
City to rename old library for steel magnate Mr Andrew Carnegie

Friday, 05 Jun, 2009

The city approved a motion to rename the old library building on East Second Avenue the Carnegie Building, in honor of the building's benefactor, Mr Andrew Carnegie. The building, completed in 1906, was called the "Old Library Building" in city documentation since the library moved to its new location in the 1900 block of East Third Avenue.

The Carnegie Building sits on five city lots. Three of those were originally given to the city for use as a library by Mr William Jackson Palmer, an affluent Pennsylvania Civil War general who was influential in the founding of many Colorado towns, including Durango, Colorado Springs and Alamosa, that sat near the path of his Denver and Rio Grande Railroad.

Mr Palmer gave the city the library property near the turn of the 20th century with the provision that if the land was ever used by the city for purposes other than to house a library it would revert back to him or his heirs.

After four years of information gathering and library planning, Mr Smith sent new letters to all five heirs, who he said were a bit surprised at the news that they still held land in America but had wanted to know the project's specifics before approving the transfer. After seeing the final plans, each heir approved the transfer.

He also believed strongly in language-based community education and funded the first of nearly 2,500 Carnegie libraries in 1883 in Scotland.

The walls of Durango's original Carnegie library have been largely covered up with remodels, but the Silverton City Library, another Carnegie library, stills looks the way it did when the industrialist funded its construction.

(Sourced from www.durangoherald.com)

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