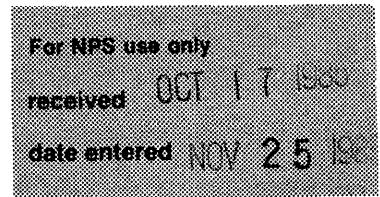


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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NAME: Walsh County

LOCATION: 638 Cooper Avenue, Grafton, North Dakota 38, Walsh County 099

OWNER: Walsh County, Grafton, North Dakota

ACREAGE: 1.720 Acres

VBD (LEGAL): Lots 1-6 and 19-24, Block 33 of the Original Townsite of Grafton

UTM: Zone 14, Easting = 618075, Northing = 5363825; Grafton, N. Dak. Quad.

DESCRIPTION: The Walsh County Courthouse is a three story, rectangularly shaped structure. Indiana Limestone covers brick and a structural frame of steel. Five bays comprise the 73'x114' plan, and the central three bays are set back and elevated slightly from the corner bays. The building's flat roof is surmounted by a metal deck. A one-story, 1980 addition is attached at and visible from the rear. Metal frame windows, installed in 1984, light the building while preserving the original 1-over-1 proportions. A diverse collection of metals, woods, and marble decorate the building. Aluminum is used in the front doors and the exterior grillwork above, and on the top half of the stairway rails. Rainbow marble from St. Cloud, Minnesota, forms a large frame for the front door. Montana Travertine marble sheaths the interior corridor and walls and bottom half of the stair rail; terrazzo covers the floors. Tennessee gray marble pilasters are found throughout the second floor corridor. The judge's bench is a composite of Brazillian Rosewood and White African Zebrawood inlays. Benches are an African walnut with red birch inlays. Other decorative elements on the building's exterior include recessed fluted pilasters topped by medallions, both of which flank the front door, and ornamental spandrels. The freize bears the name "Walsh County Courthouse" in stylized letters. The site also contains a large monument and courtyard.

SIGNIFICANCE: Date: 1940

Architect: T.B. Wells

Contractor: Johnson and Gilanders

The Walsh County Courthouse is historically significant for its function as the depository of county records, as the location of county offices, and as the site of the court. From the early 1930's Walsh county citizens recognized a need for a new courthouse facility but could not agree on the method of paying for one. Some were willing to secure financing for a large building through the issuance of bonds which would enable the county to take advantage of WPA grant funds. Others wanted to settle for a smaller, but immediately affordable building. The issue became deadlocked, and bond elections beginning in 1935 failed. The county newspaper editor, a bond proponent, explained the failure of the elections on an overall conservatism on the part of voters, and an unwillingness to mortgage their future on a government offer. Finally in 1938 the bond issue passed. Numerous delays in shipping materials held up courthouse completion until late 1940. News stories pronounced the events as "One of the greatest events in county history."

It also has significance in North Dakota's architectural history as the only courthouse with Art Deco styling in the northeast quarter of the state. The building retains a high level of integrity, and exhibits high artistic quality in its decoration. Its

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architect, T.B. Wells, enjoyed an active career in his native North Dakota after returning from study at L'ecole des Beaux Arts. He obtained many contracts for public and commercial buildings in the eastern half of the state including Grafton's city hall and sports arena, several educational facilities, area civic auditoriums, and industrial buildings.

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Interview with Lorraine Pappenfuss, Walsh County Auditor, April 2, 1985

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"Structure Rated as Finest County Capitol in Area," Walsh County Record, August 25, 1940, p. 5.

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NORTH DAKOTA COUNTY COURTHOUSES TR
Adams, et. al. counties

Less-than-50-year-old courthouses: Ranson County Courthouse
Renville County Courthouse
Sheridan County Courthouse
Stark County Courthouse
Walsh County Courthouse

North Dakota has demonstrated through both its survey methodology and findings, and its discussion of exceptional significance of the courthouses within their historic context that the five courthouses that are less than fifty years old should be accepted as part of the State's thematic submission of courthouse nominations. The survey revealed a historical and architectural cohesiveness to courthouses constructed between 1929 and 1940, and a logical historical and architectural break in courthouse design and construction after 1940. The State's Art Deco and Art Moderne courthouses possess exceptional significance to their communities and to the State in the areas of architecture and history. Architecturally, they have among the most sophisticated designs, impressive materials, and retained integrity of the State's courthouses. Additionally, they are extremely impressive examples of their styles in sparsely populated areas (approximately 9 persons per square mile) where such accomplished designs might not be expected. Historically, the courthouses represent exceptional tenacity and confidence in rural communities hard hit by the Depression through the citizens' willingness to commit themselves to the construction of unusually expensive courthouses.