

REPORT TO: B. Longfield, Chair and Members of the Heritage Advisory Committee

RE: **Proposal for Designation, Carnegie Building (1912), 25 Adelaide Street**

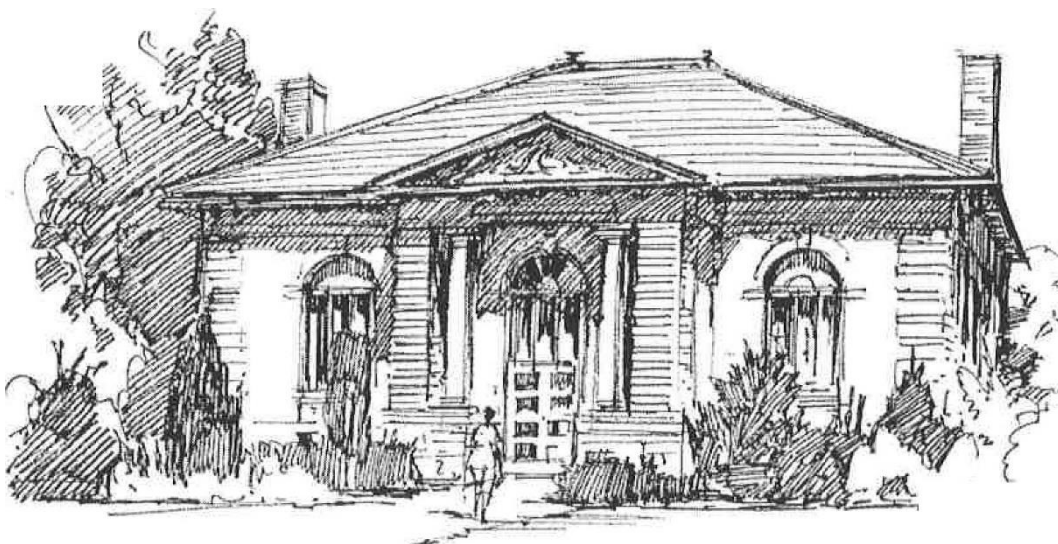
DATE: September 13, 2004

1.0 RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

Resolved, that Report P.A. 04-52 regarding proposal for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, Carnegie Building (1912), 25 Adelaide Street, be received.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Council agreed to consider the designation of the Carnegie Building, 25 Adelaide Street, under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act at the recommendation of the Grimsby Heritage Advisory Committee. This report is intended to outline the history behind the building and describe the architectural elements of the building in order to assist Council in making a decision.



Drawing Donated to the Town by Harold Costello, Mayor 1973 - 1976

This building was constructed in 1912 as a result of an \$8,000 grant from the Andrew Carnegie. It is one of 125 such buildings that were built in Canada. It has served as Grimsby's library until 2003 when a new library/art gallery was built on the property to the west. An inscription on the back of the above drawing describes the architecture as follows: "in the British classical treatment of buildings as a whole, it is self-contained, and further, the three part facade represents strength, wisdom and beauty. There is the main doorway decisively framed by pillars, continuous baseboard, and corniced top and bottom. There is the portico and steps (since removed) much as in a Greek temple where the supplicant ascents the steps to commune with the muses. The Carnegie Library is a typical product of conventional eighteenth century British classical taste directed to achieve commodity, firmness, and delight.

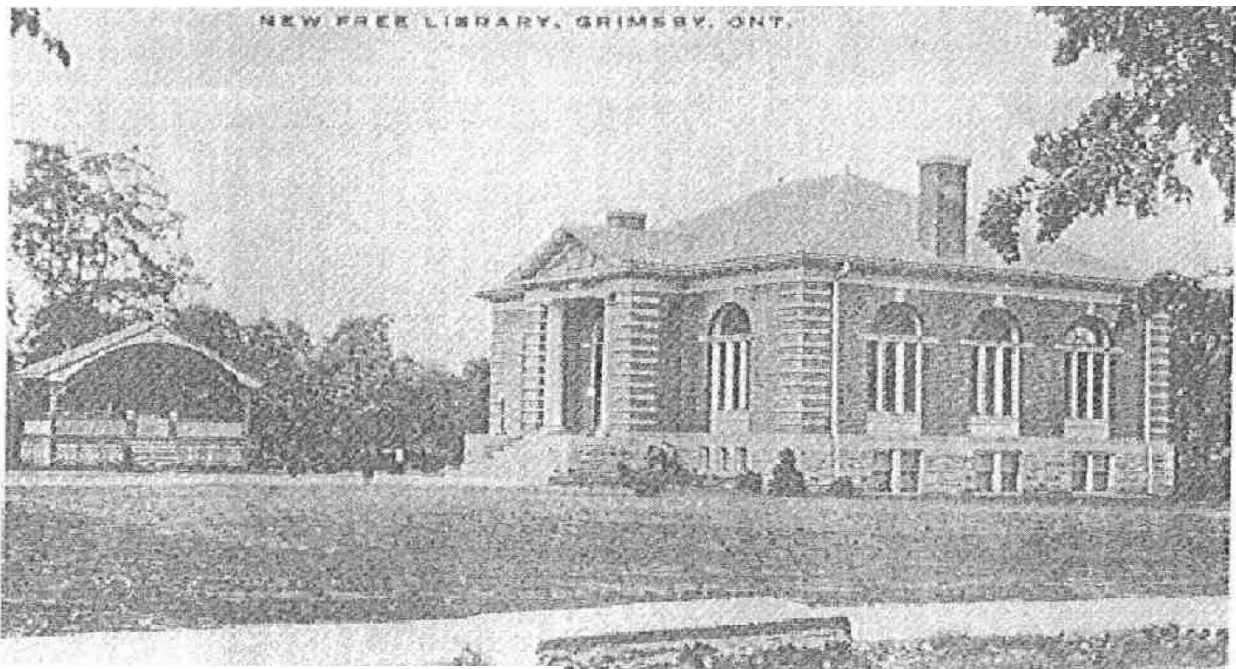
3.0 HISTORY

Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish born American, came from humble beginnings to become one of the wealthiest people in the world. His riches were amassed through his exploits in the steel industry in the late 19th century. His philanthropy was legendary. During his life he personally gave away more than \$350,000,000, an enormous sum for the time. His benefactions extended to a number of areas including scientific research, education, libraries, international peace and hero funds.

Donations to free public library buildings exceeded \$56,000,000 for the 2509 buildings worldwide. A significant majority of the libraries were constructed in the United States but a total of 125 buildings were constructed in Canada with Carnegie money.

The first library in Grimsby was established in the old stone Mabey house in 1871 and later was moved to the second floor of the old fire hall. In 1902 the municipal council discussed the possibilities of applying to Andrew Carnegie for a grant to build a Public Library. In 1903 a committee was appointed to contact Mr. Carnegie for a grant in the amount of \$10,000.

There was no response for a few years. Mr. Jas. Aitchison lobbied Andrew Carnegie for years by apparently sending postcards of Grimsby scenes regularly. His efforts paid off when in 1910 Mr. Bertram, Secretary to Carnegie, asked for more information about the community. Mr. Carnegie agreed to provide a grant of \$8,000 to Grimsby subject to the community maintaining a Free Public Library at a cost of at least \$800 per year and the provision of a suitable site for the building. The Village of Grimsby and the Township of North Grimsby agreed to these conditions. In 1911 the construction of a new library began on the lot occupied by the Town Hall on the corner of Adelaide and Depot (Ontario) Streets.



Building design was somewhat controlled by the grant process. Some of the Carnegie design goals were to achieve effective accommodation, efficiency and a fairly uniform appearance to all of the buildings. The above photograph depicts the result

In the 1940's the lower level of the library was renovated into a bright attractive boys and girls room. In 1955 the Dominion Bureau of Statistics noted that the Grimsby Public Library had the largest circulation (3,200) in Canada for a town of that size. The library housed the Grimsby Band, Boy Scouts, and Girl Guides and allowed the Fire Department to hold its Annual Carnival on its front lawn.

Art exhibits were held in the library in 1972 and, shortly thereafter, an architect was appointed to design an addition to the building. In 1975 the enlarged building was opened housing the Grimsby Public Library and Art Gallery. In 2003 a new library/art gallery was built on the property to the west and the 1975 addition was subsequently removed.

(The above information was obtained from:

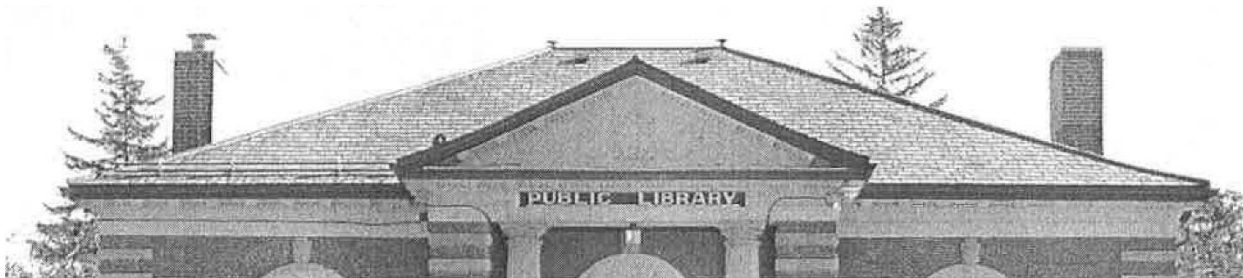
- "Incredible Carnegie" - John K. Winkler, The Vanguard Press, New York
- "The Best Gift" - A record of Carnegie Libraries in Ontario, M. Bechman, S. Langmead and J. Black, and
- "Once Upon a Little Town... Grimsby 1876 to 1976" - The Grimsby Historical Society, Rannie Publications)

4.0 ARCHITECTURE

In his book Ontario Architecture, John Blumenson attributed a proliferation of Classical elements in early 20th Century architecture to a prominent architectural school in France (Ecole des Beaux-Arts) and an architectural exposition in late 19th Century Chicago, which provided a forum for Beaux -Arts disciples. The enthusiasm resulted "in the construction of oversized Classical buildings throughout North America. In Ontario, the American version of Beux-Arts Classicism was not totally embraced. Ontario architects, with individual exceptions, preferred a Classical statement reflecting a more refined interpretation of Roman and Greek architecture on a smaller scale". "The goal was to synthesize the Classical past by creating large and at times exuberant, if not grand, displays of temple like buildings adapted to a variety of public and semipublic uses, such as post offices, banks and libraries." "The Ontario version prefers single columns with smooth shafts and unadorned mouldings and a plain cornice with modillion blocks rather than paired columns with enrichments, typical of American Beaux-Arts Classicism." Mr. Blumenson identified Carnegie Libraries as a popular vernacular interpretation of this style of architecture.

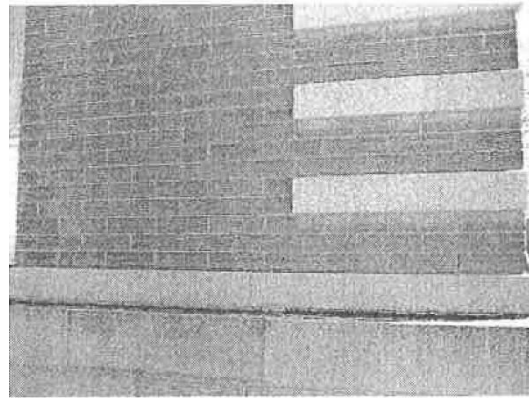
4.1 Details of Carnegie Building

In general, the building has a rectangular shape with an entrance frontispiece protrusion centrally located on the south side defining the main entrance. The roof can be described as a hip roof (with slopes on all sides). There is a secondary gable end above the entrance. The plan has a raised first floor with a portion of the basement foundation exposed. The building is symmetrical on all sides with equidistant openings (windows and doors) on the walls.

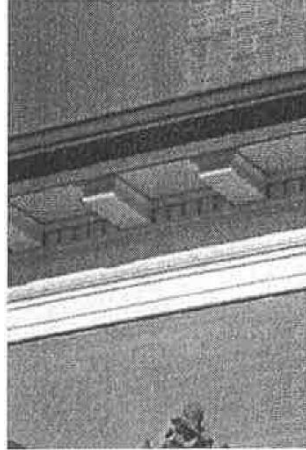


The roof appears to consist of slate shingles. Vents have apparently been installed on all sides near the peaks and an ice barrier has been installed above the door at the west side facing south.

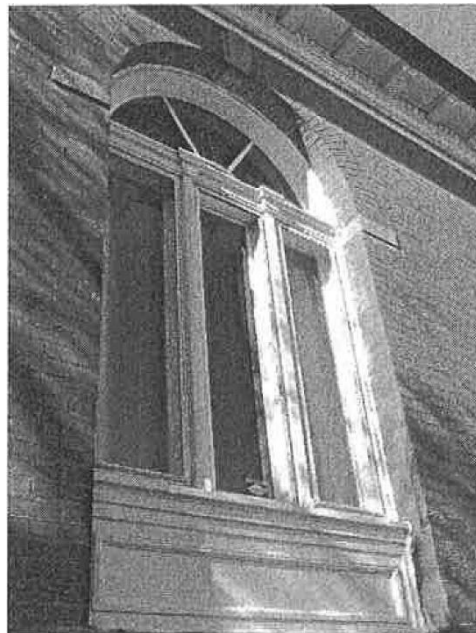
The stone foundation wall is laid in a Random Ashlar pattern. The individual stones have a rock-faced finish. The mortar joints are raised in a plain semicircular cross section.



The exterior wall material consists of a plain bonded brick with ornamental concrete quoining at the corners. The plain concrete water table defines the boundary between the first floor and the basement.



The cornices are adorned with modillion blocks with smaller dentil blocks in between. The frieze board is plain with an architrave base.



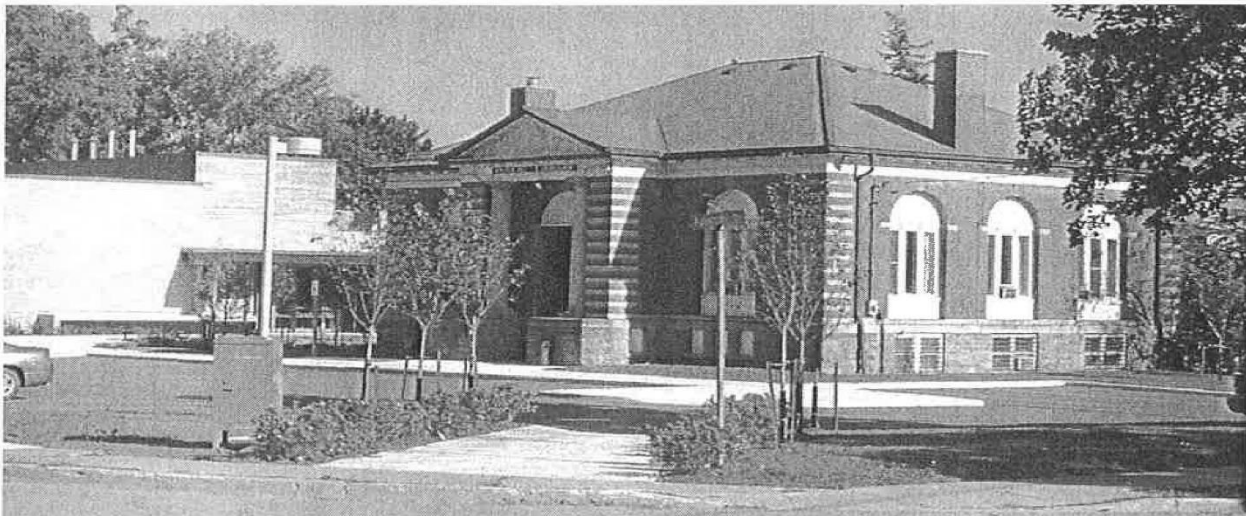
The windows have three vertical panes divided by pilastered mullions. The windows are topped with a semicircular arch with a simple 3-pane sunburst and are sitting on a paneled base. The brick arches surrounding the windows are highlighted by a concrete key and bases.



Two Roman Doric columns supporting a triangular pediment frame the main entrance. The pediment is faced with an ornamental molding and is trimmed in the identical manner to the roof cornice. The bases of the columns are supported by foundation extensions. The proportions of the main doorway were identical to that of the windows.

4.2 Changes to the Building

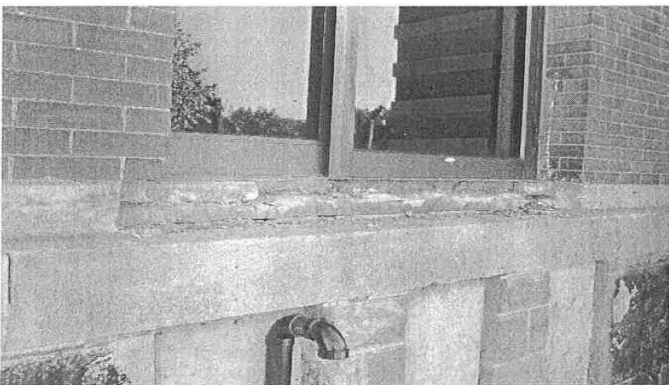
The first impression when comparing the overall appearance of the site with the older picture on Page 2 is that the building has not changed much. It still maintains a commanding presence at the corner of Ontario and Adelaide Streets. The prominent features are relatively intact. However, upon closer inspection one recognizes that changes have been made to some of the details. This section of the report will highlight some of the changes to the building.



South Elevation

The basement windows and the arches above all of the window and door have been boarded up. The middle pane of the easterly window has been shortened to accommodate an air conditioning unit.

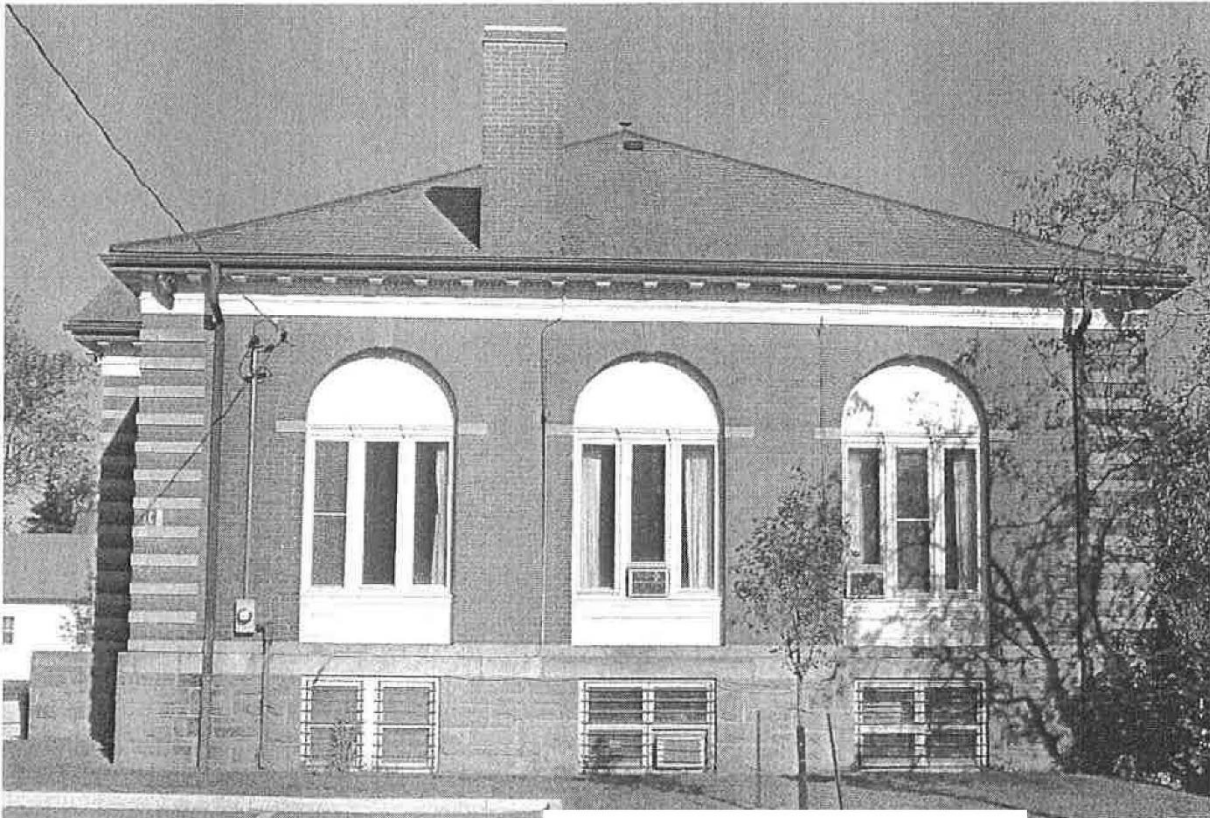
The main entrance has been lowered, presumably to improve access to the basement, and the steps have been removed. A steel framed glass doorway has replaced the main door. A steel framed stained glass panel has been inserted between the new door and the arch.



The westerly window has been replaced by a steel framed glass doorway, which has been made inoperable. Some damage has been sustained to the concrete water table under this doorway.

East Side Elevation

The east elevation is relatively intact with the exception of the window arches, which have been covered by panels. Also, accommodations have been made for air conditioning units in two of the main floor windows and one of the basement windows.



North Side Elevation

This elevation has sustained the least number of changes. The windows are intact and have not been covered up.

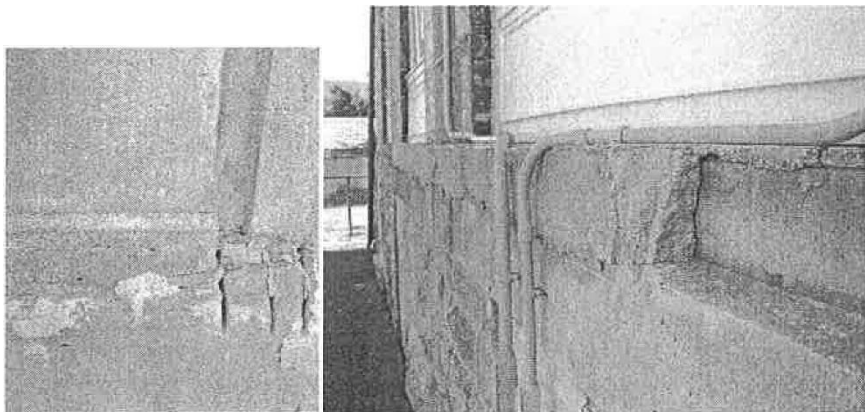
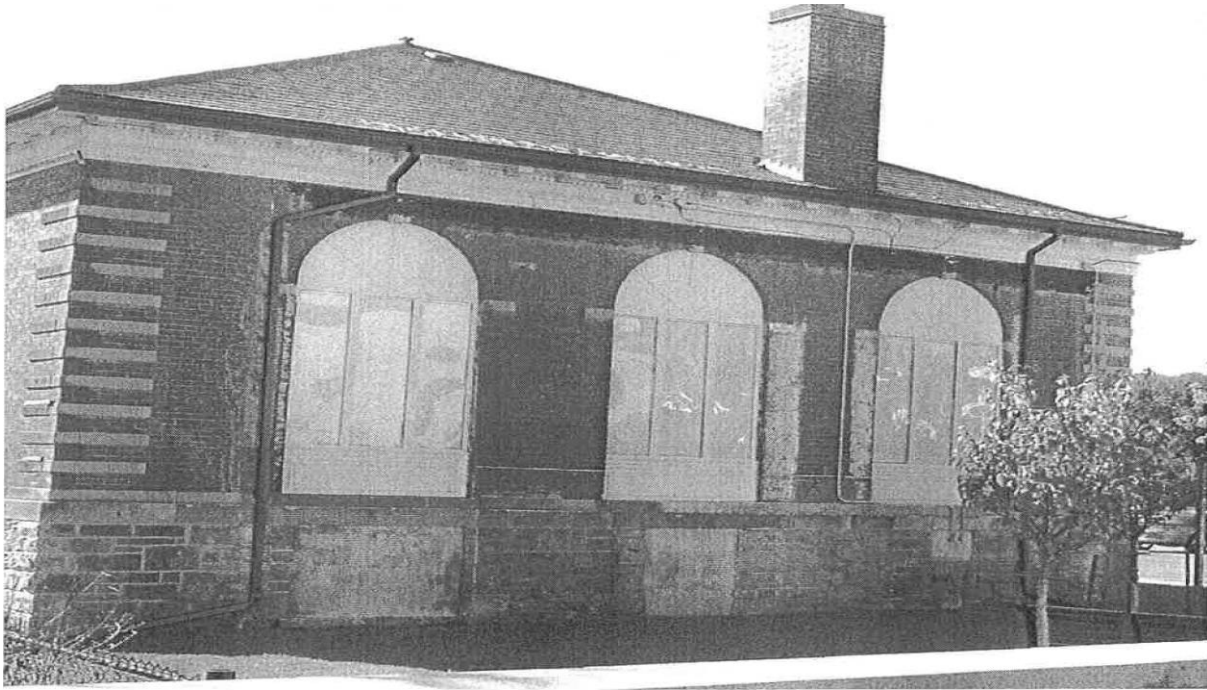


The stone foundation on this side appears to have been covered up at one time with a course material similar to that of the mortar used between the stones. About half has fallen off.



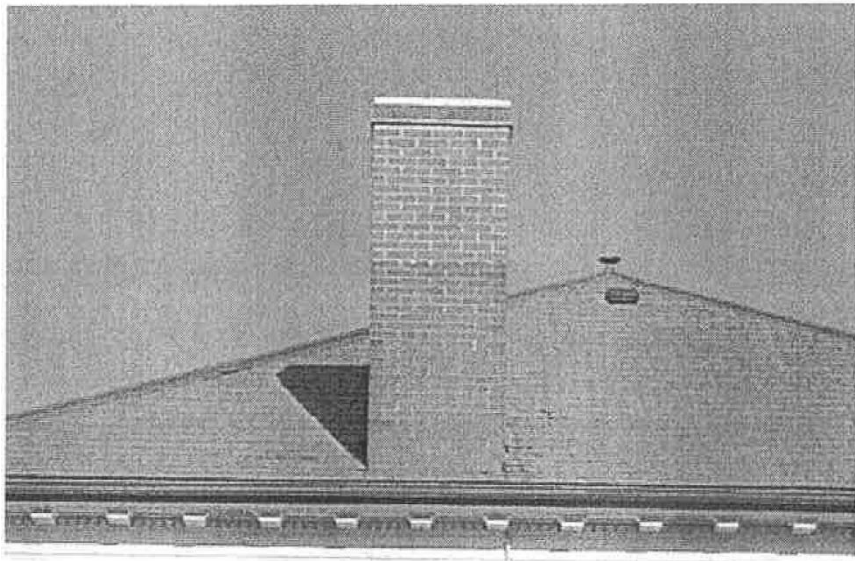
West Side Elevation

The west side of the building is where the addition was attached. Most of the elements have been retained. The original windows have been removed and the basement openings have been filled with masonry walls. Temporary windows occupy the original window openings.



Some evidence of the addition remains on this side including tar residue where the roof of the addition was in contact with the wall; remnants of the concrete floor that bridged the new addition with the Carnegie building; mortar on the brick beside the windows; and saw marks in the stone and brick walls.

Other Details



The top halves of both of the chimneys have been replaced.

Submitted by:

Walter Basic, Planner