

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Elkhart County Court House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Court House Square ___ not for publication

city, town Goshen ___ vicinity of congressional district Indiana 3rd

state Indiana code 018 county Elkhart code 039

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Elkhart County, Indiana

street & number County Court House

city, town Goshen ___ vicinity of state Indiana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office

street & number County Court House

city, town Goshen ___ vicinity of state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Indiana Historic Sites & Structures
title Inventory (Survey #453)

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Indiana Department of Natural Resources

city, town Indianapolis ___ vicinity of state Indiana

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The present building is located in "Court House Square," the site of Elkhart County's first Court House which, "after 35 years of honest wear," was razed in 1868. Positioned in the center of the square, the present structure, surrounded by mature and beautiful maple and elm trees, is the focal point of downtown Goshen, as well as Elkhart County. Also included within the Court House Square block are various "memorabilia," including a fountain depicting a statue of Neptune, donated in 1912; "Old Bullion," an iron cannon donated by the local VFW and fired during the political rallies held on the lawn at the turn of the century; and a monument commemorating those in Elkhart County who died during World War II.

The Court House as originally constructed in 1868-1870 was a three story (2½ story above grade) Italianate style brick and stone building, asymmetrical in plan, with its lower level partially recessed into the ground and measuring 82' x 72'. (See photo #1).

The entire structure was dominated by a lookout/clock tower located at the south end of the building, which also served as the entrance to the lower level. The main entrances to the building were constructed on an E/W axis and were emphasized by exterior "monumental type" stairs and a slightly projecting "classic portico." The portico consisted of four freestanding Corinthian columns set on a rusticated podium, supporting a "well proportioned" entablature and measuring 52' from base to cornice. A continuous band of stone rustication surrounded the building from grade to the main entrance level. The exterior corners of the building were emphasized by stone quoins at the main level and stone pilasters at the upper level. The entire structure was crowned by a bracketed cornice and, excepting the clock tower and portico, a shallow hipped roof hidden by balusters.

In 1905, as a result of increased space needs, an extensive building program was initiated to renovate and expand the existing facilities. The clock tower, a Goshen landmark for more than a generation, became so "oppressively imposing" that this obtrusive feature was eliminated and a new clay tile dome tower, more moderate in proportion, was added. The new tower, with a clock in each of the four faces, is positioned over the central portion of the building located at the intersection of the N/S and E/W axes. The building has been expanded at both ends along the N/S axis symmetrical in plan, with a total increase in ground space of 87' x 70', or approximately 20,000 square feet. A pipe tunnel, originating at the existing jail (located to the west of the square) and extending to the west end of the building beneath the entrance stairs, was constructed to provide heat for the building.

Additions and alterations over the years include:

- .. Revised heating system - 1914
- .. Addition of an elevator - 1960
- .. Addition of A/C system - 1973
- .. Small exterior masonry storage addition - ?
located north of west entrance stairs

The Court House as it exists today is in excellent repair and the interior finishes (marble wainscot, the painted plaster, wood trim, etc.) appear to be as was originally constructed in 1906.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
1868-1870; 1905-1908	Barrows & Garnsey Architects; Patton & Miller Architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Elkhart County Court House is significant for its interesting combination of two styles of architecture and for its visual dominance of downtown Goshen.

The Elkhart County Commissioners, Jacob Bechtel, J. E. Thompson and Nathaniel Thompson, were gifted with the wisdom to recognize the necessity for a new court house to reflect the extraordinary progress made by the people of Elkhart County, and the perseverance to overcome the opposition of the taxpayers. Consequently, in 1868, the Commissioners retained the Chicago architectural firm of Barrows & Garnsey and on June 11 adopted their design. Completed in 1870, at a cost of \$125,000, the Elkhart County Court House is a superb example of a successful transition from "past to present" in terms of the architectural styles of the period.

The original building, as constructed in 1868, was Italianate style in character and demonstrated a fusion of the Italian Ville style and the Renaissance revival. It was described as "imposing in appearance, chaste in design, massive and of great strength and delicacy of finish..with the clock tower adding greatly to the appearance of the building."

However, as the Georgian revival, with its pleasing symmetrical facades, gained momentum, the asymmetrical location of the "elegantly proportioned clock tower" became increasingly obtrusive and grew in disfavor with the public. Thus, in 1905, when the Chicago architectural firm of Patton & Miller was retained for the renovation and expansion of the existing building, the clock tower was removed from the south facade and a new tower positioned on the central axes of the building. Wings, symmetrical in plan, were added to the north and south facades. The renovated building assumed the character of a Georgian Revival style co-eval with Second Renaissance style. The fact that these two styles reached their zenith between 1890-1915 (concurrent with the court house renovation) played a major role in effecting a satisfactory solution to the problem of combining two dissimilar styles. The Second Renaissance style gave continuity from original to new design and the Neo-Colonial style, with its symmetry, domed tower, etc., provided a structure with a more aesthetically pleasing architectural massing of elements. The present building is considered to be one of the most attractive county buildings in the State of Indiana.

The County Commissioners also possessed the foresight to recognize the need for preserving a "Green Acre" in the midst of present and future urban monotony and Court House Square serves as an excellent example of sensible urban planning. During the summer the maple and elm trees surrounding the Court House provide much needed shade and also veil the structure while still permitting its prominent tower to serve as a reference point in Elkhart County--it can be seen for miles.

As the seat of Elkhart County Government, the Court House (located approximately central to the county) has been the site of numerous and sundry political rallies held on the Court House lawn and has hosted such political luminaries as Ezra Taft Benson, former Secretary of Agriculture (1960); former Senator William Jenner, and the great orator, William Jennings Bryan (1904).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bartholomew, H.S.K.: Pioneer History of Elkhart County, Indiana (Goshen, Indiana: The Goshen Printing, 1930) PP 21-23
 Bartholomew, H.S.K.: Sketches and Stories of Elkhart County, Indiana (Nappanee, Indiana, E. V. Publishing House, 1936) PP 186-188

(See continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data **UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreeage of nominated property 3.28 **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**
 Quadrangle name Goshen, Indiana Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	1 6	5 9 7 0 7 0	4 6 0 4 3 8 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification The Elkhart County Court House Square is located in the central commercial business district of Goshen, Indiana, and is bounded by the curb lines of: Clinton Street on the north; Lincoln Avenue on the south; Main Street on the east; and 3rd Street on the west.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Robert Plennert, Registered Architect
 organization R. M. McInturf, Structural Engineer date June 18, 1979
 street & number 810 Christian Avenue telephone 219/293-1919
 city or town Elkhart state Indiana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is: OKA 9-23
 national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Joseph A. [Signature]
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date 1-4-80

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 for Sally G. Oldham date 4/10/80
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: W. Ray Luce date 4/3/80
 Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **JAN 29 1980**

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 4

Deahl, Anthony; A Twentieth Century History and Biographical Record of Elkhart County, Indiana (Chicago, The Lewis Publishing Company, 1905) PP 49-58

Weaver, Abraham E.; A Standard History of Elkhart County, Indiana (Chicago, The American Historical Society, 1916) PP 67-81

Whiffen, Marcus; American Architecture Since 1780 A Guide to the Styles (Cambridge, Massachusetts, The Mit Press, 1969)

History of Elkhart County, Indiana (Chicago, Charles C. Chapman & Co. 1881) PP 506-511

Historical Atlas of Elkhart County, Indiana (Higgins, Belden & Co., 1874) Page 9