

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only
received 10, 28/80
DEC - 3 1980
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Antelope County Courthouse (AP04-1)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 501-511 Main Street not for publication

city, town Neligh vicinity of congressional district Third

state Nebraska code 031 county Antelope code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

4. Owner of Property

name Antelope County Commissioners

street & number Antelope County Courthouse

city, town Neligh vicinity of state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Antelope County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Neligh state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Preservation in Nebraska has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1971 federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town Lincoln state Nebraska

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Antelope County Courthouse is located on the east side of Main Street and just north of the main business district of Neligh. The northeast corner of the building is on the exact center of block 5 of the original town. The courthouse is a moderately pretentious two-story building of pressed brick construction. Measuring 63 x 68 feet, it has high rectangular windows on the first story and arched windows on the second story. Through a rather plain entrance, a central hallway leads to the various county offices. A second entrance is on the south side, facing toward the business district, and a third is on the east side, facing toward the present highway. On the second floor, the courtroom and judges chambers are located. The interior hallways, offices, and courtroom are very plain yet functional in design. On the outside, the only decorative features consists of tinwork trim and a terra-cotta statue of an antelope, standing high above the main west entrance. Purchased by the ladies of Antelope County, the statue was exhibited at the Chicago Exposition of 1893.

Originally the courthouse was crowned by a large four-sided clock tower. Four smaller pyramids were built into the roof at each corner of the building. With the tower, the building was nearly 100 feet high. Arched trusses were used to support the tower and Howe trusses were used to carry the rest of the ceiling. Due to extreme deterioration, the clock tower was removed in 1964 and a new roof built over; the smaller pyramids remain.

In 1966, a new office annex was constructed just north of the courthouse. The annex is a separate building and not connected to the courthouse, maintaining the original structure's integrity. The interior of the courthouse has been slightly altered as some of the original offices such as county clerk and treasurer were moved into the annex, and were replaced by other county offices. With the exception of the removed clock tower, the Antelope County Courthouse remains essentially unchanged since its construction in 1894.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1894-1895 **Builder/Architect** George F. MacDonald, Fred Thornton

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Antelope County Courthouse symbolizes Neligh's growth and prosperity in the nineteenth century. It is both one of the oldest courthouse buildings still in use and one of about 10 remaining nineteenth century courthouses in Nebraska.

When Antelope County was organized, the small settlement of Oakdale in the southeastern part of the county was selected as county seat. In 1873, Neligh was founded in a more central location, and efforts began to move the county seat there. After a bitter struggle, Neligh won out and the county offices moved there in 1883. From 1883 to 1894, the offices were housed in two rented buildings, costing the county \$1,000 a year. Several elections were held to pass bond issues for the construction of a courthouse building, but were defeated by the vote of outlying precincts, particularly in the Oakdale area. On June 5, 1894, a proposal for a tax levy for the purpose of building a courthouse finally passed.

The building plans drawn by George E. MacDonald of Lincoln were selected, but later were found to be incomplete, and Fred Thornton of Neligh finished the drawings. J. N. Mills was hired as the contractor with the stipulation that he was to hire county labor for the work. Also he was to give preference to home work and materials when ever possible. On August 2, construction of the building began. The courthouse was finished at a cost of \$15,238 and dedicated on January 11, 1895.

With the completion of the courthouse, the location of the county seat was permanently fixed in Neligh. Neligh became the most important town in the county with the benefit of being county seat and also having a successful flour mill.

As county government grew, the courthouse proved inadequate for housing all county offices. By 1900, the sheriff's office and jail were moved into the former Gates College Gymnasium which the county purchased for \$800. In 1966, a separate annex building for the county clerk, treasurer, and other offices was built to the north of the courthouse. However, the building of the annex and the removal of the deteriorated clock tower insured the continued use of the old courthouse.

Because of necessary replacement, nineteenth century courthouses have become a relative rarity in Nebraska. Rather than destroy and build new, Antelope County continued to use the original structure. The Antelope County Courthouse represents the progress of its people and was the most impressive building in the county. Today it is an excellent example of the many such courthouses that were built in the nineteenth century and have since been torn down to make way for modern structures.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Neligh, Nebraska

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	4	5	8	0	2	6	1	4	6	6	4	4	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tom Buecker, Curator Neligh Mill

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date August, 1980

street & number P.O. Box 271

telephone 402/287-4303

city or town Neligh

state Nebraska

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Marion D. Knott

10/7/80

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

date

For HCRS use only

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

Bruce Van Drough

date

12/3/80

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation sheet Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 2

Article, Neligh Leader, January 11, 1895.

"History of Antelope County", published by the Antelope County Historical Society, 1973.

Blue prints of courthouse on file at county museum.

Interview, Mrs. Kenneth Pierson, February 18, 1980.