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 Hear	d County Jail			
and/or common	Heard County Jail			
2. Loca	ation Court 5	g. and Shady of	2-1- 2	
street & number	-	Square and Shady La		not for publication
city, town Fra	nklin	vicinity of	congressional district	6th - Newt Gingrich
state Georgi	a cod	e 013 county	Heard	code 149
3. Clas	sification			
Category district _X building(s) structure site object	Ownership _x_ public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered	Status occupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation _X_ other: Vacant
4. Uwn	er of Prope	rty		
name Wayne	Miller, Heard Coun	ty Commissioner		
street & number	P.O. Box 55		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
city, town Fra	anklin	vicinity of	state	Georgia 30217
5. Loca	ation of Lega	al Descripti	on	
courthouse, regis	stry of deeds, etc. No do	eed due to courthou	se fire in 1894	
street & number				
city, town		······································	state	
	resentation	in Existing		
Historic	Structures Field Sumty, Georgia	urvev:	perty been determined ele	egible? yes _X no
date January	y. 1977		federal stat	e county local
	urvey records Historic	Preservation Section	on, Department of N	atural Resources
city, town Atla	anta		state	Georgia

7. Description

Condition ____ excellent _X_ good ____ fair
 Check one

 deteriorated
 _____ unaltered

 ruins
 _____ altered

 unexposed

Check one <u>x</u> original site moved date .

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Heard County Jail, built by Fred Wagner in 1880, is a vernacular version of the Romanesque style. The building sits on a high ridge overlooking the Chattahoochee River at the corner of Shady Lane and Court Square in Franklin. The nominated property includes less than one acre.

The exterior of the building, a combination jail and sheriff's residence, is made of red brick laid in American bond with decorative corbeling around the cornice. Square in form, the jail is capped with a high pyramidal roof. The two-story jail has a one-story front porch with four square wooden columns. At the entrance level, on the front facade, there is a central door with transom light and a one-over-one window to each side. On the second floor of the front facade, a central arched opening has one four-over-four window to each side. All windows on the second floor have metal bars for security. Directly above the arched window on the second floor is a pair of small arched openings in the tower. Originally, the jail had two interior end chimneys plus an interior chimney at the rear; today, the west chimney cap is gone. In the 1960s, framed shed additions were added to the east and west for storage. A framed shed addition to the rear was added in the 1930s as part of the sheriff's residence.

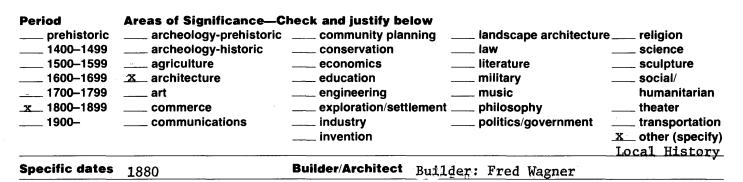
The interior of the building is a combination jail and sheriff's residence. Entering from the front, the residential area has a central hallway running the depth of the two front rooms on each side. These rooms, which were used as bedrooms, have corner fireplaces. One of the fireplaces has been paneled over. Behind the hallway is the kitchen and to the left is another bedroom. To the rear is a shed addition containing a bathroom and closets. To the right of the kitchen, directly behind the front bedroom, is the entrance to the jail. This room has a side entrance and contains the stairway leading to the jail upstairs. At one time, there was a well in this room which supplied water for the building.

The second floor, which is the jail, consists of one large room and two small rooms. The large room has two cells, each containing eight beds and a toilet. At the top of the stairs, in front of the "death cell," are the gallows and trap door. The release for the trap door is mounted on the stair rail. Each cell is made of heavy cast iron which was welded and bolted together inside the jail. To support the weight of the cells, the ceiling below is made of corregated iron, iron beams and reinforced concrete.

The tower, which is known as the hanging tower, was not designed nor used for that function. Instead, it contained a large water tank. New plumbing was installed prior to 1940.

There are no extant outbuildings associated with the jail. In the 1930s, a garage was built west of the jail, but it was removed in the 1950s. The boundary of the nominated property is defined by the small rectangular city lot upon which the jail stands.

8. Significance



Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Heard County Jail is significant to the architectural and local history of Franklin and Heard County. In terms of architectural history, the building is a representative example of the simple late-nineteenth-century jail found in many of Georgia's rural counties. It is also the oldest extant public building in the county and a major historic landmark in Franklin. In terms of local history, it is associated with the county system of law enforcement administered through the joint office of sheriff/jailer.

<u>Architectural History</u>. The Heard County Jail is significant in terms of architectural history as a representative example of the simple late-nineteenthcentury jail found in many of Georgia's rural counties. Its simple Victorian design, featuring compact massing with a hipped roof and tower, round and flat arched windows, and corbelled cornices, its limited range of simple, durable, fireproof materials including stone, brick, iron, concrete, and plaster, its plan which incorporates sheriff's residence and keep in one structure, and its furnishings, notably the iron cellblocks, water tower and plumbing, are characteristic features of the late-nineteenth-century county jail in Georgia, here realized on a modest scale appropriate to the rural nature of the county.

The Heard County Jail is also architecturally significant as the oldest extant public building in the county and a major historic landmark in Franklin. The jail was originally part of a late-nineteenth-century county courthouse complex which stood on the square in the center of Franklin. The first courthouse associated with the jail burned in 1894 and was replaced soon after. This courthouse itself was demolished in the late 1960s when a new county courthouse was built away from the square. The Franklin City Hall, situated near the jail, is a modern concrete-block building; the post office, dating from the 1950s, is likewise modern. Few historic commercial buildings remain on the square, and most of them have been modernized on the exterior at least. Thus, the Heard County Jail stands as a major historic landmark in the county seat.

Local History. The Heard County Jail is associated with the county system of law enforcement, administered through the joint office of sheriff/jailer, typical of small counties in Georgia. In Heard County, as in other rural counties in the state, the sheriff also served as the jailer and resided in the jail building. The Heard County Jail was used continuously as such from 1880 to 1965, when it was replaced by a new jail in the new courthouse. Eight different sheriffs

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United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

8

lived in the jail during the twentieth century, the most recent being the current sheriff, Virgil Bledsoe, who lived there from 1933 to 1943, when his father was sheriff, and from 1949 to 1965, while he was sheriff. According to Sheriff Bledsoe, the jail seldom housed more than a handful of prisoners, and no one was ever hanged there.

<u>Preservation Interest</u>. The Heard County Jail is currently unused by the county. The newly formed Heard County Historic Society is interested in preserving the structure and using it as a headquarters.

