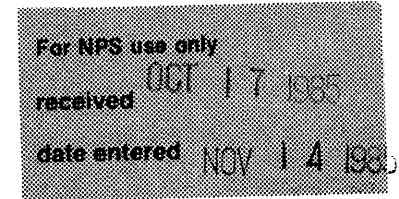


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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



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NAME: Burleigh County Courthouse
LOCATION: East Thayer Avenue, bounded west by Fifth Street and east by Sixth Street,
Bismarck, North Dakota 38, Burleigh County 015
OWNER: Burleigh County, Bismarck, North Dakota
ACREAGE: 2.065 Acres
VBD (LEGAL): Block 102, Original Townsite Plat
UTM: Zone 14, Easting = 363920, Northing 5185140; Bismarck, N. Dak. Quad.

DESCRIPTION: The Burleigh County Courthouse is a three-story structure with a recently built two-story office addition-corridor connecting it to the three-story historic jail. A skin of Indiana limestone wraps the structural system of load-bearing masonry in the historic courthouse which rests above a base of pink granite. Flat roofs cover all three structures. The historic courthouse contains windows with one of two configurations: Throughout most of the building 1-over-1 lights with a metal sash have replaced the original windows; the main courtroom windows have three panes, one on top of another. Aluminum spandrels encompass the second and third floor windows of the building. A tile terrace marks the front entrance way which is decorated with bronze doors and a carved stone design above the transom. Decoration on the interior consists in vestibule paintings by local artist Clell Gannon, cornice-level paintings on the ground and second floor levels depicting wildlife; and murals in the original Commissioners' room and in the courtroom. Vermont Cippoline marble lines the walls of the main floor and vestibule. A marble wainscot ushers the stairway and a stair rail of nickel silver bears a sunrise motif. The courtroom, in addition to the mural, contains ornamental plastered beams and fluted Botticino marble pilasters.

The two-story annex houses administrative offices of the court. It has fixed-pane ribbon windows (some with small casements windows at bottom), aluminum panels separating the two floors, a structural steel frame with metal deck and concrete floors, tan bricks at the north end, and a large exterior stairway on the west side. The jail is faced in tan brick and exhibits a variety of window treatments, including glass block, side-by-side casements, 1-over-1 moveable, and metal-grill-covered windows, as dictated by use. The building carries a styling similar to that of the courthouse. A stone marker which locates the original county courthouse also can be found on the site.

Some integrity of design of the courthouse has been compromised. The windows, replaced in 1972 and the 1962 annex are the most obvious alterations. Nevertheless, when viewed from the front, the building appears today much as it did originally. Plans for a 1985 rehabilitation of the buildings on-site include application of facing material to the 1962 annex which will match that of the historic courthouse. Plans also call for the addition of a third story for the annex and a removal of the west side stairway. The change will make the annex more aesthetically compatible with the historic structures it bridges.

SIGNIFICANCE: Date: 1931

Architect: Ira Rush
Contractor: Redlinger & Hansen

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The Burleigh County courthouse is significant for the role it has played in the history of county government and because it houses many county offices and official records.

As an architectural achievement it contains the most extensive collection of original artwork of any Art Deco courthouse or other courthouse newly considered in this nomination. No other post-1920 courthouse in the state uses painting as freely for decoration. This practice is reminiscent of the decorative traditions commonly employed by monumental public architecture in the nineteenth century until the teens of the twentieth century.

Further, the aluminum spandrels are an unusual building feature among Deco courthouses in the state, but in keeping with the style's use of exotic materials for decoration. Minot architect, Ira Rush, who gained several commissions for North Dakota courthouses, made an effort to maintain a consistency of design between the spandrels and the stairway hand rail. The similarity of their design motifs adds to the artistic quality of the building.

Consistency of detailing extends to the jail, as well. It is contemporaneous with the courthouse and echoes the latter's styling. Thus, for planning purposes, the jail shall be considered part of the significant resource.

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