

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 9 1977

DATE ENTERED MAR 28 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Bristol County Courthouse Complex

AND/OR COMMON
same**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 15, 11, 9 Court Street

CITY, TOWN

Taunton

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

10th

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE
025COUNTY
BristolCODE
005**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☐ YES, RESTRICTED
☒ YES, UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ COMMERCIAL
☐ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☒ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSEUM
☐ PARK
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Bristol County

STREET & NUMBER
9 Court Street

CITY, TOWN

Taunton

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts, 02780

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Bristol County Registry of DeedsSTREET & NUMBER
11 Court Street

CITY, TOWN

Taunton

STATE

Massachusetts, 02780

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYSTITLE
Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE

1976

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Massachusetts Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Boston

STATE
Massachusetts, 02108

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
☒ EXCELLENT	☐ DETERIORATED	☒ UNALTERED	☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ GOOD	☐ RUINS	☐ ALTERED	☒ MOVED
☐ FAIR	☐ UNEXPOSED		DATE 1894 (#1)

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Bristol County Courthouse complex consists of a group of three buildings situated in the downtown section of Taunton at the corner of Court Street and Taunton Green. The buildings occupy approximately two acres of property directly opposite the town Common.

The First District Courthouse (#1) was constructed in 1826 and was moved west to its present site in 1894 to provide space for the erection of the Superior Courthouse (#2). The elegant two story brick masonry Greek Revival structure at 15 Court Street faces south. The partially exposed basement is defined by a wide granite water table at the first story floor level. The three bay wide facade is dominated by an Ionic portico. Four two story columns support a heavy molded entablature beneath a triangular pediment. Ten full length stone steps with iron railings lead to the center entrance. The double three panel doors are flanked by delicate pilasters, headed by an entablature containing the name of the building and crowned by a triangular pediment. On either side of these doors are 6/6 windows with panels below. Three symmetrically placed 12/12 windows occupy the second story. The corners of the building are articulated by wide brick pilasters. The pediment of the portico is surmounted by an octagonal cupola with arched louvered openings and a weathervane. There is a later addition on the north (rear) elevation.

The Bristol County Superior Courthouse (#2) is set well back on a spacious lawn. The building faces south toward Taunton Green and stands on the site of two previous courthouses (1772 and 1826). The distinguished building dominates the center of the city. The imposing Richardsonian Romanesque structure, designed by Frank Irving Cooper, was built in 1894. It is of rough faced granite with a copper roof and dome. It has a high water table. The courthouse is dominated by a 170' central tower which rises in three stages. The first stage contains a series of four small windows divided by stout engaged columns. The second stage is a duodecagonal cylinder which rises from the granite roof on the stage below. Its facade is composed of a central triple arched window divided by compound piers with Romanesque capitals. The center arch contains an oculus. A low balustrade runs along the sill. To either side of this triple window is an engaged cylinder headed by a small Byzantine style dome with a round arcade on short columns. A console table in stone with a circular design relief separates the tower from the duodecagonal copper dome. This dome is crowned by a large flame motif finial. The main body of the facade is 2½ stories, with a dentiled granite stringcourse at the second story floor level. A gable entrance projects from the center of the facade. A large round molded arch on short columns marks the double arched doors. These are flanked by a single window on either side, and are headed by a wide three round arched window on compound piers on the second story. Each of the three arches contains a double arched window separated by colonettes and headed by an oculus. The gable above has a round relief ornament crowned by a rounded finial. To either side of the center section is a decorative gable dormer with a rounded finial at the peak. The eastern and western ends of the facade are marked by a three story turret. Fenestration on the first story of the facade is single casement separated from a transom window by a wide granite band. The second story is arched windows, and the third is small 1/1 separated by double engaged columns.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Bristol County

CONTINUATION SHEET Courthouse Complex ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The Registry of Deeds (#3) is located between the other two buildings at 11 Court Street. The Georgian Revival structure, designed by Albion Marble of Fall River, was built in 1918. It is a two story brick building with granite ornamentation. The hip roof has two tall chimneys. The partially exposed granite basement is marked by a rounded granite watertable at the first floor level. A molded granite stringcourse connects the sills of the first story windows, and a granite stringcourse defines the first and second stories. All corners of the building are quoined. A wide molded entablature with projecting cornice encircles the building. Fenestration on the facade is 18 light double casements and on the elevations single 2/2 casements with eight light tracery above. All windows are headed by a granite entablature with keystone. The five bay wide south facade has a two story single bay center entrance engaged Doric portico. The arched entrance itself is flanked by paired pilasters and headed by a dentiled cornice above the building title in the frieze. Directly above this is a second story window which has a wide bottom panel with "1918" inscribed within and a molded architrave. A single window on the first and on the second story flank the portico. The eastern and western end bays project slightly from the center section. The east and west elevations are nine bays deep. Both elevations have a central three bay wide section which projects slightly.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☒ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☒ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☒ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	1826 (#1), 1894 (#2), 1918 (#3)	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Frank Irving Cooper (#2) Albion Marble (#3)
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bristol County Courthouses are significant for their architectural prominence and for their part in the governmental history of Taunton.

All three buildings are fine examples of their various styles and stand together as an impressive unit in the center of the city. First District Courthouse (#1) is the best example of Greek Revival architecture in Taunton, just as the Superior Courthouse (#2) remains the most outstanding Richardsonian Romanesque structure in the city. Between these two, the Registry of Deeds (#3) is representative of Taunton's finest Georgian Revival architecture.

Taunton was designated the Shire Town of Bristol County following the settlement of a boundary dispute with Rhode Island which assigned the town of Bristol to that state. The first courthouse was built in Taunton in 1746, followed by two others constructed in 1772 and 1826. These were both located on the site of the present Superior Courthouse (#2). The 1826 building once housed the Municipal Court of Taunton, 1854. It was established as the First District Courthouse (#1) in 1874 and was moved west to its present location in 1894.

Frank Irving Cooper, the well-known Massachusetts architect who designed the Superior Courthouse, was born in May of 1867. He founded the Frank Irving Cooper Corp. in 1914. The organization is well remembered for fine school architecture. Mr. Cooper designed high schools in Malden, Attleboro, Plymouth, Somerville and Quincy. He is also responsible for the design of the Medford Public Library, the Ashburnham Memorial Town Hall, and the Clark Laboratory at Amherst College. Cooper died in November of 1933.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Old Colony Historical Society.

City of Taunton, Tercentenary Official Program, 1639-1939.

Cross, Wilton, Historic Taunton, The Story of 300 Years in Pictures, Taunton, 1939.

City Engineer Maps, 1828-29, 1869.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approx. 1 1/4 acres

UTM REFERENCES

D A 11 9 3 2 6 1 6 0 4 6 4 0 9 0 0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 1 9 3 2 6 2 8 0 4 6 4 0 8 2 0

A B 1 9 3 2 6 2 8 0 4 6 4 0 9 0 0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C D 1 9 3 2 6 1 6 0 4 6 4 0 8 2 0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Blaine Mallory and Joseph Orfant, National Register Editor
(Christine White, Taunton Historical Commission)

ORGANIZATION Massachusetts Historical Commission DATE July 5, 1977

STREET & NUMBER 294 Washington Street TELEPHONE 617-727-8470

CITY OR TOWN Boston, STATE Mass. 02108

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Peter L. Wedawski

TITLE Acting Executive Director, Mass. Historical Commission

DATE 7/19/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Katherine H. Cole*

DATE

3-28-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3-26-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

BRICK WALL

Bristol County Courthouse Complex
Taunton, Massachusetts
Sketch Map
Scale: 1"=50'
City Engineers' Map, c. 1940

FIRST
DISTRICT
COURT

#1

COMMERCIAL

REGISTRY
OF
DEEDS

#3

CONCRETE
TUNNEL

BRICK WALL

SUPERIOR
COURT

#2

COMMERCIAL

BRICK WALL

MODERN
COMMERCIAL
MALL



TAUNTON GREEN
(CITY SQUARE)

THE COMMON

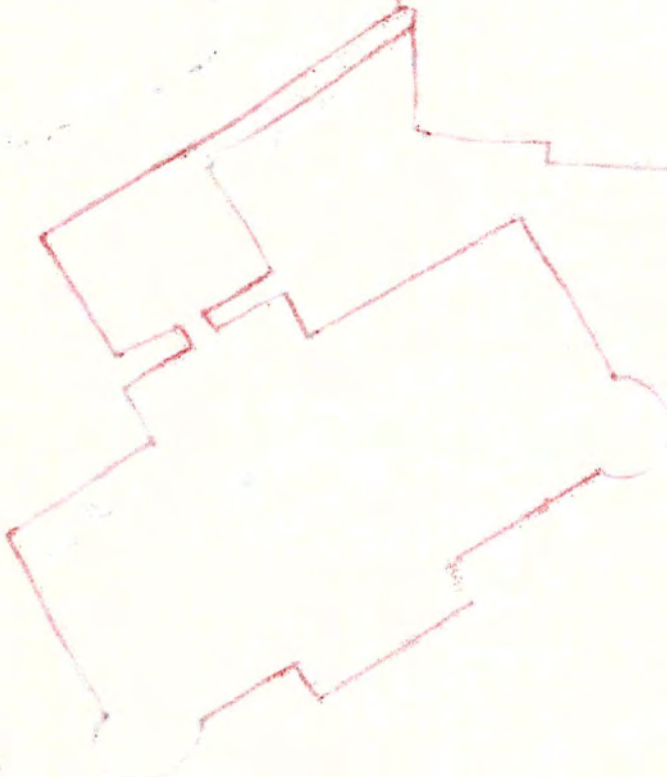
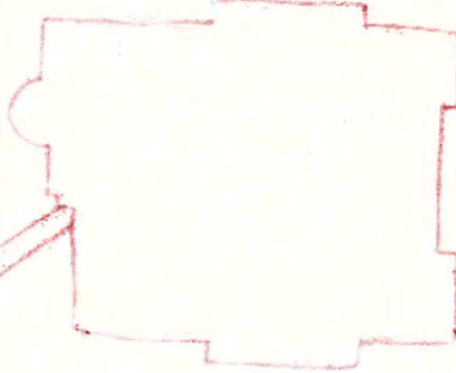
COURT
STREET

VACANT
LOT

COMMERCIAL

TAUNTON
GREEN

MAR 28 1978



Property

Bristol County Courthouse Complex

State

Mass.

Working Number

8.9.77.1262

Bristol

TECHNICAL

Photos

Maps

3
1, sketch

CONTROL

8.11.77

THE COMPLEX COMPRISES 3 DISTINCT STYLES, EACH
STATED TO BE THE FINEST EXAMPLE FOUND
IN THE CITY: RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE
GREEK REVIVAL
GEORGIAN REVIVAL

ARCHITECTURAL

HISTORIAN 2

ACCEPT

H. Smith
12/12/77

NO V.B.D.

~~File in situation for 8.9.77.1262~~
would like to see photograph of First District
Courthouse near elevation with additions.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Jann Gilmore
10.25.77

Accept

I can accept without additional photo. 1/25/78

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Lebowich
2/16/78

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

J. Smith
3/24/78

National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered MAR 28 1978

Federal Register Entry

5.2.78

Re-submit _____

INT:2106-74



Bristol County Courthouse Complex
Taunton, Massachusetts
1976

MAR 28 1978

Richard Mros

Old Colony Historical Society
66 Church Green, Taunton, MA. 02780

#1 ⁸³

South facade of First District
Courthouse (#1).

AUG 9 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Bristol County Courthouse Complex
Taunton, Massachusetts
1976

MAR 28 1978

Richard Mros

Old Colony Historical Society

66 Church Green, Taunton, MA. 02780

#2 ~~8~~3

South facade of Bristol County

Superior Courthouse (#2)

AUG 9 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Bristol County Courthouse Complex
Taunton, Massachusetts

1976

Richard Mros

Old Colony Historical Society

66 Church Green, Taunton, MA. 02780

#3

South facade of Registry of Deeds (#3)

AUG 9 1977

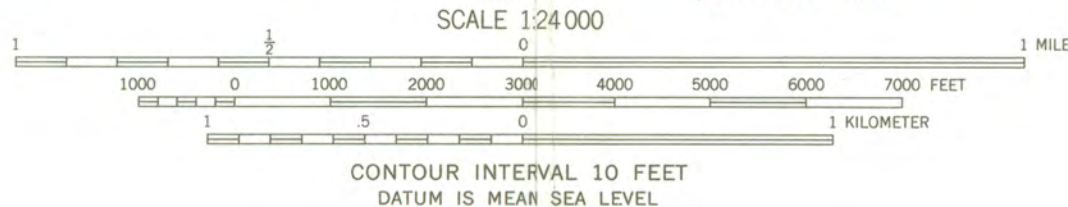
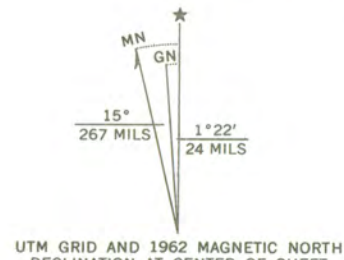
MAR 28 1978

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Bristol County Court-
house Complex
Taunton, Massachusetts
UTM Coordinates:
A 19/326 160/4640 900
B 19/326 280/4640 900
C 19/326 280/4640 820
D 19/326 160/4640 820

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry in part by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs. Topography by planimetric surveys 1942
Revised 1962

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
U.S. Route ——— State Route ———

TAUNTON, MASS.
N4152.5-W7100.7

1962

AMS 6767 1 NE - SERIES V814

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



2. 15. 78

TELEPHONE REPORT

TIME OF CALL

2:15 PM 9:45



1. CALL ☒ TO: ☐ FROM (Name)

JOSEPH ORFANT

2. ADDRESS (Tel. No. if needed)

MASSACHUSETTS

617) 727-8470

3. SUBJECT, PROJECT NO., ETC.

BRISTOL COUNTY COURTHOUSE COMPLEX

4. DETAILS OF DISCUSSION

DESCRIBE THE LATER ADDITION ON THE NORTH (NEAR)
ELEVATION OF THE FIRST DISTRICT COURTHOUSE:

HE DOES NOT THINK LATER ADDITION IS INTRUSIVE -
IS NOT A HIGHER BUILDING. HE IS CALLING
CHRISTINE WHITE TO GET PHOTOGRAPH FROM HER AND IS
SENDING IT.

2/15/78 3:45 pm.

2/16/78 JOSEPH ORFANT CALLED TO SAY ADDITION TO FIRST
DISTRICT COURTHOUSE IS ONE ROOM SIZE / 2 STORIES IN
HEIGHT WITH A FLAT ROOF.

HE INDICATED HE HAD SOUGHT TO OBTAIN A
PHOTO FOR US BUT IT WOULD BE SPRAWLING BEFORE HE
COULD GET IT. SAID HE WAS CERTAIN ADDITION
WAS NOT INTRUSIVE.

NAME OF PERSON PLACING/RECEIVING CALL

TITLE

OFFICE

James A. Gilmore

Arch. Historian

OAHF

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE **MASSACHUSETTS**

Date Entered **MAR 28 1978**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Bristol County Courthouse Complex	Taunton Bristol County

Also Notified

Hon. Edward W. Brooke
Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
Hon. Margaret M. Heckler

Regional Director, North Atlantic Region

880

Mott/js

4/3/78

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Elizabeth R. Amadon
Executive Director, Massachusetts
Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

① NAME as it appears on federal register:
Bristol County Courthouse Complex

② OTHER NAMES:

③ date of entry: MAR 28 1978

④ county code: 005

⑤ LOCATION street & number: 9, 11, 15 Court St.

city / town: Taunton

vicinity of:

state: MA

county: Bristol

⑥ NPS REGION: North Atlantic

⑦ OWNER ☐ PRIVATE ☐ STATE ☐ MUNICIPAL ☒ COUNTY ☐ MULTIPLE ☐ FEDERAL (agency name):

⑧ ADMINISTRATOR:

⑨ EXISTING SURVEYS ☐ HABS ☐ HAER ☐ NHL ☐ FUNDING? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ CONGRESS DISTRICT 10th

⑩ SOURCE of NOMINATION ☒ STATE ☐ FEDERAL

⑪ WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? ☐ YES, NAME: ☐ NO

⑫ WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? ☐ YES, NAME: ☐ NO

⑬ ACRES: 1.25

⑭ LOCAL ☐ PRIVATE ORGANIZATION

⑮ CONDITION ☐ deteriorated ☐ altered ☐ original site

☐ excellent ☐ ruins ☐ unaltered ☐ moved

☐ good ☐ unexposed ☐ reconstructed ☐ unknown

☐ fair ☐ unexcavated ☐ excavated

⑯ features: ☐ SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-1 ☐ SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-2 ☐ SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3

☐ NOT INTACT-0 ☐ NOT INTACT-0 ☐ NOT INTACT-0

☐ UNKNOWN-4 ☐ UNKNOWN-5 ☐ UNKNOWN-6

☐ NOT APPLICABLE-7 ☐ NOT APPLICABLE-8 ☐ NOT APPLICABLE-9

⑰ ACCESS ☐ YES-Restricted ☐ YES-Unrestricted ☐ No Access ☐ Unknown

⑱ ADAPTIVE USE ☐ YES ☐ NO

⑲ SAVED? ☐ YES ☐ NO

⑳ IS PROPERTY A HISTORIC DISTRICT? ☐ yes ☐ no

㉑ AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-prehistoric-2 ☐ COMMERCE-6 ☐ ENTERTAINMENT-26 ☐ LANDSCAPE ARCH.-15 ☐ POLITICS/GOVT.-21 ☐ RECREATION-28

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-historic-1 ☐ COMMUNICATIONS-7 ☐ EXPLORATION-12 ☐ LAW-16 ☐ RELIGION-22 ☐ SETTLEMENT-29

☐ AGRICULTURE-3 ☐ CONSERVATION-8 ☐ HEALTH-27 ☐ LITERATURE-17 ☐ SCIENCE-23 ☐ URBAN PLANNING-31

☐ ARCHITECTURE-4 ☐ ECONOMICS-9 ☐ INDUSTRY-13 ☐ MILITARY-18 ☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN-24 ☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

☐ ART-5 ☐ EDUCATION-10 ☐ INVENTION-14 ☐ MUSIC-19 ☐ SOCIAL/CULTURAL-30 ☐ TRANSPORTATION-25

㉒ CLAIMS: explain

'first' ☐

'oldest' ☐

'only' ☐

㉓ functions

WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT:

CURRENTLY:

㉔ dates of initial construction:

major alterations:

historic events:

㉕ ETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION

㉖ architectural style(s):

㉗ architect:

㉘ master builder:

㉙ engineer:

㉚ landscape architect / garden designer:

㉛ interior decorator:

㉜ artist:

㉝ artisan:

㉞ builder/contractor:

㉟ NAMES give role & date

PERSONAL:

EVENTS:

INSTITUTIONAL:

㊱ NATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP