

LIBRARY GETS HISTORIC PRESERVATION APPROVAL

BARABOO, WISCONSIN; JULY 14, 2020 – The Baraboo Public Library passed a key milestone in its expansion process last month when the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), a state-level arm of the National Park Service’s National Register of Historic Places, approved the final architectural concept for the expanded library design. With this hurdle crossed, the City of Baraboo’s application for a \$6 million loan for a portion of the building project through the United States Department of Agriculture can move forward.

“We are very pleased with the result of SHPO vetting process,” said library director Jessica Bergin. “We feel the SHPO review gave careful consideration of our historic Carnegie heritage, while recognizing the planners’ desire to create a beautiful and functional building that welcomes and serves the community, and enhances the character of this block, so close to our historic downtown.”

The Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office, administered by the Wisconsin State Historical Society in Madison, is tasked with identifying, evaluating, and protecting the state’s historic and archeological resources. The Baraboo Public Library, built in 1903, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1981. The architects who designed the original neoclassical library building, Baraboo native Louis Claude and Edward Starck, designed many small libraries over their 30-year partnership. According to the State Historical Society website, the Baraboo Public Library was the first Claude and Starck library in the classical style to be entered in the National Register.

The architectural team creating the library expansion design is led by Ann Dilcher, a LEED accredited architect with Quinn Evans Architects, and Carter Arndt, project architect with MSA Professional Services. They have worked closely with library board members and the SHPO reviewers to align the building design with a vision of a modern, beautiful, and functional addition while at the same time honoring and spotlighting the historical Carnegie building.

The final architectural design restores portions of the original building, especially the primary façade and roofline, to preserve historical materials and features. It removes the 1982 wrap-around brick addition to the east and north of the original building. The connection between the original building and the addition to the east will be mostly glass to separate and differentiate the historic brick structure from the new addition. The addition echoes the historic library and neighboring First United Methodist Church with brick masonry as the prominent material and, like the historic library façade, features three equal sections across the front. The appearance of the addition is meant to complement rather

than imitate the look of the original Carnegie building. Designers ensured that the addition has the same generous setback from the street as the original building.

The library serves a population that has grown by 50% since it was last renovated in 1982. It lacks accessibility and spaces needed to provide contemporary library services. In addition to expanded space to accommodate additional programming, the library needs to reorganize spaces to reflect the evolution of library services, including small study and meeting rooms, large community gathering spaces, and spaces that allow people to make, test, create, learn new skills and teach skills to their community. In addition to program and study space, the community has recognized the important role this library plays in early literacy and ranked renovation of the children's area as a top priority.

The library, which in September will observe the 125th anniversary of its charter as a public library by the state of Wisconsin, is set to begin construction of the building addition in the spring of 2021.

"With this library renovation and addition, we honor the legacy of Andrew Carnegie, and the dedicated founders of the Baraboo Public Library," said Bergin, "while shaping our building and services to fit the needs of our community today and in the future."

For more information about the library expansion project, including how to contribute to the library building fund, visit the library website at Baraboopubliclibrary.org.