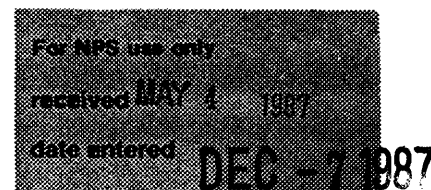


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Harding County, Mosquero
County Courthouses of New Mexico

1. Name: Harding County Courthouse
(County Courthouses of New Mexico)
2. Location: Pine Street
Mosquero, New Mexico
3. Owner: Harding County Commission
Harding County Courthouse
Mosquero, New Mexico 87733

7. Description: The 1922 Classical Revival Style Harding County Courthouse is a two story, flat roofed building with little embellishment. Situated in a small town in the most rural county in New Mexico, this white, two story structure stands out from the New Mexico Vernacular Style residences which surround it. The building was constructed as a school prior to 1922, and later remodeled into the Courthouse. It is coincidentally located in a Shelbyville style court square, and remains essentially unchanged since 1922.

This two story, square shaped building has a flat roof and projecting cornice molding embellished with dentils and brackets. One brick chimney rises from the east side on the exterior of the building. Windows are 1-over-1 double hung wood sash, with an occasional transom. A metal fire escape is attached to the building on the north side. The main entrance is on the west side through an off-center portico. The portico is embellished with engaged pilasters, bracketed and dentilated cornice, and broad pediment. The entrance consists of two 8 light French doors, with 4 light sidelights. One of these has been stuccoed over. Above the door hangs a wire light fixture.

Minor remodeling on the interior includes vinyl tile floors, plaster walls and ceilings, and exposed fluorescent lights. Doors are wooden with wood framed transom light; the baseboards and banister railings are also wood. Exposed wire, conduit, and metal pipe railings clutter the walls.

The second floor courtroom has vinyl tile flooring, Deco Style wood and metal seating, wooden chair rail moldings and a wood panel judge's bench. The acoustical tile ceiling may conceal a stamped tin ceiling above. Harding County does not have a jail. They share facilities with adjacent counties.

The Harding County Courthouse is in fair condition with minor remodeling mostly evident on the exterior.

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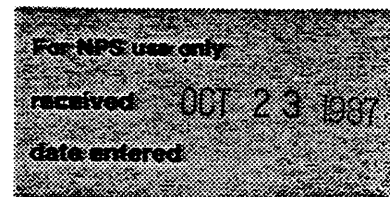
8. Significance: The Harding County Courthouse in Mosquero, New Mexico meets National Register Criterion C as the most substantial, best-designed historic, public building in the county, a building which achieves many of the objectives of Classical-styled courthouse design with the most limited means.

Most of the courthouse's limited detailing surrounds the main entrance on the west side: projecting piers and a molded cornice on two scroll brackets frame the entrance, and directly above on the second story engaged pilasters reach up to the molding-and-dentil entablature which circles the building. After passing through this main entrance, one turns to the left, back up a single flight of stairs to a landing above the entrance. A single stairway leads on to a small vestibule outside the courtroom. In the rectangular courtroom, a railing separates the public seating from the "sanctuary" beyond with its raised platforms and seats for the witness, jury and judge. The second floor has a T-shaped plan, lacking rooms above the northeast and southeast corners of the rectangular first floor; (note the drop from two to one stories on the right in the photograph). This arrangement allows windows on three sides of "sanctuary," thereby bathing the seat of justice in light. The classical detailing and deeply-set entrance provide the courthouse with the proper solemnity, while the interior plan achieves the traditional courthouse metaphor of the ascension to light and justice.

The population of mostly-rural Harding County peaked at 4,421 in 1930 and has declined steadily since, standing at 1090 in 1980. The county seat of Mosquero has never numbered more than a few hundred inhabitants. The courthouse, not surprisingly, is the most substantial civic building ever erected in the county; its half-block grounds, ringed by a metal lattice fence and symmetrically planted with trees, are one of only two defined public spaces in the county. The other is the small, triangular public square ringed by one and two-story commercial buildings in nearby Roy, New Mexico. Surrounding the courthouse and scattered throughout Mosquero are modest, one-story houses of adobe, stone and wood frame, most with corrugated metal roofs. Completing the town are three modest stone or stuccoed churches, eight to ten one-story stuccoed commercial buildings, two blocks north of the courthouse, and, another two blocks to the north, a set of

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new school buildings. Amid these vernacular buildings, the courthouse, for all its modesty, has an imposing presence.

9. Major Bibliographic References:

Pare, Richard, ed. Courthouse: A Photographic Document. New York: Horizon Press, 1978.

Pratt, Boyd. Gone But Not Forgotten. Santa Fe: Historic Preservation Division, 1986.

Robinson, Willard. The People's Architecture: Texas Courthouses, Jails and Municipal Halls. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1983.

New Mexico State Highway Department. "General Highway Map of Harding County," with insert "Village of Mosquero." Santa Fe: NMSHD, 1951. Map Room, UNM.

Savy, Coe. "Harding County Courthouse was One a School." Harding County Historical Society Newsletter. Ca. 1973.

Whisenhunt, Donald. New Mexico Courthouses. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1979.

Wilson, Chris. "Mosquero, N.M., September 15, 1987." Field notes on file NMHPD.

10. Geographical Data: The nominated property consists of Blocks 1-6, block 7, of the Original Townsite of Mosquero.

Quad Name: Mosquero, N.M. Quad Scale: 1:24,000

UTM Reference: 13 594295 3959310

Acreage: approximately 1.5 acres.