

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

JUL 03 1989

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Highlands County Courthouse
other names/site number 8HG 83

2. Location

street & number 430 South Commerce Avenue N/A not for publication
city, town Sebring N/A vicinity
state Florida code FL county Highlands code FL 055 zip code 33870

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Multiple Resources of Sebring, FL

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

George W. King 6/21/89
Signature of certifying official State Historic Preservation Officer Date
FL Dept. of State - Bureau of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:)

Shelva Byers 8/14/89
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stonewalls concretegraniteroof composition, rolledother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Politics/government
Architecture

Period of Significance

1926-1939

Significant Dates

1926

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bishop, Fred

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please See Multiple Resources of Sebring, Florida Cover Nomination

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Bureau of Historic Preservation

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 3 acres

UTM References

A

1	7
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4	5	6	8	4	0
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3	0	4	0	8	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Town of Sebring, 8th Addition, P B 1-PG 3, All-of Block 74

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary follows the legal description historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Vicki L. Welcher-Historic Sites Specialist
organization FL Dept of State-Bureau of Historic Preservation date June 21, 1989
street & number 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333
city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1 Highlands County Courthouse

The Highlands County Courthouse is a large, three-story reinforced concrete building located at 430 South Commerce Avenue in Sebring, Florida. It is a good example of the Neo-Classical Revival style as applied to governmental buildings. It has a rectangular plan with a flat roof and parapet. The center three bays are recessed within a monumental portico. A projecting cornice, underscored with dentils and a simple frieze, defines the second story. A second cornice, simpler and less massive, rests on decorative pilasters above the third story fenestration.

Fenestration is regular and symmetrically organized. The principal window type is double hung sash, grouped in patterns of three with the first and third sashes half sized. The first and second story windows are stacked in recessed rectangular openings separated by wood panels featuring a classical entablature and frieze panels in a diamond pattern. Two monumental porticos in the Ionic order project from the front and rear elevations. They enclose recessed entrances surrounded by pedimented frontispieces and pilasters. The building remains unaltered.

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 1

Highlands County Courthouse

The Highlands County Courthouse, constructed in 1926, is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of politics/government for its association with the establishment of Highlands County and the selection of Sebring as the county seat. It is also significant at the local level under Criterion C as a good example of the Neo-Classical Revival style as it applies to government buildings in South-Central Florida during the 1900-1930 period.

One of the most persistent and passionately debated issues in Florida politics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was county subdivision. The tremendous size of many Florida counties, the cost and difficulty of travel, and the settlement of previously undeveloped or underdeveloped areas as a result of railroad construction made county subdivision essential. Prior to 1921, Highlands County, together with Charlottes, Glades, and Hardee Counties, was part of DeSoto County, a sprawling jurisdiction of 3,750 square miles that covered much of southwest Florida. The DeSoto County seat was located in Arcadia, some forty miles southwest of Sebring.

In 1921, after several years of complaint by disgruntled residents, the Florida State Legislature approved the subdivision of DeSoto County into five separate jurisdictions. Once the county was subdivided, a new political issue arose: the location of the county seat. The fight to secure the county seat for Sebring was led by the local Board of Trade, the predecessor to the chamber of commerce. The most enduring legacy of the board's efforts was its leadership in the bitter and successful contest against Avon Park, several miles to the north, to secure the seat of newly created Highlands County in 1921. The resulting location of county offices and courthouse at Sebring heightened its regional and state importance and provided additional employment for the community.

Construction of the Highlands County Courthouse was begun on June 15, 1926 and completed in March of 1927. Courthouse offices had been located in the second story of the Hainz Building at 134-138 North Ridgewood Avenue since the formation of the county in 1921. It became evident that a larger facility was needed to house the offices and records of the rapidly growing county. In August, 1925 a \$175,000 bond issue was approved by voters and a group of commissioners was appointed to visit other county seats in Florida in an effort to determine what kind of building would best suit the county's needs. Ultimately, Fred A. Bishop, an architect from Richmond, Virginia, was hired to design the building. The construction was executed by Roanoke, Virginia contractor, D.J. Phillips, at a cost of \$202,700. The furniture, fixtures,

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Highlands County Courthouse

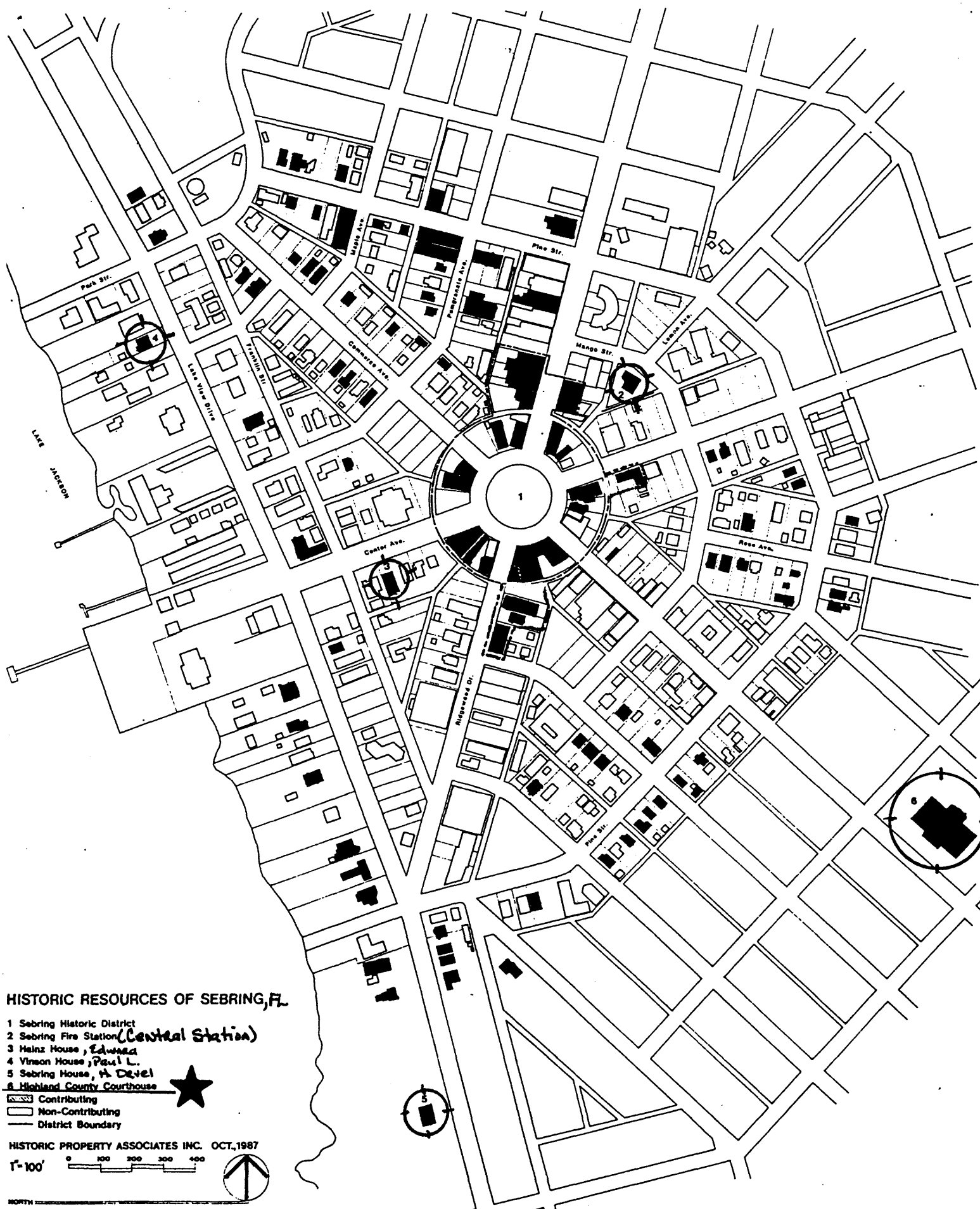
and landscaping brought the total cost of the project to approximately \$250,000.

Fred Bishop was a significant architect in Richmond during the 1920s and early 1930s. At least two of his commissions were for buildings currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places. One was for the 1928 Byrd Theater, Richmond, Virginia's landmark movie palace. The second was for the addition of two wings, added in 1922-1923, to the Washington Street Methodist Episcopal Church. For many years the Washington Street Methodist Church was considered the leading Methodist Church in Virginia. The Highlands County Courthouse is Bishop's only known commission in Florida.

The Highlands County Courthouse embodies the classical tradition in courthouse design. Its proportions are symmetrical and monumental. Its distinguishing features are a colossal portico in the Ionic Order, an attic story, an unenriched entablature, a parapet, and an unadorned roof line. The courthouse is a good example of Neo-Classical design which was frequently associated with public buildings in the United States from 1900-1930.




The Highlands County Courthouse is significant to the development of Sebring as the center of governmental and related service industries in Highlands County. The choice of the classical style of architecture for the structure further reflects the importance that such a structure had on the inhabitants of the town. Not only did they pick a more established style for the courthouse than had been chosen for the majority of commercial structures around the Circle, it was also much greater in mass than was actually needed by the fundamentally agricultural county. The Courthouse, therefore, reflects a change in perception and attitudes in Sebring, from the previous decade. The community no longer viewed itself as rural; rather, it saw itself as progressive and positioned for a better and more successful future.

The courthouse because of its design, massiveness, and historical associations is the most significant building in Sebring. Its massing is easily two and three times greater than other historic structures located within the downtown area of Sebring. Located four blocks off the Circle, the site of the classical structure lends power and distinction to the small county seat. The implications of the choice of such a large, classically styled courthouse reflect the historical significance and changes that becoming the county seat had on the small town of Sebring.



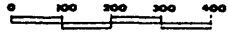
HISTORIC RESOURCES OF SEBRING, FL

- 1 Sebring Historic District (Central Station)
- 2 Sebring Fire Station (Central Station)
- 3 Heinz House, Edward
- 4 Vinson House, Paul L.
- 5 Sebring House, H. Devel
- 6 Highland County Courthouse

 Contributing
 Non-Contributing
 District Boundary

HISTORIC PROPERTY ASSOCIATES INC. OCT., 1987

1" = 100'



NORTH