

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY #
INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

HISTORIC NAME: Ocean County Courthouse COMMON NAME: Courthouse
 LOCATION: Washington Street BLOCK/LOT: 661/ 3 & 4 less than 1 acre
 (original Courthouse building only)
 MUNICIPALITY: Dover Township COUNTY: Ocean
 OWNER/ADDRESS: Ocean County UTM reference: 18/568780/4422620
 101 Hooper Avenue, Toms River, N.J.
 ORIGINAL USE: Courthouse PRESENT USE: Courthouse
 USGS QUAD:

DESCRIPTION

Construction Date: 1850 - 1851 Source of Date: Minute Book I, 1851,
 Board of Chosen Freeholders
 Architect: Builder: "Mr. Aitken"
 Style: Greek Revival Number of Stories: 2
 Foundation: brick Form/Plan Type: rectangular
 Structural System:

Exterior Wall Fabric: brick, common bond painted red

Fenestration: 1st story - 3 bays wide, 6/6 DHS, formerly three doors
 2nd story - 9/9 DHS

Entrance Location: south; centrally located double doors with rectangular
 transom

Roof/Chimneys: pitched gable with projected pediment supported by six
 fluted Doric columns

Additional Architectural Description: On a more modest scale, the Ocean County Courthouse was modeled after the Greek Revival style of the Hudson County Courthouse. Originally, the building contained a large courtroom on the second floor with auxiliary offices on the first floor. The walls and ceiling of the courtroom were decorated with intricate plaster carvings of ribbons, birds, and cupids. A fire in 1927 destroyed these features and the room was remodeled. The exterior of the original Courthouse has not been altered. Due to the increased volume of county business, however, two adjoining wings were added in the 1950's and 1960's.

PHOTO

MAP (Indicate North) See map 2



(10) Ocean County Courthouse
 Old Village of Toms River
 Multiple Resource Nomination
 Photographer: Charles Gaertner
 Date of photo: Spring 1978
 Negative: Ocean County Museum
 View: North

(609)292-2023

OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION, 109 WEST STATE STREET, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625

SITING AND RELATED STRUCTURES:

Centrally located on a 3.6 acre plot, the Ocean County Courthouse is 81 feet long by 52 feet wide. The county courts occupy three buildings within the Courthouse complex. Additional buildings include an 1851 jailhouse, new county jail, and sheriff offices.

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Open Space Woodland Scattered Buildings
Suburban Urban Residential Agricultural Industrial
Downtown Commercial Highway Commercial Other

The area around the Courthouse complex is developed as additional county owned buildings, municipal buildings, professional offices, and parking lots. Along the south side of Washington Street, some historic buildings such as the Presbyterian Church (1852-1857), and the Town Hall (c. 1905), had their wood exterior fabric bricked over in the 1940's, disguising their unique period details. This alteration became the trend for other sites in the immediate area.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Ocean County Courthouse is a significant building both in architectural design and historical association. The Courthouse, with its formal and elegant appearance, reflects the mid-nineteenth century interest in Classical architecture. With its tall Doric columns supporting a massive pedimented portico, the Courthouse is an excellent example of the temple form that was the most distinguishing feature of the Greek Revival style.

Historically, the building has served continuously for over 128 years as the county "hall of justice" and place of county government business.

The building has also served as a meeting place for political and social gatherings. In the nineteenth century, Republicans and Democrats held their county conventions in the building. During the Civil War, the Courthouse was the scene of Union recruiting rallies. Company F, Fourteenth N.J. Volunteers, under the command of Captain Ralph Gowdy, organized and were drilled in front of the Courthouse steps. Locally, being the most important and impressive building in the community, civic and religious social events were held in the building's auditorium.

PHYSICAL CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Poor
REGISTER ELIGIBILITY: Yes Possible No As part of district
THREATS TO STRUCTURE: Roads Development Zoning Deterioration
No Threat Other
COMMENTS:

REFERENCES:

Brown, Alfred W. "Historical Ocean County", May, 1945.
New Jersey Courier (Toms River), March 17, 1869.
Ocean County Courthouse. Deed records. Minute Book I Board of Chosen Freeholders. Toms River, N.J.

RECORDED BY: Kevin McGorty
ORGANIZATION: Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission
DATE: Summer 1978

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet

Item number

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Old Village of Toms River Multiple Resource Nomination

Ocean County Courthouse

3-2982-1002

Section 7: Description

The original Ocean County Courthouse c. 1850-51 is centrally located between two main additions constructed in the early 1950s. These two-story brick wings are 13 bays wide. The west wing is L-shaped and the east wing rectangular in form. Two multi-level buildings adjoin the north (rear) elevation of the east wing and were constructed to accommodate new courtrooms and law enforcement offices.

The two wings are connected to the original courthouse by enclosed walkways measuring 12' by 10'. The east wing walkway is located on the second story, hidden behind an arched brick wall, with a breezeway below. On the west wing, exposed walkways are located on both the first and second stories. The first story walkway is recessed 24' from the main elevation and the second story walkway, 12' from the courthouse facade.

The inconsistent treatment of these walkways and the close proximity of the wings to the historic building inhibits a full appreciation of the total proportion and massing of the original courthouse. From the streetscape, however, the overall visual impact is compatible with the old courthouse, being visually distinctive from the contemporary additions because of its Greek Revival details. Its tall Doric columns support a full entablature and pediment gable preserving the essential architectural concept of this popular mid-19th century style. These distinctive features allow the historic building to be viewed as an independent entity from the other buildings on the block-long property.

While the adjoining wings and other buildings are compatible in scale, in use of materials, in roof shapes and window and door placements, they are not significant architecturally or historically. Since the old courthouse is being nominated for its historic architectural design, which can be easily discernable from the adjoining wings, it would be confusing to the public to have the whole courthouse complex included in the designation.

Recorded by: Kevin McGorty