

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Old Pinellas County Courthouse

other names/site number Pinellas County Courthouse/ 8Pi 1894

2. Location

street & number 315 Court Street n/a  not for publication

city or town Clearwater n/a  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Pinellas code 103 zip code 34616

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Suzanne P. Walker Deputy SHPO 5/22/92  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

Signature of the Keeper

**Entered in the  
National Register**

Date of Action

Michael Byrum

6/25/92

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

n/a

0 n/a

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)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals:  
Classical Revival: Neo-Classical  
Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: Granite  
walls Brick  
roof Asphalt  
other Stone: Limestone  
Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1917-1937

**Significant Dates**

1917

1924

1926

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

**Architect/Builder**

Kennard, Francis J./Bates, Hudnall & Jetton,  
and Walker, B.F. & Sons

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than 1 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	3228110	3094120
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Howard Hansen/Barbara E. Mattick, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date May 1992

street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough St. telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Pinellas County

street & number 315 Court Street telephone (813) 462-3485 Co. Adm.

city or town Clearwater state FL zip code 34616

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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SUMMARY

The Old Pinellas County Courthouse, located at 315 Court Street in downtown Clearwater, Florida, is a Neoclassical Revival, two story with basement building, with flat roofs and an irregular plan, built in three phases. The original building was constructed in 1917 and additions designed by the same architect were made in 1924 and 1926. It is considered to be one building. The 1917 and 1926 parts were slightly altered in 1936-37. A 1960s "skybridge" or elevated passageway to connect the jail with the Old Courthouse is a noncontributing structure.

The courthouse has buff-colored, brick, load bearing walls. The main entrance steps and the raised basement level are of gray granite ashlar blocks. Indiana limestone ornamentation consists of Ionic columns, pilasters, entablatures, window lintels, and other details. Windows are generally paired, wooden, 1/1 double hung sash with single-light transoms, or 3/3 double hung sash.

The interior contains offices and hallways, two large courtrooms, and jury rooms. The interior of the second floor and the courtroom of the 1917 building were restored in 1985, and restoration of the 1926 courtroom is pending.

SETTING

The Old Pinellas County Courthouse is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of South Fort Harrison Avenue and Court Street. The courthouse occupies approximately the eastern half of an oversized block located three blocks south of Cleveland Street, Clearwater's main commercial street. In 1917, the courthouse was oriented toward Fort Harrison Avenue, the principal north-south street in Clearwater, part of what is now designated as Alternate U.S. 19.

The courthouse is set back about sixty feet from Fort Harrison Avenue and twenty feet from Court Street. The Pinellas County Jail is situated approximately twenty feet from the southwest corner of the courthouse and occupies the remainder of the site south of the courthouse. A concrete walkway, about thirty feet wide, leads from Fort Harrison Avenue to the steps of the main (east) entrance of the

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building, and narrow concrete sidewalks encircle the perimeter of the courthouse. Large live oaks, planted about fifteen to twenty-five feet from the south, north, and east sides of the building during the 1920s, obscure all but the main portico of the courthouse.

The neighborhood around the courthouse was originally residential and consisted of one and two-story frame houses and winter tourist boarding houses built between 1890 and 1930. The houses immediately west of the courthouse were demolished to make way for a new courthouse building in 1960s. The area surrounding the old courthouse is now commercial.

## 1917 COURTHOUSE

Exterior

The 1917 courthouse is rectangular in plan, approximately 150' north-south and 60' east-west. The first floor is raised six feet above grade. The exterior of the basement level is faced with ashlar gray granite blocks; the exterior above this level is of buff or tan-colored brick with 1/4" joints of white lime based mortar.

The main (east) facade has a projecting central block approximately 70' wide and 55' high that contains an Ionic tetrastyle in-antis portico that supports a full entablature (Photo 1). Above the entablature is a parapet wall ornamented with three panels bordered with fascies. The portico is approached by a broad flight of granite steps flanked by 6' high granite cheeks. A cast iron Classical Revival Style electric light standard rests on each cheek. The columns, entablature, window lintels, door architraves, and parapet ornamentation on the main portico are of Indiana limestone. The floor of the portico is ceramic tile laid in a pattern of red and black geometric forms and borders on a white field.

Within the portico, the main facade has three bays. A central entrance has a very plain, double, glass and aluminum door with fixed transoms. Its surround, however, is limestone with detailed stone work (Photo 2). A band of bellflowers or husks surrounds the doorway. Centered above the door, in the top band of bellflowers, is an anthemion

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flanked by brackets which support an architrave. Each bracket has three glyphs filled with bellflowers; at the bottom of each glyph is a gutta. The entrance is flanked by bays which have paired, 1/1 windows with single light transoms at both stories. The windows have limestone surrounds similar to , but less elaborate than that around the door. The three bays of the second floor are filled with 1/1 windows.

Two wings which flank the central block are each 40' long and 40' high from grade to top of parapet. These wings have three bays separated by four brick pilasters with stone Doric capitals that support a plain cornice. Each bay is filled with a pair of wooden, 1/1 double hung sash at the first story, and similar windows without transoms at the second story (Photo 1).

The north and south elevations of the building both consist of three bays separated by pilaster elements in the manner of the wings of the main facade (Photos 3 & 4). The central bays of the first floor of these elevations contain a single doorway with a stone architrave like that at the main entrance, but without the anthemion. The door is reached by a flight of granite steps. The steps were altered during the 1936-37 basement remodeling to provide a door to the basement level. The remaining bays of both elevations contain paired windows identical to the main facade. Panels employing the fasces and bellflower motifs flank the entrance at the second story.

The rear (west) elevation of the 1917 courthouse, though obscured by the 1924 addition, has bays articulated with pilasters as on the other elevations. Most of the bays are filled with paired windows with transoms, except the three central bays of the first floor which have a one story wing, about 50' wide and 20' deep, covered with a flat roof. The 50' west wall of this wing was covered by the 1924 addition (Photo 5).

Interior

The interior of the 1917 part of the courthouse has 12' ceilings, except for in the courtroom, and has smooth finished plaster walls. The concrete slab floors of the building were originally covered with rubber, generally of a

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tan color with dark brown borders, but the hallways and stair hall were finished with ceramic tile made of black and red borders and patterns on a white field (Photo 6). Five foot tall pink-gray marble wainscoting lines the walls of the first floor hall and staircase. Door and window architraves throughout the building are plain and made of yellow pine stained mahogany with an orange shellac finish (Photo 7). Doors are wood with two or three panels, and most have one-light transoms.

The first floor interior of the 1917 courthouse consists of a central, north-south hallway flanked by offices. An entrance vestibule or short cross hall connects the central hall to the main (east) entrance of the building. The central hall opens onto a room that runs across the northern end of the building, that contains the main staircase which consists of a double flight of stairs (Photos 8 & 9). A second small staircase is located on the west side of the central hallway and gives access to the jury rooms on the second floor.

The second floor of the building consists of a large, almost square courtroom that occupies the central block of the courthouse. It is connected to the main staircase by a central hall. Offices and rest rooms occupy the second floor space north of the courtroom, and jury (Photo 10), grand jury (Photo 11), and witness rooms occupy the space south of the courtroom.

The courtroom is the most significant room of the building, and contains the most elaborate ornamentation (Photo 12). The approximately square room contains about 1300 square feet and has 20' high ceilings. The walls of the courtroom are divided into three bays on the east and west walls, and each of these bays has paired windows. The south wall, containing the judge's bench, has five bays; the north wall is covered by a deep spectators' balcony (Photo 13). All of the bays are defined by paired Tuscan style pilasters on bases that rise from panelled wainscoting to a dentiled cornice. The ceiling has panelled, intersecting wooden beams aligned with the pilasters to form a grid of 20 coffers. The judge's bench, jury box, and witness stand are faced with wooden paneling. The wood throughout the room is yellow pine with a mahogany stain and shellac finish.

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Pinellas Co., FL1924 WEST WING ADDITION

In 1924, a rectangular, two-story with basement wing was built on the rear (west) elevation of the 1917 courthouse (Photos 14 & 5). It was attached to the small one-story wing that projected from the three central bays of the two-story 1917 building.

Exterior

The exterior of the 1924 wing is of buff-colored brick with 1/4" white mortar joints that match the exterior finish of the earlier building. It has a flat roof concealed by a low parapet. The roof is of built-up type and slopes to the west where down spouts are located. The first floor is raised 6' above grade and a finished basement containing offices is located in this area. The exterior of the basement level is faced with plain gray cast concrete panels below a slightly projecting string course. Single, wooden, 4/4 and 6/6 double hung sash windows are located at regular intervals in the concrete base.

The west (rear) elevation of the wing is composed of three bays created by four brick pilasters with concrete capitals supporting a cast concrete cornice. The bays on both floors contain paired, wooden, 3/3 double hung sash windows with one-light transoms. The north and south elevations are identical, and have two bays created by pilasters. Paired windows with transoms are located on both floors of each bay. The east elevation projects one story above the one-story "hyphen" that connects the wing to the 1917 building. This elevation has three blank bays created by four pilasters supporting a cornice.

Interior

The interior finishes of this wing are similar to those of the 1917 building, with concrete slab floors and smooth plaster walls and ceilings. The ceiling height is 12' on the first and second floors, and 8' in the basement. This wing was designed to house the offices and records of the Clerk of Court and Registrar of Deeds. The first floor is a single large room that is entered from the hallway of the 1917 building. A small staircase, located in the northeast

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corner of the room, leads to small offices located on the second floor and basement of this wing.

## 1926 NORTHWEST WING ADDITION

In 1926, a brick, two-story with basement wing was attached to the northern two bays of the rear (west) elevation of the 1917 courthouse (Photo 5). An office adjacent to the main staircase on each floor of the 1917 building was converted into wide cross halls to give access to the new wing. The 1926 wing is rectangular in plan, approximately 70' long east-west and 50' wide north-south (See Site Plan).

Exterior

The main (north) facade fronts onto Court Street and echoes the design of the main facade of the 1917 building in design and materials (Photo 15). It has five bays and the three central ones are framed by four Ionic pilasters; the outer pilasters are paired with a Tuscan pilaster to mimic the in-antis arrangement of the 1917 main facade. The Indiana limestone pilasters are two stories high and rest on a base of gray granite ashlar that faces the 6' high basement level. The pilasters support a limestone Ionic entablature. The brick parapet above the entablature contains three rectangular panels framed by stone fascies. This elevation has five sets of paired, 1/1 double hung sash windows with one-light transoms on each floor.

The west elevation of the 1926 wing has three bays are similar to the ones on the 1917 and 1924 buildings (Photo 16). The west elevation has three sets of paired windows on each floor. The central bay at the basement level contains a door.

The south elevation of the 1926 wing faces onto a narrow courtyard formed by the 1924 wing (Photo 17). It has five bays with paired windows on each floor.

Interior

The 1926 wing was designed to house offices of the county commissioners on the first floor and a large courtroom on the second floor. The first floor has a

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central hallway flanked by offices on both sides. The ceiling is 12' high. The second floor has a ceiling height of 20' and is occupied by a large, nearly square courtroom. A bailiff's office, restrooms, and a narrow staircase leading to the courtroom balcony occupy the space east of the courtroom along the access hallway to the courtroom. Small jury and witness rooms occupy the second floor space west of the courtroom.

Woodgrain laminate panelling covers most of the interior plaster walls throughout the courthouse. Ceilings are dropped in hallways for central air conditioning duct work, and the ceramic tile floors are covered with linoleum. In the 1926 courtroom, a suspended ceiling hangs about 8' above the floor, blocking off the balcony, and panelling covers the windows and walls (Photos 18 & 19). Underneath these finishes, however, the interior of this wing is identical in finish to the other sections of the courthouse. The courtroom remains intact under these finishes, however, and will be restored according to historic photographs (Photo 20).

### ALTERATIONS

#### Historic Alterations 1936-37

In 1936-37, a Works Progress Administration project created a basement floor of offices in the crawl space under the 1917 building and linked it to existing basements in the 1924 and 1926 wings. The resulting exterior alterations to the 1917 building included the removal of half of the entrance steps on the north and south sides to create entry doors to the basement (Photo 4), and the installation of four small windows in the granite ashlar of the main (east) facade.

#### Modern Alterations 1960s

By the late 1950s, the courthouse and jail were both overcrowded. In 1959, the County Commission studied plans to build a new courthouse and jail on new sites, but instead decided to acquire the remaining property on the square block surrounding the courthouse and adjacent to the existing one.

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In 1960, houses occupying the western half of the block behind the courthouse were demolished to construct a large six-story courthouse building. The jail was also remodeled during this period, with alterations and additions which connected the jail to the new courthouse (Photo 21). This renovation significantly altered the historic appearance and integrity of the jail.

Another part of these renovations was the construction of a steel frame pedestrian "sky bridge" to link the 1917 and 1926 courtrooms to the jail (Photo 14). A second floor bay of windows was removed from the rear (south) wall of the 1926 addition and made into a doorway for the skybridge (Photo 17). The other part of the skybridge was attached to the rear (west) wall of the 1917 building at the second floor bay immediately south of the 1924 wing (Photo 5). A pair of windows was remodeled into a doorway.

The interior of the 1917-1926 courthouse was modernized with the installation of laminated wall panelling and drop ceilings. The two courtrooms remained in use for civil and traffic cases, and the offices were used by various county departments.

### Interior Restoration 1984-1985

In 1984, it was found that damage to the original fabric from the 1960s alterations was minimal, and Judge Radford Smith initiated a movement to restore the courthouse. In 1986, the second floor and main stairwell of the 1917 part of the building were restored to their original appearance. Electrical, HVAC, and plumbing systems were replaced and inappropriate floor, wall, and ceiling coverings were removed. Woodwork was stripped and restored to a shellac finish. Modern electroliers similar in scale and design to the original ones were installed in the 1917 courtroom (Photos 22 & 12). This restoration was funded in part by a grant from the State of Florida, Division of Historical Resources. A master plan to restore the entire 1917-1926 building has been devised and received additional grant funding from the state in 1991.

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## SUMMARY

The Old Pinellas County Courthouse is significant under **Criterion A** in the area of **Politics and Government** as the first permanent building erected as the seat of county government in Pinellas County, and as the only historic building associated with this activity. Its expansion between 1917 and 1926 reflected the rapid growth of Pinellas County government during the Florida Boom period, and the 1930s alterations showed its slowed, but continued, growth during the Depression. The courthouse is also significant under **Criterion C** as an excellent example of Neoclassical Revival Style architecture and as the work of the well known pioneer Tampa architect, Francis J. Kennard.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

The creation of Pinellas County from the western part of Hillsborough County in 1912 was in large part a result of the physical geography of the Tampa Bay region. The Pinellas peninsula, approximately 26 miles long and containing 264 square miles of land, is separated from the mainland by Tampa Bay. Countless miles of gulf and bayshore beaches have provided Pinellas with great wealth in commercial fishing and tourism, but they have also cursed the peninsula with transportation and communication problems.

The Pinellas peninsula was a part of Hillsborough County when that county was created from Alachua County 1834. Settlement of the peninsula was sparse in 1860 and remained so until 1889 when the Orange Belt Railroad was completed from Apopka to its final destination in St. Petersburg on the southern end of the peninsula.

Tampa, the county seat of Hillsborough, boomed in the 1880s and 1890s, but the isolated, rural residents of the Pinellas peninsula struggled to attract winter tourists and planted citrus groves, competing with the rest of the state in these markets. The explosive growth of Tampa at the turn of the century consumed all of the Hillsborough County tax monies, leaving the residents of the Pinellas peninsula with little funding and few county services.

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St. Petersburg, located near the southern tip of the peninsula, was a tiny fishing village at the turn of the century, but had attracted a group of ambitious northern entrepreneurs who had dreams of creating a winter tourist mecca there. County spending for infrastructure and services was necessary for St. Petersburg's development plans.

In 1901, William L. Straub became owner and editor of the St. Petersburg Times, and he made it his policy to complain about Tampa's poor treatment of St. Petersburg. In 1906, Straub's editorials focused on the issue of political autonomy for the Pinellas peninsula. On February 20, 1907, the boards of trade for St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Tarpon Springs responded to Straub's rhetoric by creating the County Division Organization. Straub printed a lengthy editorial in the Times on February 23, 1907, entitled "The Pinellas Declaration of Independence". County separation petitions were distributed and signed, and a separation bill written by Straub was presented to the state legislature. It passed by a vote of 28-21 in the House, but was defeated in a reconsideration vote during the 1907 session. Hillsborough County politicians kept the bill stalled in subsequent legislative session until 1911 when it passed the House on May 5 and the Senate on May 16. Governor Albert Gilchrist signed the bill six days later. The separation bill called for a popular referendum, and on November 14, 1911, the peninsula's voters approved the creation of the new county.

During the long struggle for the creation of Pinellas County, Straub had ensured the upper peninsula's support by working out a compromise that made the town of Clearwater the county seat for twenty years, and also gave the upper peninsula three of the county's five commission seats.

The power structure of St. Petersburg reluctantly went along with the Straub compromise, but after the county's creation, many of them had second thoughts and sought an ordinance calling for an election to choose the permanent location of the courthouse. The upper county commissioners outvoted those from the lower county and then awarded a contract for the construction of a two-story, frame courthouse to be built in Clearwater within thirty days at a cost of \$3,750.

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The town council of Clearwater donated several downtown lots (one block north of the present courthouse) for the building. The people of Clearwater organized volunteer work crews to erect the courthouse, and worked by torchlight through the nights to complete the building in record time. Guards with shotguns patrolled the construction site because rumors had spread that St. Petersburg residents would burn the courthouse for revenge. The courthouse was occupied in January of 1912, but the hard feelings between St. Petersburg and Clearwater over who "stole" the courthouse persisted for decades.

## HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The new county prospered under home rule, and by 1915, county government had outgrown the jerry-built frame courthouse. On February 3, 1916, the county commissioners voted in favor of a \$160,000 bond issue to finance the construction of a new courthouse and jail. The county commissioners purchased a tract of land on the west side of Fort Harrison Avenue for \$5,000 on January 19, 1917. Tampa architect Francis J. Kennard was chosen to design the courthouse and adjacent jail. On January 19, 1917, a contract in the amount of \$100,023 was awarded to the firm of Bates, Hudnall, and Jetton for construction of the courthouse, and the Tampa firm of G.A. Miller and Company received a contract for \$19,800 to build the jail.

The courthouse was completed on time and within budget on July 7, 1918 (Photo 23). Its main facade was 150' long, and the interior contained about 7,200 square feet of space on each of its two floors. The first floor contained all of the county's business records and commissioners' offices; the second floor housed one large courtroom, judges' offices, jury and grand jury room.

The rapid growth of Pinellas County during the 1920s land boom era necessitated an addition to the courthouse in 1924. Kennard designed a two-story with basement wing to be attached to the rear (west) elevation of the 1917 building. Each floor of the addition was to contain about 1800 square feet of space and house county offices and offices for the Clerk of the Circuit Court. On May 17, 1924, the county

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commissioners awarded a contract of \$25,000 to Bates, Hudnall, and Jetton for the construction of the building.

Within two years the continued booming of the county forced the county commissioners to float another bond issue to expand the courthouse again. In 1926, Kennard designed a large two-story and basement wing to be attached to the northwest corner of the 1917 building. The new wing provided space for the county commissioners' offices, the county engineering department on the first floor, and large courtroom for county and circuit judges on the second floor. A new jail to be located south of the courthouse was also designed at this time. On September 27, 1926, the county commissioners awarded a building contract of \$170,838 to the firm of B.F. Walker & Sons for the courthouse wing and jail.

The dire financial condition of Pinellas County after the collapse of the land boom in late 1926 brought local government spending to a halt for two decades, but during the mid-1930s, the federal government's Works Progress Administration and other related programs offered some relief. In 1936, WPA funds were used to remodel the third floor of the jail, to build a bridge connecting the jail to the courtrooms, and to convert the basement space below the 1917 courthouse into offices. The first floor of the original 1917 building as constructed was six feet above grade, leaving the space beneath vacant. The 1936-37 remodelling of this vacant area created 7,462 square feet of office space. Entrances to the basement were made at the north and south ends of the building, and the area was air-conditioned.

## ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Neoclassical Revival Style (1894-c1940)

The Neoclassical Revival Style was popularized by the World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893. Buildings erected by each state at the Exposition were to have a classical theme. Wide publicity for the event and attendance by people from all over the country assured a popularity of the style which lasted for nearly fifty years.

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Neoclassicism recalled the simple architectural features and techniques of the Greeks and Romans. Its most distinguishing characteristics include: use of the Ionic or Corinthian order for colossal columns, pilasters and engaged columns, flat or low pitched roofs behind parapets, horizontality, symmetry, and balance. Doorways often have elaborate, decorative surrounds based on Greek Revival, Adam, or Georgian precedents. Cornices often have dentils or modillions, and sometimes have a wide frieze band. Windows are usually double hung sash with various light configurations.

Francis J. Kennard, AIA

Francis Joseph Kennard was born in London on March 15, 1865. He received his education and architectural training in the same city. Kennard came to Putnam County, Florida, in 1886 and moved to Orlando, Florida, two years later. He practiced architecture in Orlando from 1888-1895. Orlando was a boom town during this period, and Kennard was one of the few trained architects in the area. The Great Freeze of 1894-1895 devastated the Orlando economy and this, evidently, prompted Kennard's move to Tampa, Florida. His first major project in that area was the Belleview Hotel (NR, 1979) in Belleair for the Plant Railroad System in 1896-1897. This rambling, massive frame hotel was designed in a late 19th century Arts and Crafts inspired Picturesque style.

Kennard's later important commissions were invariably of masonry construction and were designed in a variety of revival styles typical of early 20th century Beaux Arts inspired historicism. His best surviving works in Tampa include the Floridian Hotel, the Citrus Exchange Building, the Shrine Temple and the Hillsborough High School. The Lee County Courthouse (NR, 1989) in Ft. Myers, the Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church in Clearwater, and the Union Trust Bank in St. Petersburg are important examples of his work during the 1920s in other Florida cities. Kennard designed few large buildings after the collapse of the Florida boom in 1926, but continued to practice architecture in Tampa until his death in 1943.

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## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The original part of the Old Pinellas County Courthouse, designed by Francis J. Kennard in 1916, is an excellent example of the use of the Neoclassical Style. It incorporates many of the distinctive features associated with the style, including: colossal columns and pilasters with Greek capitals, a flat roof with parapet decorated with Roman fasces and a Greek anthemion. The major entrances display fairly elaborate surrounds with typical Greek motifs, and the windows are typical double hung sash. The 1924 and 1926 additions to the 1917 building were also designed by Kennard. His plans expertly integrated the use of the same materials and Neoclassical motifs and designs in the additions.

The plan of the 1917 building and its Neoclassical Revival Style are both typical of similar small courthouses built during the early 20th century throughout Florida. The building's materials, structural systems, and construction techniques are also typical of similar contemporary buildings in the region. Kennard, however, modified some of the standard features of Neoclassical Revival buildings to create a building which was particularly suitable for the Pinellas County courthouse. The main facade has a classical temple portico, commonly found on American governmental buildings, but Kennard modified it by omitting the pediment and replacing it with a panelled, high parapet wall. The temple facade formula is further altered by turning it into a recessed porch with columns set in-antis rather than the typical fashion of a projecting portico.

Kennard faced the challenge of creating an appearance of monumentality on a small building. He achieved this illusion by creating a long, narrow rectangular plan (150' x 50') with a projecting central block and by raising the main floor 6' above grade. To achieve greater height, he added a parapet about 10' high above the entablature of the central block; this made the central section of the building 55' high. With a main facade 150' long that rises to the height of a five-story building, the little two-story courthouse with 14,000 square feet of interior space appeared monumental to passers-by.

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The 1917 courthouse gave the county commissioners an impressive symbol of their power, but did not give them much space. The placement of the 1917 building on its site and the plainness of the rear facade indicate that Kennard planned for major additions to be made to the courthouse. His design for the small 1924 wing incorporated the same building materials, fenestration, and use of pilasters to blend in with the 1917 building.

The 1924 addition filled the most convenient site for enlargements by covering the rear (west) wall of the 1917 building. The 1926 addition, therefore, presented an awkward design problem. This wing, almost the size of the original courthouse, had to fill the remaining space on the site, but not destroy the symmetrical design and massing of the original structure. Kennard's solution was to design a street (north) elevation for the new wing that echoed the massing, bays and design of the central block of the main facade of the 1917 building. Its Ionic tetrastyle in-antis schema was reused on the new north elevation with pilasters substituting for the columns of the main (east) facade. The granite-faced basement level and an entablature surmounted with a high parapet wall with panels on the main facade were duplicated on the 1926 facade, thus unifying the two sections. The courtrooms of the 1926 wing also echoed the 1917 one in its design scheme of paired pilasters supporting a full entablature and a coffered ceiling created by intersecting paired beams.

The Old Pinellas County Courthouse, therefore, is significant as the most historic and important governmental building in Pinellas County and as an excellent example of Francis J. Kennard's ability to design a classical building to meet the needs of an emerging local government.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The legal description of the property as filed in the Pinellas County Property Appraiser's Office is: Turner's, A.C. sub blks 7 and 8 and vac alley and 1/2 vac alley on S. The Old Courthouse and the New Courthouse are filed together; the Old Courthouse is located on block 8.

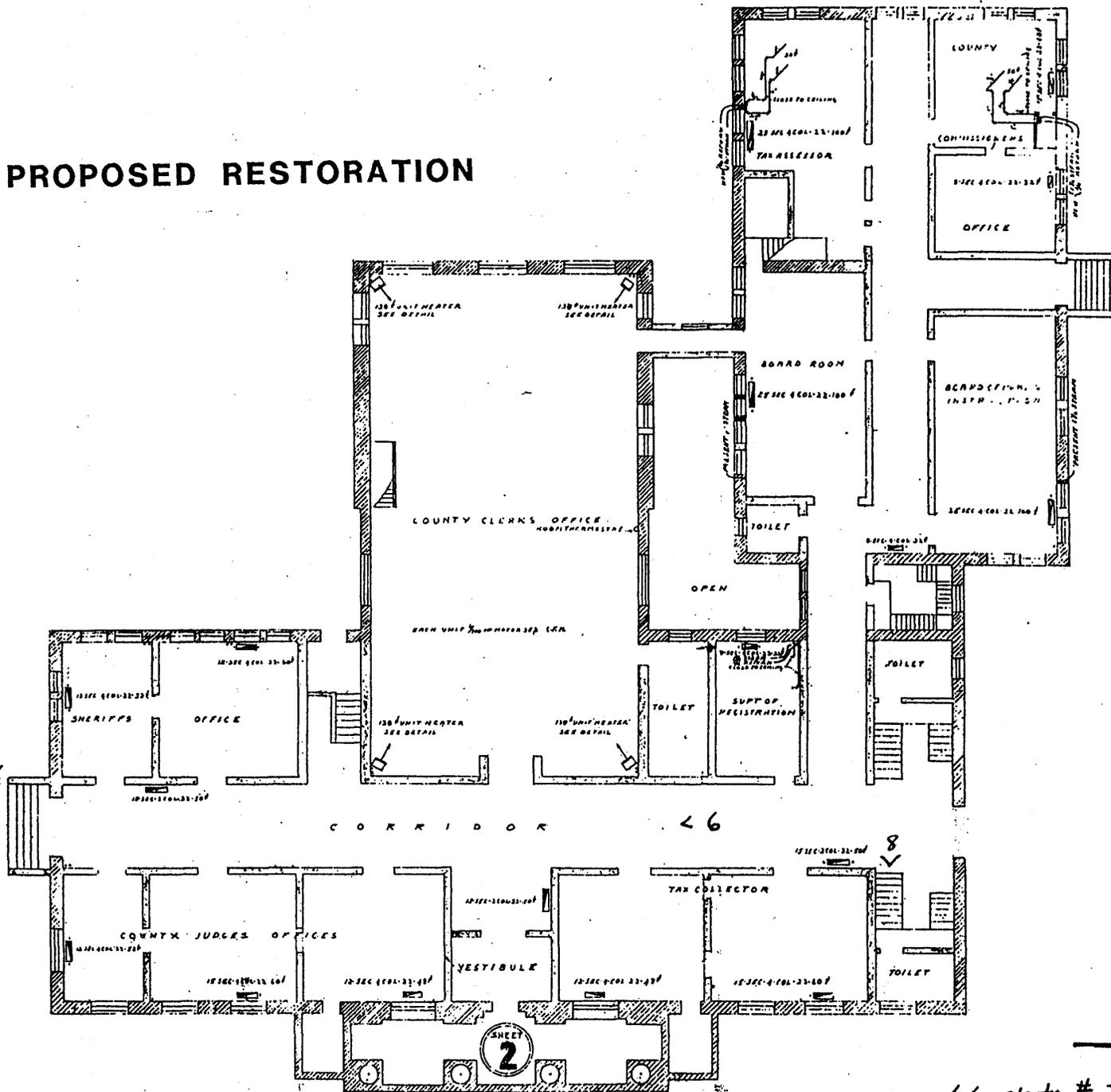
Beginning at the SW corner of S. Fort Harrison Avenue and Court Street, proceed W approximately 250.6 feet along the S curb of Court Street. Then proceed S approximately 185 feet along the edge of the parking lot located E of the new courthouse complex, and continue to the N wall of the jail. Then proceed E approximately 103.3 feet along the wall to the NE corner of the jail. Then proceed approximately 21.75 feet S along the E wall of the jail to the sidewalk that runs along the N side of the parking lot. Then proceed east approximately 152.25 feet along the N side of the parking lot to the W curb of S. Fort Harrison Avenue. Then proceed N approximately 195.75 feet along the W side of S. Fort Harrison Avenue to the point of beginning.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary encloses the portion of block 8 which is historically associated with the Pinellas County Courthouse and retains its integrity.



# PROPOSED RESTORATION



NOTE  
 FOR DETAILED ELEVATION-COUNTY  
 CLERKS OFFICE SEE DETAIL PAGE  
 3-200 UNIT HEATERS, CLERKS SUB  
 OFFICE

SHEET  
**2**

## HEATING

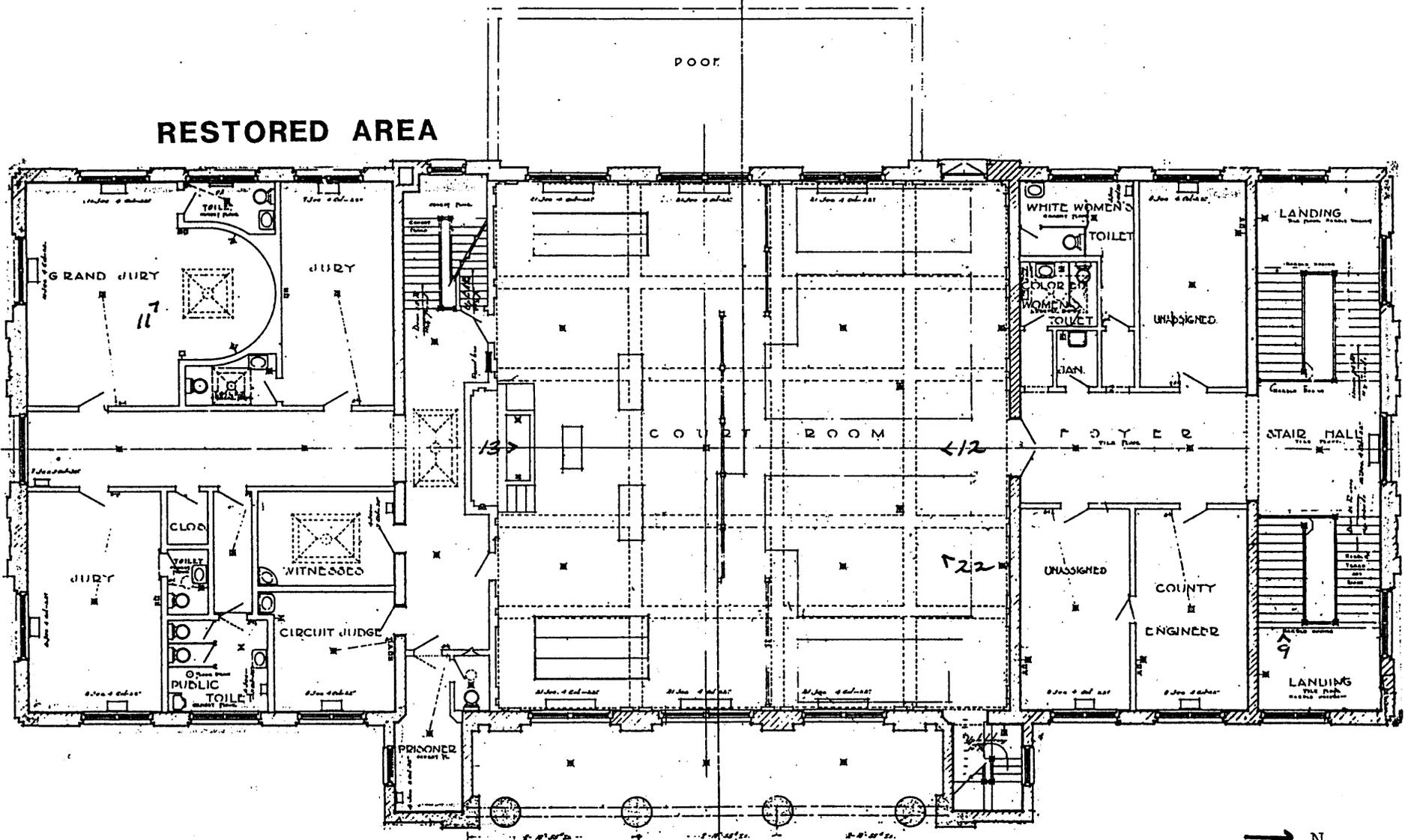
### -PINELLAS COUNTY COURT HOUSE-

→ N  
 <6 photo # + camera  
 direction

Scale: 1"=25'

FIRST FLOOR PLAN	
TRACED BY	T.L.D.
DRAWN BY	G.L.D.
DESIGNED BY	G.L.D.
	JULY 5 1935

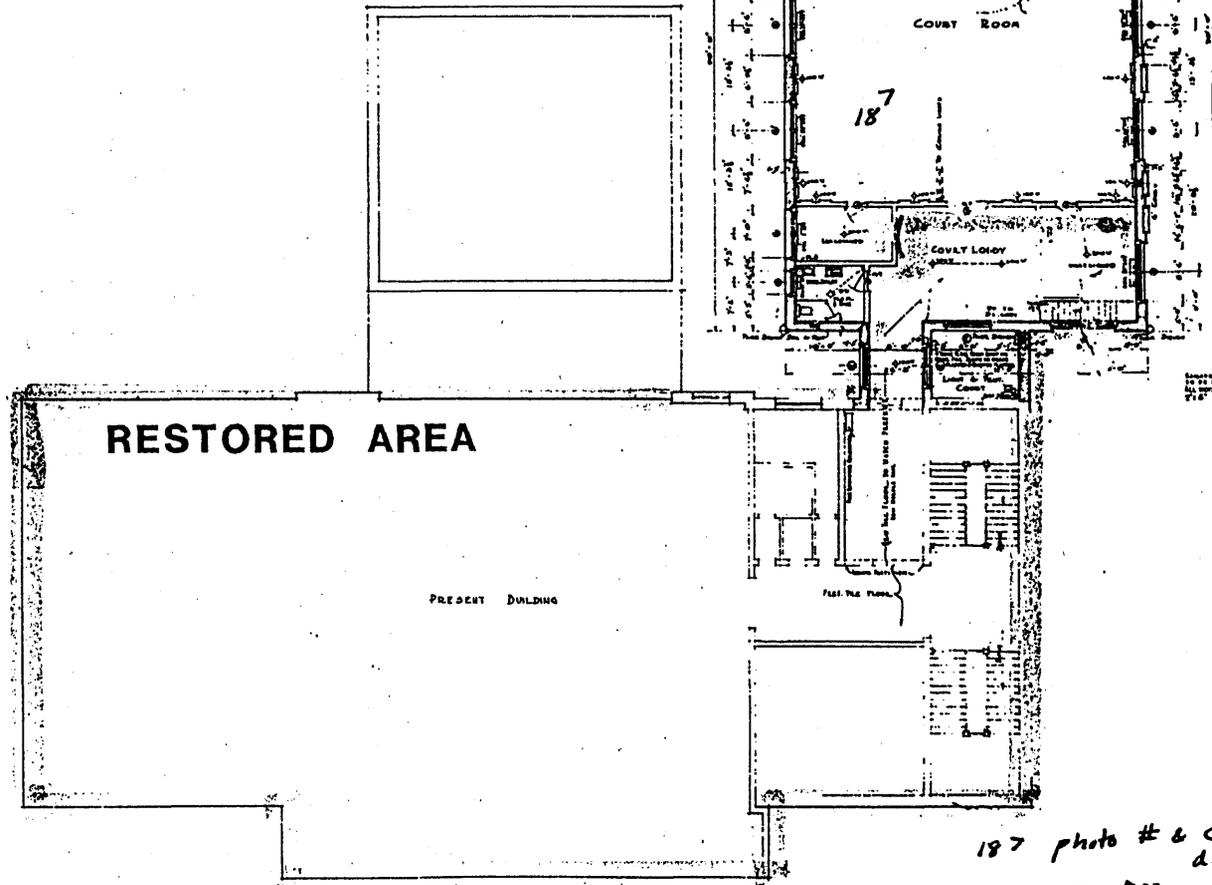
**RESTORED AREA**



Scale: 1"=approx. 16'

22 photo # & camera direction

# PROPOSED RESTORATION



187 photo # & camera direction  
 → N

Scale: 1"=approx. 29'

DATE - SEPT 6th - 1925		SECOND FLOOR PLAN		SCALE 8" = 10'	SHEET NO 10
PLANNED BY GAB	DATE	REVISIONS	ADDITION TO PINELLAS COUNTY COURTHOUSE		FRANCIS J. KERRILL & SON ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS
TRACED BY GAB					

