

= Oregon Public Library =

The Oregon Public Library is located in Oregon , Illinois , United States , the county seat of Ogle County . The building is a public library that was constructed in 1909 . Prior to 1909 , Oregon 's library was housed in different buildings , none of which were designed to house a library . The library was built using a grant from wealthy philanthropist Andrew Carnegie . The grant was obtained after Oregon 's citizens voted to change Oregon 's library from a city library to a township library . The building was completed by 1908 but the library did not begin operation until 1909 .

The Oregon Library was designed by Chicago architects Pond and Pond . The Ponds were members of the Eagle 's Nest Art Colony , founded by Lorado Taft , and their association with Taft and the colony led them to design the library . Their design was influenced by the colony , and a combination of two architectural styles , Classical Revival and the Arts and Crafts movement . The completed library included a second floor art gallery to which members of Eagle 's Nest donated works for a permanent collection . The gallery 's collection includes 64 paintings and sculptures as well as a Currier and Ives lithograph collection appraised at US \$ 700 @, @ 000 . The Oregon Public Library was listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 2003 , three years later it was included as a contributing property in a historic district that received the National Register designation .

= = History = =

While the library building dates to the early 20th century the move toward intellectual outreach in Oregon started years before . The first Oregon library was organized in 1872 , though it had no building of its own . Before the library had its own building , library books were stored in a drug store and then in the County Treasurer 's office . Eventually the Oregon Library occupied rented office space in the First National Bank building . This situation persisted until 1905 when Oregon voters voiced their collective opinion on the library 's future .

The citizens of Oregon were faced with a dilemma in 1905 : either allow Oregon 's library to remain , truly , Oregon 's city library , or , by referendum , allow Oregon 's library to make the shift into a township library . This change would allow the library one distinct advantage ; it would qualify the library for a grant from Andrew Carnegie for the construction of a new building . Initially , Carnegie promised US \$ 7 @, @ 000 for the new library but once voters approved the change the grant amount was increased to \$ 10 @, @ 000 . The grant , aside from requiring the library to hold " township library " status , required a site to be selected prior to the grant application process ; a site , at the corner of Oregon 's Jefferson and Third Streets , was selected .

= = Art gallery = =

= = = Eagle 's Nest influence = = =

Even before the library was built , members of the Eagle 's Nest Art Colony were pushing for the new building to include a second @-@ story art gallery . The colony , founded in 1898 by sculptor Lorado Taft , was based on the bluffs flanking the east bank of the Rock River , overlooking Oregon . Later in Carnegie 's philanthropy his secretary James Bertram laid out strict requirements , including requirements which discouraged multiple uses for Carnegie libraries . Another requirement stipulated that Bertram approve library plans prior to grant approval or construction . The Oregon library , however , was constructed before Bertram 's requirements were published and includes the gallery .

The art colony at Eagle 's Nest was populated by Chicago artists , all members of the Chicago Art Institute or the University of Chicago art department , who gathered in Ogle County to escape the summer heat of Chicago . Two of the charter members of the art colony were the Chicago architects , Allen and Irving Kane Pond , who designed the Oregon Public Library building . It was the Ponds '

association with the Eagle 's Nest Art Colony that led them to design the library .

The building was constructed after the Carnegie grant approval , and its first use came in October 1908 by Leon A. Malkielski , a colony member , for an exhibition of 100 paintings . The library proper did not begin providing its services until 1909 . The colony tried to contribute to area culture by requiring its members to hold art shows , lectures , and other exhibitions throughout the early 20th century . With the library complete it began to play a role in those exhibitions . Hamlin Garland , a 1921 Pulitzer Prize recipient for literature , spoke at the Oregon library while he was a member of the Eagle 's Nest Colony .

= = = Collections = = =

The gallery on the second floor of the library building was not formally dedicated until July 4 , 1918 . That date marked the beginning of the library 's permanent collection , which started with additions from members of the Eagle 's Nest Colony . Members donated twelve statues , twenty oil paintings , and four portraits to the permanent collection of the art gallery . One of the statues in the collection is a 4 @-@ foot (1 @. @ 2 @-@ m) plaster study of The Eternal Indian by Lorado Taft . It was completed in 1908 as he prepared to create the Black Hawk Statue at the original site of the Eagle 's Nest Colony . The entire permanent collection consists of 32 paintings and 32 sculptures from Eagle 's Nest artists . A citizen left the library a Currier and Ives lithograph collection which contains 46 Currier and Ives lithographs and 14 lithographs by Nathaniel Currier . The two collections have been appraised at over \$ 700 @, @ 000 .

In addition to the substantial historical art collection held by the library gallery the collection consists of works by local artists . One Oregon resident has donated artwork from the annual Grand Detour Art Show regularly . Other area residents have donated pieces as well . In all , the library holds about 30 contemporary works by local artists .

= = Architecture = =

The library is designed with an eye toward late 19th century and early 20th century movements in architecture . While it contains many elements common to Classical Revival architecture the building 's asymmetry and playfully creative style are distinctly characteristic of the Arts and Crafts Movement . The building was designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Pond and Pond and is constructed of buff colored brick . Red brick belt coursing and accents contrast the buff colored brick on the majority of the facade . The two @-@ story Oregon Public Library has a full brick basement and approximately 5 @, @ 500 foot ² (511 m ²) of floor space .

The building , though based on Classical architecture is not entirely a Classical building . Its rooflines , main entrance , and the placement and style of the windows are all asymmetrical in nature , a hallmark of the Arts and Crafts style . Its simple massing and noticeable lack of ornamentation throughout the structure connects the building closely to the Arts and Crafts movement . This influence is seen most prominently on the building 's interior .

Though Arts and Crafts is specifically regarded as a movement within architecture , as opposed to a full @-@ blown style , there are elements that are considered typical to buildings designed in the style . Examples include , dark , heavy woodwork and very simple ornamentation . The Oregon Public Library contains functional elements associated with that movement . Dark woodwork is found throughout the building , first in the stairwell to the gallery and its balusters and newel posts and then in the four @-@ panel wooden interior door . The ceilings are coffered and have exposed wooden beams . Also located in the interior is a large 1909 wooden floor clock , a built @-@ in storage cabinet , and two wooden fuse boxes that all evoke the Arts and Crafts movement .

The building does demonstrate elements of Classical Revival architecture but they are minimal and concentrated around the front entrance . Below the front entrance hood there are two stone pilasters and a stone lintel , as well as relief work adorning the pediment ; leading to the front entrance are seven concrete stairs . The entire entry facade is a gable @-@ front , temple style design and on the library 's east wing there are stone @-@ capped modified buttresses . Each of these elements

demonstrates the Classical Revival style .

= = Significance = =

The Oregon Public Library was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places on May 9 , 2003 for its architectural and educational significance . The building represents a good example of the Arts and Crafts movement in architecture . As a Carnegie library , the Oregon Public Library satisfied the requirements laid out for listing on the National Register in the Illinois Carnegie Libraries Multiple Property Submission . When the Oregon Commercial Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2006 the Oregon Library was included as a contributing property . The library building is considered the most " outstanding " of the Craftsman or Arts and Crafts buildings within the historic district boundaries .