

INTENSIVE SURVEY FORM Historic Preservation Division State Historical Society of Wisconsin

1 City, Village or Town: Durand		County: Pepin	Surveyor: D. Filipowicz J. R. Bresina L. Garfield	Date: 8/81 5/81	Street Number
Street Address: 307 W. Madison		Legal Description: Block 3, Washington Sq. Range 3 West of Base line, City of Durand		Acreage: approx. 1.3	
Current Name & Use: Pepin County Courthouse & Jail		Current Owner: County of Pepin; Attn: James R. Bresina, County Clerk			
Film Roll No.	Affix Contact Prints		Current Owner's Address: 307 W. Madison, Durand, WI 54736		
Negative No.			Special Features Not Visible In Photographs: see interior Description of jail, Item 3		
Facade Orient.			Interior visited? <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No		

2 Original Name & Use: Pepin County Courthouse & Jail	Source	Previous Owners	Dates	Uses	Source	Town Range Section
Dates of Construction: 1873-74/1978 (jail 1895 - datestone)	Source A					
Architect and/or Builder: unknown	Source					

3 Architectural Significance <input type="radio"/> Represents work of a master <input type="radio"/> Possesses high artistic values <input type="radio"/> Represents a type, period, or method of construction <input checked="" type="radio"/> Is a visual landmark in the area <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ <input type="radio"/> None.	4 Historical Significance <input type="radio"/> Assoc. with lives of significant persons <input type="radio"/> Assoc. with significant historical events <input checked="" type="radio"/> Assoc. with development of a locality <input checked="" type="radio"/> Other: <u>politics & government in Pepin Co</u>	Section Map Name
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Statement of Architectural Significance:
Description: Dominating the open square one block south of Durand's main business corridor, the Pepin County Courthouse is a two-story rectangular Greek Revival frame (now covered with aluminum siding) building with giant order open portico. Decoration is limited to a louvred square belfrey centered over a blind lunette in the pediment and the four wood Ionic columns. Early photographs of the building show the full-height columns on the portico spanned by a wood balustrade, since replaced by pipe railings and pedestals. The original segmental-arched (over)

Statement of Historical Significance:
 Built in the winter of 1873-74,^B the Pepin County Courthouse is historically significant as the long time center of Pepin County government, as the focal point in the development of Durand, and as a pivotal element in the turbulent controversy surrounding the selection of a county seat. Its long tenure, however, has been characterized by a sometimes rocky history, including a brief period (1881-1886) when it did not serve as a courthouse at all.

Although other counties experienced fights over the location of a seat, the battle in Pepin County was notable for its duration, a thirty year period during which three villages variously served as the county seat. Created in 1858, the county's first seat was located at Pepin, in the southern (over)

5 Sources of Information (Reference to Above)	6 District Classification District Name: _____ <input type="radio"/> Pivotal <input type="radio"/> Contributing <input type="radio"/> Non-Contributing Initials: _____ Date: _____	Map Code
A Atlas of Pepin County, 1967.		
B see over		
C see over		
D Pepin County Press, Vol. I, No. 46, April 27, 1861, p. 2.		
E Pepin County Press, Vol. II, No. 23, November 16, 1861, p. 2. (con't.)	7 Representation in Previous Surveys: <input type="radio"/> NRHP <input type="radio"/> WRL <input type="radio"/> Local Landmark <input checked="" type="radio"/> Other: WIHP	8 Eligibility for the National Register <input checked="" type="radio"/> Eligible <input type="radio"/> Not Eligible <input type="radio"/> Unknown local Initials: DHF Date: 10/81

Architectural Statement (cont.):

wood window frames with their projecting moldings have been replaced by simple rectangular wood frames. A simple semi-circular fanlight covers the glazed double front doors, centered in the three-unit front (north) facade. Windows are regularly-arranged on the east and west side walls. A low, coursed rock-faced cut stone foundation supports the building. Composition shingles cover the gable roof. Inside, the plan is regular; a center hall connects offices on the first floor, and the remodelled courtroom fills the second. Interior construction is undistinguished: painted plaster and (modern) panelled walls, hardwood and linoleum floors, accoustical tile ceilings, and modern fixtures are consistent throughout. The cost of construction was conflictingly recorded as \$7,000 (History of the Chippewa Valley, 1891) and \$12,000 (History of Buffalo & Pepin Counties, 1919). The one-story blond brick courthouse annex, connected to the southeast corner of the building, is not considered significant to the nomination.

Constructed of red brick and recently sided with aluminum, the sheriff's residence and jail retains its nineteenth century vernacular domestic-type form resulting from the intersection of a projecting gabled pavilion with the simple rectangular mass of the building. Applied timber framing in the ends of the steep gables on the front (north) and ends of the roof relate the building to the late Gothic Revival tradition. Windows, simple rectangular double-hung sash, are symmetrically spaced to each side of the front center pavilion and on the side walls. An inscription stone marked "Pepin County 1895" decorates the attic level of the front pavilion. The interior is significant for the retention of the original iron lattice cells to the rear (south) of the first story, and as the historic and current residence of the county sheriff (although the quarters have been modernized) in the second story and front of the first. Sheriff's offices and police headquarters are located in the one-story contemporary addition to the rear. The limestone foundation is still visible in the basement.

With hallmark full-size portico and center belfrey, the Pepin County Courthouse is one of only two extant Greek Revival courthouses representing that era of construction in Wisconsin. (The other, the Iowa County Courthouse in Lancaster, was listed in the National Register in 1971.) The courthouse square site includes a recent one-story annex attached to the southeast corner of the courthouse (not significant to the nomination) and the two-story cross-gable vernacular jail to the west. With its late Gothic Revival references, the jail is complementary in style and compatible in scale to the courthouse; its principle architectural interest is derived from its exterior domestic aspect and the interior retention of iron lattice cells, which jointly represent a type of construction -- the combination sheriff's residence and jail -- which is increasingly rare in the state and rarer still in current use.

Because of the exceptional nature of both the courthouse and jail, the two might have been nominated for architectural significance; compromises in integrity due to comprehensive interior remodeling of the courthouse, and minor exterior alterations as well as the installation of aluminum siding on both the courthouse and jail, severely diminish their character as representatives of periods of construction.

History Statement (cont.):

tier of the county.^C But the county's S-shaped configuration nearly insured that other villages would compete for the honor (and convenience) of the courthouse. As early as 1859, the county seat issue was brought to a vote, but Pepin was able to retain its status. Nevertheless, when the state legislature approved yet another election in 1861, Durand, amidst charges of fraudulent voting and mutilated ballots, won the honor.^{D,E}

(continued)

PEPIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Intensive Survey Form - Continuation Sheet

History Statement (cont.):

The reaction elsewhere in the county was less than enthusiastic: the Durand "clique," with its "proclivity to manufacture votes" had committed a "bold and lawless piece of villiány," reported a Pepin newspaper.^E But for the small village of Durand, the election results meant a boom. Initially, county business was conducted in Topping's Hall in the business district. But to solidify its hold on the slippery title, the city built a courthouse in 1873-74 and deeded it to the county. Reported to have cost between \$7,000 and \$12,000, the courthouse was the "most conspicuous public building in the city," located in an area known as Washington Square.^B During its first season, the courthouse was packed to "utmost capacity," and the building also served as a community center, with social and political events held inside.^F The most notorious event associated with the courthouse in its early years was the hanging of Ed Maxwell from a tree on the courthouse lawn. The notorious outlaw was awaiting trial at the courthouse for the murder of two Pepin County men when the crowd of 500 preempted the judicial process.^G

Meanwhile, the county seat controversy continued to fester. In November 1881, a new election summarily removed the county offices to Arkansaw and the courthouse building reverted to the city for use as a center for a variety of civic functions, including political rallies.^H Eventually, however, the courthouse building itself proved instrumental in removing the seat permanently to Durand. By 1886, it became apparent that a new courthouse and jail would have to be built in Arkansaw to replace the temporary "barracks" used there which were inadequate for county business and unsafe for county records. The cost of those facilities would mean the imposition of a tax to raise a building fund. Thus the question came to the ballot again, with Durand boasting that the county could have the old courthouse back for \$1 if the seat were returned to the village. "This, in brief, is the situation," reported a Durand newspaper. "Let the county seat remain at Arkansaw and a heavy tax is necessary to erect new buildings. Move it to Durand, and no expenses will be incurred." Economy won out and the seat was moved permanently to Durand.^I

The next year, Durand was incorporated as a city and local leaders boasted that the courthouse was good enough "for another twenty years."^I That assessment proved too modest. The courthouse continues in use as the seat of Pepin County to this day.

Sources of Information (cont.):

- B George Forrester, ed., Historical and Biographical Album of Chippewa Valley, WI, Chicago, A. Warner Co., 1891-92, p. 291.
- C Frankin Curtiss-Wedge, ed., History of Buffalo and Pepin County, Wis., part II Minona, Minnesota, H.C. Cooper & Co., 1919, p. 45.
- F Durand Weekly Times, Feb. 20, 1874, p. 5; Feb. 27, 1874, p. 5; March 6, 1874, p. 5.
- G Eau Claire Free Press, Vol. 24, No. 8, Nov. 24, 1881, p. 1.
- H Pepin County Courier, Vol. 9, No. 31, July 23, 1886, p. 5.
- I Pepin County Courier, Vol. 9, No. 45, Oct. 29, 1886, p. 5.