

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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received

OCT 17 1985

date entered

NOV 14 1985

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

1. Name

historic 24 New Prop.
North Dakota County Courthouses (Thematic)and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number See continuation SheetsN/A not for publicationcity, town See continuation sheets N/A vicinity ofstate North Dakota code 38 county See continuation sheet code continuation sheets

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name See continuation sheets.street & number See continuation sheets.city, town See continuation sheets N/A vicinity of state North Dakota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Courthousestreet & number See continuation sheets.city, town See continuation sheets. state North Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes X nodate N/A N/A federal state county localdepository for survey records N/Acity, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The County Courthouses of North Dakota provide the setting and space for governmental activities on the county level throughout the state. A historic structures survey of these facilities was undertaken to evaluate the county buildings for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The effort resulted in the identification of 46 contributing buildings and 8 buildings which do not contribute to the historic significance of their respective complexes. Twenty of those buildings, were placed on the National Register prior to this nomination (see Appendix A). Because the procedures for thematic nominations require that all eligible resources be made part of the nomination, the previously listed courthouses have been included.

Methodology

L. Martin Perry, architectural historian on the North Dakota State Historical Society staff, conducted the survey from October 1984 through May 1985 and prepared the nomination at the project's conclusion. All extant courthouses, whether currently or formerly used as such, both historic and modern, were considered.

Each non-listed facility was visited, examined, photographed, and recorded on North Dakota Cultural Resource Survey Architectural inventory forms. On-site examination consisted in notation of facing materials on the buildings' exteriors and interiors. All buildings were photographed on the exterior from at least two opposing angles, and in the courtroom. In historic courthouses, public spaces such as hallways, stairways, and atriums, were also photographed to document their features. Finally, a windshield survey of the county seat was undertaken. Documentary research was conducted during the period in which site visitations occurred. Two resources, county newspapers and county histories, provided information about building materials, dimensions, etc. A third item, Bohn's North Dakota Courtrooms (1975), presented visual representation of the buildings against which to compare current views. The photographs and narrative content of these sources formed the basis by which integrity was measured.

The Auditor in each county was contacted at least once, and often several times, for information about a particular building's history. These custodians of the courthouse frequently proved able to answer questions that remained after site inspections and documentary research. The Auditors also aided the project by furnishing, upon request, a sketch map of the site and appropriate legal locations. Since these officials possessed building blue prints in more than 80% of the cases, site dimensions have a high degree of precision. Communication with the Auditors also allowed for a check in the accuracy of some facts drawn from other sources.

The survey was intended to assess the National Register eligibility of all courthouses throughout North Dakota. Thus, in those counties where the courthouse was already listed a site inspection was not undertaken. Contact with the Auditor was made, however, to establish what changes had been made to the building since listing. This data allowed an assessment of the integrity of the listed facility to determine whether it retains sufficient integrity to continue on the National Register. Full collection of site inspection notes, photographs, and research is on file at the state Historical Society office.

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Geographical Description

Several varied landscapes combine to give North Dakota its characteristic appearance. In very simplified terms, the Missouri River cuts the state into western and eastern portions, and forms a division between two distinct types of terrain. East of the river the land is generally flat, with extremely low gradients in the valley of the Red River, the state's eastern boundary, to mildly rolling prairie westward toward the Missouri River. Glacier movement leveled that part of the state during prehistoric periods. Contrastingly, much of the state west of the Missouri River was not subjected to the effect of glacial ice, and presents a stark yet interesting array of rugged topographic features. In this area lie the Badlands and numerous high rising buttes. Indigenous trees are rarely found outside of river valleys; human settlement is marked by the planting of orderly rows of trees for shelter. Agriculture is the state's largest industry. Wheat, sunflowers, beets, and potatoes dominate in the east; ranching is prominent in the west where it is more suitable to the hilly terrain. Development of mineral resources, particularly lignite coal and oil, also has had an impact in the western portion of the state.

Description of Theme

The county, a legal, geographical, and political entity, is pervasive throughout America. States have established units of government to minister areas larger than the town but certainly smaller than the state. The many activities of the county administration usually focus within the courthouse building. The courthouse is, as a result, the obvious sign of this county organization and network of services. Thus, the familiar county organization, as represented by the courthouse, is the unifying theme for the resources in this nomination.

North Dakota's population of 652,695 (1980 census) is scattered across 70,665 square miles, which yields an average of 9.2 persons per square mile. That ratio has not changed significantly since the leveling of population growth as indicated by the 1910 census, which reported an average of 8.1 persons per square miles. The high occurred in the 1930 census, with 9.6 persons per square mile. In a state with such a low population density, the definition and role of the courthouse changes in relation to changes in county size. Generally, in rural counties with shrinking populations, the functions of county government are contained within a single courthouse building. In counties which are growing, county responsibilities frequently outgrow the space available in the courthouse, and they claim secondary buildings. Because the theme focuses upon the historic facilities, those newer offices outside the courthouse grounds have not been considered. Continued reference to census statistics reveals a basis by which to differentiate growing and stable counties from counties with shrinking populations.

While the overall state population has remained stable for the past 70 years, on a county-by-county basis significant fluctuations in the number of people have occurred. Thirteen counties in 1980 were listed with a county seat of 3,000 people or more. In eleven of these counties the 1980 population roughly equals or has surpassed the 1920

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levels. In the remaining two counties a moderate loss, about 30% has occurred after seven decades. These thirteen represent 25% of the state's total of 53 counties. The largest portion of counties with county seats having less than 3000 people (1980 Census) have lost significant numbers of residents in the same period. Losses of one-half the number of the 1930 census figures are common in these rural counties. Some had been reduced to one-third of their 1930 levels by 1980.

These demographics show county populations to be considerably more variable from 1920-1980 than the state's population over the same period, which points to two conclusions. First, shifts in county population as revealed by census figures provide data useful in analysis of state history when counties are considered in aggregate. Observation of the state's total population gives no suggestion of demographic shifts, but rather, suggest stasis. Reference to county population figures clearly reveals a movement away from rural areas toward more urban settings. Study of courthouses can illustrate these shifts by analysis of evolving spatial needs within the courthouse facility over a number of years.

Second, county seat size in 1980 in most cases correlates with county population changes from the period from 1920-1980. Eleven out of the thirteen counties whose county seats exceeded 3,000 people either increased or maintained their 1920 populations. Conversely most counties whose seats had less than 3,000 people in 1980 had lost significant numbers of people in the years 1920-1980 (all population statistics from North Dakota Blue Book--1981). In conjunction with these facts regarding county size, the courthouse is one building erected by counties either to maintain population size in smaller counties or to facilitate growth in larger counties by providing a central location for county offices, a secure method for storing valuable county records, and a setting where divisive arguments can be settled. The stabilizing effect of courthouses on the political life of a county is discussed in the statement of significance.

Windshield survey of county seats, particularly in the smaller counties, revealed the courthouse to be one of the most prominent buildings in its town, and presumably in the county. Its appearance is far from consistent, though. In the fourteen counties west of the Missouri River the longest-standing courthouse typically was a wood frame building of one-and-a-half to two stories with clapboard siding. Extant examples are found in Billings, Amidon, and Slope counties. Recently, several counties in this area (Bowman, Grant, Sioux, Mercer, Oliver) have replaced their original buildings with facilities of one to two stories and masonry construction.

East of the Missouri River masonry predominates as a building material and structure size increases. Most historic courthouses are two stories plus a basement, and some have three floors above ground. The long life of masonry construction has allowed these counties to retain a greater percentage of their historic facilities than have western counties whose residents built frame courthouses. In the eastern counties, only five courthouses out of thirty nine have been replaced since 1940, while in the remaining fourteen western counties, nine new facilities have been constructed since 1955, seven of those since 1973.

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Description of the Resources

Stylistically, the extant courthouses can be comfortably grouped into six categories. The earliest period of construction which still finds representation ranges from 1883-1905. These brick courthouses are architect designed, display an eclectic borrowing of period revivals, and exhibit elements of one or more of these styles: Italianate, Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, or Romanesque. Courthouses within this group can be found in Benson, Wells, Griggs, Stutsman, McLean (current courthouse), and Kidder counties.

The second period of construction for which there are standing examples runs from 1905-1922. During this period many counties, especially those newly formed in the west, erected wood frame structures for county use. Today these can be found in Billings, Dunn, Slope, Sioux, and McLean (former courthouse) counties. These buildings are smaller in scale and simpler in massing than their brick contemporaries. They resemble large residential dwellings more than they do monumental public architecture. Their designs probably came from local sources, lumberyard pattern books, for instance, would have been considerably less expensive than those in brick, and could be constructed in a short time by area laborers--three facts which would have appealed to those developing a county in the first three decades of this century.

A third type of courthouse appears roughly during the same time as the "pattern book" courthouses above. These assume a Beaux Arts classical styling, including elements such as a dome, rotunda, rich exterior decorations, statuary, and interior painting. Thirteen North Dakota courthouses have been designed in this style by a St. Paul, Minnesota, firm, Beuchner and Orth, and today are dispersed across the state in Dickey, Divide, Foster, Grand Forks, LaMoure, McHenry, McIntosh, Mountrail, Pierce, Pembina, Richland, Sargent, and Traill counties. Another early courthouse, Cass county's, possesses exterior detailing which approaches this style. These fourteen buildings have been recognized for their architectural distinction by listing on the National Register prior to this nomination.

A fourth type appeared during the years after the first World War until the Depression, or about 1918-1928. Courthouses built at this time were architect designed with special attention given to correctness in detail. Their styling falls into one of two kinds, Classical revival or Federalist revival. Courthouses in Golden Valley and Logan counties are examples of the latter kind, with cupolas, rigidly symmetrical facades, and delicate lines. Those in Barnes, Steele, Adams, and very vaguely, Burke county, can be understood in terms of the former kind, with a three-part horizontal composition, careful massing, and the use of Greek temple features such as pediments and columns.

The fifth type of courthouse appeared during the Depression years until the second World War, from 1929-1940. Eight, in Burleigh, Emmons, Hettinger, Ransom, Sheridan, Stark, Walsh, and Ward counties are recognizably Art Deco, because of their use of stylized exterior decoration, emphasis on the vertical, use of exotic materials on the interior and exterior, and use of setbacks and telescoping structural bays. A ninth

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courthouse constructed during this period, in Renville county, distinguishes itself with an Art Moderne styling. The Moderne is related to the Deco treatment, but with rounded corners on both the building interior and exterior, it has a more streamlined effect.

Only five courthouses were built in the state from 1940 until 1973, the first not completed until 1952. This begins the sixth and final type, the modern courthouses. These buildings are of too recent a vintage to be considered for the National Register.

Courthouse siting is generally undramatic. North Dakota lacks examples of the courthouse square, a block in the center of the county seat which acts as the vehicular and symbolic focus of the town/county. In most cases the courthouse is situated on one of the townsite blocks, and thus the block becomes indistinguishable from others in the town's grid of streets. A variant to this practice are the buildings which are located on the outskirts of their towns. There seems to be no rule to govern where the courthouse would appear either early or late in any town's history. Apparently the most important event which determined the location of the courthouse was the donation of a block or series of lots for the facility.

Courthouse setting rather than siting frequently is the visual key to the building's importance. In most cases courthouses occupy entire townsite blocks, are well landscaped with mature vegetation, and are surrounded by generous grounds. It may share the block with other county buildings, such as a sheriff's residence/jail, or with other non-county-owned buildings. Invariably, the grounds have sidewalks, parking, and a flagpole. Other features of the site, however, may be present. Maintenance sheds, HVAC units, and other support buildings may be present. Because of the symbolic nature of the building, the grounds may contain a variety of features, from memorial markers to log cabins. To aid in efficiency, on the continuation sheets bearing information for individual buildings, only features other than the sidewalk, parking, and flagpole will be noted. Those noted features, too, will be assigned a status of "contributing" or "non-contributing" as appropriate.

Integrity Justification

All seven aspects of integrity were considered in assessing the significance of historic courthouses. Three courthouses were found lacking in integrity to an extent which rendered them ineligible for the nomination. The former Ward County courthouse, presently located on the State Fairgrounds in Minot, North Dakota, was lacking in integrity of location and setting, and possibly materials and feeling on its interior. The former LaMoure and McKenzie County courthouses, in LaMoure and Watford City, respectively, had been altered by the recent application of stucco finishes to a point where they do not resemble their original appearance. In addition, LaMoure's had been moved to a memorial park, and Watford City's had had a large addition attached to the side under the stucco which changed its visual composition.

A wide range of alterations to courthouses have been made over time. In the few counties where growth of population has required an expansion of record-storage

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capability and services provided, additions have been made to the courthouse building. These additions are usually smaller than the courthouse itself, may be attached or detached, and may be sympathetic or unsympathetic to the historic building. In the event of extreme population growth, supplementary office space off-site has been secured for county offices. These cases are very recent and frequently temporary; therefore ancillary county facilities were not recorded. The trend, however, is apparent: whether there has been an increase or decrease in population over time, there has been an expansion of county services over time. Early courthouses which only provided offices for an auditor, treasurer, sheriff, and recorder, soon found building expansion or new construction imperative to accommodate the growing array of services offered by the county. In short, a historic courthouse which has seen no external additions is one which was built with rooms that anticipated future spatial needs. Counties whose populations have diminished have found less need to make additions to their buildings than counties whose populations have grown, even when the number of services offered are the same.

Integrity is also a concern in terms of other changes made to the exterior of the building, particularly modernization/maintenance. The need to replace deteriorated building parts or to effect preventative measures has led to many window, roof, and door replacements. Original building features have also suffered at the expense energy conservation plans. For decisions of integrity, then, the following rule was used. Any building to be considered for nomination must have an integrity of feeling, association, and location. Further, it must have a sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and setting to allow it to convey its architectural character. Each building's integrity is addressed and justified on the individual continuation sheets.

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APPENDIX A

North Dakota Courthouses Presently listed in the National Register of Historic Places

<u>County</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date Entered</u>
Benson	Minnewauken	11/2/78
Billings	Medora	12/16/77
Cass	Fargo	12/23/83
Dickey	Ellendale	11/25/80
Divide	Crosby	11/25/80
Foster	Carrington	11/25/80
Grand Forks	Grand Forks	11/25/80
Griggs	Cooperstown	7/21/77
LaMoure	LaMoure	11/25/80
McHenry	Towner	11/25/80
McIntosh	Ashley	11/25/80
Mountrail	Stanley	11/25/80
Pembina	Cavalier	11/25/80
Pierce	Rugby	11/25/80
Richland	Wahpeton	11/25/80
Sargent	Forman	11/25/80
Stutsman	Jamestown	9/8/76
Traill	Hillsboro	11/25/80
Wells	Fessenden	11/25/80

All count as one contributing building, except for Stutsman County Courthouse and Jail, which was nominated as two contributing buildings. Total: 20 Contributing Buildings.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates See continuation sheet Builder/Architect See continuation sheets

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The county courthouses of North Dakota are significant for the role they play in the political and architectural history of the state. In this largely rural state their status as the primary governmental building and grandest architectural edifice in their particular county is evident. Each of these resources serves several crucial functions: it provides a central space for county offices; it houses and safeguards vital county records concerning property and taxation; it provides a setting for the resolution of legal matters; and its monumentality is something with which county residents identify and in which they can take pride. Though not of primary significance, each courthouse has a social importance to county residents through providing space for public intercourse. Many of North Dakota's extant courthouses also have had a stabilizing effect on the newly organized counties during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The organization of North Dakota's counties was a protracted process (Hall, 1923; Long, 1984). As early as 1849, when the eastern two-thirds of the state existed as the western part of the Minnesota Territory, three counties were established within present North Dakota boundaries. The largest of these was Pembina, a county which exists in reduced size today. Subsequently, the Dakota Territory was established in the early 1860's, and included land which is presently South Dakota and Colorado. The first territorial legislative assembly met in 1862 and established the first counties.

Territorial, and eventually state, boundaries coincided with geographical lines of longitude and latitude which give the state a generally rectangular perimeter. Legislators drew county boundaries to form rectangular blocks of townships. Only counties bordering the Missouri and Red Rivers and Devils Lake had irregular boundaries. Railroads during the 1870's, in the business of town building, also had a hand in organizing counties. They gave names and boundaries to several counties, believing that the imposition of a name and county boundary would give these unorganized counties the appearance of well developed entities, and would make them more attractive for settlement. Railroad efforts notwithstanding, the large size of these early counties in relation to their size today betrayed their then-low population. As people immigrated to the Dakota Territory, counties were subdivided into smaller, yet still regularly shaped units. Statehood in 1889 left a fractured row of counties along the southern border of the state; these had once been larger counties, occupying an area which eventually became subdivided by state borders. Counties continued to be organized from the subdivision of larger counties as late as the teens. From 1910–1916 Burke, Renville, Divide, Golden Valley, Slope, and Grant counties were the last in the state to be formed.

Today, a few courthouses remain from pre-statehood days, those in Kidder, Stutsman, and Griggs counties (1882, 1883, and 1884 respectively). Only two others, those of Towner and Eddy counties (1898 and 1899), represent nineteenth century construction.

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The low number of aged structures indicates that most counties are occupying their second and third courthouses. A very typical chronology to describe the progression of county buildings is as follows. Officers of a newly organized county would hold their meetings in some temporary location, either the home of an officer or some downtown store. For a period of usually no more than a year, one or two downtown offices would be rented for storage of the records. At the end of an appropriate period the county would have collected enough revenue to erect a spartan frame courthouse for about \$2,000-5,000. Because this process begins with the erection of a less sturdy, temporary building, only the two courthouses in Amidon, Slope County, still stand in tandem to bear witness to this scenario.

The question of which city should acquire the county seat was often a difficult one for newly organized counties (see, eg., Slope: "Amidon Wins County Seat"; Sioux: "County Jail Case"). Very young counties with shifting populations and economies gave their residents no strong indicators of which town would emerge as the dominant commercial or political force and thereby earn the right to the seat. Often, two or three towns in a new county would have comparable populations and have attained similar levels of economic development; each could lay claim to the seat of government. Most citizens were sure of one thing, though: they wanted their town to become the county seat, because that status was thought to bring greater prosperity with it. So in young counties the issue of county seat location was brought before voters several times. One town would amass the two-thirds majority necessary to capture the seat, and would hang on until the next election. Thus, the location of the courthouse changed with some frequency throughout the state's counties (North Dakota Blue Book--1981, pp. 122-126).

The accepted transience of early county seats had a significant effect on the type of courthouse which was constructed (see, eg., Golden Valley: "Courthouse Committee Presents Reasons"). County commissioners, with responsibility for providing space for county offices, had two routes through which to finance the courthouse. They could rely on available tax revenues, as suggested above, or they could ask county residents to vote on a bond issue. Such an issue required a two-thirds majority to pass, as did the vote for county seat relocation. These issues occasionally passed. Commissioners sold the bonds and had enough capital to build a large and more impressive structure.

The decision to undertake indebtedness and erect a large building or to use available funds and accept a more modest one had implications which county residents recognized (see, eg., Ransom: "Kvello Calls New Court House 'A Symbol'"). Acceptance of the smaller, non-mortgaged courthouse would allow for greater fluctuation of the county seat. Residents felt not too much was lost in abandoning such a courthouse as a consequence of relocating the county seat. Those in favor of relocation would cite the deteriorated condition of the courthouse to urge voters that the county needed a new building, anyway, and a new home for that building. Rhetoric aside, these structures indeed could not have been of too enduring a nature because few survive today. At bottom, county residents understood that the lower quality buildings would allow the county seat to drift more easily (see, eg., Steele: "Farmer's Press Attempts to Mislead People").

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They also knew that passage of a bond to finance construction of a grander courthouse, on the other hand, would result in a more permanent building and a long-term indebtedness for county residents. County tax-payers had no desire to shoulder a ten-to twenty-year obligation only to abandon the building after four years. Such would have required them to pay for two buildings (the debt on the old and purchase of the new) at once. Thus, the action of counties financing their courthouse with bonds signals the stabilization of county organization.

Not all counties went so far as bonded indebtedness to construct a new courthouse building. Many saved tax monies for several years in a county building fund until the time when they could purchase outright a large building (see, eg., Burke: "How Funds Were Appropriated"; Ward: "Ward Will Dedicate New Court House Saturday"). The effect, though, is nearly the same whether the building is purchased through the sale of bonds or through a building fund: erecting a monumental courthouse represented an investment in the future and ended the possibilities for other towns to capture the seat. Two events in county history illustrate this condition. Dunn County in western North Dakota was created in 1883, but was not fully organized until 1908, with Manning as the seat. From 1908-1915 nearby Kenmare grew significantly larger than Manning and began to feel they deserved the seat. In early 1915 Kenmare residents saw the door opened when the original courthouse burned. When county commissioners took steps to secure a modest replacement Kenmare citizens challenged that action by seeking an injunction to keep county funds from being used to build a new courthouse. Their bid was unsuccessful, though, and the courts did not uphold their petition (Dunn: "New \$5,000 Court House"). Consequently a replacement courthouse was built in Manning, a town of 42, which today still owns the seat.

A second case involves Steele, a small county in the eastern portion of the state. In the mid-1920's a growing faction based in rival town Hope held the idea that taxes were excessive because the county was too poor to support itself. Their reactionary proposition called for a dissolution of the county by splitting it into two parts, and then letting neighboring counties absorb the east and west halves--a reverse of the process by which the county was created. To that end the faction in Hope had successfully blocked several courthouse bond issues which been put before county voters for six years since 1920. Steele county commissioners gave up on the bond method, and in 1925 simply began to divert funds from county accounts earmarked for other projects. Their action increased the \$36,000 building fund to \$85,000. Residents of Hope attacked through the courts, charging that monies collected from them for a preestablished use was now being put to an alternate use without their consent. The courts found in favor of the county commissioners in Finley (Steel: various issues of Hope Pioneer and Steele County Farmer's Press, January-August, 1925). Steele county remains today, and their 1925 courthouse possesses one of the highest degrees of integrity of any being nominated. The lessons of Dunn and Steele counties offer strong evidence of the impact on subsequent county existence once a courthouse is constructed.

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The ability of the courthouse to set the future course for the county, the great investment it represents, and the magnificence of its design, all work together to lend it a special symbolic appeal for county residents (see, eg., Ransom: "Kvello Calls..."). In no other building do citizens come to view themselves as one more than in their courthouse. Several other features of the courthouse heighten its symbolic power. Although North Dakota towns do not take advantage of the courthouse square, the courthouse setting, generally an entire block, adds to its monumentality. Courthouse grounds, too, are generally given over to placement of various memorial objects, signs, plaques, and even log buildings. The siting of the courthouse on the edge of town rather than at the center, a not too uncommon occurrence, suggests a specialness for the building, a transcendent status. Together these factors give the courthouse the power to embody the identity of a particular county.

County residents have taken pride in the design of their courthouses, as well. Newspaper descriptions of historic courthouses from the time of dedication emphasize how functional their new building is, and how it is without superfluous ornament, yet they invariably praise its beauty and majesty. Rightfully so, these buildings traditionally bear the most sophisticated architectural expression of any in the area. Pride within a county over the courthouse also extended to pride between counties. Perhaps more than a little grandstanding explains that thirteen counties commissioned the firm of Beuchner and Orth to prepare plans for their courthouses (see Beuchner and Orth Courthouses thematic nomination). Other counties, for instance Ward, Burke, and Barnes, who hired Minneapolis, Minnesota, firm of Toltz, King, and Day, did not lose the opportunity to broadcast the fact through the local press (see, eg., Burke: "Burke County's New Official Home"). Dedication of the new courthouse involved a large ceremony with tours, speeches, picnics, appearances by old-time county residents and sometimes the governors (see Barnes: "Valley City Extends an Invitation"). Some counties, Emmons, for instance, had the good fortune to build near the time of their fiftieth anniversary, and tied the dedication into other centennial celebrations. The opening of the Barnes county courthouse, as did some others, included a historical pageant. In all of these events the new building is recognized as the carrier of identity and virtues of the people it serves.

On the practical level, courthouses are vitally important for their primary functions: storage of records, centralization of county administration, and housing the courts. Fire, the great enemy of the courthouse, always threatened to obstruct the execution of those duties. In fact fires caused many of these nominated buildings to be constructed. Even the possibility of fire in a substandard building weighed heavily on the minds of county residents; the promise of safety through fireproofing usually was cited as primary justification for the expense of a new courthouse (many examples, for instance, Sheridan: "Reasons for...").

The need for more space was tirelessly cited as a second reason for a new facility. The growing volume of records and number of services called many new buildings into service as early as the 1920's and 1930's (see, eg., Burleigh, "Back the New Court House Tomorrow"). Today that trend is not reversing; Burleigh county offices in 1985, for example, have expanded into a large office building across from the courthouse, and

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National Park Service**

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a third floor is being added to the annex which connects the once separated jail and original courthouse. These spatial pressures are ongoing in any county, and are married to similar maintenance concerns.

Because so, the rationale upon which integrity standards were devised and used in this nomination are as follows. An addition to a courthouse which would jeopardize the integrity of the original building would need to substantially obscure, dwarf, or deface the historic courthouse. Since practical concerns led to the adoption of energy-conserving window, roof, and door systems, those systems would need to alter the appearance of the building in a substantial way to destroy its integrity. The basis for these standards is lodged in three premises. First, county officials responsible for those alterations adopted the changes in good faith for the benefit of their constituents. Interviews with numerous county auditors and commissioners reveal that nearly all feel that they would have been irresponsible to have resisted all changes. Second, the alterations to these buildings has frequently been the result of uninformed choices by county officials with little experience in building design. Listing a courthouse on the National Register will have the effect of inviting county officials to consult with appropriate State Historical Society staff when alterations or additions are planned. Listing will help insure that federal funds are not used to do further damage to the design or materials of listed facilities. And third, while these buildings have an architectural significance, their symbolic, functional, and economic import gives them an historic significance at least as great as their architectural value, which makes the question of integrity less critical.

One final justification. All of the Art Deco courthouses of the 1930's have been included. Their construction dates extend as late as 1940, i.e. beyond the normal National Register fifty-year guideline for eligibility. Architecturally these buildings have some of the most sophisticated designs and impressive materials, as well as the highest degree of integrity. The year 1940 also represents a dramatic break in courthouse construction throughout the state, so that the Art Deco courthouses truly belong to a historic period and that those constructed in 1952 and afterward represent a modern phase. Historically the Deco courthouses are very significant. Their construction costs went beyond what citizens conceived that buildings might cost. Nevertheless, federal financial assistance in the form of matching PWA and WPA grants allowed counties to accept the financial risk during the Depression. Their erection during that period represents an important mixture of federal relief programs and local self-confidence--a formula on which many during the Depression hung their hopes. North Dakota, as many agricultural states in the Great Plains, was hard hit by the Depression; courthouse construction gave work to many unemployed laborers. The existence of such fine structures during that trying period gives the buildings constructed from 1935-1940 an exceptional significance. The item will be addressed on the particular continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property See continuation sheets

Quadrangle name See continuation sheets

Quadrangle scale 1:25000, 7½ minute

UTM References See continuation sheets

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A			
C			
E			
G			

	Zone	Easting	Northing
B	[Plot with high growth]	[Plot with high growth]	[Plot with high growth]
D	[Plot with medium growth]	[Plot with medium growth]	[Plot with medium growth]
F	[Plot with low growth]	[Plot with low growth]	[Plot with low growth]
H	[Plot with very low growth]	[Plot with very low growth]	[Plot with very low growth]

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheets.

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

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Marty Perry, Architectural Historian

organization State Historical Society of North Dakota **date** October 3, 1985

street & number North Dakota Heritage Center telephone (701)224-2672

city or town Bismarck state North Dakota

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national X state X 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 National Park Service.

James E. Sperry
State Historic Preservation Officer signature

State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota) date October 3, 1985

For NPS use only.

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: 
Chief of Registration

date 11/14/85

date

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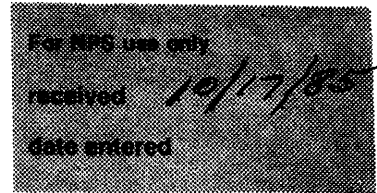
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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name North Dakota County Courthouses TR
State North Dakota

Cover 11/4/85

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Adams County Courthouse

Substantive Review Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

2. Barnes County Courthouse

Substantive Review Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

3. Burke County Courthouse

Substantive Review Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

X 4. Burleigh County Courthouse

Substantive Review Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

5. Dunn County Courthouse

Substantive Review Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 3/26/86

X 6. Eddy County Courthouse

Substantive Review Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

7. Emmons County Courthouse

Substantive Review Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

X 8. Golden Valley County
Courthouse

Substantive Review Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

9. Hettinger County
Courthouse

Substantive Review Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

X 10. Kidder County Courthouse

Substantive Review Keeper

Attest

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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Item number

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName North Dakota County Courthouses TR
State North Dakota

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Logan County Courthouse

Substantive Review

Keeper

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

Attest

12. Former McLean County
Courthouse

Substantive Review

Keeper

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

Attest

13. McLean County Courthouse

Substantive Review

Keeper

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

Attest

14. Ransom County Courthouse

Substantive Review

Keeper

L. J. [Signature] 11/23/85

Attest

15. Renville County Courthouse

Substantive Review

Keeper

L. J. [Signature] 11/23/85

Attest

16. Sheridan County Courthouse

Substantive Review

Keeper

L. J. [Signature] 11/23/85

Attest

17. Former Sioux County
Courthouse

Substantive Review

Keeper

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

Attest

18. Slope County Courthouse

Substantive Review

Keeper

S. P.

Attest

19. Original Slope County
Courthouse

Substantive Review

Keeper

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

Attest

20. Stark County Courthouse

Substantive Review

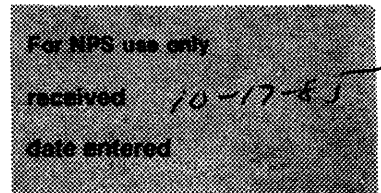
Keeper

L. J. [Signature] 11/23/85

Attest

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name North Dakota County Courthouses TR
State North Dakota

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

21. Steele County Courthouse ~~Substantive Review~~

Keeper

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Attest

22. Towner County Courthouse ~~Substantive Review~~

Keeper

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

Attest

50 23. Walsh County Courthouse ~~Substantive Review~~

Keeper

[Signature] 11/25/85

Attest

24. Ward County Courthouse ~~Substantive Review~~

Keeper

Beth Grosvenor 11/14/85

Attest

25.

Keeper

Attest

26.

Keeper

Attest

27.

Keeper

Attest

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Keeper

Attest

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Keeper

Attest

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Keeper

Attest