

IOWA SITE INVENTORY
Division of Historic Preservation
Iowa State Historical Department
26 E. Market St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Site Number 98-018-001
District Name _____
Map Reference # 98-018-001
Topo Map Northwood 1:24,000

IDENTIFICATION

- 1. Site Name Worth County Courthouse
- 2. Village/Town/City Northwood Township _____ County Worth
- 3. Street Address Central Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets
- 4. Legal Location OT 63
Urban: subdivision block parcel subparcel
Rural: township range section 1/4 section-1/4 section
- 5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 482400 northing 4809990; Acreage less than 1 ac
- 6. Owner(s) Name Worth County Board of Supervisors
- 7. Owner(s) Address Courthouse Northwood Iowa 50459
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
- 8. Use: present Courthouse original Courthouse

DESCRIPTION

- 9. Date of Construction 1893 Architect/Builder H.R.P. Hamilton, Arch.
S. Road, Builder
- 10. Building Type: single family dwelling multiple family dwelling commercial
 industrial educational other institutional public religious agricultural
- 11. Exterior Walls: clapboard stone brick board & batten shingles stucco
 other _____
- 12. Structural System: wood frame with interlocking joints
 wood frame with light members (balloon frame) masonry load-bearing walls
 iron frame steel frame with curtain walls reinforced concrete
 other _____
- 13. Condition: excellent good fair deteriorated
- 14. Integrity: original site moved-if so, when? _____
Notes on alterations, additions (with dates and architect, if known) and any other notable features of building and site:

Tall tower roof and gables removed - 2/2 sash replaced with 1/1 - a number of windows (especially side and rear) bricked-in - interior extensively modernized.
- 15. Related Outbuildings and Property: barn other farm structures
 carriage house garage privy other _____
- 16. Is the building endangered? no yes-if so, why? _____
- 17. Surroundings of the building: open land woodland scattered outbuildings
 densely built-up commercial industrial residential other _____
- 18. Map _____
- 19. Photo
Roll _____ Frame _____ View _____

SIGNIFICANCE (Indicate sources of information for all statements)

20. Architectural Significance

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure c. Not eligible/intrusion

This courthouse is an extremely simplified version of the Victorian Romanesque, perhaps indicating a small construction budget. With the loss of the high tower roof and its sharply-pointed gables, only the large entrance arch, and a small round-arched window near the bases of the tower, and some round-arched windows across the rear, suggest any interest in interpreting a style.

21. Historical Significance

Theme(s) Politics/Government

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure c. Not eligible/intrusion

This courthouse is locally significant as the historical focus of county government, and of the political power and prestige derived from the community's status as the county seat. As center of county government, an Iowa town was reasonably assured of economic and population growth, and a prominent role in local social and political life. The county courthouse represents a significant public investment in a structure built not simply for utilitarian purposes, but also as a monument associated with the historical importance of county organization and development.

See Continuation Sheet

22. Sources (for primary and secondary sources, give complete facts of publication: author, title, place of publication, date, etc.):

- Andreas, A.T. Illustrated Historical Atlas of Iowa. Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875.
- Pratt, LeRoy G. The Counties and Courthouses of Iowa. Mason City, Iowa: Klipto Printing and Office Supply Co., 1977.
- Stanek, Edward and Jacqueline. Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.

Prepared by _____ Date January, 1980
 Address _____ Telephone _____
 Organization DHP

FOR DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION USE ONLY

1. OFFICE INFORMATION SOURCES ON THIS PROPERTY

<input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY RESOURCE FILE	<input type="checkbox"/> REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE PROJECT:
<input type="checkbox"/> WINDSHIELD SURVEY	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> NATIONAL REGISTER	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____
<input type="checkbox"/> GRANTS-IN-AID: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____
<input type="checkbox"/> DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____

2. SUBJECT TRACES

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

3. PHOTO IMAGES 324/2-3, 357/10A-20A,
356/10A

CONTINUATION SHEET

Item Number(s)

WORTH COUNTY

Little information is available on the early courthouse history of Worth County until the late 1870s. In 1879, some years after the organization of the county, an attempt was made to move the county seat from Northwood to the town of Kensett. A committee of Northwood citizens was appointed to take appropriate measures to counteract this petition. Land valued at \$500 was contributed and 53 citizens contributed a total of \$5,075 for the erection of a courthouse in Northwood. Their subscription provided that the building should be apportioned to the contributors if the land should ever revert to the original owners. They did, however, agree that the location of the building could be changed with the written consent of a majority of the subscribers.

Northwood was chosen to retain its status as the county seat, and a fine brick courthouse, plain and unpretentious, was built during the year 1880. The total cost of the facility was about \$4,400.

The present courthouse is again of solid brick mounted upon a base of limestone. A small clockless tower is its primary embellishment. The building is otherwise as unpretentious as its predecessor. It was completed in the year 1893.

--from Stanek, Edward, and Jacqueline Stanek,
Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des
Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.