

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED APR 27 1976  
DATE ENTERED OCT 21 1976

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  
 AND/OR COMMON  
Iowa State Capitol Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
Grand Ave. and E. 12th Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Des Moines  
STATE  
Iowa  
VICINITY OF  
CODE  
COUNTY  
Polk  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
4  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
State of Iowa  
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
VICINITY OF  
STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Secretary of State, State Land Office  
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
Iowa Statehouse  
STATE  
Des Moines  
Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
DATE  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN  
STATE  
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The cornerstone of the Iowa State Capitol, more commonly called the Statehouse, was laid on November 23, 1871. It was dedicated on January 17, 1884, and completed around 1886.

The Statehouse in form and plan is a classic state capitol design of symmetrical wings dominated by a central dome. The structure measures 364 feet north to south, by 247 feet east to west, with the dome rising to a height of 275 feet above the ground floor. The Statehouse, although generally similar to numerous other statehouses dating from the second half of the nineteenth century, is distinct from the others by the extreme plasticity of its compositional units and the robust articulation of the classical details. This is in the manner of the French Baroque as popularized by the Ecole des Beaux Artes and particularly in the tradition of Hardouin-Mansart and Le Vau.

It is basically of three story construction. The ground floor houses a cafeteria and various offices and utility rooms. The Supreme Court, Governor's suite of offices, and other elected state officials are located on the first floor. The House and Senate chambers, the law library, and numerous committee rooms and legislative offices occupy the second floor.

A central rotunda extending above the first floor of the building to the dome dominates the interior. Some time early in the century a hold was cut into the first floor extending the rotunda into the basement, but there are plans to close this and restore it to its original design.

Other notable features include the grand staircase and the multileveled and balconied law library of Piranesian spacial complexity. Throughout the interior the Statehouse is decorated with a richness that is exceptional even considering its Mid-Victorian origins. In addition to a sumptuous collection of colored marbles and assorted hardwoods, the interior displays fine ornamental ironwork; elaborate encaustic tile floors; allegorical statuary; murals by Kenyon Cox, Edwin Howland Blashfield, and mosaics by Frederick Dielman.

The foundation of the building is made from glacial stone from Blackhawk and Buchanan counties (Iowa). The superstructure is constructed of granite, limestone, and sandstone from Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota, Ohio and Illinois. Twenty-nine kinds of marbles were used in finishing the building, twenty-two of which were imported from Mexico and Europe. Domestic marbles were from Iowa, Tennessee, and Vermont.

Woods used in carvings and trim include ash, red oak, white oak, chestnut, black walnut, white walnut (butternut), cherry mahogany, poplar, catalpa, white pine, and yellow pine.

The ceilings of the House chamber were damaged by fire in 1904 and had to be replaced. The original gas lights have been replaced by electric lights and air conditioning has been installed. Some of the rooms in back of the legislative chambers have been double-decked in order to provide more space. The basement, originally a stable, has been converted to a cafeteria and offices. Generally, however, the architecture, the decor and the beauty are as they were. The building is located on 165 acres of state land.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1871

BUILDER/ARCHITECT J. Cochrane, A. Piquenard

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The present Iowa State Capitol or Statehouse is the fifth building to house the state government. The almost palatial decoration, inside and out, contrasts sharply with its function as the seat of a rural, republican government. However, such a structure was in keeping not only with contemporary architectural enthusiasms but with people's pride in their system of government and a belief that its workings should be respectfully housed.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Briggs, John E., "The Removal of the State Capital from Iowa City to Des Moines," The Iowa Journal of History and Politics, 14.
- Dey, Peter A., "Recollections of the Old Capital and the New," Annals of Iowa, 3rd Series, July 1905.
- Kasson, John A., "The Fight for the New Capital," Annals of Iowa, third series, Jly, 1900
- Swisher, Jacob, "The Capitals at Des Moines," The Iowa Journal of History and Politics, Vol. 39.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 17

UTM REFERENCES

A	15	449720	4604470	B	15	449510	4604410
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	15	4495180	4604180	D	15	449800	4604240
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Glenn E. Brockett, Chairman

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Iowa State Capital Planning Commission

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Statehouse

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Des Moines

Iowa

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Adrian D. Funderburk*

TITLE

Director, Div. of Historic Preservation

DATE

4-22-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*John R. ...*

DATE

10/21/76

Acting

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*W. ...*

DATE

10-18-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Iowa State Capitol Building, Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa

1. According to our office architectural historian, the design of the Capitol was executed basically according to plan. However, the architect who replaced Piquenard, Bell, had the dome redesigned in better proportion to the building than that of the original plan.
2. Restoration of the Capitol has been unsystematic. No master plan was or has been adopted for such work. It has been and is a piecemeal operation, with restoration work occurring as the opportunity arises.
3. Acreage is 17. 165 acres comprised the original Capitol grounds. Since then, other state buildings of varying style and quality have occupied most of this space. The verbal description of these 17 acres is:

Bounded by Grand Avenue on the north, Walnut Street on the south,  
9th Street East on the west, and 12th Street East on the east.

The present Capitol grounds are landscaped, with trees and semi-formal gardens.