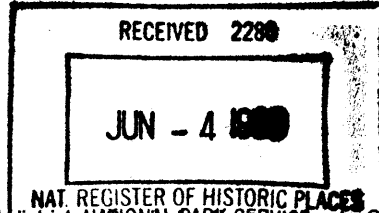


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

768



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Indian River County Courthouse

other names/site number IR 615

2. Location

street & number 2145 14th Avenue n/a not for publication

city or town Vero Beach n/a vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Indian River code 061 zip code 32960

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 5/18/99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

for
[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 7/19/99

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: Courthouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Masonry Vernacular
Modern Movement: Moderne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Brick
Terra Cotta
roof Asphalt
other Metal: Steel

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics /Government

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance

1937-1949

Significant Dates

1937

Significant Person

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Architect: Garns, W.H. & Sons

Builder: Hensick, William & Son

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository

Indian River Courthouse
Name of Property

Indian River Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than 1

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	5	9	2	1	0	3	0	5	7	2	7	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul L. Weaver & Barbara E. Mattick/Historic Preservationist Supervisor

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date May 1999

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Robert L. Brackett

street & number P.O. Box 965 telephone (561) 567-4303

city or town Vero Beach state FL zip code 32690

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE**
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL

SUMMARY

The Indian River County Courthouse is located at 2145 14th Avenue at the historic commercial and governmental center of the City of Vero Beach, Florida. Completed in 1937, the original building rises two stories in height, has an H-pattern ground plan and a flat roof with parapet, and is finished with buff brick. Its design shows the restrained influence of the Art Moderne style, with brick and cast stone detailing. The interior originally contained administrative offices on the first floor and offices and an expansive courtroom on the second floor. Wings of compatible design were added to the north and south ends of the building in 1961 and 1957 respectively. Over the past thirty years, exterior window openings were changed and the interior was remodeled on several occasions. These alterations, however, have been removed. The building has been adapted for use as a privately owned office building and is largely restored to its original appearance.

Setting

The Indian River County Courthouse occupies most of a city block on 14th Avenue, the principal historic commercial street in Vero Beach. The location is at the heart of the city's historic commercial and governmental center. The building faces east toward Pocahontas Park. It is in close proximity to the Vero Beach City Hall and several historic landmarks, including the Florida Theatre, the Pueblo Arcade, and the Old Vero Beach Community Center.

In 1913, the Town of Vero subdivision was laid out. Comprised of seven blocks, the subdivision was located west of the Florida East Coast (FEC) railroad tracks and the Dixie Highway, and was bordered on the south by 20th Street. Shortly thereafter, the historic business district in which the courthouse is located emerged along Twentieth Street and Fourteenth and Fifteenth avenues. Few of the buildings from that era remain, for in 1919, a fire destroyed the original commercial buildings on the south side of Twentieth Street between Fourteenth and Fifteenth avenues.

During the 1920s, new buildings were constructed in the original business district and beyond, along Twentieth Street, Fourteenth Avenue, and the Dixie Highway. Several large tourist hotels, including the expansive Vero Del Mar, were constructed near the business district. Mixed use buildings, serving both commercial and residential functions, were constructed in the district during the period.

The setting of the courthouse has traditionally been the center of government for Vero Beach and later Indian River County. In 1925, following the formation of Indian River County from St. Lucie County, Vero Beach became the county seat. County offices were initially housed in a building on Fourteenth Avenue. The Vero City Hall was constructed that same year on adjacent Thirteenth Avenue. The present courthouse, constructed in

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2 **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

1937 with funds supplied by the Public Works Administration, remains on Fourteenth Avenue in the historic commercial/governmental core of Vero (photograph 1).

Exterior

The Indian River County Courthouse contains four major components: the original courthouse, the two aforementioned additions, and an elevator tower addition dating to 1973. The original courthouse consists of a main block with wings on its north and south sides (photographs 1-4).

The original portion of the building has an H-pattern ground plan formed by the main block and attached wings. The overall plan of the building with the additions is irregular. The north and south additions, while technically non-historic, are of compatible design with the historic portion of the courthouse. Both wings are constructed of similar materials and have similar features. The additions are set back from the wall planes of the original courthouse and subordinate to it in terms of their mass and height (photographs 1-5). The additions are further distinguished from the historic courthouse by a lighter color brick, lack of belt course, and slightly different muntin dimensions in the windows.

The historic portion of the courthouse rests on concrete footings with eighteen inch thick concrete stem walls. The stem walls partially enclose a basement, an unusual feature in Florida. The finished portion of the basement has floors of reinforced concrete; the unfinished portions of the basement have dirt floors.

The first floor of the courthouse is a concrete slab. The structural walls of the upper floors are framed with shallow steel beams and infilled with structural terra cotta block. The walls support a concrete slab, reinforced with wire mesh, which forms the second floor.

The structure of the main roof consists of a steel truss system resting on the east-west second floor walls. The roof of the central block rises four feet higher than that of the original north and south wings. The truss system supports another concrete slab reinforced with wire mesh. The roof surface is a built-up bituminous type.

The non-historic north and south wings are both built on steel reinforced concrete slabs, but do not contain basements. The structural walls are similar to the original portion of the building, framed with shallow steel beams supported by terra cotta blocks. The beams support a concrete slab, reinforced with wire mesh, which forms the second floor. The roof structure and surfaces are similar to the original courthouse.

The exterior of the historic portion of the building is a buff brick veneer with brick and cast stone detailing. The east elevation contains cast stone coping, sills, lintels, belt course, door surrounds, and entablature with a panel

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

indicating the name of the building. The other major decorative feature is patterned brick on both the main (east) and west elevations. Brick detailing includes inset brick in a vertically oriented pattern, shafts of brick in the spandrels between the first and second floor windows, and panels of diagonally placed brick in the parapets of the north and south wings (photographs 2-4).

The fenestration pattern of the building is regular and symmetrical. The east elevation of the main block is five bays wide with a centrally placed entrance at the first story level. The flanking wings are three bays wide. The fenestration pattern is the same on the west elevation except the central block has been obscured by a 1973 elevator tower addition (photograph 6).

The exterior of the 1957 and 1961 additions are compatible with, though distinguishable from the original portion of the courthouse. The fenestration is very similar, but the dimensions of the glazing are slightly different. The additions have lighter buff brick exteriors, similar though less detailed spandrels, and similar cast stone door surrounds on the north and south entrances (photographs 2-4).

Interior

The interior plan is symmetrical and organized around two corridors that run north and south and east and west. The first floor originally contained county offices, including those of the commissioners, clerk, engineer, board of health, tax assessor, tax appraiser, school board, and vaults for housing and protecting public records (photograph 7-9). The second floor housed the county judicial offices. These included an expansive courtroom, judge's chambers, and jury rooms (photograph 16-19).

Interior wall and ceiling finishes were originally plaster over lath board on both the first and second floors. Floors in the downstairs were probably linoleum or a similar material. A masonite wainscoting covered the lower portions of the walls in the first floor corridors. Significant features of the first floor were paneled glass doors which opened to offices with transom lights above. During the recent renovations, marble flooring was added and the wainscoting and paneled glass doors were restored (photographs 7-15).

The most significant space in the building was the second floor courtroom. The courtroom contained heart pine floors and oak wainscoting. During the recent renovations these features were replicated. Furthermore, non-historic partitions have been removed and the original spatial configuration of the courtroom has been restored (photograph 16-19).

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 4

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

Alterations

The overall integrity of the building is good. Windows were removed and openings enclosed within the last several decades. Within the past year windows have been restored to their original design based on historic photographs and the original drawings. The 1957 and 1961 additions and the 1973 rear elevator tower are the other exterior alterations (photographs 2-6).

On the interior, the floors have been replaced and the interior wall and ceiling finishes have been renewed. With the restoration of the original courthouse space, the existing and original floor plan and spatial configuration are virtually the same.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 4 **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

Interior of South Addition

The south addition housed offices when originally constructed. The original floor plan appears to be largely intact with the exception of some partition walls added to the second floor. At the first floor level was an office for the tax assessor on the east side of the main corridor, and an office for the clerk of the circuit court and a vault on the west side. Original wall and ceiling finishes were plaster over lath board. These finishes were renewed during recent renovations. Floors were a vinyl tile over the original concrete slab when the renovations began. They are presently carpeted.

The second floor served as offices for judges for the circuit court. The wall and ceiling finishes were similar to those on the first floor and have been maintained. The original floor finish was a vinyl tile but was subsequently carpeted. New carpeting was laid during recent renovations.

Interior of North Addition

The north addition housed offices and a county commission meeting room when originally constructed. The original floor plan appears to be largely intact. At the first floor level was an office for the tax collector on the east side of the main corridor and a meeting room for the county commission on the west side. Original wall and ceiling finishes were plaster over lath board. These finishes were renewed during recent renovations. Floors were a vinyl tile over the original concrete slab when the renovations began. They are presently carpeted.

The second floor served as offices for judges of the county court and jury and hearing rooms. The wall and ceiling finishes were similar to those on the first floor and have been maintained. The original floor finish was vinyl tile but was subsequently carpeted. New carpeting was laid during recent renovations.

Alterations

The overall integrity of the building is good. Windows were removed and openings enclosed within the last several decades. Within the past year windows have been restored to their original design based on historic photographs and the original drawings. The 1957 and 1961 additions and the 1973 rear elevator tower are the other exterior alterations (photographs 2-6).

On the interior, the floors have been replaced and the interior wall and ceiling finishes have been renewed. With the restoration of the original courthouse space, the existing and original floor plan and spatial configuration are virtually the same.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 1 **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

SUMMARY

The Indian River County Courthouse, built in 1937, fulfills Criteria A and C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It has significance in the areas of Politics /Government and Architecture. Its historical significance is based on its association with the development of Vero Beach as the seat of government of Indian River County and the resulting need for a permanent facility for county offices. It has further historical significance in the area of Social History for its association with the Public Works Administration (PWA), a New Deal Program which symbolized the growing importance of government at the local, state, and federal levels during the Depression Decade of the 1930s. Finally, it has architectural significance as a fine example of a restrained use of the Art Moderne style, typical of the New Deal era.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Permanent settlement of what today is Vero Beach did not occur until the late nineteenth century. Construction of the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) in 1893 stimulated the first concentrated settlement. Extending from Jacksonville ultimately to Key West, the FEC brought thousands of settlers to the area during the ensuing four decades. Citrus cultivation and other agricultural production were the primary economic activities of early settlers. Vero quickly grew into the largest population center in what was later to become Indian River County. Because of its rail link, Vero became the chief shipping and processing center for citrus and other agricultural products in what was then northern St. Lucie County.

Vero Beach was founded during the late nineteenth century, when a small settlement began in the late 1880s. Among the early settlers was Henry Gifford, who in 1886 established the first store in the area and acquired a tract of approximately 150 acres on which he planted citrus. Gifford's wife, Sarah, named the settlement "Vero" which translated from Latin means to speak the truth. In 1891 the first post office was established.

Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway played an important role in the development of Vero. The Flagler line reached Vero in late 1893. Settlement and development followed at a moderate pace. The railroad provided a transportation system by which farmers and citrus growers could market their crops. The most important crop was the increasingly popular Indian River citrus grown in the area. The railroad also served as the principal means of transportation for new settlers and seasonal visitors. In 1905, St. Lucie County was subdivided from Brevard County. At that time fewer than 100 people lived at Vero. By 1910, the area presently encompassing Indian River County had a population of only 1,039. Vero's population doubled during the five year period to about 200.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 2 **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

Land reclamation played a significant role in the development of Vero and other lowland areas of Florida. Land reclamation consisted of intensive drainage projects that created new area for agricultural development. As a result, citrus cultivation in and around Vero expanded. The Indian River Farms Company, organized in 1912, drained much of the wetlands around Vero. The primary focus of the company was to develop the area for settlement and make land available for citrus cultivation. In 1913, the company surveyed a large tract of wetlands west of the FEC line. It began dredging canals, dikes, laterals, and spillways, a process that continued through the 1920s. Citrus growers and farmers purchased most of the reclaimed land.

Population and economic growth quickly followed the work of the Indian River Farms Company. In 1913, the town of Vero was surveyed and organized into blocks and lots. Located on the fringe of the Indian River Farms tract just west of the FEC line, the original town encompassed a seven block area. A fledgling business district developed along Twentieth Street and Fourteenth and Fifteenth avenues. Citrus drove the local economy. Although much of the fruit was produced at Ft. Pierce, a substantial amount was grown and shipped from Vero. Among the major local growers were Riverfront Growers, Deerfield Groves, and Graves Brothers Company, all established about 1915. In 1919 Vero was incorporated. That same year much of the original commercial district burned.

Growth was particularly significant in Vero and other areas of Florida during the 1920s, when real estate speculation fueled the Great Florida Land Boom. Entranced by a flood of promotional literature expounding the beauty of Florida, freed by the increased mobility which the automobile afforded, and seeking to make an easy fortune through land speculation, investors and new residents from all over the country descended upon the state in unprecedented numbers. The boom, however, quickly exhausted itself. Its crash was devastating, propelling Florida into a protracted economic depression after 1926.

It is difficult to exaggerate the speculative proportions of the 1920s boom. Miami and Palm Beach are generally regarded as the areas of the most intense activity, but few communities in coastal areas of Florida failed to experience expansive growth. Vero Beach experienced its most intensive period of development during the boom. Between 1920 and 1923, the population nearly doubled, rising to 1,500. The majority of the existing historic buildings in Vero were constructed during the 1920s, providing further evidence of the significance of the period.

One of the prevailing themes of the political history of Florida during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was county subdivision. As Florida's population grew and new communities developed, residents in outlying areas continually lobbied for the division of Florida's larger counties into smaller, more manageable units. The tremendous size of many counties, the difficulty of travel, and the settlement of previously unpopulated or underpopulated areas following the construction of railroads and highways made reorganization

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 3 **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE**
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL

of county government essential. The patronage, power, and economic benefits associated with local government were further incentives for reorganization. All of these factors to a greater or lesser extent played a part in the creation of Indian River County, which was subdivided from St. Lucie County in 1925. Vero, with the most residents, influential legislators, and an active business community, became the seat of government for the newly formed county. During the boom, many coastal communities added beach to their official names, hoping to attract tourists as a result of their location. Vero was re-incorporated as Vero Beach in 1925.

The collapse of the Florida Land Boom in 1926 threw the state economy into a depression three years before the rest of the nation. Construction in Vero Beach slowed dramatically. The population of the town was estimated at 2,500 by 1929, an increase of over 300% from the beginning of the decade, but most of the growth occurred between 1920 and 1926. In many ways the Depression Decade in Vero was similar to that of communities throughout the country. The one relatively bright spot was the tourist industry, stimulated by the a mild climate and attractive beaches. Although modest by the standards of the 1920s, the population of Vero Beach rose to over 3,000 by the end of the following decade. Beginning in the mid-1930s, federally assisted projects, most notably the construction of the Indian River County Courthouse, stimulated the local economy. Not until after World War II, however, did Vero Beach and other Florida communities fully recover from the Great Depression.

The population of Vero Beach continued to increase throughout the 1940s, reaching 4,746 in 1950. The local economy remained rooted in traditional but ever expanding industries and economic activities. Most prominent were agriculture, particularly citrus production, commerce, commercial fishing, and the railroad. Increasing numbers of retirees located in Vero, attracted by its climate, beauty, and low cost of living. The mild climate also attracted the Brooklyn Dodgers, who in 1947 made Vero Beach the location of their spring training camp. In 1953, "Dodgertown," the team's spring training facility was erected in the northwest part of the city. The population increased rapidly during the last three decades, reaching 8,000 by 1960, and doubling to over 16,000 by 1980.

The post-World War II development of Vero is similar to much of coastal Florida--increasing numbers of automobiles and asphalt, an interstate highway system, suburban sprawl, the gradual erosion of the central commercial districts, and strip development along major state highways. In Vero Beach, the commercial district along Twentieth Street and Fourteenth Avenue has suffered from neglect and decentralization caused by urban sprawl. Unbridled development remains a major threat to historical buildings in the city center.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 4

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Indian River County Courthouse is significant under Criterion A for its association with the development of Vero Beach as the center of government for Indian River County. It was constructed in direct response to the greatly increased demand for governmental services created by the influx of visitors and new residents arriving or passing through Vero Beach during the 1920s and 1930s. Located at the heart of the city's financial and retail district, the courthouse was associated with county subdivision, one of the enduring themes of Florida politics during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

County subdivision was an important issue in St. Lucie County during the 1920s. Distribution of tax funds, tax revenues, and the effectiveness of mosquito control were among the issues that divided northern St. Lucie County, where Vero was located, from southern St. Lucie County and Ft. Pierce. The event which is credited with catalyzing public support for the formation of Indian River County was associated with the Vero Theatre (NR 1992)), another local landmark. When the Vero Theatre was completed in 1924, the owners proposed to open on Sundays in violation of St. Lucie county "blue laws." Officials based at the county seat of Ft. Pierce reacted immediately. They went the county sheriff to enforce Sunday closing. Angered by this intervention in local affairs, businessmen, professionals, and other townspeople met and petitioned the legislature for the formation of a new county. Senator A.W. Young introduced the bill. On June 29, 1925, following senate approval, the governor signed the bill creating Indian River County from the northern part of St. Lucie County.

The formation of Indian River County created an immediate need for a permanent facility to house county government. County offices were initially housed in the second floor of the Seminole Building, a two story commercial block at the corner of 21st Street and Seminole Avenue, now known as 14th Street. During the 1930s they were located in a building known as the Palmetto Hotel (later called the Charlton Apartments) located at the intersection of Old Dixie Highway and 19th Street. Neither of these buildings was specifically designed for governmental functions, and neither ever satisfied the county's need for a permanent facility. The collapse of the Florida Land Boom and the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, however, deprived Indian River County of the tax revenue needed for construction of an adequate governmental center. Finally, during the 1930s, funding through a loan from the Public Works Administration (PWA) was obtained to build a two-story courthouse on 14th Avenue across the street from Pocomantas Park. County offices housed at the new courthouse included clerk of the circuit court, tax assessor, property appraiser, county commissioners, county and circuit judges, and the school board.

The Indian River County Courthouse has further historical significance for its association with the Public Works Administration, a New Deal Program which symbolized the growing impact of government at the local, state, and federal levels during the Depression Decade of the 1930s. The PWA was one of many of the alphabet soup

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 5 **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE**
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL

programs associated with the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It was authorized under the National Recovery Act of 1933 and specifically created by Roosevelt through Executive Order 6174. The PWA was administered by Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior and a key Roosevelt aide and New Dealer. The Public Works Administration administered 34,500 projects valued at 7 billion dollars in construction costs. The program was responsible for a variety of construction projects including buildings, dams, and roads.

Construction of the courthouse was financed through a \$75,000 loan from the PWA. The board of county commissioners submitted an application to the PWA in August, 1933. The terms of the original application required only that 70% of the amount borrowed be paid back. The PWA approved the loan in February, 1935. One of the justifications for the loan, in the opinion of the commissioners, was the employment value of the project. The loan was obtained as a result of intense lobbying by the Vero Beach Chamber of Commerce, particularly its president, local attorney James T. Vocelle. Congressman J. Mark Wilson personally intervened with PWA officials to secure the loan.

In July, 1935, the City of Vero Beach donated the land, located on 14th Avenue opposite Pocahontas Park as the site for the courthouse. In December, 1935 county voters passed a bond issue to be used as collateral to be used for the federal loan. Construction of the courthouse began in April, 1936. The architect of the building was W.H. Garns and Son of Vero Beach and Indianapolis, Indiana. The contractor was William Hensick and Son. J.H. Addison of the Inspection Division of the Federal Public Works Administration was the resident engineer inspector for the new building. The courthouse was completed in March, 1937.

The Indian River County Courthouse was one of the major federal projects constructed in Florida during the Depression Decade. In an attempt to promote its program and silence criticism of the New Deal, in 1939 the PWA published Public Buildings, Architecture under the Public Works Administration 1933-1939. The courthouse was the only local government building in Florida and one of only six buildings or structures in the state pictured in the publication.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT: Art Moderne Style

The Art Moderne style, like the Art Deco, was a break from traditional architectural forms. It began to appear in the United States after 1930 and reflected contemporary industrial notions of speed and efficiency through aerodynamic design. While Art Deco emphasized verticality, Art Moderne buildings were oriented to the horizontal. They have flat roofs, smooth exterior surfaces, glass blocks, horizontal grooves, cantilevered overhangs, and rounded corners that underscore the streamline effect. In Florida, Art Moderne buildings are most often found in communities where tourism sustained the local economy during the Great Depression.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 6 **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Beyond its historical importance, the Indian River County Courthouse has architectural significance for the type and style of building it embodies. The building shows the influence of the Government Moderne, a Moderne style rooted in classicism but frugal in its detailing. The original portion of the building in the tradition of classical courthouse design has a very symmetrical fenestration pattern and overall design. Detailing is limited to simple brick and cast stone elements.

Furthermore, the Indian River County Courthouse embodies many of the common features of traditional American courthouse design as identified by the National Park Service. Typical exterior features include a central block form with balanced wings, two stories in height, regular placement of windows, a centrally placed entrance, and a masonry exterior finish. Typical interior features are a lobby, courtrooms, and vaults.

Although renovations over the years had obscured or altered historical architectural features, the rehabilitation of the building largely restored the architectural integrity of the building. New windows, based on the design of the originals have been installed, and the main elevation now retains all its original features and materials except for replacement windows which have been replaced based on historic photographs and the original plans for the building. The interior of the courthouse retains its original corridor pattern, room layout and specific features, such as vaults and some doors. The recent renovations resulted in restoration of the spatial configuration and wainscoting and refinishing of the original heart pine floors, all in the second floor courtroom. Also, all corridor doors and transoms, including the original type of glass, have been restored.

W.H. Garns & Son Architects

W.H. Garns was the architect of the Indian River County Courthouse. Garns maintained offices in Indianapolis and Vero Beach. He originally came to Vero Beach from Indianapolis in 1925, at the height of the Florida land boom. He returned to Indianapolis after two years but went back to Vero about 1933 when planning for the Indian River County Courthouse began. In addition to the courthouse, Garns designed the Vero Beach Physical Arts building (NR 1992) and other buildings in Vero Beach, West Palm Beach, and Indianapolis. In Indianapolis one of his major commissions was the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church.

CONCLUSION

The Indian River County Courthouse is the most significant governmental building in Indian River County, and was prominently associated with the development of Vero Beach as the seat of government for the surrounding county during the late 1920s and 1930s. The courthouse has further historical significance for its association

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 7

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

with the Public Works Administration (PWA), a New Deal Program which symbolized the growing importance of government at the local, state, and federal levels during the Depression Decade of the 1930s. It has architectural significance for its association with a traditional American building type, the county courthouse, and retains the integrity of its original design and restrained Art Moderne architectural features.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 1

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

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Chamber of Commerce of Vero Beach. Indian River Tourist Guide. Vero Beach, 1951.

Hopkins, James. Fifty Years of Citrus: The Florida Citrus Exchange: 1909-1959. Gainesville, 1960.

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Newman, Anna. Stories of Early Life Along the Beautiful Indian River. Stuart, 1953.

Nolan, David. Fifty Feet in Paradise, The Booming of Florida. New York, 1984.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 **Page** 2

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

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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

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 2

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Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL**

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1 **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE**
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1 through 9, Block 35, ORIGINAL TOWN OF VERO, according to the plat thereof, as recorded in Plat 2, page 12, of the public records of St. Lucie County, Florida; said land now lying and being in Indian River County, Florida.

And also the East one half of the 10 foot wide public alleyway, between Lots 20 through 28 on the west, and Lots 1 through 9 on the east, all in Block 35.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The proposed boundary contains all resources historically associated with the property.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ **Photos** _____ **Page** 1 **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE**
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL

List of Photographs

1. Indian River County Courthouse
2. 2145 14th Avenue,
Vero Beach, Indian River County, Florida
3. Paul Weaver
4. February, 1998
5. Indian River County Courthouse, 2145 14th Avenue
6. Main (east) elevation, facing west
7. Photo No. 1 of 19

Items 1-5 are the same for the rest of the photographs.

6. East elevation, showing original north wing and 1961 addition, facing west
7. Photo No. 2 of 19
6. East elevation, original north wing and 1961 addition, facing west
7. Photo No. 3 of 19
6. West elevation, original north wing and 1961 addition, facing east
7. Photo No. 4 of 19
6. South elevation, compatible entrance design, 1957 addition, facing north
7. Photo No. 5 of 19
6. West elevation, elevator tower addition, facing east
7. Photo No. 6 of 19
6. Interior, showing original entrance, corridor pattern, facing east
7. Photo No. 7 of 19
6. Interior, north corridor, facing north
7. Photo No. 8 of 19
6. Interior, south corridor, showing courtroom bench, facing north
7. Photo No. 9 of 19

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number Photos Page 2 **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE**
Vero Beach, Indian River Co., FL

- 6. Interior, original stair off south corridor facing west
- 7. Photo No. 10 of 19

- 6. Interior, original stair off north corridor facing east
- 7. Photo No. 11 of 19

- 6. Interior, original door, facing west
- 7. Photo No. 12 of 19

- 6. Interior, vault, facing east
- 7. Photo No. 13 of 19

- 6. Interior, exhibit area showing document case facing north
- 7. Photo No. 14 of 19

- 6. Interior, typical doors, transom restored to original appearance, facing east
- 7. Photo No. 15 of 19

- 6. Interior, courtroom, showing paneling reconstructed based on original design and materials, facing north
- 7. Photo No. 16 of 19

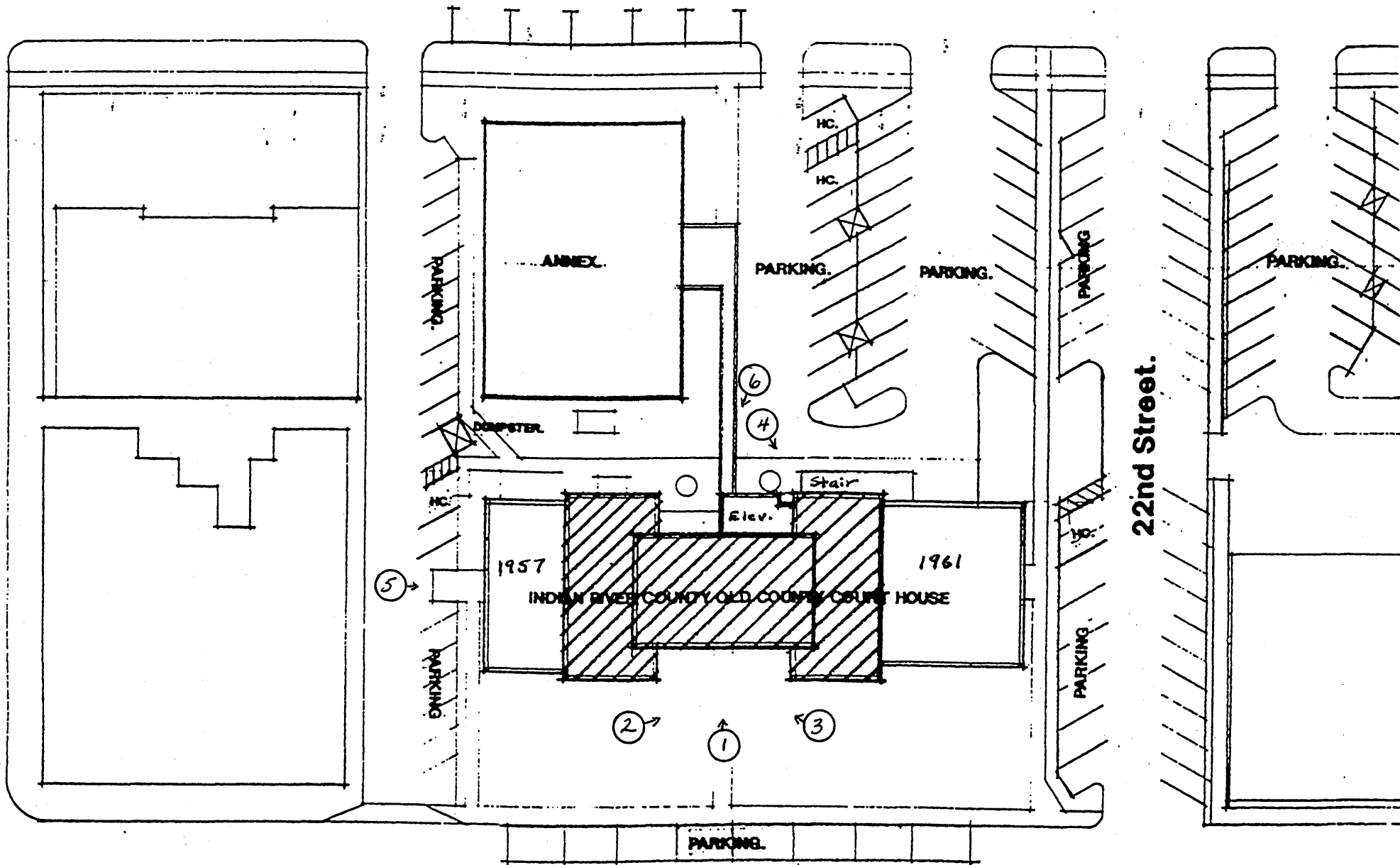
- 6. Interior, courtroom, showing paneling and entrance facing north
- 7. Photo No. 17 of 19

- 6. Interior, courtroom, showing restored floors facing south
- 7. Photo No. 18 of 19

- 6. Interior, courtroom paneling, raised dais in location of original judge's bench, facing south
- 7. Photo No. 19 of 19

21st Street

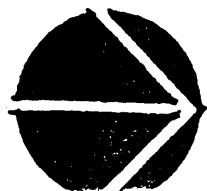
15th Avenue

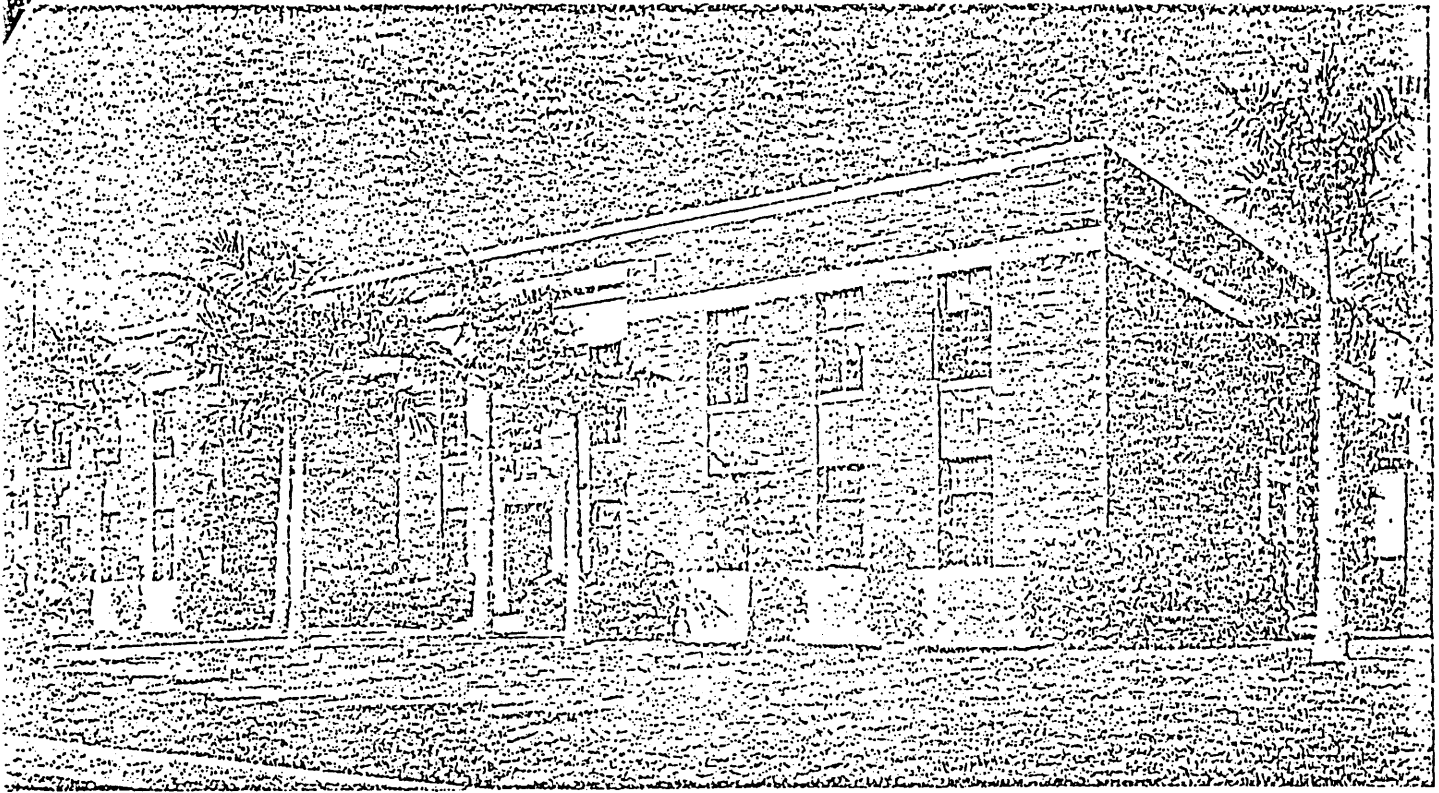


14th Avenue

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY
 COURTHOUSE
 Vero Beach, FL

SITE PLAN.





County Courthouse

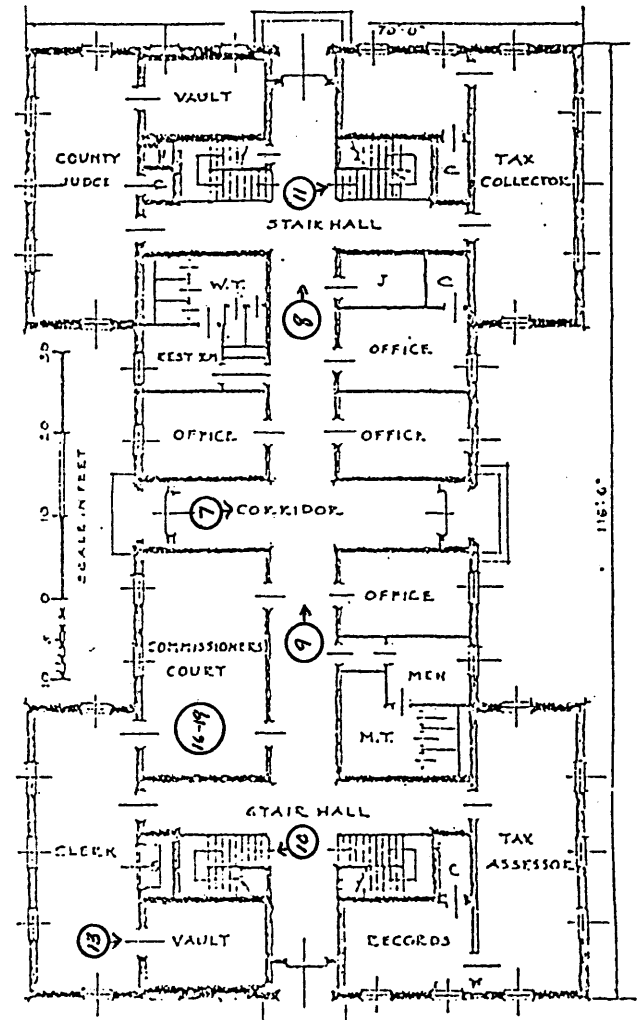
Vero Beach, Florida

In order to provide quarters for the court, the county officials, and the proper storage of records, Indian River County secured a loan and grant from the P. W. A. with which a two-story courthouse, 116 by 70 feet, was built.

The first floor contains offices for the recorder, auditor, engineer, commissioners, board of health, assessors, school board, and treasurer. The second floor is occupied by the courtroom, the judge's chambers, jury rooms, and the county clerk. Adequate vaults have been provided in connection with each department for the storage of records.

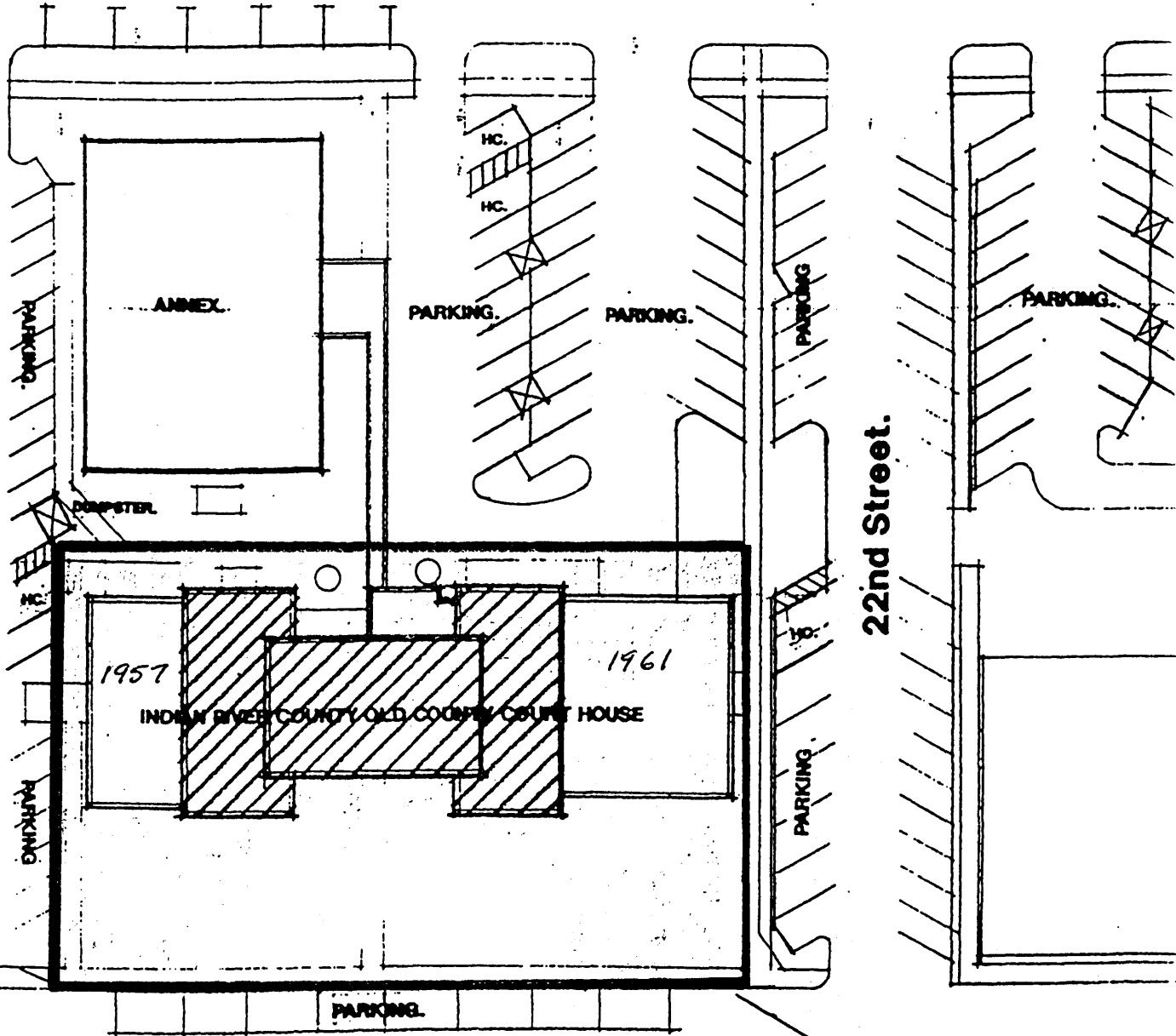
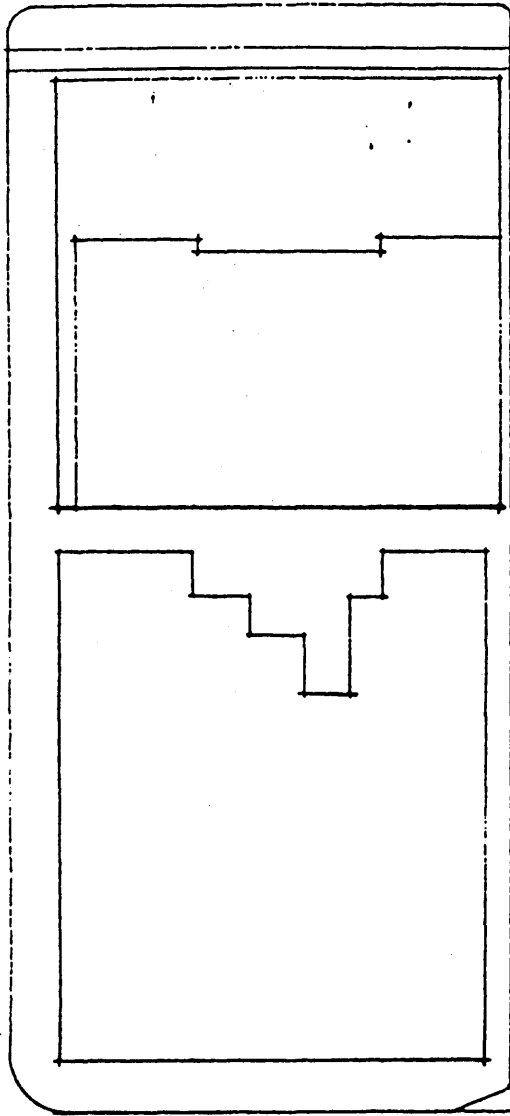
The building is fireproof throughout and the exterior walls are brick, backed with clay tile and trimmed with cast stone.

It was completed in March 1937 at a construction cost of \$65,657 and a project cost of \$71,396.




Public Buildings: Architecture under the Public Works Administration 1933-1939, Volume 1. Washington, D.C., 1939.

21st Street



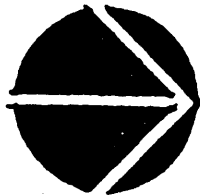
22nd Street

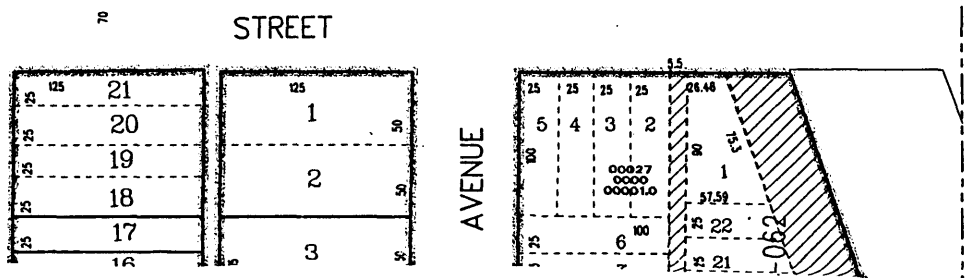
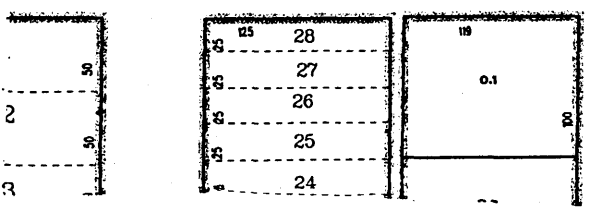
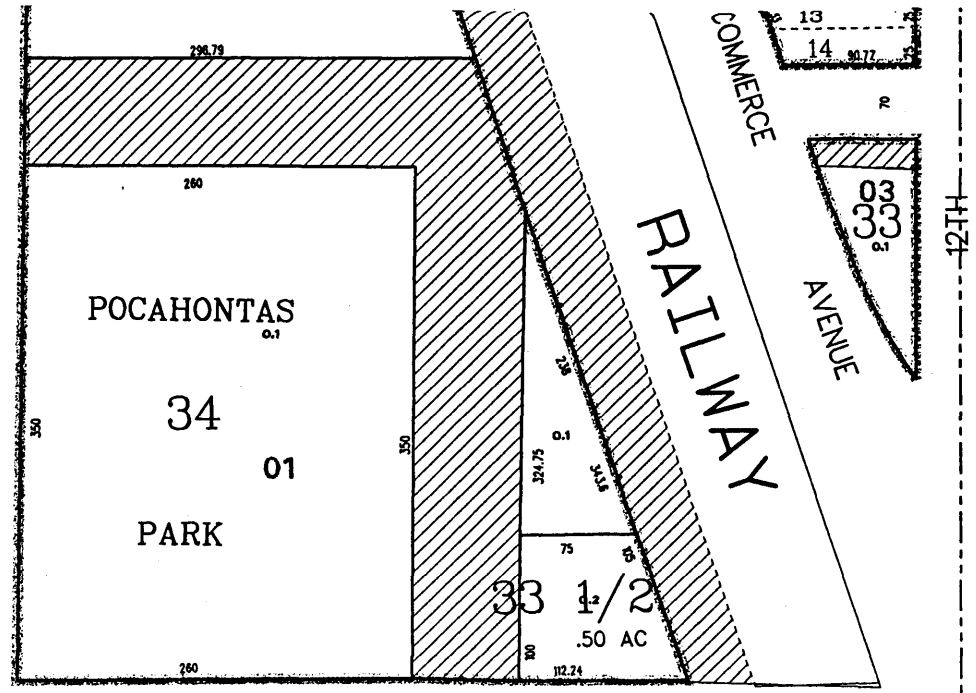
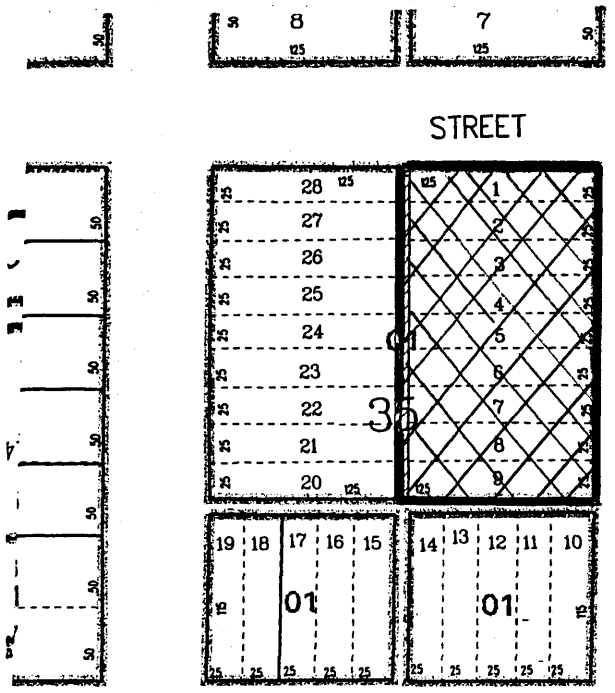
14th Avenue


Boundary 

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY
COURTHOUSE

SITE PLAN.






 AREA ENCLOSED
 BY BOUNDARY

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY
 COURTHOUSE