

**CARNEGIE LIBRARY
AS QUOTED FROM
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY 1988**

[Some corrections have been made.]

Common name: Carnegie Building

Historic name: Carnegie Library

Street address: 2155 Third Street

City: Livermore zip: 94550 County: Alameda

Parcel number: 97-31-1

Present owner: City of Livermore

Present Use: Art Gallery, History Museum, Meeting rooms.

Original Use: Public Library

Architectural style: Roman Revival

Present physical appearance of site or structure and any major alterations from original condition:

The site consisted of a 1 1/2-story building, which is constructed on a rectangular plan and designed in a very handsome example of Roman Revival architectural style. The structure is build of brick, which is sheathed in terra cotta and plaster. The roofline is dominated by an ornamented Molded cornice. The exterior walls are highlighted by large quoining. Main Fenestration includes rectangular-shaped, tripartite, multi-light windows with a transom band above. The basement windows consist of evenly spaced repeated square shaped, slightly recessed on the rusticated wall surface. Window lights include three small square panes over two larger squares.

The most distinctive features of the building are the two raised, massive round arched entrances which are highlighted by full pedimented porticos, supported by paired ionic columns. The doors themselves contain twin wooden forms with interior

glass panes on the top half. A handsome, single bulb, ball-shaped lighting fixture centers above the double doors. Freestanding metal lamps ornament the first landing of the double stair.

The building is in moderately good condition. Equally as important as the architecture itself, the surrounding details, such as the wonderful mature landscaping, the light standards, and, most importantly, the large concrete fountain on the northern entrance.

Significance:

The Carnegie Library is one of the most important landmark buildings in Livermore. It is historically significant as the city library from 1911 to 1966 (not 1963 as shown on the report) and for its association with the Andrew Carnegie Library building program. Few communities have so well cared for their Carnegie Libraries. The building set as it is in a handsomely landscaped old-fashioned park, is the epitome of the fine urban heritage, which distinguishes the City of Livermore from among the surrounding communities of the Livermore-Amador Valley.

The library, started with donations of \$500 from the town's people of Livermore in 1874, was the first in California to be publicly supported and free to the public. The first library was housed in the building located at 2130, 2136 First Street, which was constructed in 1878. This library was replaced by the Carnegie Library building, 2155 Third Street, in 1911.

The Carnegie Library, so named because \$10,000 was donated by Andrew Carnegie, was designed by the regionally important architect, William H. Weeks. The Livermore Carnegie Library

was designed in the same year that Weeks designed Carnegie Libraries for Ferndale, Monterey, Gilroy, Richmond, and Lompoc. The Lompoc Library appears to be a modification of the Livermore plan.

Interestingly, the bricks used to construct the library came from the Carnegie Brickyard on Tesla Road. (Named for but not owned by Andrew Carnegie.)

To receive a Carnegie Grant, the library must have land. This (McKeany Block) block had been the town corral and Peter McKeany's slaughterhouse, which the city purchased for \$9,000, in 1910. The cost of construction is reported to have been \$10,640.

The significance of the Carnegie Library is attributed to the association with the Livermore Free Public library and as the work of a master architect.

Builder: Hoyt Brothers