

HISTORIC NAME: Blue Earth County Courthouse

COUNTY: Blue Earth **MAY 20 1980**

CURRENT NAME:

CITY/TWP.: Mankato **JUL 28 1980**

LEGAL DESC.: Mankato Plat. Unnumbered Block bounded by Fourth Street, Walnut Street, Fifth Street, and Hickory Street.

ADDRESS: Courthouse Square

CLASSIFICATION:	CONDITION:	SIGNIFICANCE:	THEME/S:
Building <u>X</u>	Excellent <u>X</u>	Local <u>X</u>	Primary <u>Architecture</u>
Structure _____	Good _____	State _____	Secondary <u>Government</u>
Object _____	Fair _____	National _____	Others _____
District _____	Deteriorated _____		

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes X No _____ Restricted X
 VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes X No _____
 OCCUPIED: Yes X No _____

PRESENT USE:
Courthouse

DATE CONSTRUCTED: 1886-89

ORIGINAL USE: Courthouse
Haley & Allen, Minneapolis
ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Ring and Tobin, Minneapolis

ORIGINAL OWNER: Blue Earth County

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Blue Earth County Commissioners
County Courthouse
Mankato, MN 56001ACREAGE: Less than one acre XLOCAL CONTACT/ORG.: Blue Earth County Historical Society,
606 South Broad, Mankato, Minnesota 56001

UTM REFERENCE:

Mankato East 7.5

FORM PREPARED BY: Dennis Gimmetad

15 / 420100 / 4890330

DATE: January 1980

DESCRIPTION:

The Blue Earth County Courthouse is a distinctive architectural landmark, situated on a courthouse square a short distance east of the central business district. The square constitutes an entire city block. The courthouse, located near the highest (eastern) edge, is the only structure on the block, and the square retains its spatial integrity.

The essentially rectangular building is executed in an eclectic intermingling of the French and Italian Renaissance styles according to designs by architects Healy and Allen. Each facade is symmetrical in arrangement. Corners are defined by dormered pavilions; central bays are devoted to entires. The principal facade is accentuated by a four-story tower which terminates in a copper-sheathed dome; the dome is surmounted by a monumental statue of Justice. The roof of the building is a complex hip/mansard combination, defined by a broad cornice and stone parapets.

The major construction material of the buildings is buff-colored Mankato stone. The finish of the stone exhibits a variety of masonry techniques, including rock-faced, smooth-faced, and carved/articulated surfaces. Basement walls are rusticated and battered. A double sill separated by a course of finished blocks separates the basement from the first story. Wall surfaces are articulated by alternating courses of smooth and rock-faced stone. Corners of the pavilions boast two-tiered pilasters with capitals.

Window and door openings are treated in a distinctive manner. Second story windows in the pavilions are arranged in groups of three and are capped by segmentally-arched tympanums. A similar treatment is found in the roofs of the pavilion dormers. A large semi-circular window occupies the entire second story of the tower. Entires are shielded by one-story porticoes with semi-circular arches, flat roofs hidden by stone balustrades, and walls of alternating courses of smooth and rock-faced stone. The main entrance portico also features a staircase and Moorish keyhole-type arches.

The interior of the building originally included two full stories with full basement and attic. A 1965 remodeling totally gutted the interior and provided an additional floor of office space. Although the integrity of the interior was totally lost by the project, the exterior integrity was preserved by avoiding construction of an addition to the building. The major alteration to the exterior has been the replacement of the original wood window and door framing with aluminum.

See continuation sheet

MAY 20 1980

Blue Earth County Courthouse - continued

Blue Earth County
Mankato, Minnesota

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Blue Earth County Courthouse is significant as a prominently sited and elaborately articulated building that has been the seat of county government since its completion in 1889. The county had occupied several smaller buildings on the block designated as the courthouse square when the Mankato Board of Trade began agitation for a new courthouse in 1884. The project was carried out despite considerable controversy and opposition from rural areas of the county. The structure was designed by Twin Cities architects Healy and Allen. Contractors were Ring and Tobin of Minneapolis, who obtained building materials from a local quarry which they operated throughout the building's construction. The variety of external features on the courthouse is the most elaborate use of local stone among Mankato's buildings. The highly visible location and the rare lack of encroachment of the square by additions or major auxiliary structures make the building an especially outstanding example of Minnesota's elaborate late 19th century courthouses.

Bibliography

Gebhard, David, and Tom Martinson. A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977. p. 241.

Haley and Allen File. Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Hughes, Thomas. History of Blue Earth County, and Biographies of Its Leading Citizens. Chicago: Middle West Publishing Company, 1909(?) pp. 197-203.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 2 Page 1

NO CORRECTION MADE

REFERENCE NUMBER: 90001940

*Should
BE 80 00 1940*

STATE: Minnesota

COUNTY: Blue Earth

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Blue Earth County Courthouse

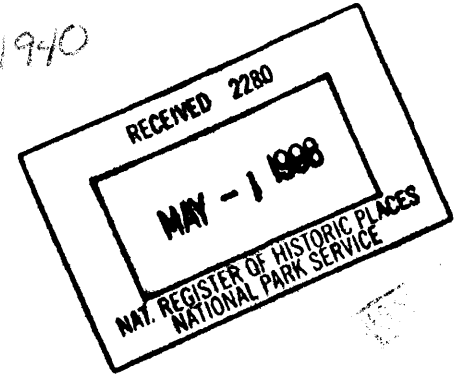
CITY/TOWNSHIP: Mankato

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: 204 S. 5th St.

COMMENTS: Address Correction

BT - Blue Earth Co. MN



[Handwritten signature of Ian R. Stewart]

Ian R. Stewart
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

4/23/98
Date