

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

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

For HCRS use only  
received SEP 18 1981  
date entered OCT 30 1981

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

**1. Name**

historic Courthouses in South Carolina Designed by William Augustus Edwards *Thematic Resources*  
and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication \_\_\_\_\_  
city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district *1, 2, 3, 5, 6*  
state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Multiple ownership (see individual inventory forms)

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. See continuation sheet

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Inventory of Historic Places  
title in South Carolina has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1977, 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The buildings included in the thematic group nomination for the Courthouses in South Carolina Designed by William Augustus Edwards represent one aspect of the work of Edwards, a native South Carolinian who achieved regional recognition as an architect during the period ca. 1895-1939. Edwards, alone and in conjunction with several partners, excelled in the design of large-scale public and educational buildings. This nomination deals with one type of Edwards's designs, county courthouses in South Carolina. There are six county courthouses definitely designed by Edwards: Abbeville County Courthouse in Abbeville, constructed in 1908; Lee County Courthouse in Bishopville, constructed in 1908-09; Dillon County Courthouse in Dillon, constructed in 1911; Calhoun County Courthouse in St. Matthews, constructed in 1913; York County Courthouse in York, constructed in 1914; and Jasper County Courthouse in Ridgeland, constructed in 1915. Abbeville County Courthouse and York County Courthouse are already listed in the National Register.

William A. Edwards was born 8 December 1866 in Darlington, South Carolina. He was educated at St. David's Academy, Richmond College, and the University of South Carolina. After graduation in 1885 he moved to Virginia where he eventually formed a partnership with another Darlington County native, Charles Coker Wilson. The firm moved from Roanoke, Virginia, to Columbia, South Carolina, in 1895. The partnership continued until ca. 1902; however, no buildings designed by the firm have as yet been identified.<sup>1</sup>

Around 1902, Edwards established a firm with Frank C. Walter, a relationship which lasted about six years. The Abbeville County Courthouse, opera house/municipal building complex was designed during this period. In addition the firm of Edwards and Walter designed the Lee County Courthouse about this same time. Whether Edwards relocated to Atlanta before or after the dissolution of Edwards and Walter is uncertain, but it is known that he set up a private practice there in 1908. The Dillon County Courthouse, perhaps the finest building in this group, and the Calhoun County Courthouse were designed by Edwards alone.<sup>2</sup>

Edwards became a member of the Atlanta chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1913 and in the following year formed a partnership with William J. Sayward, a relationship which lasted until Edwards's death in 1939. The firm of Edwards and Sayward was quite prolific during its quarter century in existence, designing buildings throughout Georgia and in South Carolina and Florida. Edwards and Sayward designed the York County Courthouse in 1914 and the Jasper County Courthouse in 1915.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the courthouses included in this nomination Edwards designed many fine buildings in the three-state area of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Some of his most outstanding projects include the Withers Building at Winthrop College in Rock Hill, South Carolina (1920s), Currell College at the University of South Carolina in Columbia (1920s), the administration building, library, science hall and law building at the University of Florida in Gainesville (1913-25), the Exchange Bank and Office Building in Tallahassee, Florida (1927), the Unitarian Church in Atlanta, Georgia (1914), and the library at Agnes Scott College (ca. 1930) in Decatur, Georgia. William Edwards remained an active architect even in the last years of his life. As late as 1938 he designed the Teachers' College at Georgia State College, and his firm had completed the architectural planning for a Public Works Administration housing project in Atlanta at the time of his death at the age of seventy-two in March 1939.<sup>4</sup>

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Location of Legal Description:

Lee County Courthouse  
123 South Main Street  
Bishopville, S. C. 29010

Dillon County Courthouse  
1303 West Main Street  
Dillon, S. C. 29536

Calhoun County Courthouse  
South Railroad Avenue  
St. Matthews, S. C. 29135

Jasper County Courthouse  
Russell Street  
Ridgeland, S. C. 29936

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The Abbeville and York County Courthouses are listed in the National Register as elements of the Abbeville and York Historic Districts. Descriptions of the Abbeville and York Courthouses are included in this thematic study so that a comprehensive view of William A. Edwards's South Carolina courthouse design may be attained.

**ABBEVILLE COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

Abbeville County Courthouse was built in 1908, to replace an earlier courthouse destroyed by fire. William Augustus Edwards, of the Atlanta firm of Edwards and Walter, was the architect and Frederic Minshall of Abbeville was the contractor.

The courthouse is a monumental two-story brick building, located on the public square of Abbeville. The facade is characterized by a projecting entrance pavilion with a colossal Ionic portico in antis, of stone construction. The portico has two pair of unfluted stone columns, with Scamozzi capitals, which support a full entablature, composed of an architrave consisting of three fascias; a plain frieze; and a cornice composed of a bead-and-reel astragal, a cyma recta with leaf-and-tongue carving, a dentil course, a bead-and-reel astragal, an egg-and-dart ovolo, a soffit and corona, a cyma reversa, a fillet, and a crowning cyma recta. This entablature is carried around the entire elevation unifying and ordering its elements.

The facade beneath the portico is of brick, laid in American Flemish bond, with raked joints. A wooden arch encompasses both levels of the central bay of the facade; the central entrance on the first floor has new glass doors, while the casement windows of the second story are original. The single bays flanking the entrance pavilion have similar arches encompassing the casement windows of the first and second stories. A broad brick attic story rises above the entablature; this attic story bears a stone course inscribed "ABBEVILLE COUNTY COURT HOUSE."

The left side elevation has a central, recessed, three-bay section with a flanking single-bay pavilion towards the front and a three-bay pavilion towards the rear. The sloping lot allows for two full basement levels at the rear of the building. The facade entablature in full is carried around the foremost pavilion; only the cornice is carried around the rest of the side elevation. The broad arched windows of the second story of the side elevation mark the courtroom. The lesser windows of the side elevation have flat brick arches with stone key and terminal voussoirs. This fenestration is carried out over the rear elevation, which, owing to the sloping site, and the full expression of the attic story, has five full stories.

The right side elevation has a brick arcade, connecting the courthouse to the adjacent opera house and municipal office building, which was designed by Edwards and which uses many of the same compositional elements and details. The junction between the two buildings has been filled with further expansion of the courthouse, on two stories.

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The Abbeville County Courthouse has a longitudinal hall, defining its main axis; the county offices are located on either side of this hall. A stair is located at either end of the hall. The front stair has paneled newel posts and a sawn balustrade. A dentil cornice enriches the hallway. The courtroom occupies most of the second story. The three arched windows of the left side elevation are reflected in three blind arches on the right side. Roman Doric pilasters alternate with the arches. A heavy tabernacle frame behind the judge's seat features three stained glass windows; this frame is flanked by pedimented doorways leading from the judge's chambers. The pilasters carry a dentil cornice and the main roof beams; the ceiling itself is acoustical tile. The audience seats are of bent plywood on metal frames.

The courthouse was renovated in 1964 by Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff of Columbia.

#### YORK COUNTY COURTHOUSE

York County Courthouse is a monumental two-story yellow brick building constructed in 1914. William A. Edwards was the architect.

The courthouse has the cross-axis plan common to Edwards courthouses with the facade at the south end of the longitudinal axis. The facade features a colossal Ionic tetrastyle portico, projecting from a three-bay entrance pavilion on the five-bay elevation. The portico is of stone as are the entablature and the basement story. The columns of the portico are unfluted with Attic bases, Greek Ionic capitals, and a broad stone entablature. The entablature consists of an architrave with three fascia, a cyma reversa, and a fillet; a frieze, with paterae centered over the terminal columns, and the words "YORK COUNTY COURTHOUSE" inscribed between these paterae; and a cornice, consisting of a cyma recta, a dentil course, a cyma reversa and fillet, a soffit and corona, and a crowning fillet. The cornice is raked into a pediment above the portico, where it is further enriched with an acanthus leaf cyma recta. The pediment features a central recessed medallion, with flanking triangular recesses, in its tympanum.

The facade behind the portico is three bays, of yellow brick, with a central entrance marked by a stone surround, which features console brackets supporting a stone cornice. A tripartite window is located over the entrance. The flanking bays have small one-over-one windows, on the first story only. Pilaster responds delineate the bays; the outer pilasters are of stone, and the inner pilasters are of brick.

The single bays of the facade which flank the entrance pavilion have twelve-over-twelve windows on the first and second story. The portico entablature is carried around the building, in simplified form: the cornice is of stone, but without the dentils; the frieze is of brick; and the architrave is reduced to a corbelled yellow brick rowlock course. A broad attic story, of yellow brick, is located above the entablature; this attic story features six-over-six windows. A second cornice, of bronze, is located above the attic

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story. This cornice consists of a cyma recta, a dentil course, an ovolo, a course of console modillions, a soffit and corona, and a quirked cavetto. This second cornice is also carried around the entire building. A hip roof, sheathed in tile, is pierced by four yellow-brick chimneys.

The east elevation is five bays wide with single bay end pavilions. A central entry beneath a stone arch defines the transverse axis of the building. The second story has a five-bay arcade, encompassing the courtroom windows; the central window opens onto a stone cantilevered balcony. The end pavilions have paired nine-over-nine windows on the first and second stories. The entablature of the portico is carried through this elevation.

The opposite (west) elevation and the rear elevation, have two-story yellow brick additions, which continue the proportioning of the original building without the attention to detail.

The interior of the York County Courthouse features tile floors with inlaid Greek key patterning, marble wainscoting and door surrounds, and stairs at both ends of the longitudinal hall. The courtroom on the second floor has a plaster vaulted ceiling; Tuscan pilasters lining the walls; and an apse at the north end, containing a wooden crosssetted tabernacle frame, which serves as a backdrop for the judge's seat.

## 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**

**Builder/Architect**

William Augustus Edwards

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The thematic group nomination for the Courthouses in South Carolina Designed by William Augustus Edwards includes six courthouses: Abbeville County Courthouse in Abbeville, constructed in 1908; Lee County Courthouse in Bishopville, constructed in 1908-09; Dillon County Courthouse in Dillon, constructed in 1911; Calhoun County Courthouse in St. Matthews, constructed in 1913; York County Courthouse in York, constructed in 1914; and Jasper County Courthouse in Ridgeland, constructed in 1915. Two of these buildings, Abbeville County Courthouse and York County Courthouse, are already listed in the National Register. Viewed individually or as a unit, these courthouses reflect the skill of Edwards, a regionally recognized South Carolina architect. In addition they are important symbols of the county governments.

### Additional Information:

Four new counties were created in South Carolina during the years from 1900 to 1915.<sup>5</sup> William Augustus Edwards, a native of Darlington, South Carolina, was commissioned to design courthouses for each of these four counties.<sup>6</sup> During this period, Edwards also designed new courthouses for three older counties.<sup>7</sup> Six of these courthouses survive; the Kershaw County Courthouse designed by Edwards has been destroyed.

The South Carolina county courthouses designed by Edwards demonstrate the prowess of the architect and his fluency in the classical language of architecture. Each of the six courthouses utilizes siting, scale, luxury of materials, a rigid formality, and a monumental classical order to express and emphasize the authority and power of the county government. Edwards was able to create consistent and coherent buildings through careful use of the discipline and proportions of the orders. His details are often subtle, or intricate, but are always appropriate to the composition of the whole.

Each of the Edwards courthouses has a colossal portico, identifying the primary entrance and establishing a proportional order that is carried through the rest of the building. The entablature, base, and discipline of the order are carried through every elevation, with the fenestration regulated thereby; but the actual order itself is expressed only in the portico. The entablatures of the porticos are carried around the entire building, but are often reduced to simpler compositions away from the portico; thus, a dentil course present in the portico might be replaced with a simple ovolo on the side elevations, or a tripartite stone architrave on the portico might be represented by brick corbelling on the side elevations. The same proportions would be maintained throughout the building.

Edwards used, when county finances permitted, a most luxurious order in his courthouses. He incorporated heraldic devices and symbols of justice into his compositions, adapting everything to the proportions of his governing classical orders. His designs recognize



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and emphasize the symbolic role of the county government; thus, colossal orders, formal symmetry, fasces, escutcheons, lions' heads, swords, tomes, and other explicit or implied symbols of law, reason, truth, and power appear in each courthouse. In four of the counties, Lee, Dillon, Calhoun, and Jasper, the Edwards courthouse was the first courthouse for a newly created county; hence, the symbolic role of the courthouse was even more important in establishing an appropriate government image.

In accord with the formal symmetry of each courthouse, Edwards used simple, logical, axial plans with each element of county government accessible from a primary hallway. A cross-axis plan, with intersecting, perpendicular central halls, is present in four of the six courthouses. The courtroom, in all of the six courthouses, occupies most of the second floor and is expressed on the exterior of the building by prominent windows.

Edwards maintained a luxurious formality on the interiors of his courthouses as well as on the exteriors. When county finances permitted, he used marble, terrazzo, or bronze in the flooring, wainscoting, stairs, and window frames. Exceptional luxury in the courtrooms was calculated to inspire awe and respect in the citizenry of each county. The judge's seat in each courtroom is emphasized by means of a carved tabernacle backdrop, which imparts an ecclesiastical tone to the presiding official.

Edwards was able to utilize similar plans, themes, and orders in both Neoclassical and Georgian Revival design. His courthouses are built of brick, stone, wood, and metal, with harmonious blending of these disparate materials. Edwards was able to give each of his courthouses prominence in its environment, whether in a crowded urban landscape in York and Abbeville; or on an isolated block in a commercial district in Dillon and Bishopville; or on an isolated block in a residential district in Ridgeland.

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FOOTNOTES (General Description and Statement of Significance)

<sup>1</sup> Walter F. Petty, Architectural Practice in South Carolina 1913-1963 (Columbia, S.C.: The State Printing Company, 1963), p. 8; Robert E. Dalton, "William Augustus Edwards, AIA," June, 1981. (Typewritten); Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970), p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Dalton; Withey, pp. 190-191.

<sup>3</sup> Dalton; Withey, pp. 190-191, 537-538.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> David Duncan Wallace, The History of South Carolina, 4 vols. (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1934), 3:505.

<sup>6</sup> Dalton; Withey, pp. 190-191, 537-538.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

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Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, 1902, 1908, 1910, 1912.

Dalton, Robert E. "William Augustus Edwards, AIA." June 1981. (Typewritten).

Dick, A.W., McElveen, G.R., and Peebles, Laurence M. Lee County: Economic and Social. Columbia, SC: Department of Rural Social Sciences of the University of South Carolina, 1925.

Historical Records Survey Division of Women's and Professional Projects, Works Progress Administration. Inventory of County Archives of South Carolina. #27, Jasper County. Columbia, SC: Historical Records Survey, 1938.

Historical Records Survey Division of Women's and Professional Projects, Works Progress Administration. Inventory of the County Archives of South Carolina. #31, Lee County. Columbia, SC: Historical Records Survey, 1937.

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Stokes, Durward T. History of Dillon County, South Carolina. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1978.

Wallace, David Duncan. The History of South Carolina. 4 vols. New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1934.

Withey, Henry F., and Withey, Elsie Rathburn. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970.

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Courthouses in South Carolina Designed by  
Name William Augustus Edwards Thematic Resources  
State South Carolina

Nomination	Type of Review	Decision
1. Abbeville County Courthouse	-	<u>Previously listed 9/14/72</u>
2. Calhoun County Courthouse	Entered in the -National Register	<u>Delores Byers 10/30/81</u>
3. Dillon County Courthouse	Entered in the - National Register	<u>Delores Byers 10/30/81</u>
4. Jasper County Courthouse	<u>Substantive Review</u>	<u>except - Beth Grovona 10/30/81</u>
5. Lee County Courthouse	Entered in the National Register	<u>Delores Byers 10/30/81</u>
6. York County Courthouse	-	<u>Previously listed 10/18/79</u>
7.	-	_____
8.	-	_____
9.	-	_____
10.	-	_____
11.	-	_____
12.	-	_____
13.	-	_____
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17.	-	_____
18.	-	_____
19.	-	_____
20.	-	_____
21.	-	_____
22.	-	_____
23.	-	_____
24.	-	_____