

City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (1)

Name of Building or Site

Common Historic (if applicable)  
Grieg Club Sixth Ward Public Library

Location

Street Address Aldermanic District  
1249 Williamson St.  
Madison, WI 53703 6th

Classification

Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)  
building

Zoning District

C2 HIS-TL Present Use  
club house

Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)

Name(s)  
Grieg Chorus Club Building, Corp.

Street Address

1249 Williamson St.  
Madison, WI 53703

Telephone Number

(608) 256-3290

Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)

Parcel Number  
0710-072-2902-6

Legal Description  
Block 202. Original Plat. NE 33 ft of lot 8  
and SW 22 ft of NW 1/2 of lot 9.

Condition of Property

Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins)  
excellent

Altered or Unaltered?

altered

Moved or Original Site?

original site

Wall Construction

brick bearing wall

City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

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**Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance.**

The Sixth Ward Public library at 1249 Williamson Street was built in 1913 to the designs of the Madison architectural firm of Claude and Starck. Constructed of red brick with limestone (or concrete) detailing, the story and a half building is a simplified Collegiate Gothic in style.

The exterior of the building has changed little since its completion. The Williamson Street facade consists of two parts: the entry and the library block. The entrance is located to the left of the main section. The main door is entered from street level. The door is currently glass with glass sidelights, replacing the earlier paired wood doors. The entry is contained within a moderately pointed arch detailed in sandstone. The upper area between the door and the top of the arch is glass, lighting the entry foyer. The door with its surround is part of a larger entry sequence. On either side of the door are buttress-like piers. The piers sit on a stone base which ties into the threshold. The piers are brick to the height of the door and are then capped by a stone band. The front of the upper portion of the pier contains a flat niche, also of stone. The upper sides of the pier alternate between bands of brick and of stone. Between the tops of the piers rises a central brick pediment, traced in stone.

The main block repeats the elements of the entry on a grander scale. The block sits on a raised basement. Three double hung windows, separated by vertical bands of brick, are located between the two piers. A horizontal band of masonry runs above the windows and around the piers, providing a base from which the piers step back. A stone sill, at the height of the bottom band of alternating masonry of the entry piers, forms the base for the main windows. Stone mullions and transoms divided the fenestration into six units. The bottom three are rectangular, the three directly above have segmental tops. The transoms dividing the sets of windows are at the same level as the base of the flat stone niches on the side piers. The motif of the piers on the library block is the same as at the entrance, but on a larger scale. Above the windows is an area of brick and, above, an arch. The molding of the arch is continued around the piers, to the sides of the niche, and around the building, forming a cornice-like molding at the sides of the building. The building facade is finished by a stepped parapet, culminating in a small central pediment. The parapet hides the building's gabled roof.

The side elevation is less elaborate. The wall is brick, with stone detailing around the upper windows. As on the front elevation, there are double hung windows lighting the basement. The fenestration of this facade is in an A-B-A pattern: two windows, six windows, two windows. All the lower windows are divided by courses of brick, with larger portions of wall between the sets. The upper windows light the library interior. There is a clerestory band of 10 windows with segmental tops. The two to the far left and right have pairs of larger rectangular windows below them.

The interior of the library can be discerned from existing photographs. The lower floor contained an auditorium for lectures. The upper floor contained the barrel vaulted reading room. Bookcases lined the walls to the sides of the larger windows and below the clerestory lights. The librarian's desk was located near the center of the room, facing the door with tables and chairs for patrons located on either side of the room.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

Original Owner	Original Use
City of Madison	Library
Architect or Builder	Architectural Style
Claude and Starck	Collegiate Gothic
Date of Construction	Indigenous Materials Used
1913	sandstone detailing

List of Bibliographical References Used  
see attached sheet

Form Prepared By:  
Name and Title  
Daina Penkiunas  
214 Acewood Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53714 (608) 243-8144

Organization Represented (if any)  
Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

Address	Telephone Number
PO Box 296 Madison, WI 53701	(608) 251-4615

Date Nomination Form Was Prepared  
May 8, 1995

City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

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Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to  
Designation Criteria:

The former Sixth Ward Branch Library, located at 1249 Williamson Street, was the second public library building in Madison. It is the oldest surviving library building and the only remaining Carnegie funded library building in Madison.

The predecessor of the Madison Public Library was the Madison Institute. Chartered in 1853, among its goals was to establish and sustain a reading room and library in Madison. The Institute functioned for 22 years.

In 1872 the State Legislature passed a bill allowing incorporated cities and villages to levy a tax for the support of a public library. In 1874 under Mayor Silas Pinney, the Madison City Council passed an ordinance establishing a public library. Madison became the second city in the state to open a free public library. Madison's library opened in City Hall in May 1875. The first public library in the state opened May 1874 in Sparta.(1) The Madison Institute donated its books to form the core of the new public library.

In 1902 the Madison Common Council accepted a gift of \$75,000 from Andrew Carnegie for the construction of the city's main library at the corner of Carroll and Dayton streets (no longer extant). The Collegiate Gothic brick and limestone building was designed by the Philadelphia firm of Frank Miles Day and opened February 1904. In addition to the library proper and an auditorium, the building housed the library school of the Wisconsin Free Library Commission on the second floor.

In 1911 Madison received a second gift from Andrew Carnegie for the construction of the Sixth Ward library. The area had previously had store stations for lending books, with 150 volumes in Gustav Voss's store in Schenk's Corners and a station at 1053 Williamson Street. The latter directly led to the Sixth Ward branch. Statistics showed that the predominantly blue collar neighborhood had a circulation of 11,700 by 1910.(2) The site selected for the new building by the library board was on Williamson Street, next to the old

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(1) This and other general information about the history of the Madison library system comes from Janet S. Ela, Free and Public: One Hundred Years with Madison Public Library (Madison: 1975).

(2) Ela, Free and Public, 56.

Marquette School (no longer extant). Claude and Starck designed the brick and limestone building, mimicking the style of the main library. The building opened 25 March 1913.

When the library opened it had only 1779 volumes in circulation. By 1935 the number had reached 6000. In addition to lending books, the library served as a meeting area, used by clubs and recreation groups. Classes of the Continuation School also met at the branch library. In 1958 the East Side branch moved to Atwood Avenue and changed its name to the Hawthorne branch library. The former Sixth Ward building is currently occupied by the Grieg Club.

The Williamson Street branch library was one of 63 libraries funded by Carnegie in Wisconsin. Madison was also one of only three communities in the state to receive funds for two buildings, and Madison received the largest sum--a total of \$90,000 for two libraries. Andrew Carnegie's gifts can be seen in large and small communities throughout the country. Between 1896 and 1919 Carnegie gave money toward the construction of 1,681 libraries in the United States.(3) The Sixth Ward branch followed the basic recommended plan of adult and children's collections on the main floor, and a staff room and lecture room in the basement.

The Collegiate Gothic style was popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century for academic buildings. The buildings, often of brick with stone detailing, sought to recall the academic settings of Oxford and Cambridge. The most noted extant example in Madison is East High School, built in 1922 to the designs of local architect Frank Riley. While most often built as free standing structures or as parts of academic quads, the library branch is urban in feel. While it did not have adjoining neighbors when constructed, the library building is built on a pedestrian scale and flush with the sidewalk.

The former branch library building is further significant as an example of the work of the firm of Claude and Starck. Both members of the firm were born in Wisconsin in 1868. Claude died in 1951, Starck in 1947. They received their architectural training locally, and in Milwaukee and Chicago. In 1896 Claude and Starck began their practice in Madison, which lasted until 1929. While more widely known for their Prairie School designs, the firm also produced works in revival styles popular during the early twentieth century. The firm designed a wide range of building types, including houses, schools, hotels, banks, libraries, commercial and municipal buildings. In Madison, in addition to numerous

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(3) Anders C. Dahlgren, "Reviewing the Carnegie Legacy in Wisconsin" Channel DLS24 (January 1988), 8.

residences, their works include the 1906 Doty School and the 1915 Lincoln School, the 1908 Teckemeyer Candy Company, the ca. 1900 Badger Block, and the 1921 Luther Memorial Church. Other Wisconsin library designs by the firm include the 1903 Carnegie Free Library in Baraboo, the 1907 Public Library of Watertown, the 1911 T.B. Scott Free Library in Merrill, the 1914 Carnegie Library in Barron, and the 1916 Tomah Public Library. The styles of the libraries vary from the earlier more typically classical styles to later Prairie School designs. In all, the firm designed 26 library buildings in Wisconsin, of which 15 were the result of Carnegie grants.(4)

In conclusion, the former Sixth Ward library branch building is significant as an example embodying the characteristics of a type specimen and for its associations with the development of the Madison public library system. It is also significant as an example of the Collegiate Gothic style, and as the work of the firm of the Madison architectural firm of Claude and Starck.

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(4) Gordon Orr, "Louis W. Claude: Madison Architect of the Prairie School," The Prairie School Review 14 (1981). The entire issue is devoted to Louis Claude and the work of Claude and Starck. Building counts are taken from the building list included at the conclusion of the article.

List of Bibliographic Sources

Custer, Frank. "City Library History." Capital Times. 24 April 1965, 6.

Dahlgren, Anders C. "Reviewing the Carnegie Legacy in Wisconsin." Channel DLS 24 (January 1988):8-9.

Ela, Janet S. Free and Public: One Hundred Years with Madison Public Library. Madison: 1975.

Madison, Past and Present. Madison: Wisconsin State Journal, 1902.

Mollenhoff, David. Madison: A History of the Formative Years. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1982.

Orr, Gordon. "Louis W. Claude: Madison Architect of the Prairie School." The Prairie School Review 14 (1981): 5-35.



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