

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

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

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Taylor County Courthouse

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Courthouse Square (224 South Second Street) \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Medford \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district Seventh

state Wisconsin code 55 county Taylor code 119

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name County of Taylor, Attn: Roger Emmerich, County Clerk

street & number 224 South Second Street

city, town Medford \_\_\_ vicinity of state Wisconsin 54451

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Taylor County Courthouse

street & number 224 South Second Street

city, town Medford \_\_\_ vicinity of state Wisconsin 54451

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wis. Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes  no

date 1976 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison \_\_\_ vicinity of state Wisconsin 53706

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Taylor County Courthouse occupies an elevated site of just over three and one-half acres in the city of Medford. The domed, rectangular building rises a full three stories with basement below and a full, closed balustrade encircling the roof. Four Ionic pilasters adorn the projecting portico on the front (west) facade, alternating with five rectangular windows in the recessions between. Other neoclassical elements include a high concrete ground story with projecting water table, and a concrete entablature and modillioned cornice at the roofline. Alternating concrete and brick voussoirs compose the flat arches topping each rectangular double-hung window in the interim brick stories. Round-arched openings in the concrete ground story correspond to the flat ones above, and keystones accent the arches over the entrances on each facade. The principal entrance on the west is marked by double plate glass doors (recent replacements) framed by continuous sidelights and overlight. A large brass lantern hangs on each side of the entry. The brick drum of the eight-sided dome is lighted by triple, round-arched windows on each face. Four clocks which chime on the hour and half-hour are set into alternating sections of the dome itself. A lantern marks the peak. The formality and regularity of the rectangular mass, as well as its Renaissance-style dome, mark the design as a civic structure conceived in the grand neoclassical style associated with government buildings and given further impetus by the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

Interior renovation in 1948 included installation of acoustical tile ceilings. Walls in the halls and offices have marble and wood wainscotings respectively, with plaster surfaces above. Ornate wood mouldings underscore the hall ceilings. Decorative metal posts and railings with wood banisters line the stairways.

Additional features of the courthouse square are a cannon south of the west end of the courthouse and a World War I memorial statue north of the building. The immediate vicinity of the square itself is residential in character.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1913<sup>1</sup> Builder/Architect B. Mehner<sup>2</sup>

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Taylor County Courthouse is a dignified architectural response of the county to the needs of its government and administration. In addition, the building, sited on a hill overlooking Medford, is an imposing visual landmark, testifying to its importance as a symbol of civic pride and identity.

### Architecture

With its symbolic pilastered portico and dome, and overall regularity, the courthouse was designed in the imposing neoclassical tradition of government architecture. Designed by architect B. Mehner in 1913, the building was constructed by the Hutler Construction Company of Fond du Lac at a cost of \$60,000.<sup>3</sup> Both as a descendant of the revival of the grand neoclassical style of the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, and as a product of improved building technology of the new century, the courthouse stands as a well-designed and pleasing example of civic architecture of the early twentieth century. The well-proportioned distribution of openings and building elements, and the restrained contrast of brick and concrete distinguish the courthouse design.

### Government

The size and formal manner of the courthouse suggest an increased complexity in the operation of county government. Imposing in itself and in its setting in the community of Medford, the building serves as an important focus of regional identity in the American system of self-government. The traditional aspect of its design strengthens the sense of association with other seats of government throughout the state and nation..

1. Plaque in hallway of Courthouse
2. Emmerich, p. 4
3. Idem.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Emmerich, Roger, Taylor County: The Log Cabin Country, Taylor Co. Archives, 1977  
 Record of Proceedings, Volume C, Taylor County Board of Supervisors  
 Wausau Daily Herald, October 12, 1979

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.6  
 Quadrangle name Medford, Wis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

**UMT References**

A 

1	5	7	0	9	0	1	0	5	0	0	1	4	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing			

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

In the center of Courthouse Square, Block 5, original plat, City of Medford, Wisconsin. Bounded on the north by Clark Street, on the east by South Third Street, on the south by Ogden Street, and on the west by South Second Street.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diane H. Filipowizz, Architectural Historian, Historic Preservation Division

organization State Historical Society of Wisconsin date December 1979

street & number 816 State Street telephone 608/262-2970

city or town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national     state     local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Richard Murray

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin date 3/28/80

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>for W. Ray Luce</u>	date <u>5/14/80</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest: <u>Kristen J.O. Couvell</u>	date <u>5/12/80</u>
Chief of Registration	