

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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NAME: Ward County Courthouse

LOCATION: 315 Southeast Third Street, Minot, North Dakota 038, Ward County 101

OWNER: Ward county, Minot, North Dakota

ACREAGE: 1.554 Acres

VBD (LEGAL): Block 3 of Ramstad's Riverside Subdivision of Minot

UTM: Zone 14, Easting = 330130, Northing = 5344525; Minot, N. Dak. Quad.

DESCRIPTION: The Ward County courthouse complex consists in three building components: the historic courthouse, a 1983 jail building, and a 114' skywalk connecting the two. The large historic courthouse has three stories plus basement and attic floors. The 93'x 149' building is capped by a flat roof and maintains an essentially rectangular plan. Bedford limestone serves as the exterior of the clay tile and steel-framed building. Exterior ornament includes cut-stone spandrels bearing medallions between the main and second floors, bronze spandrels cast in a chevron motif between the second and third-story windows, stylized vertical piers, designs at the summit of corner piers, several inscriptions on the friezes of each elevation, and the terraced entrance steps. Interior decorative elements include bronze gates between the vestibule and main atrium, the atrium's three-story shaft leading to the art glass skylight, generous application of various marbles throughout, and painted plaster at the ceiling and cornice molded in a zig-zag pattern.

Major alterations to the site consist in the 1983 construction of a jail and connecting skywalk, the replacement of the original wood frame 4-over-4 lights with fixed-frame windows with 2-over-2 lights during the same year, and the replacement of the roof in 1974. The new roof did not compromise the integrity of design or feeling, since it (as the old) is invisible to all but roof-top viewers. Nor does the new jail building create a visual disturbance to the site. Its comparable massing, vertical fenestration, subdued coloring, and subordinate siting make its design compatible with that of the courthouse.

SIGNIFICANCE: Date: 1929

Architect: Toltz, King, and Day
Contractor: Olson and Orheim

The Ward County Courthouse draws significance from its function as the seat of county government and as the repository of official county documents. Also, the building is significant for its architectural expression.

From 1930-1940, nine courthouses in the state were erected, all with designs inspired by the Art Deco-Art Moderne movement. Minot's courthouse was the first of those nine to be constructed, and one of few Art Deco buildings in the state to have appeared before the style's most visible representative, the state capitol (1932). Its \$498,000 cost marked it as the most expensive county building until nearly thirty years later. The richness and variety of materials on its interior is unsurpassed among its stylistic contemporaries. The achievement of its construction is heightened in that the structure was financed with neither bonded indebtedness nor federal grant.

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