that could be overseen by a single librarian at her desk. However, each of these buildings is also unique. In the case of the Gresham Carnegie Library, the building is clad in decorative brick work topped by false half-timbering.[47] In Medford, surfaces are smooth and minimally ornamented, but the library's wide entry is flanked by two large, imposing, Ionic columns.

The library that appears most similar to the Oregon City library was constructed in Forest Grove in 1912. Clad in white brick, the building was designed by the prominent Portland firm of Whidden and Lewis. The Cottage Grove library is also a central block and wings, one story above a basement, with columns flanking the entry and bands of windows on either wing. The building is clad in white brick and is topped by a parapet. Though it

[45] "Rosarians Depart on Boosting Jaunt," *The Morning Oregonian*, December 29, 1914.
[46] Rosalind Clark, *Architecture Oregon Style* [Portland: Professional Book Center, Inc. 1983], 126.
[47] Kim Fitzgerald, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Gresham Carnegie Library [July 30, 1999]. National Register of Historic Placed nominations are available through the Oregon Historic Sites Database.

is also in the American Renaissance style, it includes less applied ornament and only a single color of brick, relying on two large Tuscan columns and a multi-paned lunette transom to highlight the entry.[48]
Though the libraries designed in the American Renaissance style share similar characteristics, this was not the case for all Carnegie libraries in Oregon during the second decade of the 20th-century. For instance, the South Portland Carnegie library, located in the Lair Hill Conservation District in Portland and constructed in 1918, was designed in the Mediterranean style and is L-shaped with a semi-circular projecting entry at the joint between the two wings and arched windows.[49]

Like other Carnegie Libraries throughout the state, the Oregon City Carnegie Library shares certain qualities, yet is unique in its design and use of materials. The Oregon City Public Library is unique for its corner pilasters, its bi-color brick, and its heavily ornamented entablature. It's also an excellent example of an American Renaissance Carnegie library constructed to meet a specific set of needs associated with a new class of building: the free, public library. Its primary façade is symmetrical, highly-ornamented, with attractive Georgian details including square, brick columns, paired pilasters, a prominent sheet metal cornice and parapet wall with a large, pedimented portico with block modillions. The interior retains its original fireplace, original floors, plaster walls and ceilings, and boxed beams. It is recognizable not only as a library funded by Andrew Carnegie, but as a library that meets the requirements designed by his influential secretary, James Bertram.

Integrity
The Carnegie Library is eligible under Criterion A: Education, under Criterion A: Social History, and under Criterion C: Architecture as an institutional building. It is closely linked to broad trends in history, including the "wholesale" phase of Carnegie-funded development. It also retains its association with education, as the library has been a central educational resource for the City of Oregon City for 100 years.

The building's materials, design and workmanship are intact. It retains its two-story plan with red brick façade and yellow brick accents. It retains its symmetrical façade and prominent central entry. It retains its classical ornament and its distinctive wood windows, its original fireplace, some bookcases, and interior plaster walls. The main floor retains its sense of openness and accessibility. No additions currently exist on the building, with the exception of a ramp constructed on the building's south elevation. This alteration is compatible and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for new construction. A small, utilitarian structure has been constructed near the library's northeast corner. This structure is also compatible.

Set in the middle of the Library Park, the Oregon City Public Library remains in its original location and retains its setting and feeling. The park continues to be a peaceful site with original plantings of mature shade trees, and continues to feature the library as its central asset.

[48] Demuth/Haynes, City of Forest Grove, Washington County Cultural Resource Inventory, Carnegie Hall [February, 1984]. Inventory forms are available through the Oregon Historic Sites Database.
[49] Historic Resource Inventory, City of Portland. Inventory form for 2909 SW Second Ave. Undated. Inventory forms are available through the Oregon Historic Sites Database.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Books:

Bobinski, George S. *Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1969.

Clark, Rosalind. *Architecture Oregon Style*. Portland, OR: Professional Book Center, Inc. 1983.

Gray, William Henry. *A History of Oregon 1792-1849 Drawn From Personal Observation and Authentic Information*. Portland, OR: Harris and Holman, 1870.

Lynch, Vera Martin. *Free Land for Free Men: A Story of Clackamas County*. Portland, OR: Artline Printing, Inc., 1973.

Morey, Karin. *Oregon City Public Library*, unpublished.

Van Slyck, Abigail A. Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture 1890-1920. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Oregon. *A History of Clackamas County Libraries*. Clackamas County Libraries Association, 1941.

Newspapers and Magazines:

Carnegie, Andrew. "The Best Fields for Philanthropy," *The North American Review,* Vol. 149, No 397, Dec. 1889.

Oregon City Enterprise, various editions, as cited in text.

Pacific Coast Architect, Vol. 4, No. 1, October 1912.

Portland Morning Oregonian, various editions, as cited in text.

Scheppke, Jim. "Origins of the Oregon State Library, written on the occasion of the celebration of the State Library Centennial, January 27, 2005." www.oregon.gov/OSL/Pages/OriginsByJim.aspx [Accessed May 20, 2013].

Public Documents:

Altier, Jane. Historic Resource Inventory Form for the Oregon City Public Library, Oregon City, Oregon, May 1982. http://heritagedata.prd.state.or.us/historic/ [Accessed 4/17/2013.]

Kelly, LouEllyn W. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Valley Hospital of Klamath Falls, Klammath Falls, Oregon, March 15, 1988. http://heritagedata.prd.state.or.us/historic/ [Accessed 4/17/2013.]

Minutes, Oregon City Library Board, 1916 – 1955, held by the City of Oregon City, Oregon.

Nielson, Rebecca. Oregon City Historic Resources Survey Form for the Oregon City Public Library, Oregon City, Oregon, April 6, 2002.http://www.orcity.org/sites/default/files/606_JohnAdams.pdf [Accessed

4/17/2013.]

Nisbet Jr., Robert A. National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form for the Julian Hotel, Corvallis, Oregon, September 8, 1983. http://heritagedata.prd.state.or.us/historic/ [Accessed 4/17/2013].

Weber, Mary. Oregon Inventory of Historic Properties Historic Resources Survey Form for the First Presbyterian Church of Corvallis, Corvallis, Oregon, April 27, 1984. http://heritagedata.prd.state.or.us/historic/ [Accessed 4/17/2013].

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 # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
_X_Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: City of Oregon City

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.32 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
(Follow similar guidelines for entering the lat/long coordinates as describe on page 55, How to Complete the National Register Registration Form for entering UTM references. For properties less than 10 acres, enter the lat/long coordinates for a point corresponding to the center of the property. For properties of 10 or more acres, enter three or more points that correspond to the vertices of a polygon drawn on the map. The polygon should approximately encompass the area to be registered. Add additional points below, if necessary.)

Datum if other than WGS84: NAD83

1. Latitude: 45.355230 Longitude: -122.605491
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	530901	5022488	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The nominated area includes the Carnegie Library and the surrounding Library Park, which is a 1.3 acre block defined by 7th Street on the North, Jefferson Street on the East, 6th Street on the South and John Adams Street on the West. The park is defined as Block 102 in the Oregon City Plat Map, Township 2S, Range 2E, Section 31.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

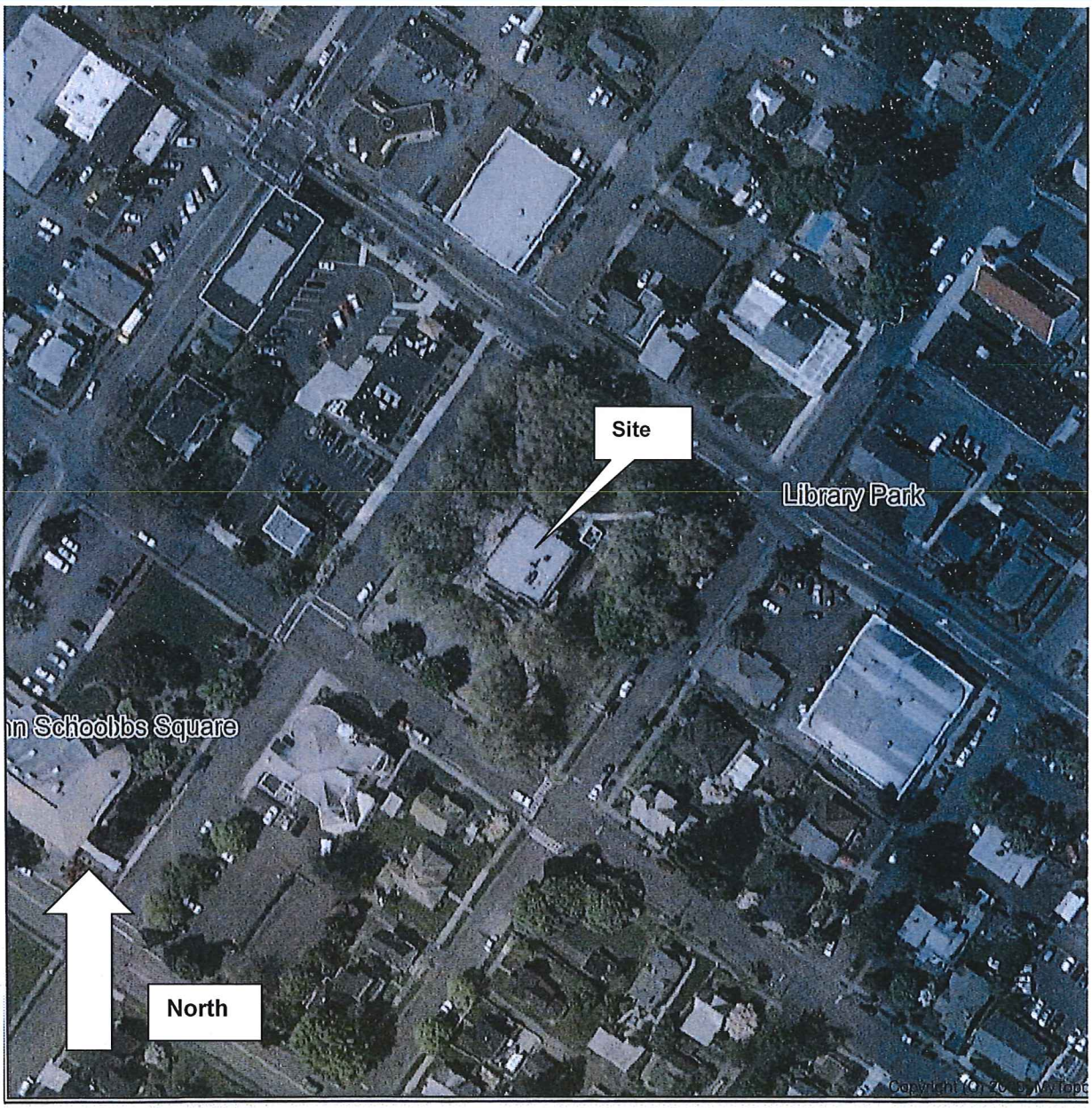
The boundary was historically defined as a city park in the original map of Oregon City, prepared by Dr. John McLoughlin in 1851. The park has remained in public ownership and was dedicated green space until it was chosen as the location of the Carnegie Library. The park surrounding the library has since been improved with amenities for library patrons that nonetheless do not negatively affect the integrity of the park.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Chrisanne Beckner, Architectural Historian
organization Sole Proprietor date June 1, 2013
street & number 1307 Jasper Ave. NE telephone (360) 878-5335
city or town Olympia state WA zip code 98506

e-mail chrisannebeckner@earthlink.net

Map 1: Regional Vicinity Map, Latitude/Longitude Coordinates 45.355230 / -122.605491

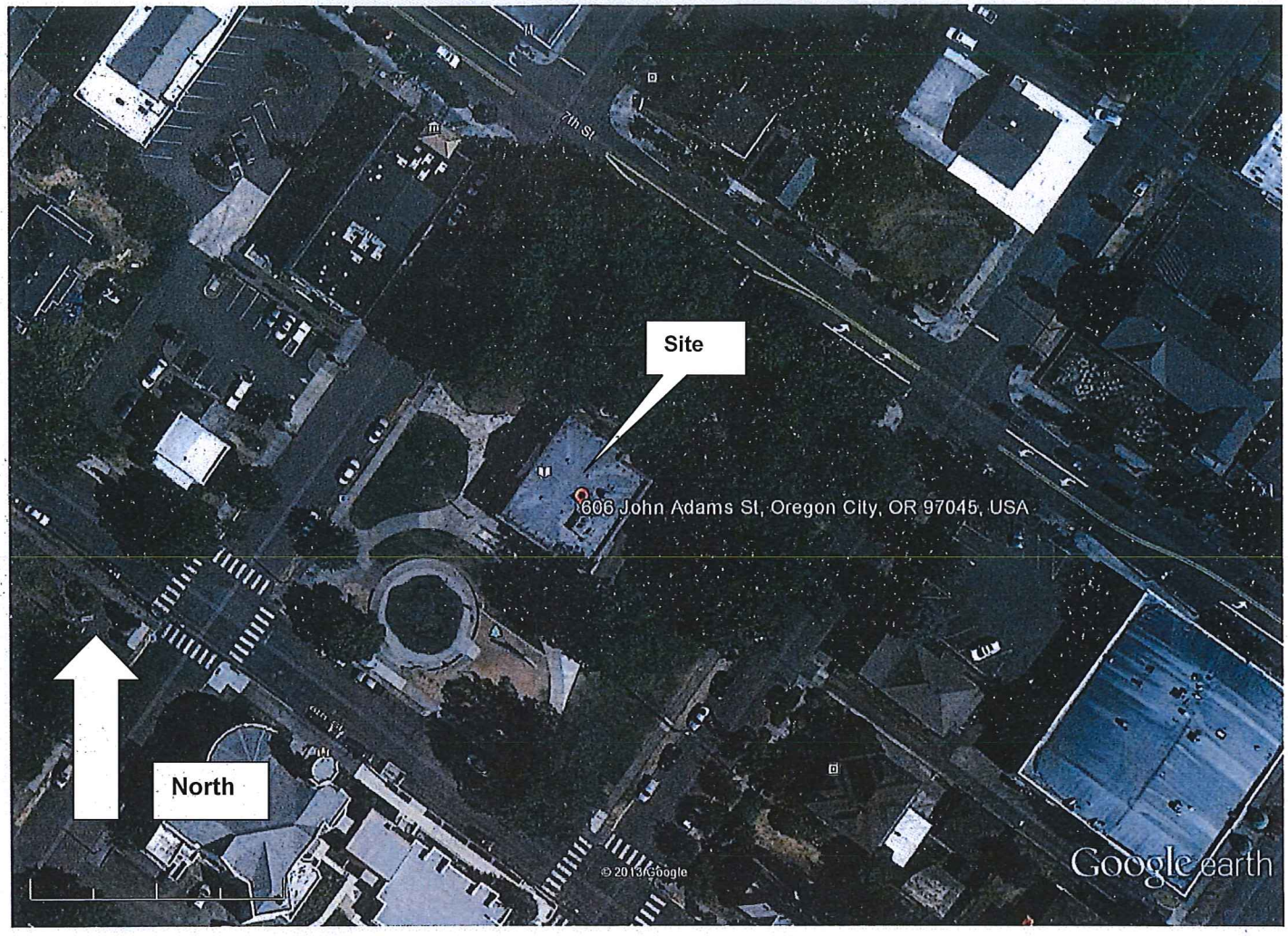


SCALE 1:1800

0 100 200 300 400 500

FEET

Map 2: Site Map, Latitude/Longitude Coordinates, 45.355230 / -122.605491



Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: **Oregon City Carnegie Library**

City or Vicinity: **Oregon City**

County: **Clackamas** **State:** **Oregon**

Photographer: **Chrisanne Beckner**

Date Photographed: **February 14, 2013**

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo 1 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_001
West Elevation, Looking East

Photo 2 of 15 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_002
South Elevation with Noncontributing Fountain and Play Equipment, looking North

Photo 3 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_003
East Elevation with Noncontributing Garbage Enclosure, Looking West

Photo 4 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_004
South Elevation with Noncontributing Garbage Enclosure, Looking North

Photo 5 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_005
Southwest Elevation with Original Pathways and Noncontributing Fountain, Looking Northeast

Photo 6 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_006
Carnegie Library and Park, Looking Southeast

Photo 7 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_007
Noncontributing Garbage Enclosure Northeast of Building, Looking Northwest

Photo 8 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_008
Children's Library, Basement, Looking North

Photo 9 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_009

Main Floor Library, Looking North

Photo 10 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_010
Main Floor Library with Vestibule, Looking Northwest

Photo 11 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_011
Main Floor Library with Original Fireplace, Looking East

Photo 12 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_012
Main Floor Library with Front Desk, Looking West

Photo 13 of 13 OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_013
Main Floor Library Research Room, Looking North

Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Oregon City

street & number City Hall, 625 Center Street telephone (503) 657-0891

city or town Oregon City state OR zip code 97045

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.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

List of Figures

Figure 1: Topographic Map of Oregon City

Figure 2: Tax Lot Map

Figure 3: Site Map

Figure 4: Primary Façade, E. E. McClaren, 1913

Figure 5: Renovation Plans, Primary Façade, Slusarenko Architecture, PC, 2001

Figure 6: Renovated First Floor Plan, Slusarenko Architecture, PC, 2001

Figure 7: Renovated Basement Floor Plan, Slusarenko Architecture, PC, 2001

Figure 8: Oregon City Public Library, as photographed by WPA photographer, 1939

Figure 9: Interior of Oregon City Public Library Reading Room, photographed by WPA photographer, 1939

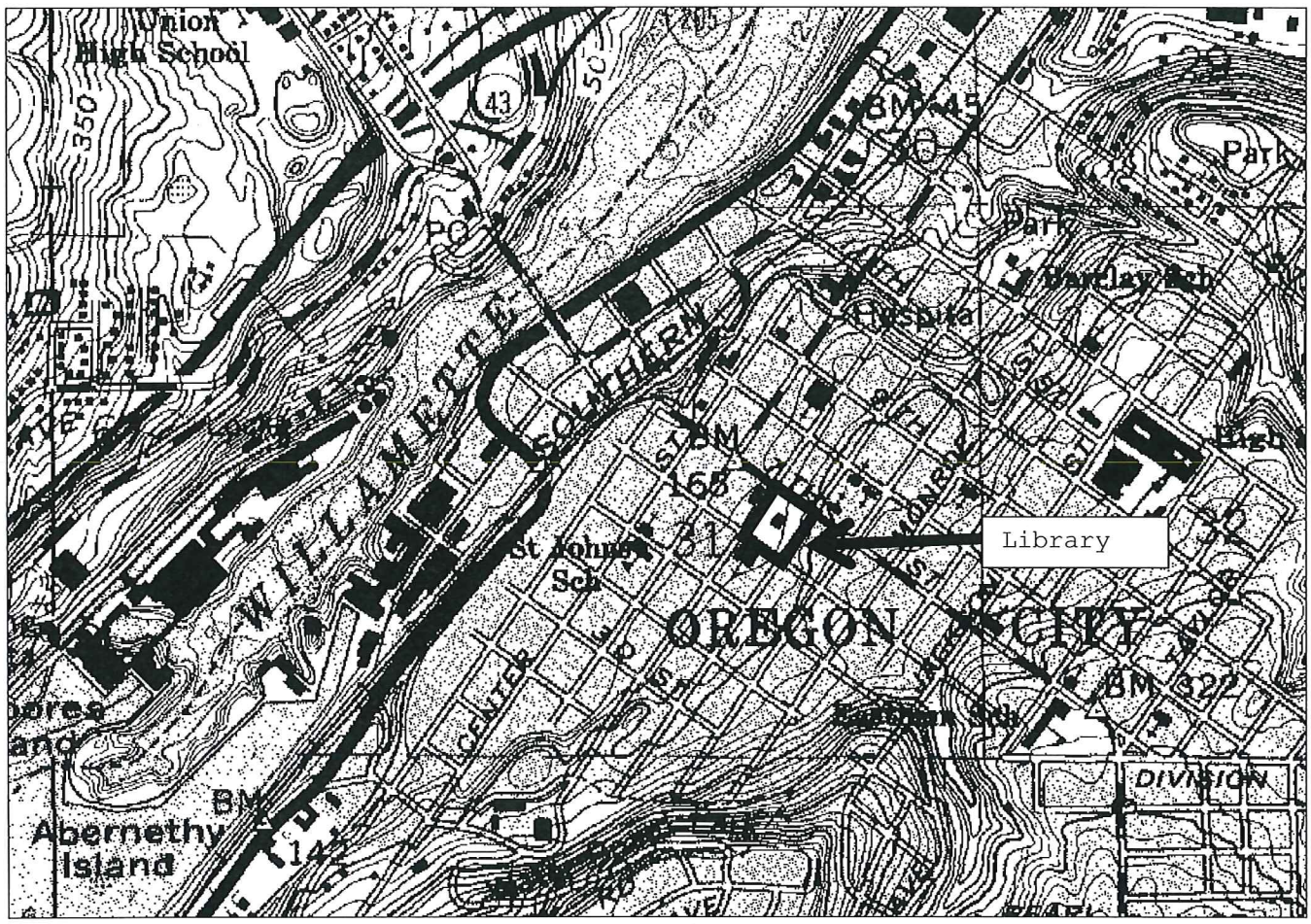


Figure 1: Topographic Map of Oregon City

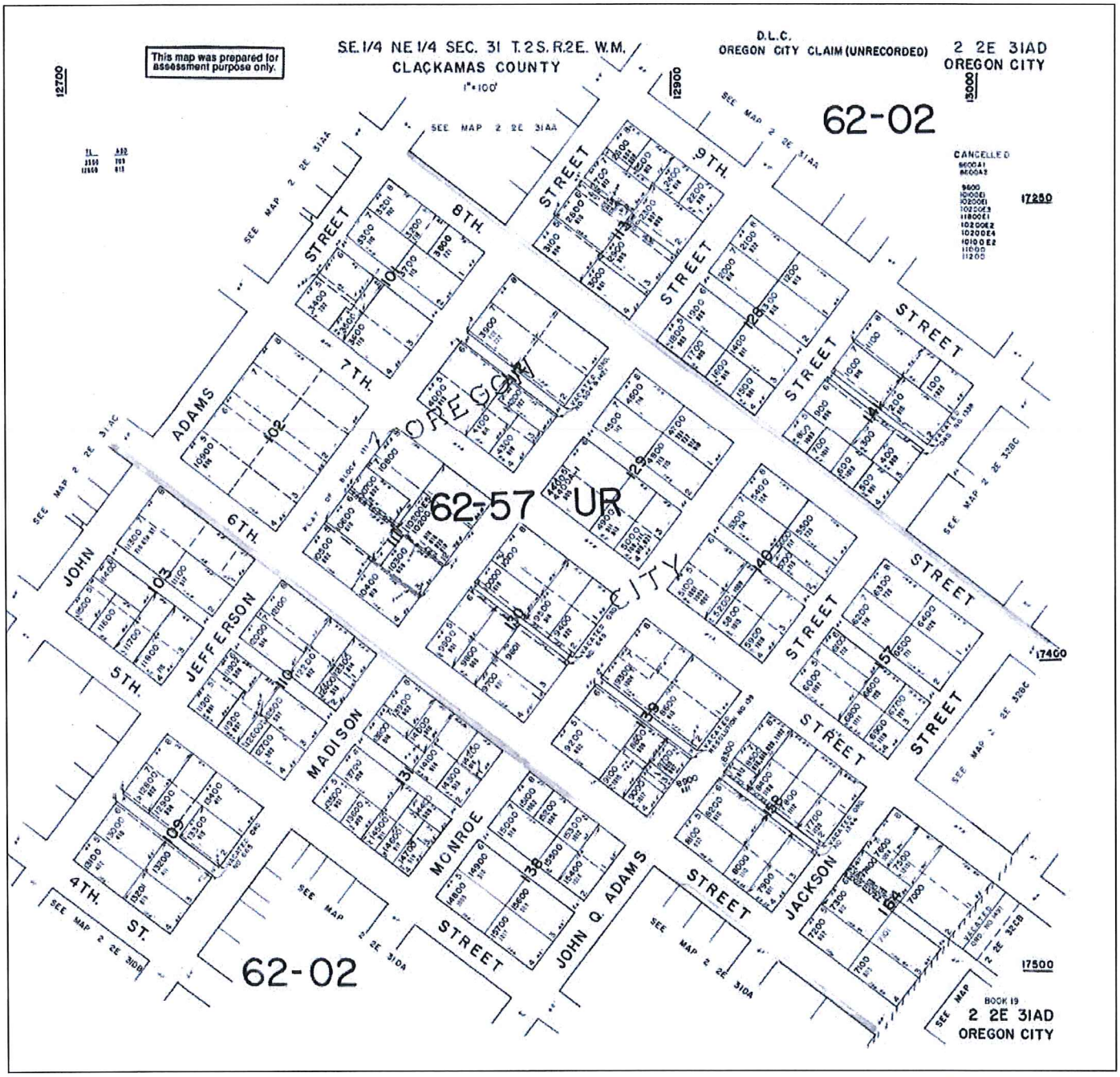


Figure 2: Tax Lot Map

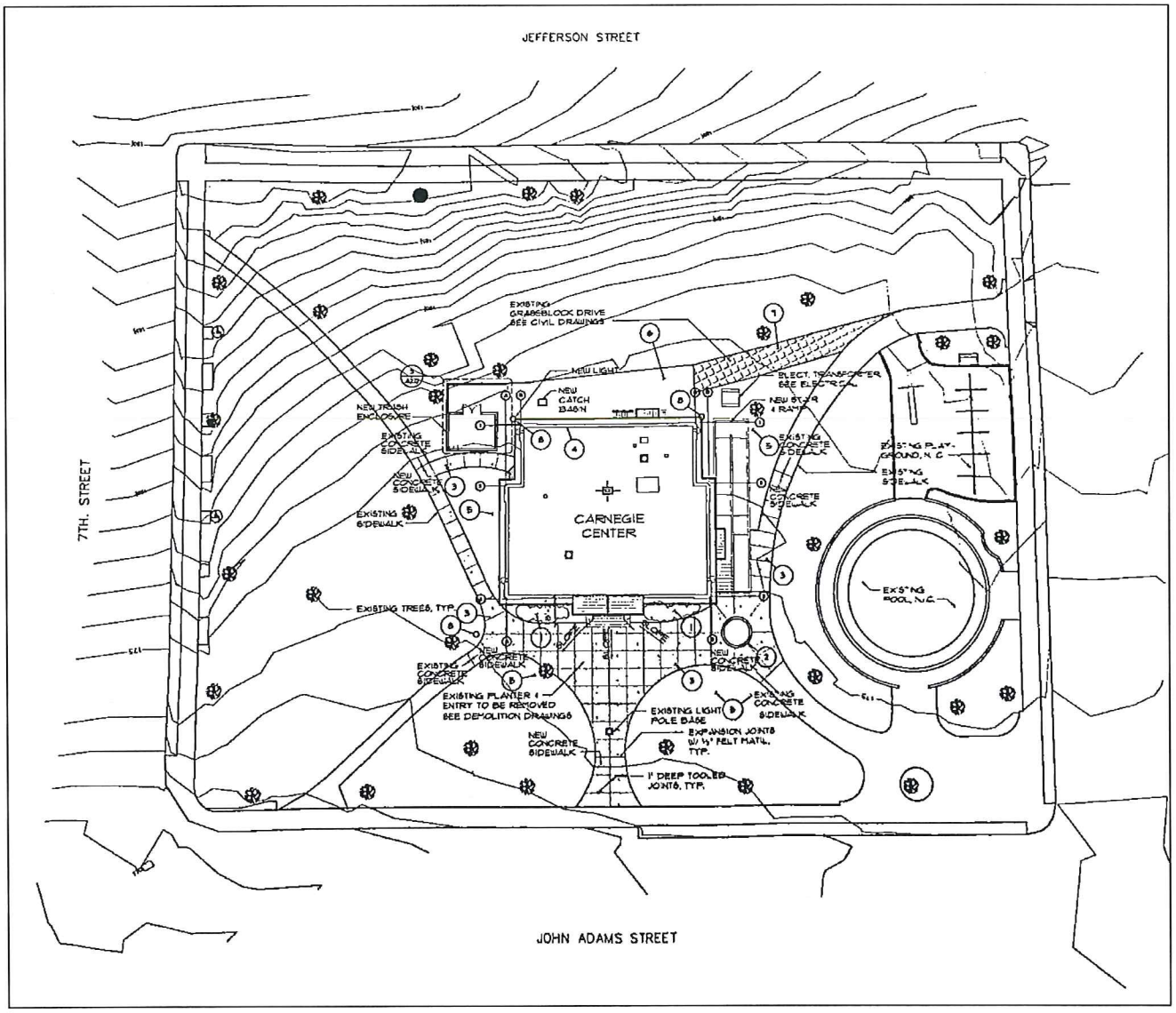


Figure 3: Site Plan[50]

← N

[50] Slusarenko Architecture, PC. Site Plan and notations prepared for Carnegie Center Renovation, Oregon City, OR, 2001. Plans available through the City of Oregon City.

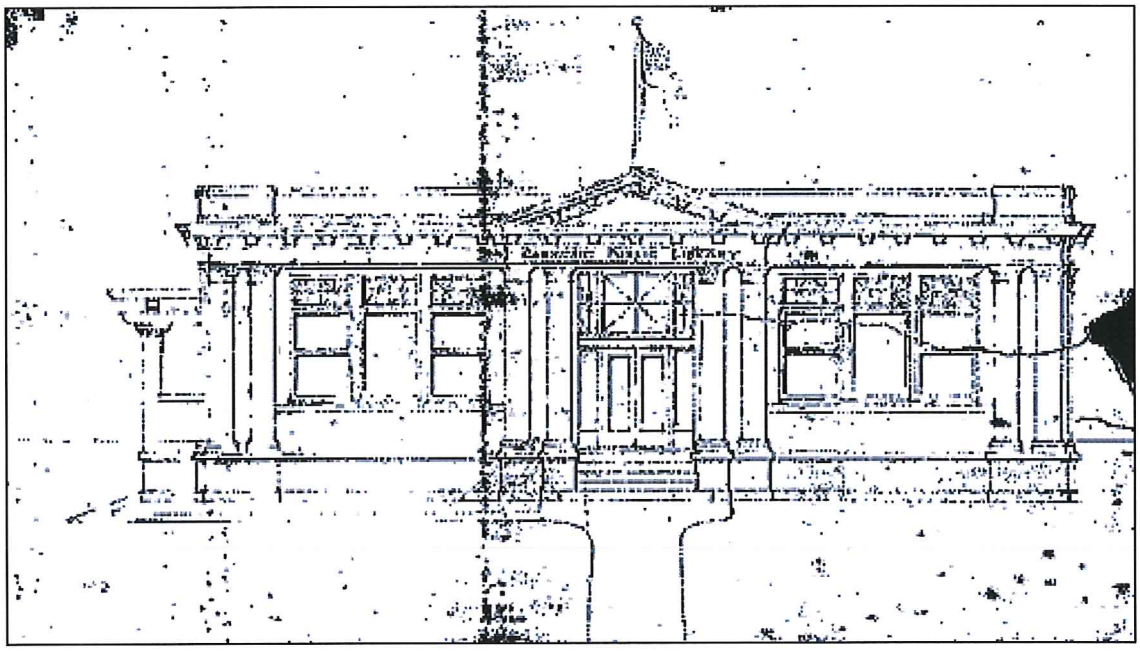


Figure 4: Primary Façade, E. E. McClaren, 1913

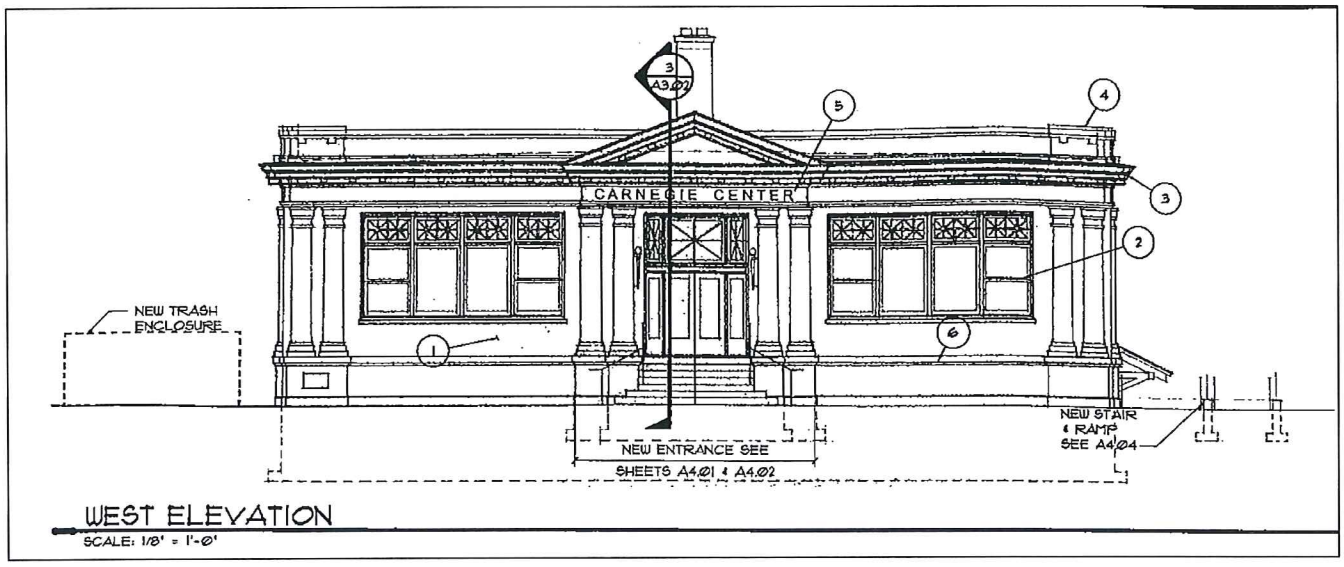


Figure 5: Renovation Plans, Primary Façade, Slusarenko Architecture, PC, 2001.

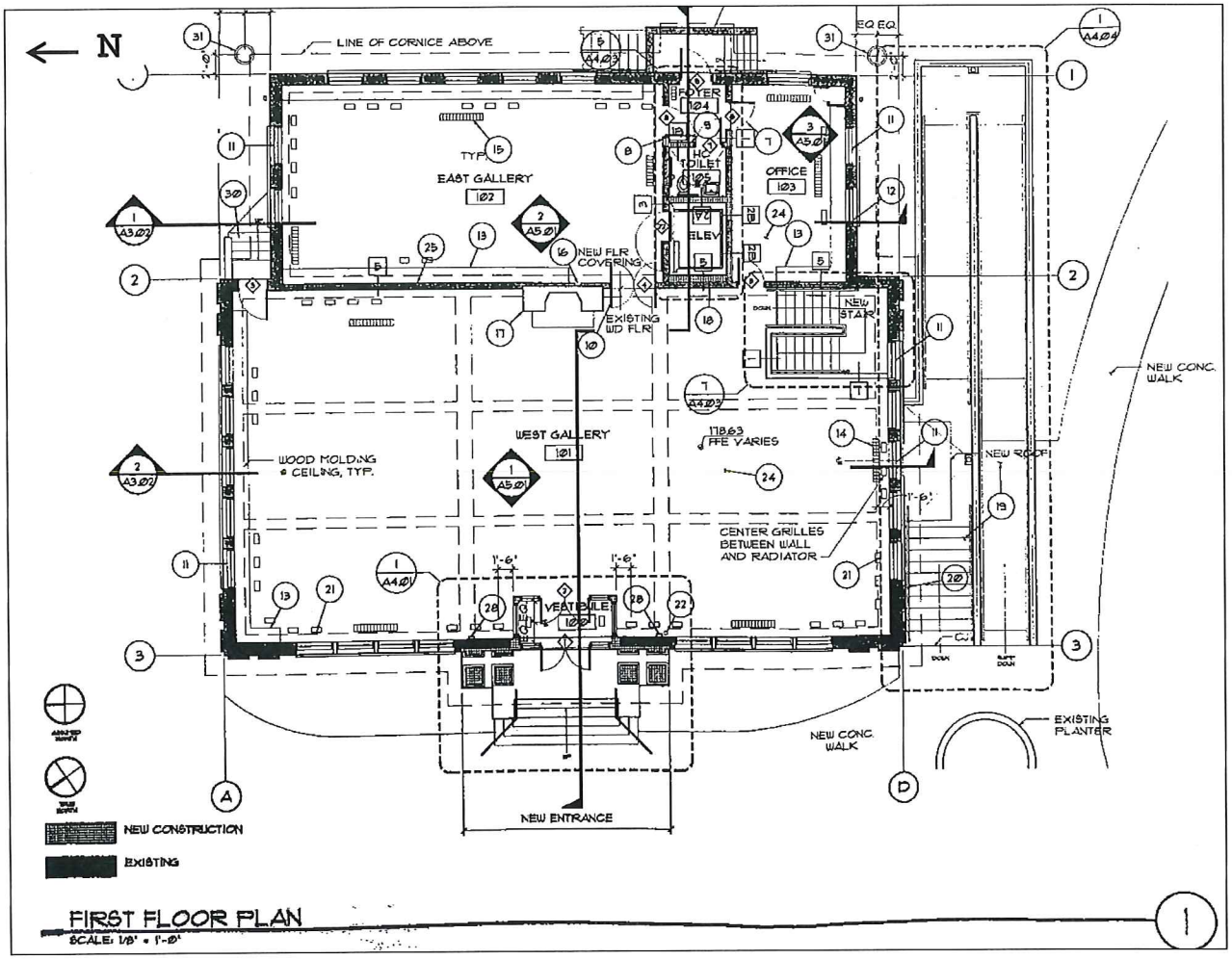


Figure 6: Renovated First Floor Plan, Slusarenko Architecture, PC, 2001.

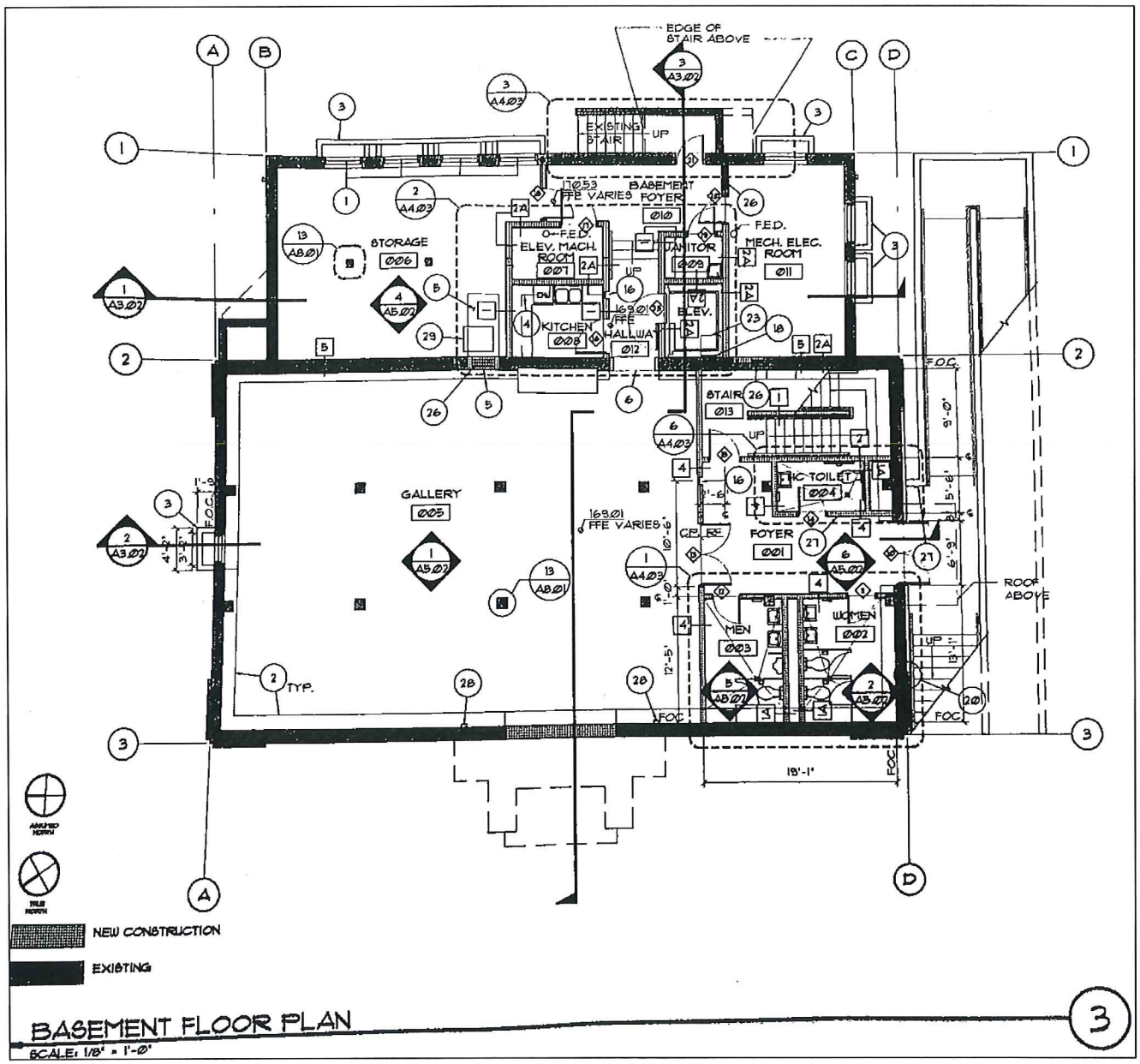


Figure 7: Renovated Basement Floor Plan, Slusarenko Architecture, PC, 2001.

← N

Figure 8: Oregon City Public Library, as photographed by WPA photographer, 1939. Image courtesy of the Oregon State Library.

Figure 9: Interior of Oregon City Public Library Reading Room, photographed by WPA photographer, 1939. Image courtesy of the Oregon State Library.

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 1 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_001
West Elevation, Looking East

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 2 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_002
South Elevation with fountain, looking North

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 3 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_003
East Elevation, Looking West

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 4 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_004
South Elevation, Looking North

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 5 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_005
Southwest Elevation with paths, Looking Northeast

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 6 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_006
Carnegie Library and Park, Looking Southeast

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 7 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_007
Garbage Enclosure Northeast of Building, Looking Northwest

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 8 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_008
Children's Library, Basement, Looking North

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 9 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_009
Main Floor Library, Looking North

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 10 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_010
Main Floor Library, Looking Northwest

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 11 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_011
Main Floor Library with Fireplace, Looking East

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 12 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_012
Main Floor Library with Front Desk, Looking West

Oregon City Carnegie Library
Oregon City, Clackamas Co.

Photo 13 of 13
OR_ClackamasCounty_OregonCityCarnegieLibrary_013
Main Floor Library Research Room, Looking North