

|                |   |                          |   |  |        |
|----------------|---|--------------------------|---|--|--------|
| <b>1</b>       | City, Village or Town:<br><b>Mauston</b>  | County:<br><b>Juneau</b> | Surveyor:<br><b>L. Garfield<br/>D. Filipowicz</b>                             | Date:<br><b>8/81</b>   | Street |
|                | Street Address:<br><b>220 E. State Street</b>                                   |                          | Legal Description:<br><b>Block 3, Maughs Addition</b>                         | Acreage:<br><b>1.5</b>   |        |
|                | Current Name & Use:<br><b>Juneau County Courthouse</b>                          |                          | Current Owner:<br><b>County of Juneau<br/>Attn: Tom Gullick, County Clerk</b> |  |        |
|                | Film Roll No.   | Affix Contact Prints     |   | Current Owner's Address:<br><b>220 E. State St., Mauston, WI 53948</b> |        |
| Negative No.   | Special Features Not Visible In Photographs:                                    |                          |   |  |        |
| Facade Orient. | Interior visited? <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |                          |   |  |        |

|          |  |                    |                 |       |      |        |      |       |
|----------|--|--------------------|-----------------|-------|------|--------|------|-------|
| <b>2</b> | Original Name & Use:<br><b>Juneau County Courthouse</b>  | Source             | Previous Owners | Dates | Uses | Source | Town |       |
|          | Dates of Construction /Alteration<br><b>1938-1941</b>    | Source<br><b>A</b> |                 |       |      |        |      |       |
|          | Architect and/or Builder:<br><b>Hougen and Henderson</b> | Source<br><b>D</b> |                 |       |      |        |      | Range |
|          |  |                    |                 |       |      |        |      |       |

|          |   |          |  |         |
|----------|---|----------|--|---------|
| <b>3</b> | <b>Architectural Significance</b><br><input type="radio"/> Represents work of a master<br><input type="radio"/> Possesses high artistic values<br><input type="radio"/> Represents a type, period, or method of construction<br><input type="radio"/> Is a visual landmark in the area<br><input checked="" type="radio"/> Other: _____ <input checked="" type="radio"/> None | <b>4</b> | <b>Historical Significance</b><br><input type="radio"/> Assoc. with lives of significant persons<br><input type="radio"/> Assoc. with significant historical events<br><input type="radio"/> Assoc. with development of a locality<br><input checked="" type="radio"/> Other: <u>associated with WPA</u><br><input type="radio"/> None | Section |
|          | Architectural Statement:<br><br><b>SEE REVERSE SIDE</b>   |          | Historical Statement:<br><br><b>SEE REVERSE SIDE</b>   |         |

|          |  |          |   |          |   |
|----------|--|----------|---|----------|---|
| <b>5</b> | Sources of Information (Reference to Above)<br><b>A SEE ADDENDUM</b> | <b>6</b> | Representation in Previous Surveys<br><input type="radio"/> HABS <input type="radio"/> NAER <input checked="" type="radio"/> WIHP <input type="radio"/> NRHP <input type="radio"/> landmark<br><input type="radio"/> other: _____ | Map Code |   |
|          | <b>B</b>   |          | <b>7</b>  |          | Condition<br><input type="radio"/> excellent <input type="radio"/> good <input type="radio"/> fair <input type="radio"/> poor <input type="radio"/> ruins |
|          |  |          |   |          | <b>C</b>  |
|          | <b>D</b>   |          | <b>9</b>  |          |   |
|          |  |          |   |          | <b>E</b>  |
|          | <b>F</b>   |          |   |          |   |

## Architectural Statement:

Description: Composed of interlocking rectangular units, rising three stories in a series of shallow setbacks, the Juneau County Courthouse (1939-1941) is a reinforced concrete structure of Modernistic design, distinguished by stylized geometric ornament and a richly colored and textured quartzite veneer. Situated in the center of Mauston and surrounded by a broad courthouse lawn, the building measures 164' x 70' at its base, climbing upward through a series of set backs from a raised basement. The building is anchored by rectangular two-story units which project outward at each corner. Set back from these, and rising slightly above them, the north facade of the central block is punctuated by two entrances set within smooth stone frames and surmounted by large transoms. Between the entrances on the north facade, a broad central pavilion (eleven window bays wide) projects outward and dominates the elevation. A final, third-story set-back, originally housing the jail and sheriff's residence, crowns the composition. The rear (or south) facade is similiar but does not have a central pavilion. The south facade features a recessed entry featuring massive fluted pillars and pilasters which support a monolithic stone lintel.

Although the massing of the north and south facades is essentially horizontal, the fenestration pattern provides a strong vertical emphasis. Extending across the facade, tall and narrow window openings rise through the first and second stories, separated horizontally by a recessed spandrel and vertically by thin piers. The original windows, which filled the openings, have been removed and replaced with smaller panes of darkened glass surrounded by composition panels. But because the original window openings are still clearly apparent (with the new in-fill and windows recessed from the facade), the verticality of the fenestration pattern is largely preserved. The south facade features the same fenestration pattern (with the same alterations).

The east and west facades (or side elevations) present a dramatic vertical profile, underscored by the recessed central panels which bisect the facades, rising through the first and second stories, crowned with ornamental stone bands featuring both curvilinear and geometric design. Originally these large panels were covered with Modernistic grills.

The Modernistic design of the building is most strongly visible in the well-preserved geometric ornament, including horizontal stone bands which border the cornice, stylized chevron patterns on the spandrels, chevrons on the side wall coping, and ornamental cornerstone and inscription stones.

Enriching the flat planes of the structure, and contrasting with the sharp lines and smoothness of the Modernistic details, the cut-stone veneer of quartzite adds both a warm color and a rugged texture to the building.

Built in two phases between 1938 and 1941, the Juneau County Courthouse is an example of the Moderne style of public architecture from the New Deal period. The introduction of new windows precludes architectural significance, but the building conveys nearly full integrity of site, material, workmanship, and detail, and clearly conveys its historical associations with the WPA program in Juneau County. The exterior of the courthouse, with the exception of the window changes, is largely preserved as built.

## Historical Statement of Significance: Associated with the WPA

Constructed during the final years of the Great Depression, the Juneau County Courthouse is historically significant as the major and most important Works Progress Administration structure built in Mauston and Juneau County, tangibly symbolizing the important role the federal government assumed in aiding the area's economy during the New Deal era. Although the county itself provided considerable financial assistance during the four years of construction (1938-1941), county officials openly reported that the Courthouse "was only

(continued)

## Historical Statement (continued):

possible due to the wonderful support, help, and cooperation of the WPA,<sup>A</sup> and WPA records in both the National Archives and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin clearly indicate that no other WPA project in Juneau County rivalled the scope of the Courthouse construction.<sup>B,C</sup>

The WPA played a highly visible role in the county during the New Deal years (as is evident from numerous news accounts of the time). But the courthouse construction, first started as a WPA project in 1938,<sup>D</sup> was its most visible undertaking. Indeed, when WPA officials mounted an exhibit in Mauston in 1939 to illustrate the work of the WPA in Wisconsin Region 5 (which consisted of the state's 15 north-central counties) the courthouse was the most prominent Juneau County entry.<sup>E</sup> (Other county projects were limited to roads and a dam.) A county-by-county survey of the WPA projects exceeding \$25,000, compiled in 1939, (now housed in the National Archives and made accessible to the State Historical Society by Karla Yasko, Counselor to the Commissioner of Fine Arts and Historic Preservation, General Services Administration) indicates that the two phases of the courthouse construction were the only large-scale undertakings in the county (and among the most expensive WPA projects in the state) by that date.<sup>B</sup> A later (c. 1942) survey of WPA projects, now housed at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, indicates that no later projects in the county rivalled the courthouse in cost or duration.<sup>C</sup> In fact, a survey of WPA funded structures in Wisconsin conducted by a SHSW intern in the summer of 1982 clearly reveals that most WPA projects in Wisconsin were limited to engineering and utilitarian structures and that monumental public buildings like the Juneau County Courthouse were the exceptions rather than the rule throughout the state.

When first proposed as a "WPA project" in the fall of 1937, the County Board planned only to build an addition to the existing (1876) courthouse.<sup>F</sup> Authorized in early 1938 and completed in April 1939, the "addition" measuring 72' x 66' was designed by Don Hougen of Wisconsin Rapids.<sup>D,J</sup> The WPA contributed labor, materials and "offered employment to needy people."<sup>G</sup> The financial success of the project (in the County Board's eyes) was so apparent that even before the addition was completed, the Board voted to raze the old courthouse and build a second, identical, unit immediately to the west of the first, thus creating an entirely new courthouse structure.<sup>H</sup> Approved as a WPA project in February 1939, and completed in 1941, the second unit included further courtroom space plus new offices for the expanding social service agencies of the county and new roof-top quarters for the jail and sheriff.<sup>I</sup> Despite the size of the project, it was reported by the Board that the "unit was built at such a low cost only through the assistance of a federal WPA project."<sup>H</sup>

The importance of the Courthouse lay not only in its size but in the employment opportunities afforded by its construction and the federal aid it brought to the city. When completed, the building housed new judicial, administrative, clerical, social service, school board, and city offices as well as a new jail, sheriff's residence, and museum. "The federal government's cooperation," boasted the local newspaper, "has produced one of the best results achieved by the WPA."<sup>D</sup>

At cornerstone laying ceremonies in the fall of 1939, P. D. Flanders, the State Director of the WPA in Wisconsin, addressed the audience and spoke of the important role of the federal government in the county.<sup>D</sup> Today, the building continues to stand as the major testament to the joint efforts of federal and local agencies in Juneau County during the New Deal era.

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## Historical Statement (continued):

Inclusion of Property Less Than Fifty Years Old: Although the Juneau County Courthouse does not meet the fifty year age requirement of the National Register, its significant association with an important and well-documented historical phenomenon (the WPA) and its status as the largest and most important WPA structure in Juneau County (and one of the largest WPA structures in the state), properly qualify it for listing in the National Register.

As noted above, WPA records at the National Archives and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin as well as contemporary news accounts from the time underscore the notable size of the project and its importance to the county.

Integrity: Within the last decade, the windows of the Juneau County Courthouse were replaced by smaller panes surrounded by stucco-like composition panels. While such windows reduce the architectural significance of the building (as a representative of the art moderne style of public architecture) the windows do not destroy the building's historic character or its ability to convey its historic association with the WPA. The new windows are set within the original window openings and set back from the main facade and the original fenestration pattern is clearly apparent. Moreover, the distinctive quartzite veneer and the characteristic geometric ornament of the period, and modernistic massing of the building are still in original condition. Historic photographs (as they appear in Mauston newspapers from the time of construction) reveal that the building stands today essentially as it did when constructed with the exception of the replacement windows and their surrounding panels.

## Sources of Information:

A Mauston Star, Nov. 24, 1938.

B "Wisconsin: Public Buildings Constructed or Rehabilitated by the Works Progress Administration with a Total Cost in Excess of \$25,000," 1939. Set #1, #14648. (photocopy provided to State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Historic Preservation Division, by Karla Yasko, Counselor to the Commissioner of Fine Arts and Historic Preservation, General Services Administration, Washington, D.C.).

C "WPA Project Card File Records," State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Archives Division, Series 1688, 1936-1942.

D Mauston Star, September 28, 1939.

E Mauston Star, July 20, 1939.

F Mauston Star, November 18, 1937.

G Mauston Star, March 3, 1938.

H Mauston Star, December 15, 1938.

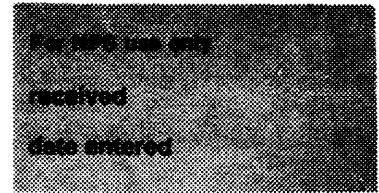
I Mauston Star, February 16, 1939.

J Mauston Star, February 17, 1938.

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

PROPERTY NAME Juneau County Courthouse

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| 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 6 |
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STATE

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COUNTY CODE

Correct street address is 220 E. State

SIGNED, SHPO OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

2/13/86

DATE