

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Wisconsin	
COUNTY: Dane	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70,10,55,0009	DATE 10/15/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Wisconsin State Capitol

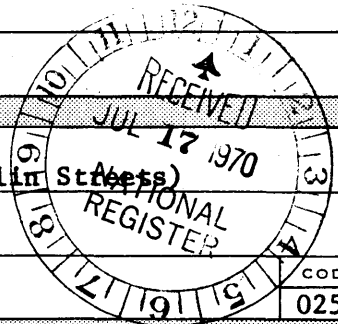
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Capitol Square (Carroll, Main, Pinckney & Mifflin Streets)

CITY OR TOWN:
Madison

STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **53702** COUNTY: **Dane** CODE: **48** COUNTY: **Dane** CODE: **025**



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of Wisconsin

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Madison** STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **48**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
City-County Building

STREET AND NUMBER:
210 Monona Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: **Madison** STATE: **Wisconsin** CODE: **48**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
None

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Cruciform edifice with four wings, each at 90° from the next and each 125 feet in width and 187 feet in length. This, of course, describes a Greek Cross, although in its orientation, with the wings extending toward the corners of the square grounds, the Capitol may be just as accurately described as a St. Andrew's Cross.* Each wing terminates in a portico composed of Corinthian columns supporting a pediment. "At each of the angles formed by the conjunction of the wings is a pavilion crowned with a flat dome. A podium wall above these flat domes forms the base upon which the barrel of the great dome rests. The barrel is treated as a circular Corinthian arcade. The great dome, the crowning feature of the building, rises to a height of 300 feet at the lantern, which is surmounted by a gilded bronze statue symbolic of the spirit of Wisconsin."¹

The architect was George Browne Post of New York City, who was one of the architects of the Columbian Exposition. "Post's cruciform plan with the great dome over the crossing was selected out of five invited submittals,"² by the capitol building commission. The Capitol has been described in its time as one of the most beautiful Capitols in the nation and, in some features, as "undoubtedly the most beautiful public building in America."³ Its dome was intentionally designed to be a few inches lower than that of the Capitol in Washington, D. C.

The apical statue symbolizing Wisconsin's motto, "Forward," was created by Daniel Chester French, a famous sculptor of the Columbian Exposition. Karl Bitter, another renowned sculptor of the same period, "executed the statuary in the east and west pediments and the four groups at the base of the colonnade around the barrel of the dome. The group in the tympanum of the south pediment is by Adolph A. Weinman; that in the north pediment by Attilio Piccirilli."⁴

Exterior construction is of white Bethel granite. In 1965 the entire exterior of the capitol building was cleaned and restored to its original white appearance. Weather permitting, this beautiful, crowning landmark of Madison can be seen for miles, day or night (when it is floodlighted), from most approaches to the city.

"The interior of the Capitol is also very sumptuous, having been executed in exotic marbles, together with many beautiful Wisconsin granites and Kasota limestones from nearby Minnesota quarries."⁵ There is a handsome mural decorating the interior of the dome, and many other murals, with subjects appropriate to their locations, enhance the beauty of the building's interior. The awe-inspiring spaciousness of the barrel and dome, and the beauty of the polished stonework of many colors inside the building can best be appreciated in views from the rotunda at both the ground floor and second floor levels.

The electrical system was recently converted from direct current to alternating current. Other alterations have been minor, such as partitioning and other changes in office areas that are not ordinarily visible to the visiting public.

* See aerial photo appended.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1906, 1917

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | osophy | <u>State government</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <u>and history</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecture, Sculpture. Significance in these areas is in the building's beauty and exemplification of the best of the post-Columbian classicism found in numerous public and private buildings from the time of the Columbian Exposition in 1893 to the Century of Progress in Chicago in 1933. The architecture of George Browne Post in this edifice is both masterful and pleasing. The Wisconsin Capitol, unusual among statehouses of this country in its form and classic symmetry, is a source of pride to the people of the state. It is sumptuous but not overdone in detail. The exterior sculptural work of such masters as Daniel Chester French, Karl Bitter, Adolph A. Weinman and Attilio Piccirilli would be difficult to surpass and completes the harmony and beauty of Classic architectural style at its best.

Invention. The Assembly Chamber contains the first electric voting machine used by a legislative body. Its inventor was B. L. Bobroff, of Milwaukee, and it was installed in 1917.¹

State Government and History. Historically, the present capitol is the third to stand on the same site. Its immediate predecessor, built between 1856 and 1869, burned on February 27, 1904, with serious damage and the loss of valuable state records. Destruction was not total, however, and state government, which needed to be housed during construction of a new capitol, functioned in temporarily repaired parts of the old building as the new one, begun in 1906, was built wing by wing. The new west wing was completed in 1909 and occupied by the Legislature that same year. The building was finally completed for full occupancy in 1917.

The Capitol houses both chambers of the Legislature, the State Supreme Court, the offices of all but one of the state's constitutional officers, and the Wisconsin Law Library. It also contains the G.A.R. Hall, a small museum devoted to Wisconsin's role in the Civil War.

In the Wisconsin Capitol, though not entirely in the present building, took place the historic progressive legislation and innovations in state government for which Wisconsin is noted. Some of this legislation which was enacted in the current building includes the Workmen's Compensation Act and the establishment of the Industrial Commission in 1911; the Unemployment Compensation Act in 1932; and creation of the Public Service Commission in 1931. The latter was actually the continuation and renaming of the first state regulatory agency to control public service companies, which

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Mack, John G. D., "The Four Wisconsin Capitols," Wisconsin Blue Book, 1923: 41-52.

Mikkelsen, Michael A., "The Wisconsin State Capitol, Madison, Wisconsin," Architectural Record, 42:195-233 (September, 1917).

Rainey, Ada, "Mural Decoration in Wisconsin Capitol Painted by H. Ballin," International Studio, 51:clxxxvii-cxcii (February, 1914).

Perrin, Richard W. E., The Architecture of Wisconsin, The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1967 (100-104).

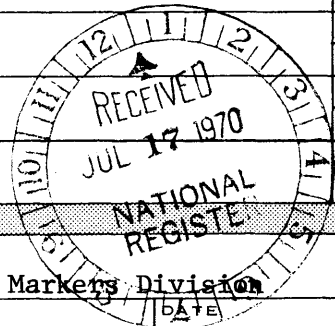
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
NW	Degrees Minutes Seconds N43° 04' 35"	Degrees Minutes Seconds W 89° 23' 10"	Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' "	Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' "		
NE	N43° 04' 35"	W 89° 22' 56"				
SE	N43° 04' 24"	W 89° 22' 56"				
SW	N43° 04' 24"	W 89° 23' 10"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **13.4**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
D. N. Anderson, Asst. Director, Historic Sites & Markers Division

ORGANIZATION:
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE: **6/30/70**

STREET AND NUMBER:
816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Madison

STATE:
Wisconsin 53706

CODE:
48

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Richard A. Erney
Richard A. Erney

Title Acting Director
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Date July 14, 1970

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest Allen Connally
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
OCT 15 1970

Date _____

ATTEST:
William J. ...
Keeper of The National Register
Date **AUG 19 1970**

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(Number all entries)

WISCONSIN STATE CAPITOL

7.

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1. Perrin, Richard W. E., The Architecture of Wisconsin, 100.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Mikkelsen, Michael A., "The Wisconsin State Capitol, Madison, Wisconsin," 196, (quoted in Perrin).
 4. Perrin, op. cit., 100-102.
 5. Ibid.



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WISCONSIN STATE CAPITOL

8.

actually had its beginning in 1874 when, through the Potter Act, Wisconsin railroads were first regulated. Prior to 1931, this regulatory agency, though its scope had been broadened to include gas, water, telephone, and electric utilities, water power, and public transportation, had retained its original identity as the Railroad Commission.

Other of Wisconsin's historically significant, pioneering legislation in socio-legal areas which originated on the same site but not within the present capitol building are the first direct primary election law (1904), the first state civil service system (1905), and the first legislative reference library and bill drafting service (1901), to mention some better known examples.

Many other states, and in some instances the Federal Government, have either adopted or adapted to their own use most of Wisconsin's progressive and forward-looking legislation, governmental practices, and state services which had their origin within the Capitol or had originated in the immediately preceding building on the same site and were further implemented in the Capitol which stands today.

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- Mack, John G. D., "The Four Wisconsin Capitols," 41-52.

