



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Third Sarpy County Courthouse
other names/site number Sarpy County Courthouse, SY08-107

2. Location

street & number 3rd St bet Washington & Jefferson Sts [n/a] not for publication
city, town Papillion [n/a] vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Sarpy code 153 zip code 68046

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
[] private	[x] building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
[x] public-local	[] district	<u>1</u>	_____
[] public-state	[] site	_____	_____
[] public-Federal	[] structure	_____	_____
	[] object	_____	_____
		<u>1</u>	_____
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing: County Courthouses of Nebraska
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria, [] See continuation sheet.

[Signature] _____ May 14, 1990
Signature of certifying official _____ Date
Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See cont. sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
[x] entered in the National Register. _____
[] See continuation sheet _____
[] determined eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. _____
[] determined not eligible for the National Register. _____
[] removed from the National Register. _____
[] other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions) Government/courthouse Current Functions (enter categories from instructions) Government/city hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions) Classical Revival Materials (enter categories from instructions) foundation Brick walls Brick roof Asphalt other Terra cotta

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 7, page 1.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) Architecture Politics/government Period of Significance 1922-40 Significant Dates 1922-23

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Significant Person N/A Architect/Builder Gernandt, William F.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 8, page 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Built in 1922-23, the Third Sarpy County Courthouse is a good, largely unaltered example of the Property Type, County Citadel. Identifying features include: rectangular shape, centered entrance, costly materials, distinctive ornamentation, Classical Revival stylistic influence, provision for fireproof storage, and the impression of a government building representing modernity, simplicity, strength, and prosperity. In addition, the courthouse has other County Citadel characteristics: flat roof and designed by an architect. The property is also a good and late example of the ten Nebraska courthouses William F. Gernandt designed during an unusually productive period, between 1910 and 1923. The courthouse illustrates the evolution of his courthouse commissions.

Now housing municipal offices and the city library, the property is the third of four buildings that serve or have served as the county's courthouse. The second courthouse no longer stands. The Third Sarpy County Courthouse is rectangular and consists of three stories plus a small attic jail space not visible from the exterior. The use of rusticated brick and a heavy water table gives the appearance of a raised basement, but entrances are at grade. With its prominent entry pavilion, the south facade is the principal entrance, but there is also access on the east and west facades.

A series of imposing elements focus attention on the centered south entrance. These include pairs of fluted engaged columns, a simple but prominent modillioned cornice, and a particularly fine two-story round-arched window. The moulded cornice, lacking modillions, continues around the other facades, a unifying feature along with the water table and coping.

Tan terra cotta contrasts texturally with tan face brick and is used effectively to highlight sills, water table and other courses, and at the centered two-story round-arched window (fretwork, rope moulding). Narrow windows are tucked between the engaged columns, reminiscent of earlier Gernandt designs. Above the columns is the county name as well as rosettes and delicate foliated panels.

Four bays consisting of simple rectangular windows flank the centered entrance, and window openings are also regularly spaced on the other facades of the 92x60' building.

The courthouse is a good example of the County Citadel courthouse exhibiting Classical Revival stylistic elements. These include the symmetric arrangement, smooth surfaces, simple parapet, and such classical

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

elements as keystones, fluted columns, rosettes, and modillions. According to specifications for the building, the architect termed the design "modern Doric."

The floorplan is T-shaped, and the principal hallway runs the east-west length of the first floor with a short stub at the center from the principal or south entrance. Staircases to the upper floors occur at this stub.

Exterior alterations are minor and expected: replacement windows quite similar to the originals, and an additional panel at the cornerstone noting the change from county to city use in 1974. An historic photograph at the Nebraska State Historical Society reveals how little the building and its site have changed. Interior changes include modernized and remodeled rooms, and converting the former third floor district courtroom to library use. Modern ceilings have recessed lighting and some original features have been obscured, but appear to remain in place. Notable courtroom elements include lincrusta panels, heavy wood mouldings, ornate plaster consoles, and a colorful ceramic tile floor. Elaborate courtrooms are a prominent feature of Gernandt courthouse designs.

The courthouse occupies a steep terraced site overlooking the principal early commercial area of Papillion. The grounds take up a half block site, and there are no noteworthy objects or other buildings on it. Modest residences share the block.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

The Third Sarpy County Courthouse is architecturally significant (Criterion C) and also historically significant (Criterion A) for its association with politics and local government. The property derives its historic significance as a focal point for the administration of local government and institutions in the county beginning in 1923. It is a fine example of public architecture and contains good examples of design features and facilities distinctive to its design and use as a courthouse. In addition, the property is interesting late example of the ten Nebraska courthouses William F. Gernandt designed during an unusually productive period, between 1910 and 1923. As the penultimate example of his courthouse work--only Richardson County is later--it illustrates the evolution of his commissions.

As a good example of the County Citadel Property Type, the courthouse contains design features and facilities distinctive to its design and use (such as fireproof vaults), has a rectangular shape, centered entrance, costly materials, distinctive ornamentation, and Classical Revival stylistic influence. Elements of the design combine effectively to convey the impression of a government building representing modernity, simplicity, and prosperity, also features of the County Citadel.

The Period of Significance is 1922, when construction began, to 1940, when the "fifty year rule" takes effect. The Sarpy County Courthouse is being nominated as an example of the Property Type, County Courthouses of Nebraska (County Citadel) of the Context, County Government in Nebraska, 1854-1941, from the Multiple Property Submission, County Courthouses of Nebraska.

Sarpy County is located just south of Omaha along the Missouri River in east central Nebraska. It is among the oldest counties in the state and was organized 1857.

More centrally-located Papillion wrested the county seat designation from Bellevue, which is a riverfront community, in 1875 after a bitter political battle. When the county seat was in Bellevue, a former bank building was used for the courthouse, and it is listed on the National Register. Following the change to Papillion, a rather modest brick courthouse was constructed. By 1921 it was deteriorating and was deemed inadequate. A campaign was mounted to secure a replacement.

The quest for the present building was not without controversy. Papillion residents attempted to move the site to the south side of town, and Richfield citizens tried to relocate the county seat to their community.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

These efforts came to naught, and the courthouse was located on this north side site just above the depot.

On September 12, 1921, voters approved issuing \$150,000 in bonds for the new courthouse, and construction began the following year. John L. Soderberg of Omaha was selected in April of 1922 to be general contractor. The architect, William J. Gernandt, had been involved in the project in late 1921, according to correspondence, county records, specifications, and tracings on file in the county.¹ Construction progress was such that cornerstone-laying ceremonies were held July 4, 1922. County records show that the courthouse was nearly complete by December of 1922, but county officials did not accept the building and move in until March of 1923.

In the 1970s the county again outgrew its courthouse and in 1974 moved to a large new facility at the edge of town.

¹At the time of the survey, these materials were housed in the city library at the former courthouse but were slated for deposit with the county historical society.

9. Major Bibliographical References

[X] See continuation sheet, section 9, page 1.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing
(36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

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	Zone Easting Northing		Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

Verbal Boundary Description

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

Boundary Justification

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Barbara Beving Long, consultant		
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

Long, Barbara Beving. "County Courthouses of Nebraska." Multiple Property Submission. 1989.
Nebraska State Historical Society. Photo Collection. #M281-1053.
Tracings. Sarpy County Courthouse. William F. Gernandt.
Correspondence, specifications, county records.
Sarpy County. Commissioners Records. Book 7.
"Dust settles with Papio winning courthouse battle." Papillion Times. January 12, 1989.
"A Bridge from the Past. Papillion, Nebraska. 1870-1970."
Simmons, Jerold, ed. "La Belle Vue." Studies in the History of Bellevue, Nebraska. Bellevue: Mayor's Advisory Committee on the Bicentennial. 1976.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property, the Third Sarpy County Courthouse, occupies lots 3-6, block 8 of the Original Plat of Papillion and is roughly 250x125' in size.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that portion of the city block that has historically been associated with the property.