

IOWA SITE INVENTORY

Division of Historic Preservation
Iowa State Historical Department
26 E. Market St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240

JUL - 2 1981

MAY 29 1981

Site Number 59-002-
District Name _____
Map Reference # 59-002-
Topo Map Des Moines NK 1:250,00

IDENTIFICATION

1. Site Name Lucas County Courthouse
2. Village/Town/City Chariton Township _____ County Lucas
3. Street Address Braden, between Main and Grant
4. Legal Location OT Courthouse Square
Urban: _____ subdivision _____ block _____ parcel _____
Rural: _____ township _____ range _____ section _____
subparcel 1/4 section-1/4 section _____
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 474200 northing 4540300; Acreage less than 1 ac
6. Owner(s) Name Lucas County Board of Supervisors
7. Owner(s) Address _____
_____ (Street address) Chariton Iowa 50047
_____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip)
8. Use: present Courthouse original Courthouse

DESCRIPTION

9. Date of Construction 1893 Architect/Builder G.J. Stewart & Co., Builder
10. Building Type: single family dwelling multiple family dwelling commercial
 industrial educational other institutional public religious agricultural
11. Exterior Walls: clapboard stone brick board & batten shingles stucco
 other _____
12. Structural System: wood frame with interlocking joints
 wood frame with light members (balloon frame) masonry load-bearing walls
 iron frame steel frame with curtain walls reinforced concrete
 other _____
13. Condition: excellent good fair deteriorated
14. Integrity: original site moved-if so, when? _____
Notes on alterations, additions (with dates and architect, if known) and any other notable features of building and site: Upper portion of clock tower removed - aluminum windows and doors added - many ceilings lowered - exposed heating/AC ducts. Mainspace features fine wood stairchase and ceramic tile flooring.
15. Related Outbuildings and Property: barn other farm structures
 carriage house garage privy other _____
16. Is the building endangered? no yes-if so, why? _____
17. Surroundings of the building: open land woodland scattered outbuildings
 densely built-up commercial industrial residential other _____
18. Map _____
19. Photo
Roll _____ Frame _____ View _____

SIGNIFICANCE (Indicate sources of information for all statements)

20. Architectural Significance

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure c. Not eligible/intrusion

This courthouse is in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, featuring rockfaced sandstone exterior wall facing, liberal use of round and wide segmental arches, turrets with conical roofs and finials.

21. Historical Significance

Theme(s) Politics/Government

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure c. Not eligible/intrusion

This courthouse is locally significant as the historical focus of county government, and of the political power and prestige derived from the community's status as the county seat. As center of county government, an Iowa town was reasonably assured of economic and population growth, and a prominent role in local social and political life. The county courthouse represents a significant public investment in a structure built not simply for utilitarian purposes, but also as a monument associated with the historical importance of county organization and development.

See Continuation Sheet

22. Sources (for primary and secondary sources, give complete facts of publication: author, title, place of publication, date, etc.):

Andreas, A.T. Illustrated Historical Atlas of Iowa. Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875.

Pratt, LeRoy G. The Counties and Courthouses of Iowa. Mason City, Iowa: Klipto Printing and Office Supply Co., 1977.

Stanek, Edward and Jacqueline. Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.

Prepared by _____ Date January 1980
 Address _____ Telephone _____
 Organization DHP

FOR DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION USE ONLY

1. OFFICE INFORMATION SOURCES ON THIS PROPERTY

- COUNTY RESOURCE FILE
- WINDSHIELD SURVEY
- NATIONAL REGISTER
- GRANTS-IN-AID: _____
- DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY
- REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE PROJECT: _____
- OTHER: _____
- OTHER: _____
- OTHER: _____

2. SUBJECT TRACES

3. PHOTO IMAGES

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

CONTINUATION SHEET

Item Number(s) _____

LUCAS COUNTY

The April, 1850, session of the Board of County Commissioners of Lucas County ordered the building of its first courthouse. It was 18 feet in width and 22 feet long, made of solid oak logs, each hewn with an eight to twelve inch face. The courthouse was one and one-half stories high with lime and sand used to fill the spaces between the logs. The construction was financed out of the Chariton town lot fund and cost a total of \$374.

The second courthouse was 50 feet square and cost somewhere between \$15,000 and \$20,000. No county records remain which illustrate the exact cost of putting up the brick walls and their contents. It appears, however, that some documents recall an offer to furnish all materials and complete the courthouse for \$13,500. Under the supervision of the county judge, the foundation was made of logs. Although this technique had not been accepted as good engineering practice, Judge Ethan Guard had theorized that its application, along with his day-to-day supervision, would work even in the absence of plans and specifications. After only ten years, so many cracks appeared in the walls that Judge Guard became nervous when holding court and ordered the sheriff to retain a church for his proceedings. The courthouse did not collapse, and the judge and jury returned to the building which provided several more years of service.

The present courthouse was authorized at an election in 1885. This time local contractors and lumber dealers faithfully followed well-designed plans. As a consequence, the stone courthouse appears the same today as it did nearly a century ago. The only major alteration has been the removal of a pointed spire and minor caps which topped the clock tower.

--from Stanek, Edward, and Jacqueline Stanek,
Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des
Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.