

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
 Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic

and/or common North Bend Carnegie Library

(DD09-10)

2. Location

street & number 140 East 8th Street

not for publication

city, town North Bend

vicinity of

congressional district First

state Nebraska code 031 county Dodge code 053

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: library

4. Owner of Property

name City of North Bend

street & number

city, town North Bend

vicinity of

state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Dodge County Courthouse

street & number Fifth and Park Streets

city, town Fremont

state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate On-going ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town Lincoln

state Nebraska

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Carnegie Library is located in a mixed-use neighborhood in the town of North Bend (1970 pop. 1,350), fifteen miles west of the county seat of Dodge County.

The building is a one-story-over-raised-basement brick structure with a pedimented entrance pavilion centered on the front (south) facade and a centered extension on the north (see photos #1 and #4). The roof is hipped with a gabled roof on the entrance pavilion and a hipped roof on the northern extension. The pavilion is decorated with recessed panels on each side of the door, the names "Carnegie Library" carved in stone above the door, and a modillioned cornice and bas-relief carving in the pediment. The modillions, which originally decorated the cornice, have been removed. The double-hung windows are multi-paned on the upper half. Under the windows on the south, east, and west, there are recessed panels with decorative brickwork. A prominent water table divides the first floor and basement. The darker bricks of the basement are laid in four-course bands.

Architect J. R. Smith, who designed the building in 1911-12, incorporated many of the suggestions of the Carnegie Corporation for the floorplan of small libraries. The small vestibule houses the stairways to the first floor and the basement. The first floor is one open room with the adults' and children's reading areas on the west and east areas, respectively. The circulation desk is located in the center at the rear, and the office is behind, in the north extension. The western half of the basement encompasses one room, possibly a lecture room. The eastern half has a center corridor running east-west with small rooms off of it and terminating in an outside exit. Originally open, this exit has been enclosed.

The building remains in use today as the city library, and has survived without any significant changes.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1911–1913

Builder/Architect Jensen & Reynolds, Omaha, builder

J. R. Smith, University Place, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The North Bend Carnegie Library reflects the state-of-the-art in the design, use, and funding for library buildings erected in small towns in Nebraska in the first two decades of the twentieth century. With the help of the Carnegie grants, the number of library buildings in Nebraska grew from two prior to 1900 to seventy by 1921; the North Bend library built in 1912–13, was part of this growth. The assistance of the local Woman's Club and the State Library Commission were also common features of the library movement in this period.

Public libraries, along with many other improvements, were created in the 19th century. Previously, libraries were owned by private individuals or by volunteer associations open only to members. The movement for libraries supported by tax monies and open to the public was fostered in New England by reformers advocating an informed electorate and social improvement. Peterborough, New Hampshire, opened the first municipally-supported public library in 1833 (Bobinski, p. 3). Public libraries were established in many cities in the latter half of the century, often located in rented rooms or a room in a governmental structure. The construction of buildings specifically for library use occurred in large urban centers in the last decades of the century. Nebraska's first public library building was the Omaha Public Library, 1891–94 (NRHP 5-22-78). As communities of all sizes began considering the housing of libraries in appropriate buildings, Andrew Carnegie offered his famous grants for the construction of library buildings.

The Carnegie grants (1898–1921) came at an opportune time in the history of libraries, in the nation and in Nebraska. The state library commissions, especially those of the Midwest, were providing strong leadership in the encouragement of libraries. The Nebraska State Library Commission, founded in 1901, was particularly noted for its guidance (Bowers & Klingensmith, p. 20). At the same time, the City Beautiful movement, the Chicago World's Fair, and Omaha's Trans-Mississippi Exposition were inspiring interest in civic architecture and classical styles. In Nebraska, only Omaha and Nebraska City erected library buildings prior to the Carnegie grants (see also Morton-James Public Library, Otoe County, Nebraska, NRHP 5-26-76). Beginning with the Carnegie grant to the City of Lincoln in 1899, Carnegie awarded grants for the construction of 68 Nebraska libraries in the next 18 years (Bobinski, pp. 207–241).

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Andrew Carnegie, often called the Patron Saint of Libraries, funded the construction of 1,679 libraries in the United States, their value totaling over 40 million dollars (Bobinski, p. 1). Carnegie wished to assist cities, but only if the community authorized continuing tax funds for library operation. The community was required to own the site and approve an annual tax levy equal to 10% of the Carnegie gift for library support (Bobinski, pp. 38-42). The building was only to be used for library purposes. These requirements helped insure a building the city could and would support. Small towns under 1,000 population were not generally eligible since separate buildings were not considered necessary by Carnegie or the library profession. After 1908, the plans were required to be submitted to Carnegie for approval, so that unprofessional plans, wasted space, and excessive decoration could be eliminated. The Carnegie Corporation published a leaflet in 1911 outlining for communities and architects the approved design ideas of the library profession. The public library, especially the small library, was such a new building type that architects were commonly unfamiliar with recommended practices.

The North Bend library uses the recommended construction materials and floorplan of the Carnegie Corporation's "Notes on Library Buildings" (sic) for a small library. A one-story-over-raised basement, brick, rectangular structure with small vestibule was recommended as the most efficient use of space. Brick was suggested for its fireproof qualities. The North Bend floorplan follows closely Plan A of the "Notes" with the following features: the main floor is one open room with the circulation desk in the center and adults' and children's reading areas on each side; the raised basement supplied usable space - half as a lecture room and half for work and service rooms, divided by a central hallway with an exit on the east, and a small vestibule with stairs to the first floor and the basement.

Carnegie was not interested in dictating the architectural style of the buildings; however, simplicity was emphasized, and he objected to the cost of "excessive" decorative elements. In both Nebraska and Iowa, classical features were commonly used, although simplicity is characteristic and decorative features were kept to a minimum (Bowers & Klingensmith, p. 10). The North Bend library is one of the most simple of the classically-styled libraries. The building is even smaller than the Carnegie recommendations for this floorplan and lacks the flanking columns on the pavilion common in larger buildings. North Bend was one of the smaller communities awarded a grant; its 1910 population was 1,107.

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Women had a significant impact on their communities in the establishment and operation of libraries as professionals and through Women's Clubs which often initiated the libraries (Bowers & Klingensmith, pp. 5-6). The Woman's Club (sic) started the library in North Bend in 1906 and maintained it through entertainments, food sales, paper sales, box socials, and donations. A librarian, Miss Hazel Armstrong, was hired in 1908. The State Library Commission helped the librarian establish proper classification, accession, and check-out systems.

The City Council levied 1.5 mills for the support of the library in 1910, and a library board was established to oversee the operations. The City received an award of \$7,500 from the Carnegie Corporation on December 7, 1911. The plans, prepared by Architect John R. Smith, were reviewed by the secretary of the State Library Commission prior to their submission to the Carnegie Corporation. The building was dedicated on April 22, 1913, with formal exercises. The president of the Library Board conveyed the importance of a library to the city's betterment in his welcoming address:

that it was such buildings as this library and our own good school building, and what they stood for, that bids for good citizens in our community.

Little is known about Architect John R. Smith (1870-1958). He practiced in University Place (now part of Lincoln) from 1909-1935, and designed the Carnegie library for that city in the Neo-Classical Revival style. Two other structures are known to be designed by him: Riley School, University Place; and the Eugene Levi House, Lincoln, which is noted for its Prairie style massing with classical details (see LC13:D7-361, Mt. Emerald and Capital Additions Historic Residential District, Lancaster County, Nebraska, NRHP 6-5-80).

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name North Bend, Ne

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	4
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6	8	5	4	9	0
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4	5	9	2	4	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 7 and 8, Block 28, North Bend Original Plat

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Penelope Chatfield, Preservation Historian

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date February, 1981

street & number 1500 R Street

telephone 402/471-3850

city or town Lincoln

state Nebraska

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Monroe D. Knecht

7/24/81

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

date

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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Bobinski, George S. Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development. Chicago: American Library Ass'n., 1969.

Bowers, Martha H., and Samuel J. Klingensmith, "An Architectural and Historical Survey of Public Libraries in Iowa, 1870-1940" MS. State Historical Dept. of Iowa, Division of Historic Preservation, 1980.

Jansen, Mrs. Dorothy, President, Library Board, supplied information on Historical Sites Survey Form, July 16, 1979.

Nesbit, Marguerite. "Nebraska and Carnegie Libraries." MS. and scrapbook, 1930. filed at Nebraska State Library Commission, Lincoln, Nebr.

North Bend Eagle, May 2, 1912, page 4. "Library Plans submitted."

_____, April 24, 1913, page 4. "New Carnegie Library at North Bend Dedicated Tuesday Evening, April 22, 1913."

_____, September 24, 1936. "History of the Public Library."



Photo 1 of 4 – view to the north

Photo by D. Murphy, 1979, NSHS (7907/28:11)



Photo 2 of 4 – view to the northeast

Photo by D. Murphy, 1979, NSHS (7907/28:5)



Photo 3 of 4 – view to the northwest

Photo by D. Murphy, 1979, NSHS (7907/28:10)



Photo 4 of 4 – view to the southeast

Photo by D. Murphy, 1979, NSHS (7907/28:8)