

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Indiana Harbor Public Library

other names/site number Grand Boulevard Carnegie Library 089-679-33017

2. Location

street & number 3605 Grand Avenue N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town East Chicago N/A ☐ vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Lake code 089 zip code 46312

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register

- ☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Indiana Harbor Public Library
Name of Property

Lake _____ IN _____
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION:

Library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. AMER.: Bungalow/Craftsma

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

BRICK

walls

BRICK

STONE: Limestone

roof

TERRA COTTA

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE _____

EDUCATION _____

Period of Significance

1913-1955 _____

Significant Dates

1913 _____

1931 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

Robinson, Argyle E. _____

9. Major Bibliographic References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

East Chicago Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6
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4	6	2	6	2	0
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4	6	1	0	5	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

2

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4

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☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher Baas
organization _____ date 03-01-2005
street & number 21116 N. Banbury Rd. telephone 317/ 877-7799
city or town Noblesville state IN zip code 46062

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of East Chicago Houseing Authority and Redevelopment
street & number 4920 Larkspur Ln telephone 219/ 397-9974
city or town East Chicago state IN zip code 46312

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

Indiana Harbor Public Library, Lake County, Indiana

Architectural Description

The Indiana Harbor Public Library is a single-story brick building on a raised, or English, basement. It is constructed in the Arts and Crafts style. The building is comprised of the original 1913 library, and a 1931 addition with three distinct parts: a central reading room, an east reading room the size of the original library, and a library operations addition. The library is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Grand Boulevard and 136th Street. It faces west onto Grand Boulevard, 136th Street is located to the north, an alley runs along the east façade, and an apartment building is located on the south. The surrounding properties are mostly houses and apartment buildings, and a commercial district is located a block to the north. Sidewalks are located along the north and west property lines, and a lawn is located between the walks and the building.

The library and the central and east reading room additions have a clay tile hipped roof with open eaves and exposed rafter tails. The gutters are missing. The operations addition has a flat roof. Skylights illuminate the central reading room and the stairwell in the operations addition.

The library's brick walls are laid in a stretcher bond and have a stone cavetto base. A watertable of vertical bricks laid in a stretcher bond, and bordered on the top and bottom by brick headers, separates the raised basement from the main story. Sections of masonry display a banding detail of a raised course of brick stretchers between two courses of stretcher bond. This detail rusticates the raised basement, alludes to quoins at the building's corners, and gives the entry porch's columns and pilasters mass and texture.

The building has two window sizes. The largest are located throughout most of the main floor, and are wood, three-over-one double-hung with stone sills and no discernable lintel. Smaller, wood, three-light awning, or hopper vent, windows are located throughout the basement and on the library's east and south facades (that face onto neighboring residential buildings).

The main, or west, façade of the original library is symmetrical and has a central entry porch. Large chimneys flank the porch, and large main-floor and basement windows flank the chimneys. The chimneys project through the eaves and have decorative brick details below the overhangs resembling stylized tassels formed by raised brick (See photo #1). The northern most chimney has metal letters spelling "East Chicago Public Library."

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Indiana Harbor Public Library, Lake County, Indiana

The entry porch is comprised of a hipped roof supported by square brick columns and pilasters, a concrete landing, and concrete stairs with brick sidewalls. The roof displays exposed rafters, but is missing its gutters. The columns and pilasters display bands of raised brick, and have stone cavetto bases. The porch landing has a concrete deck, and brick walls that display a continuation of the watertable from the main structure. Its north and south elevations have entry doors into the basement. Decorative metal guardrails connect the columns to the pilasters. Their top and bottom horizontal rails are constructed of a row of small circles, and the central section has vertical rails with square decorative details. The concrete stairs descending from the landing is a replacement. It has severely deteriorated sidewalls that are laid in a stretcher bond and have a stone coping and cavetto base. A simple metal handrail runs down the center of the stairs. The entry door is a modern aluminum replacement, but it still retains its horizontal, wood five-light transom (See photo #2).

The 1913 library's symmetrical north façade has three, large main-floor windows over three basement windows. The south façade is also symmetrical, but has three small main-story windows over three basement windows. The east façade has two small main-story windows over two basement windows on its north end, the 1931 central reading room at its center, and the operations addition on its south end (See photo #3).

The 1931 central reading room's north wall has three main-floor and three basement windows. It shares a south wall with the operations addition. The 1931 east reading room's symmetrical north and south façades have three main-story windows over three basement windows. The east façade fronts the alley, and has eight small main-floor windows over eight basement windows. The basement windows are protected by metal grillwork. Its west façade has two main-story windows over two basement windows on its north end, the 1931 central reading room at its center, and the operations addition on its south end.

The 1931 library operations addition is located in the alcove created by the 1913 library and the central and east reading rooms. It has a flat roof, and its walls are laid in an English bond and topped with a stone coping. A belt course of vertical brick stretchers is located at the height of the primary structure's eave line, and two courses of brick headers simulate the top and bottom of the main structure's watertable. Its west façade has two main-floor and basement windows. The south façade has three main-floor and two basement windows. A towering chimney ascends from the top of the wall and has a corbelled top, battlements, a stone cap, and raised brick details. The east façade has two main-floor windows, a window over a basement door, and a coal door (See photo #4).

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Indiana Harbor Public Library, Lake County, Indiana

The library's interior plan is divided into four distinct spaces: the original 1913 library, and the 1931 central reading room, east reading room, and library operations additions. Each section has both main floor and basement spaces. The library's main level had linoleum floors, and plaster walls and ceilings. The basement has a linoleum floor, plaster walls, and a pressed tin ceiling. The majority of the woodwork was dark stained oak, but the majority of it has been removed.

The original library's main floor is a long, open, rectangular space. An entry vestibule is located in the center of the west wall and is flanked by brick fireplaces. The vestibule's doors are modern replacements below the original five-light transom. The ceiling displays the framework for the box-beams that spanned the space's width. Traces of bookshelves, window casings, baseboards, cornice, and a high chair rail are evident in the plaster and paint. The fireplaces have a surround comprised of brick headers laid in a stack bond and over a base of brick stretchers. The edge bricks, and the bricks around the firebox, are raised. The surround is topped by an arched mantel that has a semicircular shelf supported by a console. The space's east wall has what the 1931 plans called a gallery (a central arched doorway flanked by smaller arched doorways). The arch's supporting column's had decorative wood panels, but they have been removed. A door to the operations addition is located south of the gallery. The original library's basement space is very similar to the main floor. It is a long, open rectangular space with an exterior entry at the center of the west wall that is flanked by brick fireplaces. The fireplaces are identical to the main floor, but do not have mantles. The east wall has openings to the central reading room, the operations addition, and the restrooms (See photos #5-8, 11).

The central reading room has the gallery on its west wall. Decorative plaster details are located over the columns. The north wall has three windows that still retain their surrounds. The east wall has a large doorway to the east reading room. It has a paneled head supported by plaster consoles. The south wall has a door to the operations addition. The ceiling displays plaster beams and has a skylight well that is missing its decorative glass. Its basement contains a workspace and bookshelves (See photo #9).

The east reading room is a large, open rectangular space the size of the original library. The walls have a wide and angled cornice with plaster panels and decorative details. Its basement space was the main stack room, and it is consumed by bookshelves. A small "receiving room" is located in its southwest corner and has access to the book lift in the operations addition (See photo #10).

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Indiana Harbor Public Library, Lake County, Indiana

The operations addition is located in the alcove created by the original library and the central and east reading rooms. It has a stairwell to the basement that was illuminated by a skylight (that has since collapsed). The addition also has a conference room, and a catalogue and file room with a book lift (dumb-waiter) to transport items between floors. Its basement has a workroom, mechanical rooms, and the furnace room.

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Indiana Harbor Public Library, Lake County, Indiana

Statement of Significance

The Indiana Harbor Public Library is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its association with East Chicago's social and educational development, and Criterion C as an excellent example of a Carnegie funded library designed in the Arts and Crafts architectural style. The library maintains a high level of integrity and was rated Notable in the Lake County Interim Report.¹

Twin Cities Early Development

Until entrepreneurs initiated great changes, the area that is now East Chicago was marshlands ignored by early settlers for less labor-intensive lands to the west. Chicago speculators, realizing the opportunities for industrial development of the region, began buying huge sections of land in the 1870's. The initial industrial beginnings came in 1888 when the Graver Tank Works began producing for the petroleum refineries in nearby Whiting, and were followed by the Grasselli Chemical Company, a forerunner of the Dupont Company.

East Chicago became a town in 1889 and a city in 1893. Because of its transportation resources, "where rail and water meet" became the city's slogan. In 1897, Inland Steel negotiated the construction of a mill for land, a canal from Lake Michigan to the Grand Calumet River, access to a railroad, and housing. Construction of the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal began in 1901, and prompted the laying out and development of Indiana Harbor by the Calumet Canal and Improvement Company and the Standard Steel and Iron Company. By 1913 the canal had 1,600 feet of concrete dock and supported a variety of industries including a second mill works, The Mark Manufacturing Company.

The East Chicago Library System and Carnegie Funded Libraries

In 1901, at age 66, steel magnate Andrew Carnegie sold his corporation and retired to a life of distributing his massive wealth. One example of his philanthropy was the \$55 million dollar funding of 2,509 libraries, 1,679 in the United States. He spent \$2.6 million dollars in Indiana. Carnegie believed that libraries "allowed those who were able and willing to educate themselves and be successful, much like himself." Alan McPherson's *Temples of Knowledge* is the definitive publication on Indiana's 164 Carnegie libraries. He theorized that Indiana has more Carnegie libraries than any other state because Indiana's "library fervor," between 1900 and 1929, coincided with the "heyday" of the Carnegie Era.

¹ Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Lake County Interim Report: Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory (Indianapolis, 1996), 215.

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Indiana Harbor Public Library, Lake County, Indiana

Indiana was "culturally and geographically positioned for more libraries" than the east, which already had library systems in place, and the west, which was still establishing cultural and educational institutions. Additionally, the era coincided with the accomplishments of Tarkington, Ade, Dreiser, Porter, Riley and many other Hoosier authors that further bolstered public interest in reading. Locally, libraries were an expression of progress and community pride. All together, Carnegie funded libraries were constructed between 1901 to 1922 in 155 communities. Local library boards were responsible for securing land and confirming that adequate tax funds were available to operate the facility. Designs were then submitted to Carnegie for approval.

Lake County had nine Carnegie libraries, the most of any Indiana county. Hammond, Whiting, and Crown Point were early grant recipients, constructing their libraries between 1904 and 1908. Gary constructed a main library in 1910, the Hobart Branch in 1915, and the Bailey Branch in 1918. Lowell was the last recipient, constructing a library in 1920. Hammond and Gary Main were monumental structures that represented the size and demand of their growing cities, while the remaining libraries were a size representative of a typical, small town Carnegie. The Harbor, East Chicago, and Lowell libraries were designed in what McPherson called the Prairie-Craftsman tradition of which fifty of the state's Carnegie's were designed (second only to the Neo-Classical style). Crown Point, Gary Main, and Hammond were designed in classically based styles, and Whiting, Hobart and the Gary Bailey Branch were designed in revival styles. Crown Point, East Chicago and Whiting still operate as libraries, Hobart Branch is a museum, Lowell is a business, and Gary Bailey Branch is vacant. Hammond and Gary Main have been demolished.²

Library activities at turn-of-the-century East Chicago started with the Tuesday Reading Club that met in City Hall, and held fundraisers for the purchase of books.³ Although the initial desire for a Carnegie Library began in 1908, it was dismissed by the city council as "charity unfitting the dignity of the city." The council felt the city should build its own library, but stalled because the additional tax "would meet the sincere disapproval of the citizens." The push, however, returned in 1909 in spite of the council, with *The Times* reporting that "should the effort... prove fruitful it will be the best forward movement made in the city during the decade." The newspaper presented it as a moral issue, that "young people" had nowhere to go except the "streets or in the pool rooms and saloons." The only available

² Alan McPherson, *Temples of Knowledge: Andrew Carnegie's Gift to Indiana* (Kewanna, Indiana: Hoosier's Nest Press, 2003), 16-20. California was second with 142 libraries and Illinois third with 106.

³ Richard Smyers, 'The East Chicago Public Library,' (Unpublished manuscript by East Chicago Public Library Senior Reference Librarian, 2005), 1.

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Indiana Harbor Public Library, Lake County, Indiana

reading was an occasional dime novel, but "no studies of a serious nature or masterpieces of literature."⁴

News of the possibility of a Carnegie became a "wedge" between the twin cities, each wanting the structure placed in their section of the municipality. One solution presented by an alderman located the library in East Chicago, and a reading room above the police station for the "Harborites". While plans for the reading room advanced as far as drawings, it became a moot point with the announcement that Carnegie had provided a \$40,000 grant for a single library, or what ultimately took place, \$20,000 for libraries in both sections of the city. Carnegie's offer was on the condition that the city could acquire lands and maintain the buildings. The East Chicago library was located on what was known as "The Circle," a roundabout located at the Baring and Chicago Avenue intersection. The Harbor library was located on the southeast corner of 136th and Grapevine Streets (Grapevine was later renamed Grand Boulevard).⁵

Chicago architect Argyle E. Robinson designed the libraries. Robinson was born in 1872 in Bloomington, Illinois and received his architectural training at Armour Institute of Technology (now Illinois Institute of Technology) from 1894-1895, and M.I.T. from 1896 to 1897. He began his Chicago practice in 1900, and was the Chicago representative for New York architectural firm Mann, MacNeille, and Lindeberg. In addition to several Hyde Park residences Robinson designed apartment buildings, warehouses, and industrial buildings. He designed the Chicago Landmark Underwriter's Laboratories Building in 1905. He was appointed City Architect in 1926 and served until 1929. In this position he designed four firehouses, all now Chicago Landmarks.⁶

Robinson's designs for both Indiana Harbor and East Chicago were in the Arts and Crafts Style, an artistic and social movement that began in Nineteenth Century England as a response to the Industrial Revolution which was threatening time-honored manual crafts with extinction. It was championed by art critic John Ruskin who espoused that the beauty of architecture was the workman's pleasure in producing it. This idea was further promoted by William Morris, an English poet, artist, and socialist reformer who rejected Victorian

⁴ The Lake County Times, 'Wanted A Carnegie Library,' January 13, 1909.

⁵ The Lake County Times, 'Now Comes Carnegie Library as a Wedge,' January 19, 1909; The Lake County Times, 'Carnegie Gives Forty Thousand,' February 9, 1911; and The Lake County Times, 'Company Gives a Site For Library,' April 5, 1911.

⁶ Commission on Chicago Landmarks, *Historic Chicago Firehouses* (Chicago, 2003), 24.

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Indiana Harbor Public Library, Lake County, Indiana

opulence and urged a return to medieval traditions of design, craftsmanship, and community. He established a firm in 1861 to manufacture wallpaper, stained glass, and woven materials. Morris & Company began to sell their wallpapers in Boston in 1873, and by the mid 1870s had representatives for their growing line of wallpaper, fabric and carpet in many major American cities.

In America, the Arts and Crafts movement, often referred to as the Craftsman style, expressed dissatisfaction with industrialization and encouraged simple honest design with a regard for the integrity of the material employed. The movement took hold with the Greene Brothers on the West Coast, Gustav Stickley in the Northeast, and Frank Lloyd Wright in the Midwest.

Arts and Crafts buildings typically have roofs with wide, open eaves and exposed rafters. Walls are constructed of wood, brick, or stucco and showcase details of natural materials like stone or tile. Windows were three-over-one, double-hung. Interiors displayed warm and homey plans with wood details like decorative beams, cornices, window and door surrounds, and built-in cabinetry stained dark to contrast with lighter plaster or wallpapered walls.

The style in East Chicago was typically exhibited in residential structures. Houses, especially Craftsman bungalows, were more often asymmetrical compositions with distinctive front porches. Since most of the city's public structures constructed at this time display the Neo-classical or Colonial Revival styles, there are only a handful of surviving non-residential examples: the sister Baring Street Carnegie Library, the Washington Park Administration Building, and the Dumidry School. Non-residential structures were typically much larger and taller buildings with hipped instead of gable roofs, but still with the wide eaves and exposed rafters.

The Harbor library displays a clay tile roof and brick walls, both "honest" and handcrafted materials. The roof has wide eaves with exposed rafters. Raised brick, instead of dressed stone, provides detail and texture. The interior displays typical Arts and Crafts plaster walls and ceilings, with dark stained wood details.

In 1913 the two libraries were dedicated on subsequent days, East Chicago on Friday, May 16 and Indiana Harbor on Saturday, May 17. Both ceremonies were evening events marked by music, and speeches. The Hammond Times reported that the ceremonies "passed off smoothly and satisfactorily," but were "not so well attended realizing the importance of the speakers" that included Mary Eileen Ahern, Editor of *Public Libraries*

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Indiana Harbor Public Library, Lake County, Indiana

Journal and national proponent of the public library movement, and Carl Hastings Milam of the American Library Association.⁷

East Chicago's population was about 20,000 when the libraries were constructed, and steadily increased to 35,000 in 1920 and 54,000 by 1930. To resolve overcrowding, additions were constructed. The East Chicago library was enlarged in 1925 and the Harbor library in 1931. East Chicago architect Karl D. Norris designed the Harbor addition that extended the structure to the alley east of, or behind, the building. The changes included new spaces for reading rooms, book storage, and library operations at a cost of \$47,000.

Norris (1886-1943) was born in LaGrange, Indiana and "became an architect by studying in his spare time in the evenings." Over his thirty-year career he designed such structures as the Roosevelt High School Auditorium, the Parramore Hospital in Crown Point, and Hammond's Minas Department Store. His addition more than doubled the library's size, and mimicked Robinson's exterior details to the point that it is difficult to distinguish between the two. Oddly, the operations addition displays details derived from the original structure, but it has a flat roof and the brick is a different quality and laid in a different course. Aside from paneling the gallery columns, the interior spaces lack the woodwork details of the original's Arts and Crafts style that would have been considered passe in 1931. He instead employed plaster details more reminiscent of the Colonial Revival style.⁸

The Depression hurt the community as well as the library system when \$3,000 in funds were lost when the East Chicago State Bank failed in 1932. However, New Deal programs provided brief employment at projects benefiting library operations. Six persons were hired with Civil Works Administration funds to paint parts of the library, and catalogue and file the collection. In 1937 the Works Progress Administration funded cleaning the walls and dusting each book in the collection.⁹

⁷ The Times (of Hammond), 'Library Invitations Issued,' May 15, 1913; and 'Library Dedication Concluded,' May 19, 1913.

⁸ East Chicago Historical Society, *Diamond Jubilee Historical Record*, 1968; Richard Smyers, 'The East Chicago Public Library,' (Unpublished manuscript by East Chicago Public Library Senior Reference Librarian, 2005), 6; The Hammond Times, 'Karl D. Norris, Calumet Region Architect, Dies,' January 5, 1943.

⁹ Richard Smyers, 'The East Chicago Public Library,' (Unpublished manuscript by East Chicago Public Library Senior Reference Librarian, 2005), 6.

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The library's Children's Room was closed in 1935 due to a scarlet fever epidemic, and a coal strike closed the building for 23 days in 1950. The furnace was converted from coal to oil in 1955, and an arsonist's fire closed the adult section for six months in 1978. The library officially closed in 1983 "because the physical structure require[d] too much repair and renovation."¹⁰

It passed into private ownership for a short time, which was when its woodwork was removed. It has been vacant for more than twenty years and is presently owned by the East Chicago Housing Authority who plans, with the help of a local not-for-profit, to rehabilitate the library as a performing arts center. While the library's integrity has been compromised from a lack of maintenance and the harvest of its interior woodwork, its remaining historical fabric, along with its historical significance, makes it eligible for the National Register.

¹⁰ Richard Smyers, 'The East Chicago Public Library,' (Unpublished manuscript by East Chicago Public Library Senior Reference Librarian, 2005) 7,11,16.

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National Park Service**

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United States Department of the Interior
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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is a line beginning at the curb on the southeast corner of Grand Boulevard and 136th Street. It heads east along the 136th Street curb to the centerline of the alley behind the building, then south to the library's south property line (which is inches south of the south wall of the library operations room), then west until it intersects with the east curb on Grand Boulevard, then north to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the library property, and the sidewalks and tree lawns essential to maintaining the building's urban context. Since the building's rear wall goes to the east property line, half the alleyway was included as a buffer. The City of East Chicago owns everything within the boundary.

Photographs

Photos by Christopher Baas
January 1, 2005
Negatives located at SHPO.

1. West façade looking east.
2. Entry porch looking southeast.
3. North and east facades looking southwest.
4. Library operations addition looking northwest.
5. 1913 library main floor looking north.
6. 1913 library main floor looking south.
7. Southernmost fireplace in 1913 library main floor looking west.
8. 1931 gallery looking west.
9. 1931 central reading room and gallery looking northwest.
10. 1931 east reading room looking north.
11. Southernmost fireplace in 1913 library basement looking west.

This is a detailed black and white map of the Hammond, Indiana area, showing industrial sites, railroads, and infrastructure. The map includes labels for 'Slag Dump', 'Hammond', 'George L.', 'Whiting', 'Cleveland', 'La Porte', 'St. Anthony', 'St. Mary', 'St. John', 'St. James', 'St. Joseph', 'St. Michael', 'St. Raphael', 'St. Vincent', 'St. Elizabeth', 'St. Ann', 'St. Clare', 'St. Francis', 'St. Margaret', 'St. Catherine', 'St. Agnes', 'St. Rose', 'St. Thérèse', 'St. Gertrude'. It also shows 'Aqueducts', 'Oil Reservoir', 'Substa', 'Lighthouse', and 'Harbor'. The map is overlaid with a grid of latitude and longitude coordinates.