

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
PH 0682527  
FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 21 1978

DATE ENTERED NOV 21 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS
**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Hamilton County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

West Sixth<sup>6th</sup> Street and Georgia Avenue

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Chattanooga

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Tennessee

CODE

47

COUNTY

Hamilton

CODE

065

**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:**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Hamilton County

STREET &amp; NUMBER

West Sixth Street and Georgia Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Chattanooga

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hamilton County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

West Sixth Street and Georgia Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Chattanooga

STATE

Tennessee

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Landmarks Survey

DATE

1977

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN

Chattanooga

STATE

Tennessee

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

## CHECK ONE

## CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT

DETERIORATED

UNALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE

GOOD

RUINS

ALTERED

MOVED    -DATE \_\_\_\_\_

FAIR

UNEXPOSED

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Hamilton County Courthouse is an impressive display of Neo-Classical Revival architecture. It follows the basic designs of the Neo-Classical Revival by having a symmetrical arrangement, large proportions, a smooth stone surface, no statuary and large single-light sashes. An arch in the facade and enriched moldings are not common features of this style but are used on this building. It was designed by R. H. Hunt in 1911 to be basically square with entrances on all four sides and to be slightly to the rear of the lot. This was modified somewhat by a rear addition on the north side which was added in 1937 and which now gives the courthouse the appearance of being at the back of the lot. The front entrance area is landscaped and largely similar to original plans retaining many of its turn-of-the-century trees and having double sidewalks separated by a garden area which contains a fountain and a bust of A. P. Stewart, lieutenant-general in the Confederate Army. Also on the grounds is a bust of John Ross, a significant early settler of the area who also served as chief of the Cherokee nation.

The Courthouse has three stories plus a basement and is built of concrete faced with Tennessee limestone. The facade has a projecting portico with four unfluted, paired Corinthian columns. This portico is flanked by three windows on each floor. Each window is flanked by sidelights and on the first floor, topped with a transom. The windows on the first two floors are vertically connected by a decorative panel. The surround of this two-story unit, also of stone, extends along three sides, is fluted, and has a crossed leaf pattern. The third floor windows also have the fluted band with crossed leaves, but only across the top of the window. At these top corners are drop pendant-type decorative details. Below the window is a decorative band with torus detailing repeated in the portico at this level and in the cornice.

The window treatment on the sides of the building is similar to the facade fenestration except for minor modifications. Two bays are on either side of the entrances, and the first floor windows have small consoles below the panels separating the two first floors. The two bays above the doorway duplicate the other windows on each floor.

The portico extends the height of the building. Directly behind each column is a pilaster; between these paired pilasters are narrow windows. The entrance consists of double doors topped with a cross-paned transom. This doorway is under a console-supported pediment with its apex broken by a cartouche. Above this pediment is a two-story arched window. Within this window, the floors are defined by two horizontal rows of panels: one composed of circular details and the other of vertical tracery. This window is topped with a limestone arch that springs from the two inner pilasters. Both spandrels are decorated with wreathes and acanthus leaves.

The entablature extends identically on all sides of the building. The architrave is composed of tri-fascia levels. The frieze is plain except for a wreath motif above each column. The cornice includes dentils and acanthus leaf decorated modillions.

Although the side window treatment is essentially identical to the facade, the entrances differ somewhat. Also, the basement can be entered from either side or the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	AUG 21 1978
DATE ENTERED	NOV 21 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

rear. On both sides of the building is a general landing area where one can enter the basement. On each side of this area is a stairway with a limestone balustrade leading to another landing which provides access to the main courthouse. There are two lamps located on the balustrade railing that are smaller versions of lamps at the front of the courthouse. At the first floor level the doorway is one double door with a transom. Above this is a flat dentiled portico supported by consoles.

The 1937 wing, although architecturally harmonious with the main courthouse, does have some differences; also the addition changes the building's plan to a T instead of the original short cross. The wing is attached to the main courthouse by a narrow portion identical to the addition in detailing. The wing is built of the same material and virtually the same height as the main building; it has a basement, two stories, and a full attic story. The rectangular, paired windows with single transom are separated by pilasters. The cornice repeats the dentils but omits the modillions of the entablature on the main block. The north entranceway is at ground level with a square portico supported by consoles similar to the others which lead to a walk which circles the building.

The interior is also richly decorated with many of the motifs found on the exterior. The hallways of the cruciform plan cross in the center under a three-story rotunda with a stained glass dome. The hallways leading to the rotunda have decorated recessed panels in the ceiling. Also used are pilasters and three columns at each of the four corners of the domed arch which form a square. Each capital of the column or pilaster is also decorated with an egg and dart molding. The pilasters in the corridors and the columns around the rotunda are of scogliola which resembles Tennessee gray marble, and the corridors have marble wainscotting. The interior stairways are made of ornamental iron and marble. The balustrades around the rotunda on the second and third floors are of marble.

On the second and third floors the columns again define a space which is open and encircled by a marble balustrade. The treatment of the ceilings and cornices is similar to the first floor. However, the capitals of the columns and the pilasters depart from the design used on the first floor; instead, these capitals have small volutes hung with clusters of grapes.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1912-13 BUILDER/ARCHITECT R. H. Hunt

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1913 this building serves as Hamilton County's fifth main courthouse. After the county was established in 1819 and named after Alexander Hamilton, the first courthouse was held in Poe's Tavern and a house, both of which were near Signal Mountain. Later it was moved to a house in Dallas (portions of which are now under water from the Chickamauga Dam) where it remained until 1840. Then the county seat was changed to Vann Town, later renamed Harrison; here a two-story brick courthouse was built. After the county seat was again moved in 1870, this time to Chattanooga by popular vote, various buildings were used until the facilities proved inadequate and a courthouse was built in 1878. This building was destroyed by a fire caused by lightning in 1910.

Temporary offices were leased in the city hall until the courthouse could be rebuilt. Although there was some discussion about using existing office space, overwhelming support favored building a new courthouse. Several architects submitted plans and R. H. Hunt was chosen, partly as a result of his landscaping details which placed the building toward the rear of the lot and made it essentially square with the facade facing Seventh Street rather than Walnut as the former courthouse had. The supervising architects were J. G. Barnwell and C. T. Jones with the Georgia A. Fuller Company contracted to erect the building. An approximate cost was \$400,000 which was raised through a bond issue and insurance from the former courthouse.

The firm of R. H. Hunt was one of the most prolific firms in the South during the 1900-1930 period. In Chattanooga, almost a dozen buildings by Hunt remain including the "Carnegie Library" (1904-05) which is on the National Register. In a thesis concerning Tennessee architects for Columbia University, Joseph Herndon states that two of Hunt's most outstanding examples are the U. S. Post Office (1933-34) in Chattanooga, which was selected by the AIA as one of the one hundred distinguished and representative buildings in United States construction history since 1918, and the Hamilton County Courthouse.

The Hamilton County Courthouse's distinctive Neo-Classical Revival architecture makes it one of Chattanooga's outstanding landmarks and a lasting tribute to one of Chattanooga's finest architects, R. H. Hunt.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chattanooga Times, 22 May 1910; 23 November 1913; 8 March 1930.

Herndon, Joseph L. "Architects in Tennessee until 1930: A Dictionary." M. A. thesis, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, Columbia University, 1975.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.64

QUADRANGLE NAME Chattanooga

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1, 6 | 6, 5, 4 | 4, 0, 0 | 3, 8 | 7, 9 | 6, 3, 0

B    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

C    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

D    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

E    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

F    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

G    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

H    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

I    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

J    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

K    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

L    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

M    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

N    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The property nominated is a five-sided lot which measures approximately 300' by 400' by 200' by 200' by 300' and is bounded by Walnut Street, Georgia Avenue, Sixth Street, and Seventh Street and Lookout Street.

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

M. A. Carver, Preservation Planner

ORGANIZATION

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission

DATE

June 1978

STREET & NUMBER

200 City Hall Annex

TELEPHONE

(615) 757-5216

CITY OR TOWN

Chattanooga

STATE

Tennessee

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

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

*Herbert L. Hays*

TITLE

Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

8/11/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

11-21-78

ATTEST:

*Charles Alfano*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11/20/78

JANN H. GILMORE  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

78002596

NOV 20 1979

County Hamilton

Inventory # I-10-776

Temp. Field # 6

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

Historic Name Hamilton County Courthouse Common Name Same

Owner Hamilton County Address Courthouse, Georgia Avenue

Property Location Georgia Avenue and Sixth at Lookout Streets  
Chattanooga, TN 37402

Map: Quad Name Chattanooga No. 105SE Edition 1969

Historical Data: Date of Construction 1911-12 Source \_\_\_\_\_

Informant \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Present Use Courthouse and Offices Original Use Same

Original Location Yes Moved? \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Site Bldg. XX Structure \_\_\_\_\_ Object \_\_\_\_\_ Part of District Thematic

Areas of Significance Architecture

Eligible for NR? Yes Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Property endangered? No By what? \_\_\_\_\_

Photos: B&W: Roll # \_\_\_\_\_ Frame # \_\_\_\_\_ Date taken \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_

Color: Roll # \_\_\_\_\_ Frame # \_\_\_\_\_ Date taken \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Negative \_\_\_\_\_ Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Recorded by: Martha Carver Date Recorded: February, 1979

Address: Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission

County Hamilton

Inventory # I-10-776

Temp. Field # 6

Architectural Data: Construction: Frame      Log      Brick      Stone XX

No. of stories 4 Roof type low hipped Material shingles Original?     

Wall covering: weatherboard      B&B      Vertical board      None XX

Tongue and Grooved      Sawn      Other     

Chimney: No.      Location      Material     

Foundation: Pier      Stone XX Brick      Other     

Basic Plan Square with 1937 addition making it "T" shape

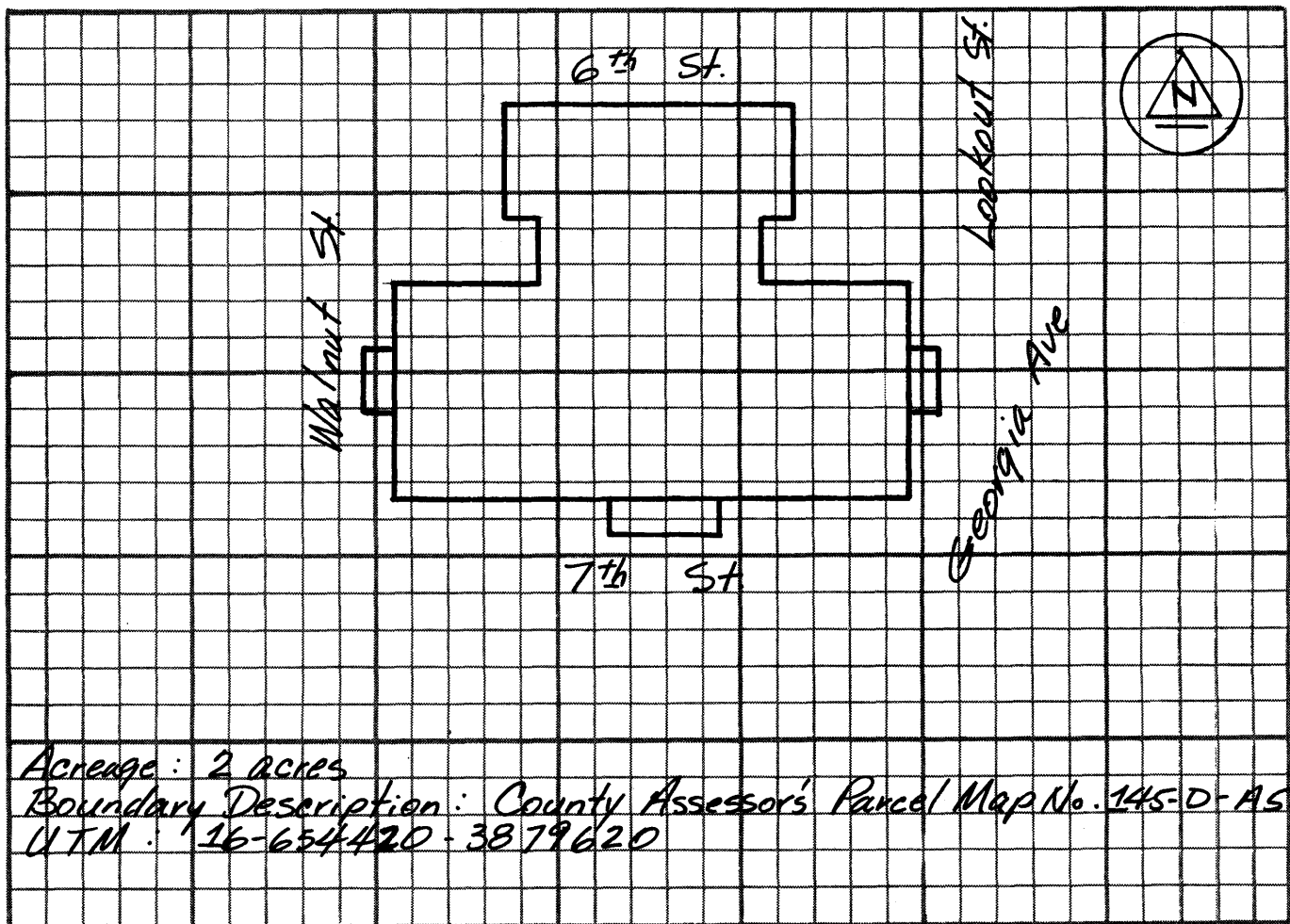
Architectural Notes Neo-Classical of the Corinthian Order, projecting portico

with four unfluted, coupled Corinthian columns, windows have decorative surrounds,

arched entrance area, elaborate cornice; interior retains many of its original

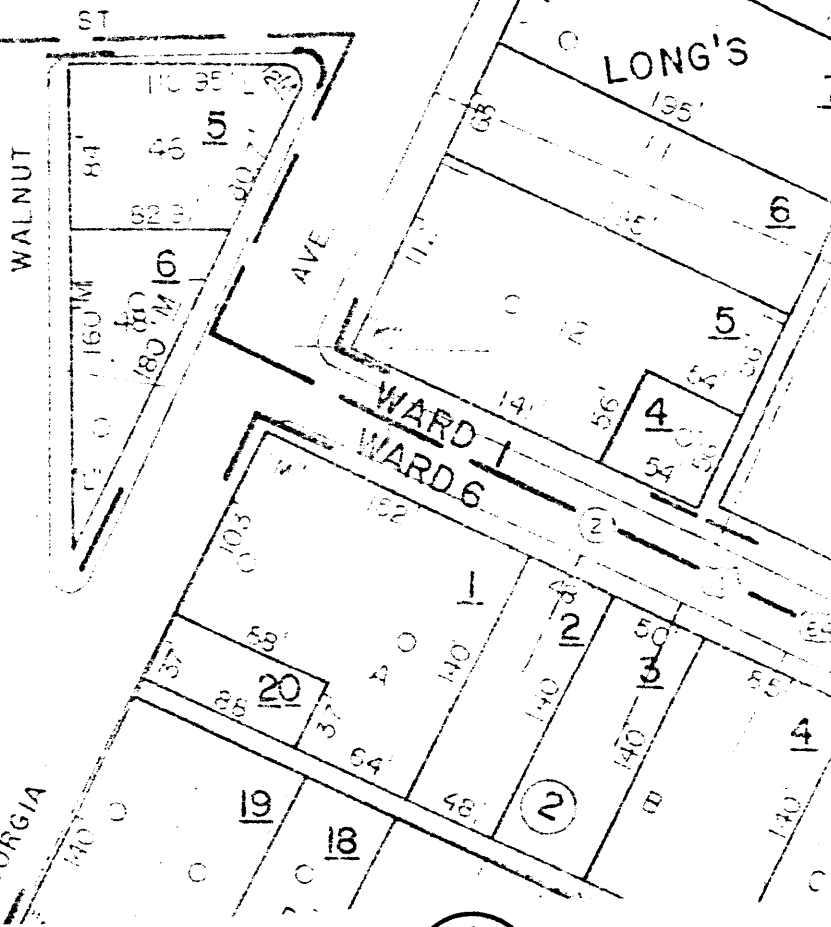
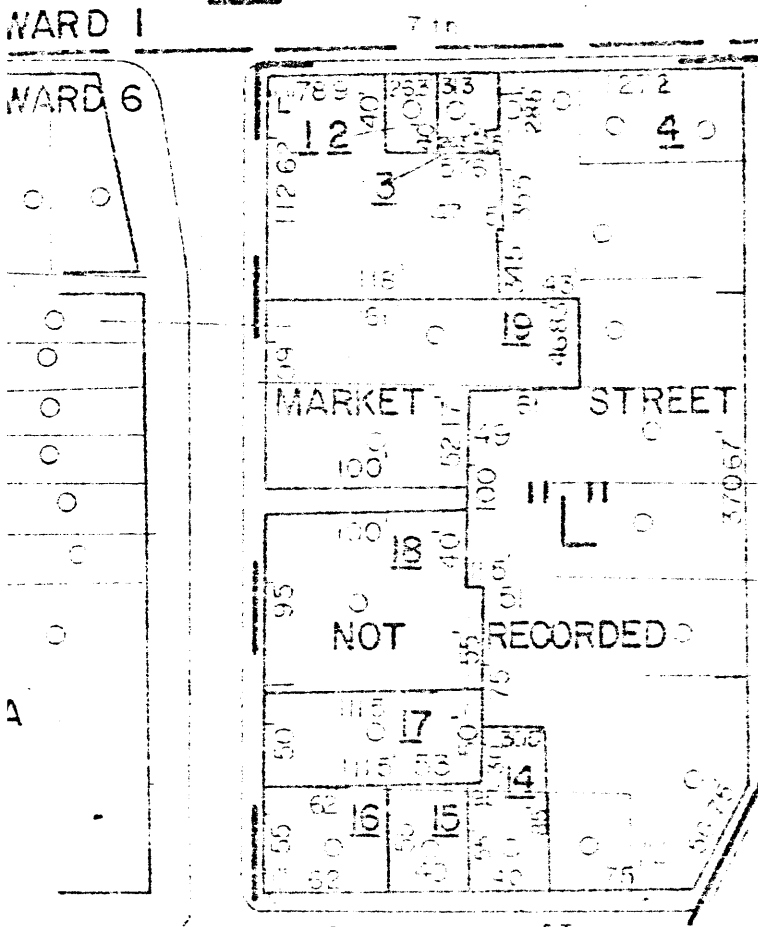
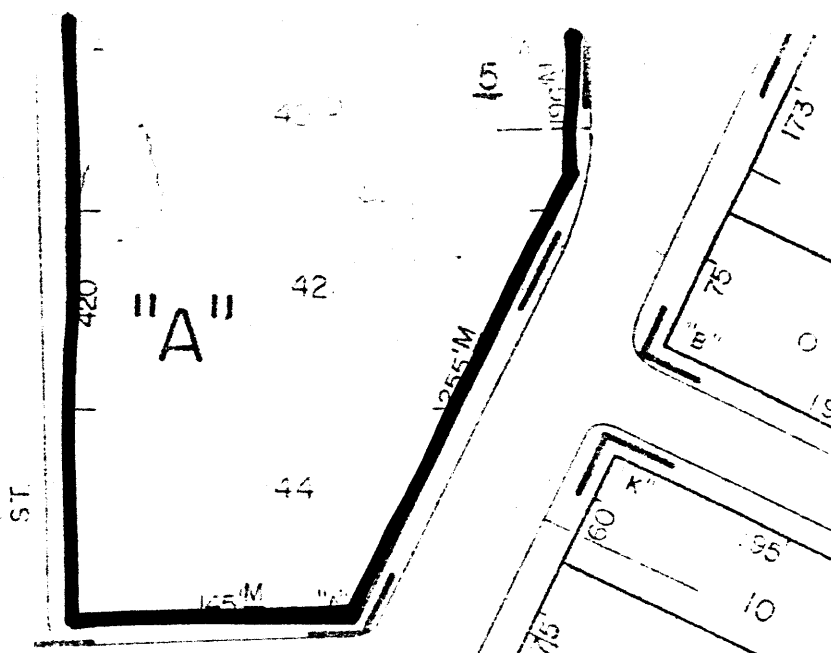
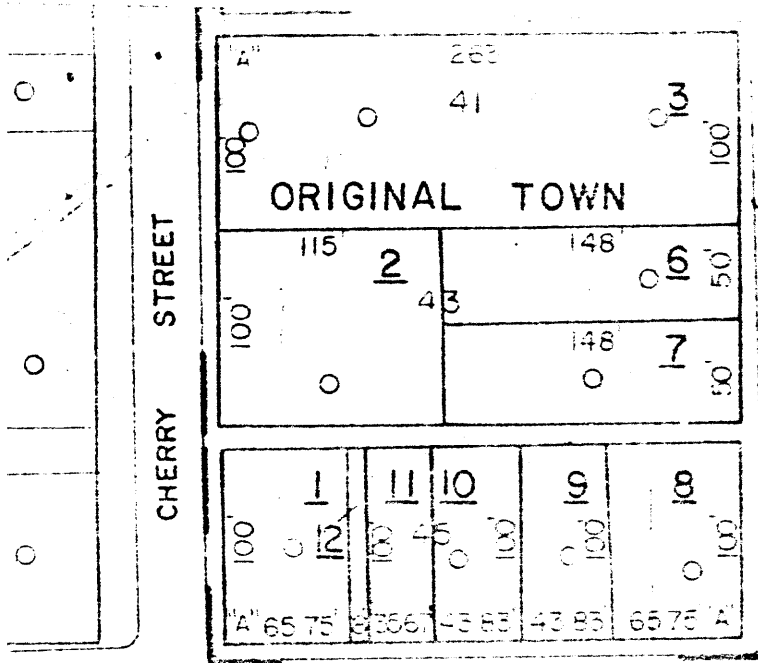
features including a three story rotunda with a stained glass dome.

Sketch Plan Below (include North, door and window locations, etc.):



FEB 29 1980

1021-



Courthouse

145-D-A5

1" = 100'



#6

NOV 20 1979