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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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Thurston County Courthouse
other names/site number TS03-20, 59

2. Location

street & number 400-412 Main St N/A not for publication
city, town Pender N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Thurston code 173 zip code 68047

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: County Courthouses of Nebraska
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

James W. Hanson Signature of certifying official November 17, 1989 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See cont. sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:) _____

Patrick W. Andrus Signature of the Keeper 1/10/90 Date of Action

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
GOVERNMENT/courthouse
DOMESTIC/hotel
COMMERCE

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/hotel
COMMERCE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance
Other: Second Renaissance Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
walls brick
roof asphalt
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 7, page 1.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
 nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)
Politics/government
Settlement

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

1889-1927

\ N/A

1889-1927

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 8, page 1.

9. Major Bibliographical References

[X] See continuation sheet, section 9, page 1.

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
- Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 1 acre

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>15</u> <u>16</u> <u>10</u> <u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>16</u> <u>14</u> <u>18</u> <u>10</u> <u>10</u>	B	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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	Zone Easting Northing		Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

Verbal Boundary Description

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

Boundary Justification

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Barbara Beving Long, consultant		
organization	Four Mile Research Co.	date	August 9, 1989
street & number	3140 Easton Boulevard	telephone	(515) 266-4964
city or town	Des Moines	state	Iowa zip code 50317

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The First Thurston County Courthouse, which consists of two adjacent buildings, exhibits features of the Property Type, Temporary Courthouse. The older, smaller portion is of modest design not intended to convey its standing as a public building. The larger portion was also not designed to be a courthouse, but as a hotel. Together, the buildings demonstrate the type of temporary facilities county officials often used in the early years of a county's history. The property is the only one identified in the survey leading to the Multiple Property Submission, County Courthouses of Nebraska, of commercial main street buildings used as temporary courthouses, although this was a typical occurrence. Used as the courthouse (older section only) between the year of county organization, 1889, and 1927, the First Thurston County Courthouse appears to hold the state record for "temporary" use; county use expanded into the hotel in 1908. The boomtown front of the smaller portion is now covered with metal siding, but the larger brick-faced section has received minor, mostly storefront alterations, and would be recognizable to historic users of the courthouse.

The older portion of the First Thurston County Courthouse (shown as 222 Main on the attached 1923 Sanborn map) is a modest two-story wood frame rectangular commercial building type that measures 20x50'. Wide metal siding now covers the boomtown front that extends above the gable-front roof and has three windows with vertical mullions. Two of these windows are paired together while the third stands alone. A narrow passage between this older portion and the three-story brick building that together constitute the courthouse offers access to stairs at the end of the older building, which now contains apartments. Ground level alterations include asbestos siding, modern face brick, and a simple flat canopy. Running along the side of the building are tiny attic windows to light the second floor.

According to county records, the county spent \$1500 to provide this courthouse in 1889 when the county was organized, and it appears they acquired an existing building. The building had five small rooms and no vault space, as was typical of Temporary Courthouses. It was remodeled in 1902, according to county records.

In 1892 the adjacent three-story brick-faced U-shaped hotel complex was built, according to an 1893 Sanborn fire insurance map and a red stone panel, "PEEBLES 1892," centered on the cornice. Then known as the Pebbles House, the building's dimensions are 100x95'.

The hotel exhibits elements of the Second Renaissance Revival style,

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including distinct horizontal divisions with pronounced belt courses and an arcade effect achieved through a series of round arched windows on the second floor. The cornice has a series of large circles along it as well as a slender contrasting course. Windows on each of the floors are treated differently, another hallmark of the Second Renaissance Revival. Third floor windows are simple and have voussoirs and a finely moulded course connecting them. Brick round arches outline the second story windows. First floor windows have voussoirs as well but also display extremely tall brick keystones and stone sills.

The centered portion of the hotel, which is six bays wide, is recessed slightly from the three-bay ends and contains the hotel entrance. The right or east bay was built to contain a bank. A remarkable stone door surround features colonettes and foliated detail as well as the word, "BANK." The attractive stone detail is repeated at the hotel entrance, which has double doors and transoms.

As is common with commercial buildings, there have been first floor alterations. These include new windows and the application of mosaic tile, brick, and other replacement panels. The interior of the hotel lobby retains important features, including high ceilings, some transoms, bulls-eye headblocks, and a wood staircase with three spindles/riser and a paneled squared newel topped with an urn shape. In addition to its continuing use as a hotel, the Palace Hotel contains a health club and professional offices.

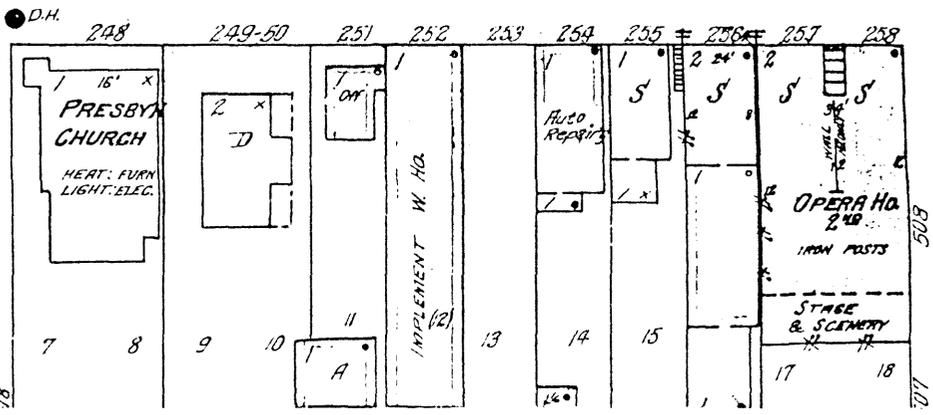
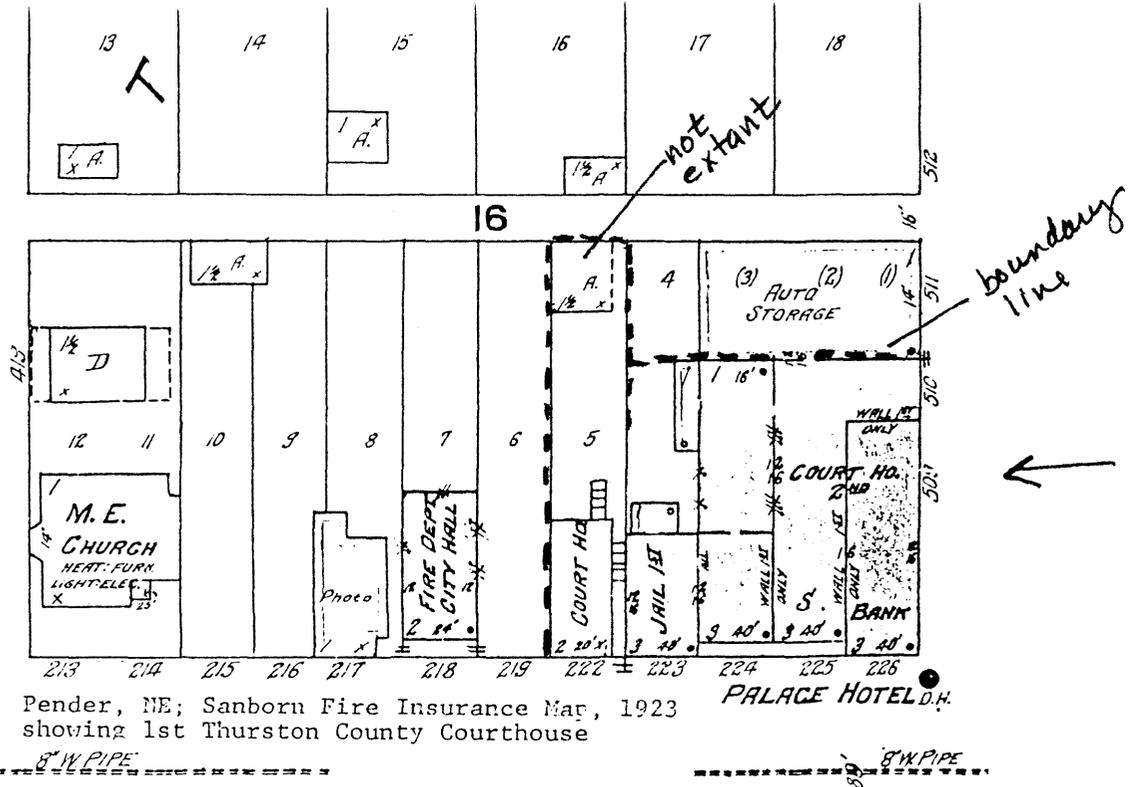
The Peebles House or Palace Hotel, as it was known as early as 1908, occupies a key corner site in the midst of Pender's three-block commercial street. Many of the buildings in this attractive compact commercial area are two- and three-story and date from the late nineteenth century. One-story examples are also represented but generally date from the early twentieth century.

After the county leased the Palace Hotel in 1908, county offices for the district judge, clerk of court, treasurer and county clerk occupied the second floor as well as the district court room. The jury room was on the third floor as was space for the superintendent of schools and the surveyor. The older frame building contained the sheriff's office and space for the county attorney and the jail until 1923 when the latter was moved to the first floor of the hotel. To accommodate county needs, the hotel owners built two large storage vaults.

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The First Thurston County Courthouse is significant under Criterion A (Politics/government and Settlement). The property derives its historical significance as the first focal point for the administration of local government and institutions in Thurston County. In addition, it symbolizes governmental stability and calls attention to the circumstances under which a county may be organized in a newly settled area. As a leased pawn in the county seat wars waged between Pender and Walthill, the courthouse illustrates the problems county boards encountered who failed to provide a permanent courthouse. Together, the two buildings that formed this Temporary Courthouse demonstrate one type of temporary facilities county officials used in the early years of a county's history.

The property is the only example of commercial main street buildings used as a temporary courthouse that was identified in the survey leading to the Multiple Property Submission, County Courthouses of Nebraska, although this was a typical occurrence. Used as the courthouse (older section only) between the year of county organization, 1889, and 1927, the First Thurston County Courthouse appears to hold the state record for "temporary" use; county use expanded into the hotel in 1908. The Period of Significance is therefore 1889-1927. Although altered, the First Thurston County Courthouse would be identifiable to its historic users. The property is being nominated as an example of the Property Type, County Courthouses in Nebraska, 1854-1941, from the Multiple Property Submission, County Courthouses of Nebraska.

Despite its location along the Missouri River in the northeast part of the state, Thurston County was not among the early riverside counties in Nebraska. Unlike most counties, it contains an Indian reservation, for the Winnebago and Omaha Indians, a factor in its late establishment. The county was not created until 1889, following sale of former Indian lands in 1884.

Pender has always been the county seat. Largely through the efforts of W.E. Peebles, the community was established in 1884. In addition to founding the town, serving as the first mayor, and building the Peebles House (part of the nominated property), Peebles donated a depot site to induce the railroad to come to Pender. By 1889, when the county was organized, population reportedly stood at 700.

In 1908 county commissioners sought to expand courthouse space by leasing space in the Palace Hotel adjacent to the existing courthouse, which was apparently purchased in 1889. Walthill residents eager for the county

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seat designation made an issue of the temporary nature of the Thurston County Courthouse and these leasing plans. They took the commissioners to court and also began a petition drive to vote on the county seat location. Walthill is located near the center of the county, while Pender is in the western extreme, a further problem for Pender. The court case went all the way to the Nebraska Supreme Court, which reversed a lower court decision, and cleared the way for the county to lease the hotel space. The controversy raged on in 1909 and 1910, with charges and countercharges the order of the day. Walthill boosters eventually lost out on the petition drive when Pender supporters proved that Walthill was engaging in fraudulent practices to secure petition signatures.

Recognizing the importance of county-owned permanent courthouse facilities in stilling talk of county seat moves, Pender boosters provided Thurston County with its present courthouse in 1927. Following a school district reorganization in 1924, the 1895 schoolhouse located just west of the Pender business district was closed. Pender residents raised funds to buy the former school and also helped the county alter it to meet the specialized needs of county government.

In an early instance of adaptive re-use, the county hired J.F. Reynolds, an architect in Sioux City, Iowa, to plan the changes. In February of 1927, Reynolds met with interested parties "and gave a very desirable talk on preservation of the present Old School Building," according to county commissioner records. Among the changes made were installing four fireproof storage vaults, a new roof, plumbing and some new flooring, also rewiring, and new partitions. Even though the building was designed to be a school, room arrangements for courthouse use conform to the norm. Commonly visited county offices and their vaults are on the first floor, and the district courtroom is on the second.

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Long, Barbara Beving. "County Courthouses of Nebraska." Multiple Property Submission. 1989.
Thurston County. Commissioners' Records. Books 2 and 3.
Pender, Nebraska. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. 1893, 1923.
Works Progress Administration. Survey of County Courthouse Records. 1936.
NeSHS Archives. Thurston County.
County Assessor's Records.
Pender Centennial Book Committee. Pender, Nebraska. The First 100 Years. 1885-1985. Dallas: Curtis Media Corp., 1984.
"Pender Pan-O-Rama. Diamond Jubilee...Official Historical Booklet."
Typed report on courthouses. Clerk's office. Thurston County. 1939.
Nebraska State Historical Society. Photo Collection. #M281-1067.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of lot 5, block 16 and the south 95 feet of lots 1-4, block 16 of the Original Plat of Pender.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the portions of commercial frontage that have historically been associated with county use of the property.