

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

JUL 06 1989

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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 Old Polk County Courthouse  
other names/site number Imperial Polk County Courthouse, 8P0222

2. Location

street & number 100 East Main Street N/A not for publication  
city, town Bartow N/A vicinity  
state Florida code FL county Polk code FL 105 zip code 33830

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 6/30/89  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Florida Department of State-Bureau of Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation 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:  
 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 [Signature] Date of Action 8/7/89

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT- Courthouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE- Museum

EDUCATION- Library

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

NEO-CLASSICAL REVIVAL

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

limestone

roof steel

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

**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

1908-1939

Significant Dates

1908

1926

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hosford, E. C.

Kennard, Francis J.

Mutal Construction Company

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

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Bureau of Historic Preservation

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property one acre

UTM References

A 

1	7	4	1	7	0	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

3	0	8	5	8	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 9 of original Bartow, plot book 3, page 15  
or ID 05-30-25-372500-009000, Polk County, Florida.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the legal description of the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title R. Douglas Walton - Historic Sites Specialist/ Susan Tate, June Beadle  
 organization FL Dept of State - Bureau of Hist. Pres date June 22, 1989  
 street & number 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333  
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0251

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Old Polk County Courthouse

Summary:

The Old Polk County Courthouse is a three story, hip roofed, Neo-Classical brick and limestone edifice with projecting Corinthian porticos and a Baroque dome. It is located in Bartow, the county seat of Polk County in the center of Florida's peninsula. It was designed in 1908 by the architectural firm of E.C. Hosford and Company of Eastman, Georgia, and expanded with matching east and west wings designed by Francis J. Kennard and Son of Tampa in 1926. Since 1926, it has remained essentially unchanged. In 1988 the architectural firm of Rowe Holmes Hammer Russell from Tampa, Florida, was retained to restore the building.

Setting:

The courthouse is located on central square, the same site where the county's 1867 and 1884 courthouses were located. The building occupies most of the square. Small green spaces are located on the entry sides on the north and south. Although not extensively landscaped, there are some noteworthy palms and oaks on the site. Two-story commercial buildings, typical of early twentieth century Florida towns, surround the courthouse square. A new courthouse, completed in 1987, is located to the northwest.

Original and Present Physical Appearance:

EXTERIOR

The structural system combines concrete spread footings, masonry bearing walls, steel beams and columns, concrete floors, and wood framing in the roof and dome. The typical floor consists of 12"x35# steel I-beams, 7"x15# in the corridors, with reinforced concrete. Five riveted trusses span the open space of the original courtroom of the 1908 portion of the building.

The Baroque dome dominates classical entry porticos, four square-based lesser domes at each corner of the 1908 central block, and hip roofed wings. The long facades of the three story courthouse achieve variety in massing, stepping back from the projecting porticos, then forward at the wings.

The tan brick walls and limestone base are set smooth with tight joints. The limestone is detailed to express a water table, belt course, and piers. The entry facades are emphasized by alternating, recessed coursing.

Dome

The vertically proportioned dome is segmented by twelve ribs. The original tin dome skin has been replaced with silver-colored asphaltic roofing

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Old Polk County Courthouse

which extends to the base of the drum at the roofline. A zinc spire originally extended from the bell cupola. Four clock faces with Roman numerals are inset in the side of the dome, aligned with each of the building's sides. The original leaded translucent glass and numerals have been replaced with new material. Some of the original clock material remains, however, and the original mechanisms made by E. Howard and Co. of Boston are still in operation. In 1943, the concrete weights separated from their chains and crashed to the rotunda floor. Subsequently, an electric motor was added.

The structure of the dome consists of circular sawn, full dimensioned, undressed lumber which appears to have been used for form work and shoring during construction. The dome is formed by angled 1x10 rib rafters and 1x6 diagonal siding. Bracing was added to the drum consisting of five random diagonal bolted braces of 2x6 spruce.

The frieze of the dome was ornamented with stamped zinc swags. Stamped zinc ribbons were applied to pier panels between the windows of the drum. These decorative details were removed and are stored in the attic. The drum windows were originally 36" 2/2 single hung sash.

The square plinth at the base of the dome was balustraded with alternating circles and square sectioned pickets. At each corner, a square pier with galvanized iron inset panels was topped with a galvanized iron urn. The stamped steel moldings and dentils and the paneled frieze remain at the base of the plinth. Each of the four square based lesser domes terminates with a galvanized iron sphere which originally sprang from a foliated gallery. (See Photo 1)

#### Roof

Above the cornice at the roof eave, a compound stone (concrete) balustrade of urn balusters terminated in square paneled piers. The east and west sections of this balustrade were relocated with the addition of the wings and matched to be continuous. The balustrade has since been removed, but will be replaced with a fiberglass reproduction in the restoration. Also removed were the chimneys for the original fireplaces which had been covered over. The projecting cornice is composed of stamped steel cyma moldings and dentils.

The original drawings for the 1908 building called for a slate roof with galvanized iron ridges and hip corner scrolls. Early photographs, however, show that this roof material was never applied. Instead, there were metal, barrel tile shingles. This covering was apparently replaced with other metal roofing, for drawings of the 1926 additions call for metal roofing to match the existing. The present stainless steel seam roof is compatible with the character of the courthouse. The roof framing consists of 2x10 rafters over

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Old Polk County Courthouse

---

concrete "fireproof" ceilings and a structure of brick masonry, steel, and concrete. (See Photo 2 & 3)

#### PORTICOS

A triangular pediment heads the projecting giant portico to the south and to the north; four concrete columns with metal Corinthian capitals frame each main entry. The pediment is detailed with dentils, a galvanized iron shield with shell forms surrounded by foliated rinceaux. Double scroll bracket modillions visually support a balustrade above the entry doorways. Pilasters and alternating recessed coursing of the stone delineate the entry openings.

This entry configuration is reflected in the east and west entries of the 1926 wings. Some details such as the shield and rinceaux, dentils, and balustraded entryways appear to have been relocated or duplicated. The Corinthian pilasters continue the character of the columns of the north and south entries. (See Photos 2 & 3)

#### DOORS AND WINDOWS

Original double entry doors were recessed. The 8 foot oak doors were glazed with 24"x48" plate glass over double horizontal panels. The doors were surrounded with transom and side lights. The main entry doors were hung on three hinges each, 3 1/4" x 6".

Fenestration is expressed in a vertical composition from cornice to belt course, and is reflected in the limestone base. Typical windows were 1/1, wood, single hung sash, 36"x44" (38" high on the third floor). Small metal ventilators were installed in the lower sash bottom rails.

The typical 2/2 single hung sash windows in the east wing are metal with wire glass. All sash appear to be original. The 1926 drawings indicate that rolling steel shutters with fusible links, rewind devices, and interior shutters would be used on the first floor of the east wing, which housed the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Windows of the third level are single sash pivot throughout. (See Photos 2 & 3)

#### INTERIOR

##### Interior Details

The major features of the interior detail indicated by the 1908 Longitudinal Section and the Decorating Plan were cornice and ceiling stencil designs, plaster moldings, "Robinson's Art Tile" floor and wainscot. The tile

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Old Polk County Courthouse

---

is white with patterns in terra cotta, light green, grey, and tan. Initial investigation indicates the use of tan or cream paint colors; the few layers of paint suggest that renovations were infrequent. (See Photo 6)

The Rotunda is circumscribed with a series of plaster moldings below the skylight. Below the moldings were a frieze of swag, double swag, and tassel; eight ribbon and bow ovals surrounded electric light fixtures on the upper level. A geometric pattern in the 3/4" tile floor was centered below the dome. This tile and 3" x 6" white wainscot tile with bullnose and tile base extend from the dome to the main floor corridors and the stairs. The stair stringers and noses are marble. The brass stair rail is set on cast iron in a modified fret geometric pattern. (See Photo 5 & 6)

A double swag and tassel stenciled frieze was designed for the cornices of the Corridors and Court Room Gallery, as well as the Rotunda. The Court Room frieze was to be bell flower and scroll, a palmetto and scroll for offices and other rooms. A foliated scroll was designated for the center and corner of the Court Room. Full scale drawings for the stencils to duplicate these painted details are preserved in the original architectural drawings.

Fireplaces were used in most major offices and jury rooms. A Fischer Leaf C.M. Mantel No. 152 was indicated on the drawings. Although all fireplaces have been covered over and chimneys cut above the roof line, early radiators remain in the building.

Interior doors on the main floor consisted of a glazed panel over two horizontal panels, with a glass transom above. Typical doors on the upper floors had five horizontal panels. Hardware was brass plate, bolt operated with skeleton key.

The primary interior materials were plaster and tile. Doors and moldings were red oak. Wood detail and flooring was used in the 1926 Court Room. (See Photo 7)

## Interior Spaces

Typical ceiling heights are 12'-6" on the main floor, 12' on the second floor, and 10' on the third floor. Court Rooms are large, two story spaces.

The main floor of the 1908 court house accommodated offices along the spine corridor from west to east, for the County Judge, Tax Assessor, Treasurer, Vaults, the County Commission and Tax Collector. East of the dome were offices of the Board of Education, Sheriff, and Court Clerk. On the second floor, from west to east were the Witness Rooms, and the Petit Jury and Grand Jury Rooms. East of the dome were the Judge and Rule Witness Rooms.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Old Polk County Courthouse

The primary space of the original second floor was the Court Room. Riveted trusses spanned the Court Room to provide a large clear span space. A 6" step and rail defined the bar; the judge and jury were in the south third of the space. The balcony occupied the north end of the two story space. The third floor included only the Jury Sleeping Rooms and Negro Waiting Room; the rest of the floor was unfinished.

When the wings were added in 1926, many changes were made in office arrangements. The main floor of the west wing was divided between the Tax Collector's offices on the north side, and miscellaneous offices on the south side. The second floor was devoted to the new Courtroom, with offices for the Judge, Prosecuting Attorney, and Clerk of the Criminal Court to the south, and Public Instruction to the north. The Court Room was designed as a two story space with a balcony and Grand Jury Room to the north on the third floor, jury rooms to the south.

The Office of Clerk of the Circuit Court occupied the entire east wing; the concern for security in this area is evident in the use of metal frame wire glass windows. Offices, public space with counter access similar to the west wing, and work spaces were located on each side of the first floor corridor. The second floor space was allocated to the Clerk of the Circuit Court, with offices to the north and south ends. A door was formed from the original southeast window to the Court Room. The third floor was designated as the upper part of the Circuit Court space, with a light well accommodating the retention of the six upper windows of the Court Room.

#### MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND RESTORATION STATUS

The significant spaces of the building - the Rotunda, the 1908 Court Room, and the 1926 Court Room - have undergone alterations which are incompatible with historic preservation, but reversible. The perception of the space of the Rotunda was altered by the replacement of the "chipped glass" ceiling at the base of the dome by a solid ceiling with four skylights. The 1926 Court Room (Court Room B) is essentially intact; the major change to the space was the partition added to the balcony. (See Photo 7)

The original Court Room has had the most visible alteration to its spatial character. In 1978, it was divided into Court Room A and Court Room C with a corridor between. From the third floor balcony, the original space and cornice moldings are visible above the suspended ceilings. In addition to moldings, the majority of the decorative details were painted from the stencil patterns indicated in the architectural drawings, and may be reproduced likewise.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 6

Old Polk County Courthouse

---

In 1988, Rowe Holmes Hammer Russell, Architects, of Tampa were retained by the County Commission for the analysis and adaptive use of the Polk County Court House. Major emphasis will be placed on the restoration of the character of the Rotunda, the 1908 Court Room, and the 1926 Court Room. Updating the building systems, code compliance, and accessibility will be addressed in conformance with preservation standards.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1 Old Polk County Courthouse

---

## Summary:

The Old Polk County Courthouse is significant under Criterion A: Politics/Government, as the major public building in Polk County from 1908 to 1987. It is significant under Criterion C: Architecture, as an excellent example of Neo-Classical Revival architecture which has been preserved with few alterations.

The Old Polk County Courthouse, built in 1908-1909, is located on the site of the previous 1867 and 1884 courthouses, the land having been donated in 1867 by Jacob Summerlin, one of Florida's most prominent pioneers. The 1908-1909 edifice reflected the rapid growth of the county during the early twentieth century phosphate boom in Central Florida. Further expansion of the building was necessary as the county grew during the 1920's Florida Land Boom, and two wings were added in 1926. This building continued to serve as the county courthouse until 1987, when a new courthouse was built to the northwest.

## Historic Context:

Polk County is located in the center of the Florida peninsula, part of an area that was reserved for the Seminole Indians during Florida's territorial period. In 1843, the Armed Occupation Act encouraged settlement, and white pioneers started to come to the area. James Whidden brought his family in 1843, and became the first white settler in what would later be Polk County. Other settlers came and established homesteads nearby. They were small scale farmers, hunters, and fishermen. Fort Meade, a military post during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842), became a trading post, and Riley Blount opened a general store at Fort Blount in 1858.

The Territory of Florida attained statehood in 1845, and the villages of Fort Meade, Socrum, Kathleen, Homeland, and Fort Blount were officially established. Polk County, named after President James K. Polk, was created from the eastern portion of Hillsborough County and small parts of two other counties. Through the influence of Jacob Summerlin (1821-1893), Fort Blount was designated the county seat. Summerlin was one of the foremost and richest cattlemen in Florida history, and was known as the "cattle king of his generation" and as the "King of the Crackers". The Civil War prevented the county government from becoming fully operational, however, and Fort Blount had no permanent government buildings.

With its small white population, Polk County's contribution to the Confederate cause was limited, and only 80 men were sent to fight for the Confederacy. Florida's most important contribution to the cause was salt and cattle, and the latter became especially important after the western supply of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

Old Polk County Courthouse

beef was halted by the surrender of Vicksburg, Mississippi in July 1863. Polk County was rich in cattle, and Jacob Summerlin was the largest and most important rancher.

After the war's end, Summerlin in 1867 had a survey made of the 160 acre Riley Blount homestead he had purchased in 1862. He gave most of it to the town, specifying that it be used as the county seat. The first courthouse was built on the site that year (1867), about the same time the town's name was changed to Bartow, in honor of Confederate General Francis F. Bartow who was the first general killed in the Civil War. The county economy was based on cattle, citrus, and timber.

Polk County was landlocked, however, and like many Florida counties it did not begin to prosper until the coming of the railroad in the 1880s. A new courthouse was built in 1884. The discovery of phosphate in 1886, and the later development of the industry transformed the area. In January 1887, the Peace River Phosphate Company was formed; by 1893, there were about two hundred phosphate companies on paper, with about a tenth of them in operation. Pine lands that had sold for \$1.50 an acre cost \$200 an acre and were eagerly sought after.

In spite of the freezes of 1894-95 which greatly damaged Florida's citrus industry, the instability of the phosphate industry, and the national depression in the early 1900s, the county's population continued to grow and nearly doubled between 1900 and 1910. This rapid growth led to increasing demands for a new, larger courthouse.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE, CRITERION A

The County Commissioners accepted the plans and specifications presented by E.C. Hosford & Company, architects from Eastman, Georgia. The proposed building was to be "one hundred nineteen (119) feet six (6) inches by eighty-eight (88) feet; three (3) stories high; faced with stone and pressed brick; all floors to be fire proof; also ceiling of third floors." There were to be fireproof stairs and partitions throughout, a slate roof, plumbing, and electrical wiring.

On July 23, 1908, ground was broken for the foundation, and the cornerstone was laid on December 17, 1908. The Mutual Construction Company of Louisville, Kentucky, was the building contractor. By June 3, 1909, all county offices had moved into the new courthouse, and on June 25, about 6,000 Polk County residents gathered to dedicate their new courthouse. In October 1911, improvements were made with the addition of paint, concrete walks, and flower beds.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Old Polk County Courthouse

---

Polk County grew steadily, and in 1920 it had a population of 38,661. With the Florida Land Boom of the 1920's, all of the state underwent unprecedented growth. Like the rest of the state, Polk County saw rampant land speculation, but unlike most of Florida, Polk had strong foundations in its citrus, cattle, and phosphate industries.

In late 1926, at the height of the Boom, the courthouse underwent its first and only expansion. Two matching Neo-Classical Revival style wings were added to the east and west sides of the 1908 building. Designed by Francis J. Kennard and Son of Tampa, the wings were carefully conformed to the style of the original 1908 building, using the same details, lines, and materials.

The expansion sufficed until the post-World War II population increase in Florida. As the courthouse lot was built on to the property line, no further expansion was possible unless the building was demolished and a new courthouse built in its place. This was unacceptable to local citizens however, so on September 25, 1987, a new courthouse was dedicated on the lot north and west of the old building. The 1908 Courthouse is being preserved and restored for the people of Polk County and their descendants as the Polk County Historical Library and Museum.

Among the most notable trials held in the Courthouse in the historical period was "The Flogging Cases" of 1936-1938, involving the flogging, tarring, and feathering of three Tampa men. Since the eight defendants were Tampa police officers, the massive publicity surrounding the case forced the trials to be moved from Hillsborough to Polk County, in an effort to secure a fair hearing. By the date a verdict of acquittal was pronounced on June 20, 1938, the cases had become one of the most involved, complicated, and longest running criminal prosecutions in Florida legal history. The case involved the resignation of the original trial judge after complaints of bias, several Florida Supreme Court opinions and decisions regarding the unwonted infusion of City of Tampa political factions into the legal process, and the direct intervention of Governor Fred P. Cone in appointing a new trial judge.

A recent case that attracted state and national interest involved the kidnapping and murder of Circuit Judge Curtis E. Chillingsworth and his wife of West Palm Beach, on June 14, 1955. After a change of venue, two trials took place in the Old Polk County Courthouse during March and November/December 1961. The two defendants received terms of life imprisonment.

Also, two politicians of state and national prominence practiced law and began their political careers in the courtrooms of the courthouse. One, Attorney J. Harding Peterson, went on to serve as a U.S. Congressman from Florida during the years 1933-1951. Another, Bartow native son Spessard L.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Old Polk County Courthouse

---

Holland, began the practice of law in Polk County in 1916, became Polk County Prosecutor in 1919, and served as a County Judge from 1920 to 1928. He was elected to the State Senate in 1932, and was Governor from 1941 to 1945. He was a U.S. Senator for 25 years, from 1946 to 1971. Holland's efforts in introducing and securing passage of the 24th Amendment (abolishing poll taxes in national elections) was his greatest achievement, as this amendment is conceded to be the only one adopted as the work of a single individual.

### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE, CRITERION C

The courthouse is designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style, which occurred in Florida generally from 1910 to 1920. Being built in 1908-1909, the courthouse was in the forefront of the use of the style in Florida. Neo-Classical reflected a renewed interest in Neo-Classicism, which is the last phase of classicism in the late 18th and 19th century, a movement based on the use of pure Greek and Roman forms. The style is characterized by monumentality, the strict use of orders, and a sparing use of ornamentation.

The style typically represents one of the classic Greek orders, which in the Old Polk County Courthouse is the Corinthian Order. The most ornate of the three orders, the Corinthian follows a column and entablature style developed by the Dorian Greeks, which features a sturdiness of proportion, with a ornate bell shaped capital and a fringe of acanthus leaves and volutes. The courthouse is a strict interpretation of the elements characterizing the formal Corinthian Order. The lack of arches is the main characteristic of the Greek origins.

The architect, E. C. Hosford, was born in Cochran, Georgia on April 24, 1883. He established his office in Eastland, Georgia, but did much of his work in Florida, becoming a resident of Lakeland in July, 1920. In addition to the Polk County Courthouse, his work includes courthouses in the Georgia towns of Eastman and Hamilton; schools, banks, business offices and private homes; and Neo-Classical Revival style courthouses in Hendry and Jefferson Counties, Florida.

The architect for the 1926 addition was Francis Joseph Kennard, born in London, England, on March 15, 1865. In 1886 his family moved to central Florida, where his father invested in orange groves. By 1888, Kennard had established an architectural office in Sanford, which he later moved to Orlando. In 1891 he supervised the building of the Tampa Bay Hotel (NR 1972) for developer and railroad tycoon Henry B. Plant. Kennard moved to Tampa in 1895 and remained there until his death in 1944. He was responsible for many buildings in southwest Florida, including the Belleview Biltmore Hotel in Bellaire (NR 1979), the Lee County Courthouse in Ft. Myers (NR 1989), the

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5

Old Polk County Courthouse

---

Pinellas County Courthouse, and numerous churches, civic buildings, schools, and hotels.

The Old Polk County Courthouse has had minor alterations during its 81 year history (see Section 7, pages 3,5,6-7), but the design and material integrity of the original 1908 structure and the 1926 addition have remained faithful to the architect's conception. The 1908 and 1926 architectural drawings, as well as historical photographs, verify that the character of the courthouse has remained essentially unchanged.

The architectural firm in charge of the current restoration plans to restore all altered components (except the chimneys, which were removed at an unknown date) to their original appearance. The Old Polk County Courthouse stands preserved as both a symbol of the American legal system and as a significant building in the daily life of Polk County citizens for the past 81 years.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1 Old Polk County Courthouse

---

Published Material

Bartow Courier-Informant. "Important Meeting of County Commissioners", March 5, 1908

\_\_\_\_\_. "Laying the Cornerstone", December 17, 1908.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Laying the Cornerstone of Polk's New Courthouse With Imposing Ceremonies", December 24, 1908.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Notice to Contractors", May 17, 1908.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Polk County, Florida", December 29, 1910.

Biographical Directory of the Governors of the United States, 1789-1978, Vol. 1. Westport, C.T.: Meckler Books, 1978..

Frisbie, Louise K., "Courthouse Construction Foreman Recalls 1908 Job," Polk County Historical Quarterly, (June 1987): 3.

Yesterday's Polk County. Miami, Florida: E.A. Seemann Publishing, Inc., 1976.

Hetherington, M.F. History of Polk County, Florida: Narrative and Biographical. Chuluota, Florida: The Mickler House Publishers, 1971. Reprint of the 1928 edition.

Johnson, Jack O. Famous Polk County Criminal Cases. Privately published, 1987.

McKay, D.B. Pioneer Florida. Tampa, Florida: The Southern Publishing Company, 1959.

Morris, Allen. The Florida Handbook 1947-48. Tallahassee, Florida: The Peninsular Publishing Company, 1946.

National Cyclopedia of American Biography, Vol. 58  
Clifton, N.J.: J.T. White & Company, 1971.

Unpublished Material

Oral interview with Judge Leonard F. Blankner by June F. Beadle, 1988.

Oral interview with Mary Huffaker Blankner by June F. Beadle, 1988.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Old Polk County Courthouse

---

Oral interview with W.J. "Bill" Ruster by June F. Beadle, 1988.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 1

Old Polk County Courthouse

---

- 1) Old Polk County Courthouse, 100 East Main Street
  - 2) Bartow, Polk County, Florida
  - 3) Unknown
  - 4) 1909
  - 5)
  - 6) Courthouse Square celebration at opening ceremonies
  - 7) 1 of 11
- 2
- 1) Old Polk County Courthouse, 100 East Main Street
  - 2) Bartow, Polk County, Florida
  - 3) Unknown
  - 4) 1909
  - 5)
  - 6) 1908 Courthouse, soon after opening ceremonies
  - 7) 2 of 11
- 3
- 1) Old Polk County Courthouse, 100 East Main Street
  - 2) Bartow, Polk County, Florida
  - 3) Susan Tate
  - 4) September 1987
  - 5) Photographer's files, College of Architecture, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida
  - 6) North elevation, camera facing south
  - 7) 3 of 11

Items 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs.

- 4
- 6) South elevation, camera facing north
  - 7) 4 of 11
- 5
- 6) West elevation, camera facing east
  - 7) 5 of 11
- 6
- 6) East elevation, camera facing west
  - 7) 6 of 11
- 7
- 6) View of rotunda, looking down from third floor
  - 7) 7 of 11
- 8
- 6) Tile floor in rotunda, looking from second floor balcony
  - 7) 8 of 11

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photos Page 2

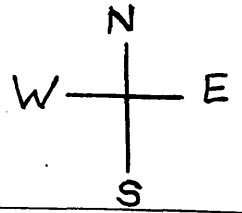
Old Polk County Courthouse

---

- 9      6) 1926 courtroom, west wing, looking north  
       7) 9 of 11
  
- 10     6) Detail of entrance to 1926 courtroom, looking east  
       7) 10 of 11
  
- 11     6) Detail of cornice in 1908 courtroom, looking from  
         balcony  
       7) 11 of 11

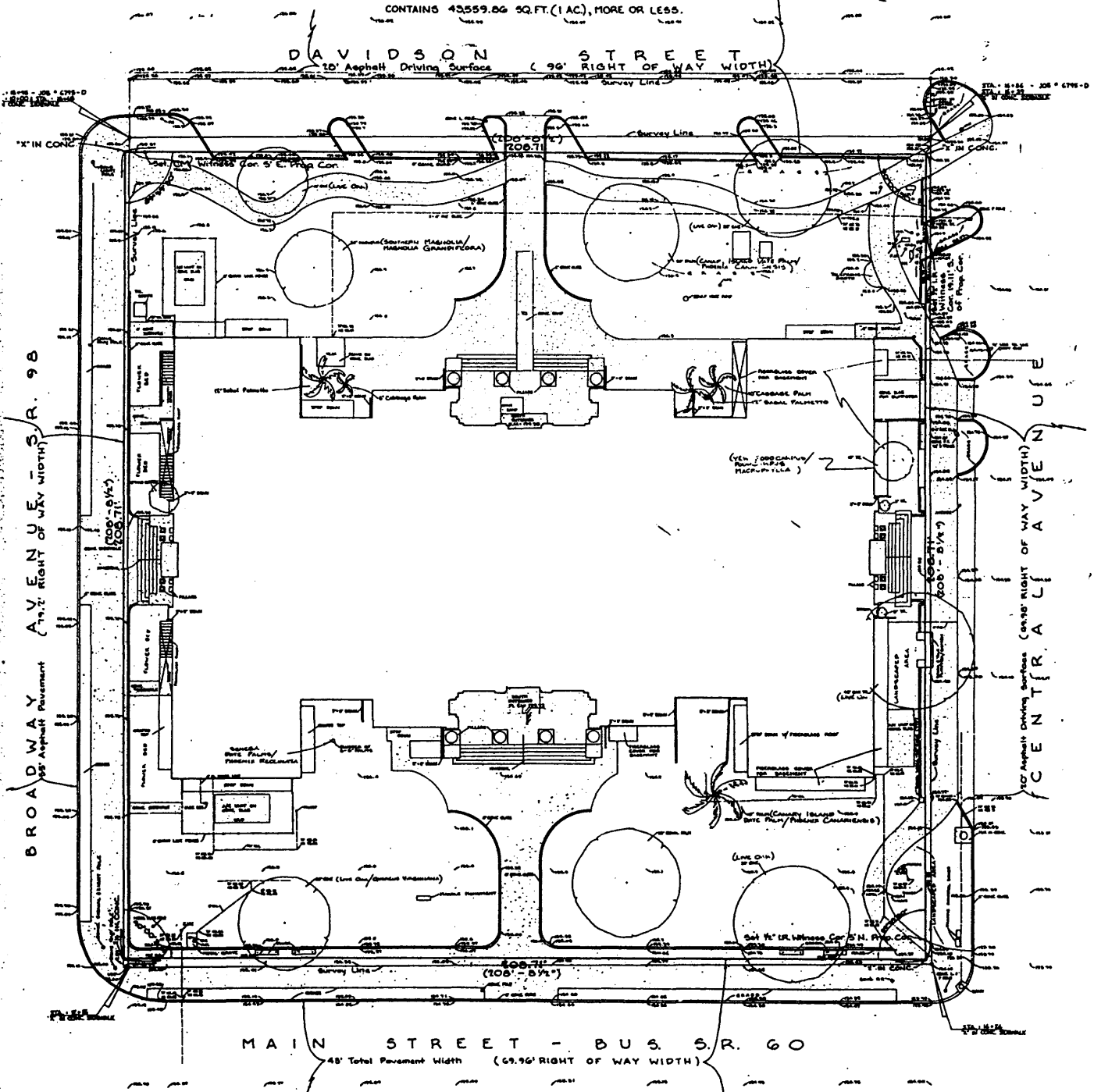
Polk County Courthouse  
101 E. Main Street  
Bartow, Florida

1" = 34.5'



SURVEY MAP  
OF

BLOCK NINE OF THE ORIGINAL  
TOWN OF BARTOW, RECORDED IN  
PLAT BOOK 3, PAGE 15 OF THE  
PUBLIC RECORDS OF POLK  
COUNTY, FLORIDA, ALL LYING  
IN SEC. 5, TWP 30 S, RNG 25 E.  
CONTAINS 43559.86 SQ. FT. (1 AC), MORE OR LESS.

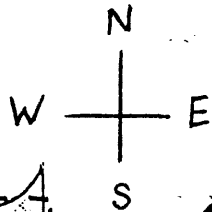


Polk County Courthouse  
101 E. Main Street  
Bartow, Florida

31

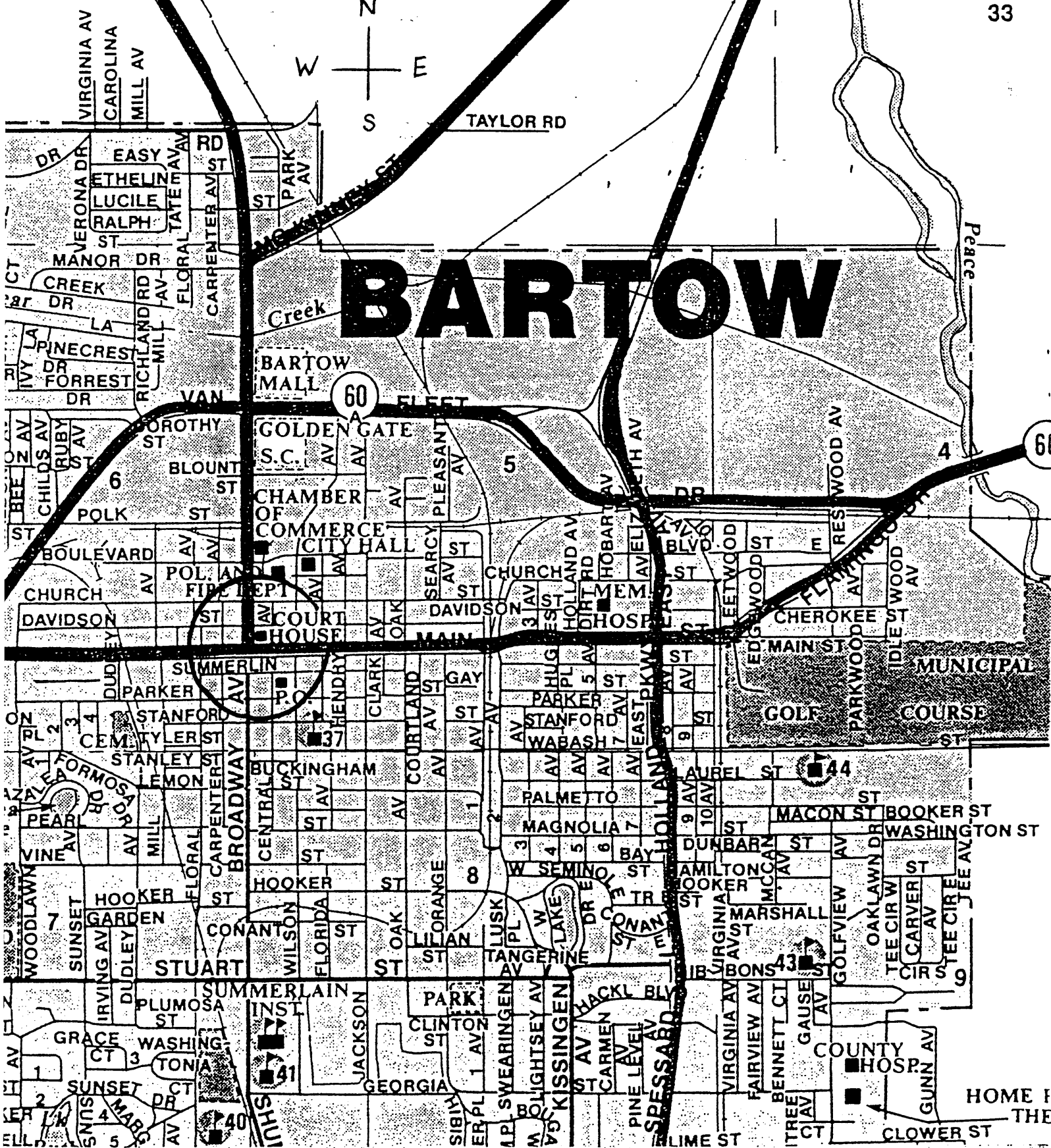
32

33



TAYLOR RD

# BARTOW



BARTOW MALL

60

GOLDEN GATE

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CITY HALL

COURT HOUSE

MUNICIPAL

GOLF COURSE

44

MACON ST

MARSHALL

STUART

WILSON

CLINTON

GEORGIA

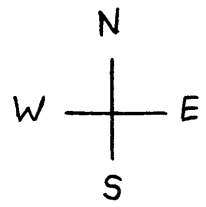
FAIRVIEW AV

BENNETT CT

GAUSE CT

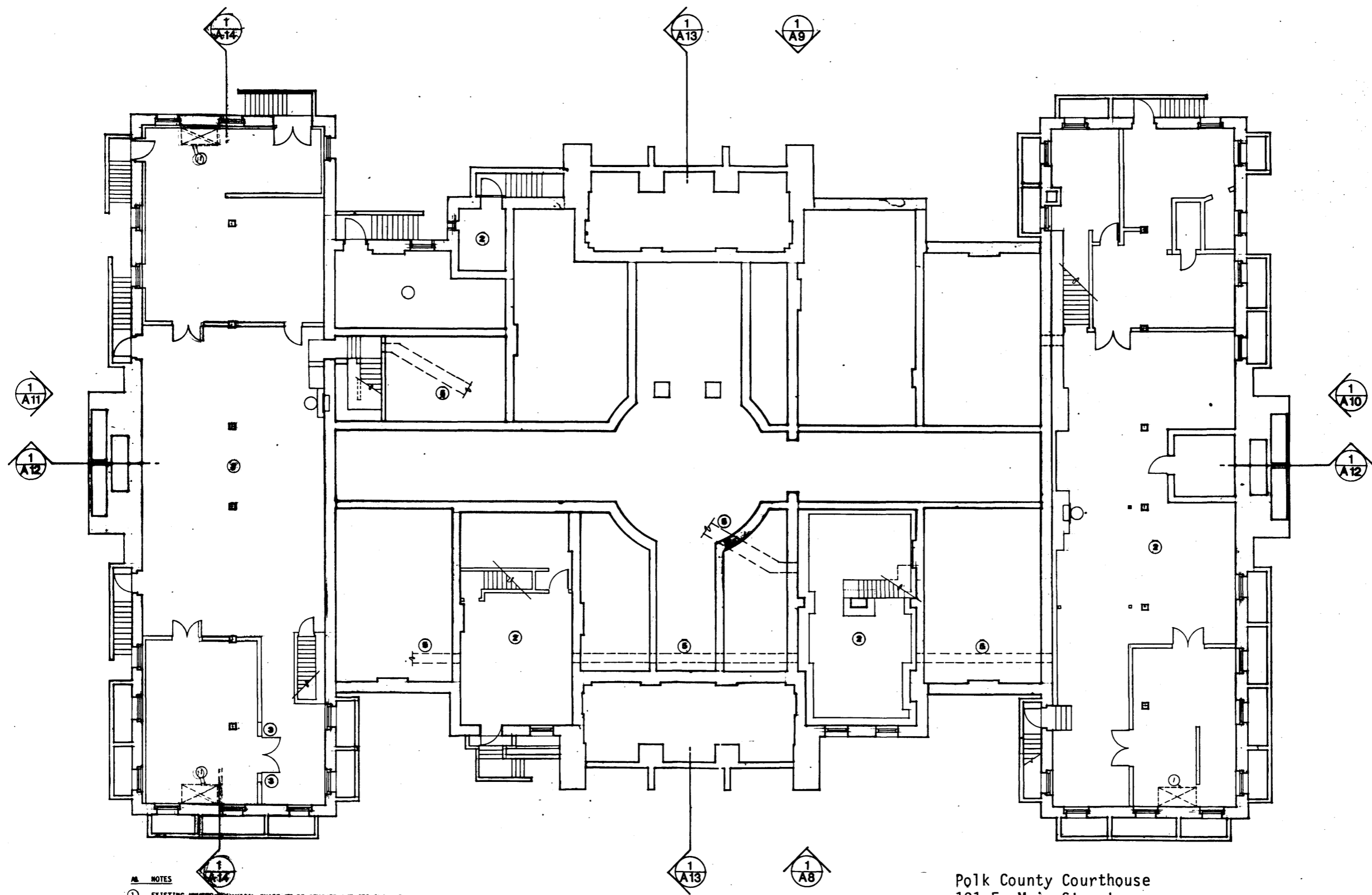
HOME OF THE

CLOVER ST



**ROWE  
HOLMES  
HAMMER  
RUSSELL**  
ARCHITECTS, INC.

100 MADISON STREET  
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33602  
813-221-8771



**OLD POLK COUNTY  
COURTHOUSE  
RESTORATION AND  
ADAPTIVE RE-USE**

FEASIBILITY STUDY

PROJECT NO. 2336	
DISTRIBUTION	DATE
FIRST ISSUE	3/10/88
GRANT APPLICATION	3/1/88
CHECKED	

- NOTES**
- ① EXISTING UNUSED MECHANICAL CHASE TO BE REMOVED AND CEILING OPENING REPAIRED.
  - ② ACCESSIBLE BATHROOM SPACE
  - ③ UNFINISHED WALL CONSTRUCTION TO BE COMPLETED
  - ④ EXISTING FIRE HOSE CABINET
  - ⑤ EXISTING TUNNEL UNDER SLAB FOR PIPING

Polk County Courthouse  
101 E. Main Street  
Bartow, Florida

**BASEMENT PLAN EXISTING CONSTRUCTION**  
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

7	7
1	1
12	12



**OLD POLK COUNTY  
COURTHOUSE  
RESTORATION AND  
ADAPTIVE RE-USE**

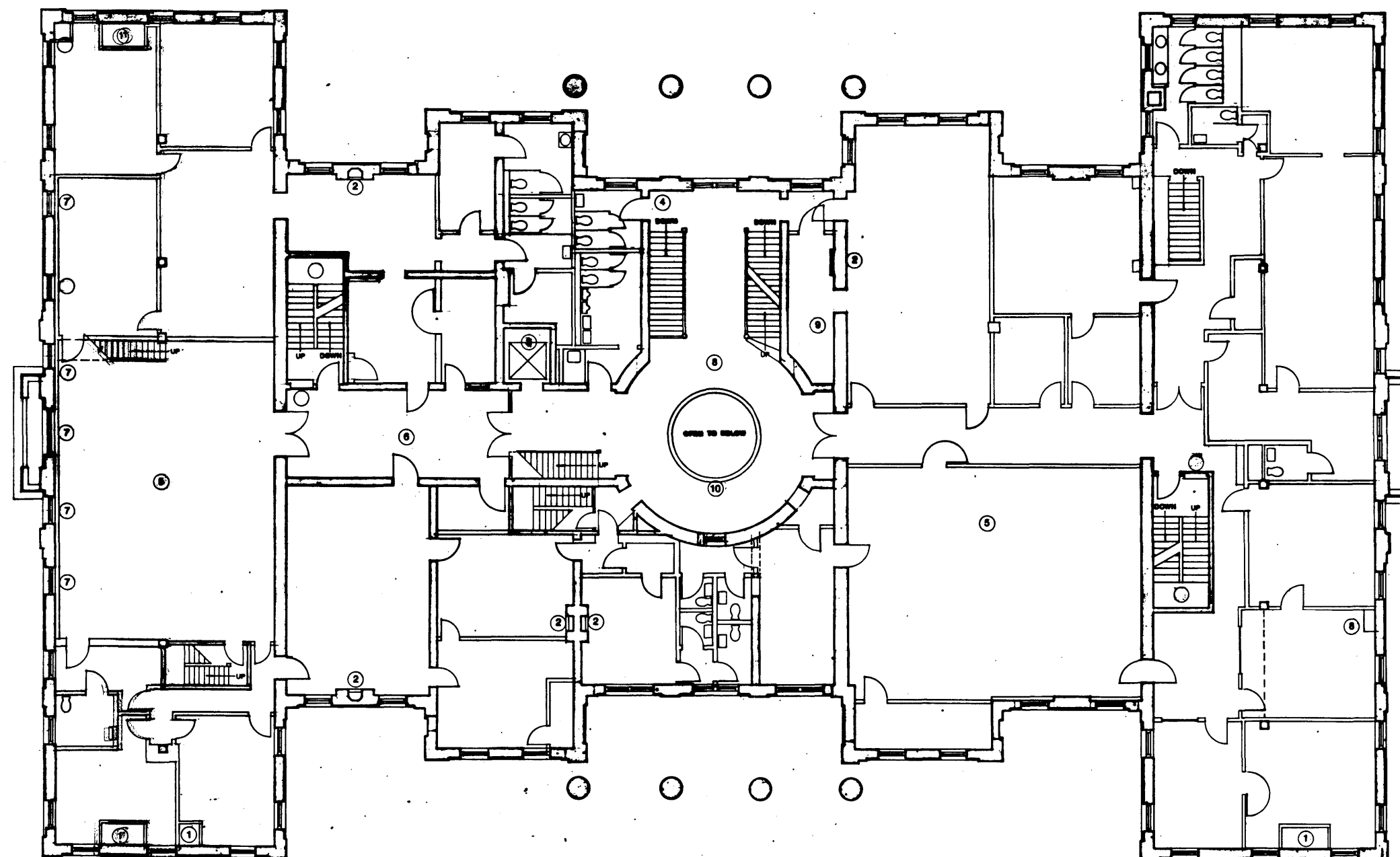
FEASIBILITY STUDY

PROJECT NO. 2336

DISTRIBUTION	DATE
FIRST ISSUE	3/10/88
GRANT APPLICATION	4/7/88

CHECKED

Polk County Courthouse  
101 E. Main Street  
Bartow, Florida



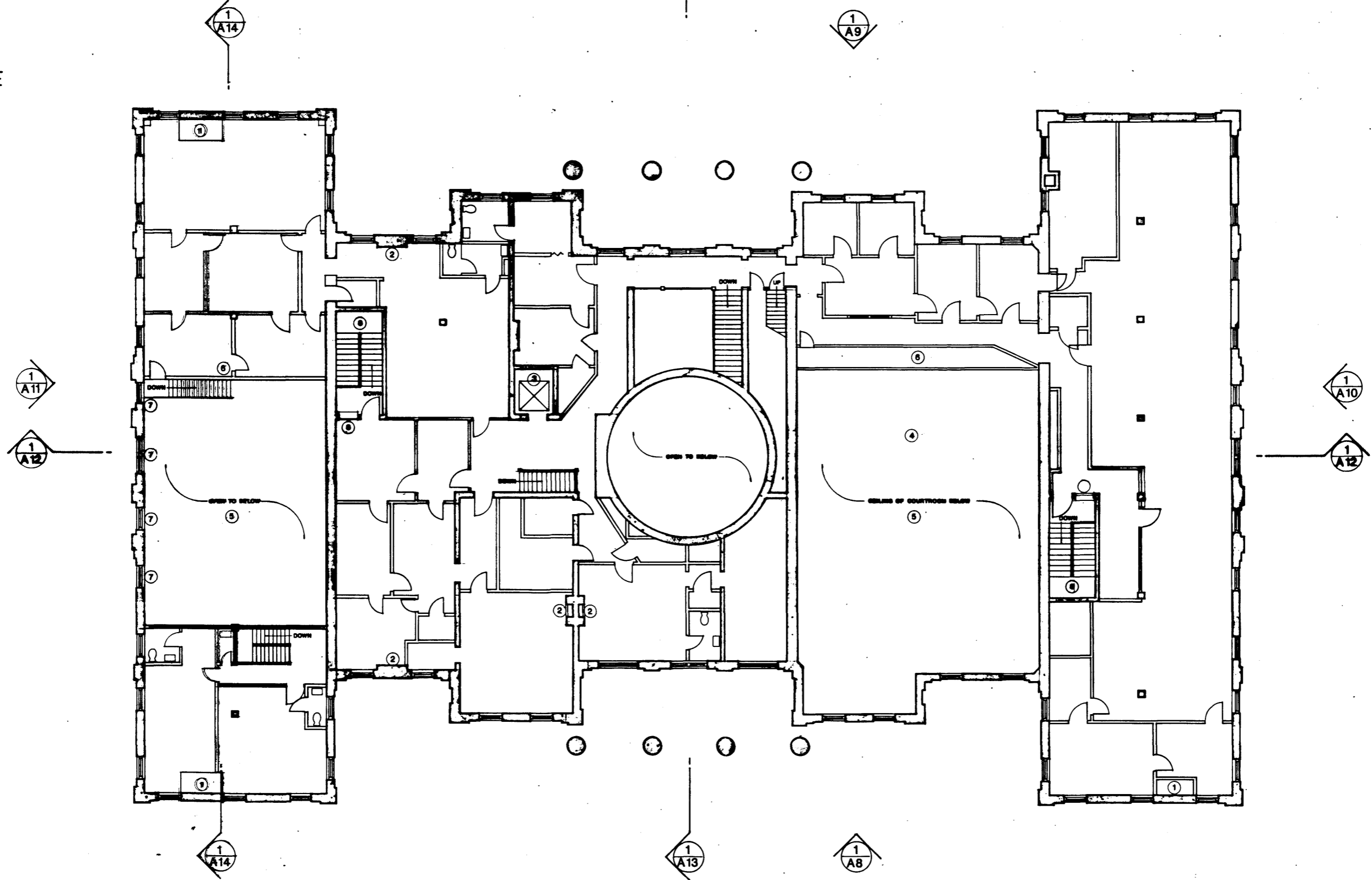
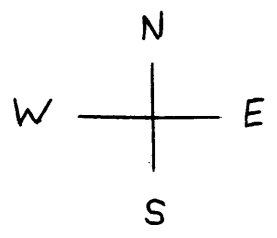
DRAWING NOTES

- ① EXISTING UNIFORM MECHANICAL CHASE TO BE REMOVED AND FLOOR OPENING REPAIRED.
- ② 1908 FIREPLACE ROBE: RESTORED TO ORIGINAL APPEARANCE WHERE FEASIBLE.
- ③ ORIGINAL COURTROOM TO BE RESTORED TO ORIGINAL APPEARANCE.
- ④ EXISTING METAL HANDRAIL TO BE REMOVED AND FLOOR RESTORED TO ORIGINAL CONDITION.
- ⑤ ORIGINAL COURTROOM TO BE RESTORED TO ORIGINAL CHARACTER.
- ⑥ EXISTING CONDOR SYSTEM AND ROTUNDA TO BE RESTORED TO ORIGINAL CHARACTER.
- ⑦ EXISTING WINDOWS (BUCKED AT INTERIOR) TO BE RESTORED TO ORIGINAL CHARACTER.
- ⑧ EXISTING RAINWATER SYSTEM TO BE REMOVED AND FLOOR OPENINGS REPAIRED.
- ⑨ EXISTING RAINWATER SYSTEM TO REMAIN.
- ⑩ EXISTING METAL HANDRAIL TO BE REMOVED AND REPLACED WITH CODE-APPROVED RAILING COMPATIBLE WITH ORIGINAL CHARACTER.
- ⑪ 1978 FIRE EXIT STAIR.
- ⑫ EXISTING FIRE HOSE CABINET.

**1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN EXISTING CONSTRUCTION**  
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

1	1	
2	2	
3	3	
4	4	
5	5	
6	6	
7	7	
8	8	
9	9	
10	10	
11	11	
12	12	





**OLD POLK COUNTY  
 COURTHOUSE  
 RESTORATION AND  
 ADAPTIVE RE-USE**

**FEASIBILITY STUDY**

PROJECT NO. 2336

DISTRIBUTION	DATE
FIRST ISSUE	3/10/88
GRANT APPLICATION	4/1/88

CHECKED

**1  
 A5** **THIRD FLOOR PLAN EXISTING CONSTRUCTION**  
 SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

- DRAWING NOTES**
- ① EXISTING UNUSED MECHANICAL CHASE TO BE REMOVED AND FLOOR OPENING REPAIRED.
  - ② 1908 FIREPLACE TO BE RESTORED TO ORIGINAL APPEARANCE WHERE FEASIBLE.
  - ③ EXISTING ELEVATOR TO HAVE REFINISHED CAB INTERIOR.
  - ④ EXISTING AIR HANDLING UNITS TO BE REMOVED AND RELOCATED ELSEWHERE.
  - ⑤ ORIGINAL COURTHOUSE, UPPER PART, TO BE RESTORED TO ORIGINAL CHARACTER.
  - ⑥ THREE TIER COURTHOUSE BALCONY TO BE RESTORED TO ORIGINAL CHARACTER.
  - ⑦ EXISTING UPPER WINDOWS, BLOCKED AT INTERIOR, TO BE RESTORED TO ORIGINAL CHARACTER.
  - ⑧ 1970 FIRE EXIT STAIR.
  - ⑨ EXISTING FIRE HOSE CABINET.

1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5
6	6	6
7	7	7
8	8	8
9	9	9
10	10	10
11	11	11
12	12	12
13	13	13
14	14	14
15	15	15

A5