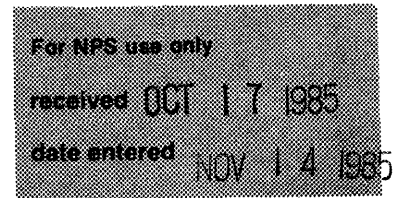


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NAME: Former McLean County Courthouse

LOCATION: Main Street, Washburn, North Dakota 38, McLean County 055

OWNER: City of Washburn, North Dakota 38, McLean County 055

VBD: Lots 5-8, Block 12, Veeder's Addition to the Washburn Townsite

ACREAGE: Less than 1 acre

UTM: Zone 14, Easting = 346580, Northing = 5239125; Washburn, N. Dak. Quad.

DESCRIPTION: The former McLean County courthouse is located on a downtown lot, and shares the block with businesses and residences. The main wood frame clapboard structure measures 35'x 35' and has a 5'x 13' basement entry on the east side and an 18'x 35' stucco covered garage on the west side. The building rises two floors to a low pitched gable roof. The garage has a flat roof and front and rear pedestrian doors; the east entry door has a shed roof and a diminutive boomtown parapet. The windows on the main building are one-over-one double hung with wooden frames.

The interior space follows the plan of residences: rooms flow continuously from front to rear rather than being partitioned into the traditional hall and office arrangement. The upper floor still has a rather large open room, probably the original courtroom, with rooms toward the rear which would have served the judge and jury.

The building now contains the collection of artifacts maintained by the county historical society.

SIGNIFICANCE: Date 1905-1917

Architect/Builder: unknown

The second McLean County courthouse has served the county in a variety of ways since its construction in 1905. For twelve years it housed the official records of McLean County and provided space for court trials. The structure was designed as a functional, less ornate replacement for the original courthouse which burned in June of 1905. The first courthouse occupied the site until it burned, and county residents presently recognize the original use of the building and site. The building is one of few courthouse buildings to have escaped demolition upon vacation by county offices (others: Billings, Sioux, Ward, McKenzie, and Pierce counties). The building's sound condition and the relocation of the new courthouse may account for its continued existence after 1917.

The building, in comparison to its predecessor and its successor, is a less outstanding work of architectural design. It has the most basic expression of Georgian Revival composition in its blocky mass, symmetry, and pronounced gable. The building slightly resembles the prosaic "pattern book" courthouses being erected west of the Missouri River in newly forming counties although it is superior in design and construction to them. The county museum retains a high degree of integrity for a building of its age. Its current use as the home of the county's historical collection affirms and furthers its place in the context of local history.

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