

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

SUPPLE	MENTARY LI	STING RECO	RD
NRIS Reference Number: 9	2001856	Date List	ted: 2/10/93
Charles Mix County Courth Property Name:		arles Mix unty:	SOUTH DAKOTA State:
<u>County Courthouses of Sou</u> Multiple Name	th Dakota	MPS	
This property is listed in Places in accordance with subject to the following notwithstanding the Nation in the nomination documents.	the attace exceptions onal Park S	ched nomina s, exclusio	ation documentations, or amendments
Signature of the Keeper		-	2/23/93 Date of Action
Amended Items in Nominati	on:		
No level of significance agency certification sect Dakota SHPO, locally has significance.	ion. In o	consultation	on with the South
The nomination is officia	lly amende	ed to inclu	ude this informati

NPS Form 10-900 (Oct. 1990) OMB No. 1024-0018

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

DEC 2 0 1991

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

SE		
	□	not for publication
		vicinity
HARLES MIX	Code: <u>023</u>	Zip code: <u>57356</u>
et forth in 36 CFR Part property be corrsidered	60. In my opinion, t d significant n  D	the property meets ationally statewide
		ate of Action
Signature of attich	Anduw	Date of Action
	f 1966, as amerided, I on standards for registe et forth in 36 CFR Part property be considered	HARLES MIX Code: 023  f 1966, as amerided, I hereby certify that the standards for registering properties in the et forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, to property be considered significant no

### CHARLES MIX COUNTY COURTHOUSE Name of Property

### CHARLES MIX COUNTY, S.D. County and State

5. Classification				
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)		
private	building(s)	Contributing Noncontributing		
xx public - local ☐ public - State	☐ district☐ site	1	buildings	
public - State	structure		sites	
	Object		structures	
			objects	
		1	Total	
Name of related multiple pr (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of	-	Number of contributing resources preving the National Register	iously listed	
COUNTY COURTHOUSE	S OF SD	0		
6. Function or Use			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)		
GOVERNMENT: Cou	rthouse	GOVERNMENT: Courthouse		
7. Description				
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Eriter categories from instructions.)		
		foundation <u>CONCRETE</u>		
PRAIRIE SCHOOL		walls <u>BRICK</u>		
		roof ASPHALT		
		other		

#### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for Mational Register listing.)		able National Register Criteria in orie or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
A Property is associated with events that have			POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
		made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	ARCHITECTURE
		·	
Ц	В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack		of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack	Period of Significance
		individual distinction.	1917-1940
		Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	Significant Dates
		n Considerations in all the boxes that apply.)	
-		y is:	1917
			1918
Ц	A	owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
	В	removed from its original location.	N/A
	С	a birthplace or grave.	Cultural Affiliation
	D	a cemetery.	N/A
	Ε	a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	
	F	a commemorative property.	Architect/Builder
	G	less than 50 years of age or achieved	Architect: William L. Steele
		significance within the past 50 years.	Builder: A.M. Wold Construction
		ve Statement of Significance he significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)	
9. 1	Иа <u>ј</u>	or Bibliographical References	
	_	raphy books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one	or more continuation sheets.)
Prev		preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	Primary location of additional data:  State Historic Preservation Office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other Name of repository:

CHARLES MIX COUNTY, S.D. County and State

CHARLES	MTY	COOMIA	COURTHOU	<u> 26</u>
Name of Property	,			

0. Geographical Data
Acreage of Property Less than one acre.
JTM References Place additional UTM references on a continuatiori sheet.)
1   4     5   3   7   5   8   0     4   7   7   7   9   8   0   2   _   _   _   _   _   _   _   _   _
B   _   _   _   _   _   _   _   _   _
/erbal Boundary Description Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)
Boundary Justification  Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)
1. Form Prepared by
Mark Hufstetler/Lon Johnson     Organization: Renewable Technologies, Incorporated   Date: September 1, 1992
Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets
Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.
Additional items Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)
roperty Owner
Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)
ame: Charles Mix County
treet & Number: Courthouse Telephone: (605)
ity or Town: Lake Andes State: South Dakota Zip code: 57356

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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#### Narrative Description:

The Charles Mix County Courthouse stands toward the rear and side of a rectangular block in Lake Andes, South Dakota. The site is located on a prominent rise just to the east of the main commercial district. The Courthouse faces south. The courthouse square is sparsely landscaped with a few evergreen and deciduous trees. A curved driveway skirts the east side of the building.

The Charles Mix County Courthouse is designed in the Prairie School style. It is the only Prairie School style courthouse in the state of South Dakota. The Courthouse is three stories in height. The exterior walls are concrete clad with brick; the brick is an unusual size measuring 11 1/2 inches by 1 3/4 inches. All facades are symmetrical. From the front, the building appears as a cross with lower wings set into the front ells. The south leg of the cross houses the main entry in a projecting vestibule. It is reached by a concrete stairway which enters the building at the half level—between the ground and first floors. The flat roof of the building is hidden behind parapet walls.

Within the cube-like form of the building the window openings appear as a single area of decorative detail contained within a rectilinear panel of brick. The vertical bands of windows are separated by thin brick piers. The piers rise from the concrete foundation which encircles the building just above the sill height of the first floor windows. The piers are topped with terra cotta capitals in what may be called a Prairie School style interpretation of the Corinthian Order. Above the capitals are rectangular, jutting, terra cotta cornices enriched with a floral design.

The building is topped with a light colored stone or concrete coping. Below the coping is a course of alternating recessed soldier bricks. Another light colored stone or concrete string course surrounds the building at the second floor cornice level.

The entry vestibule is enriched with highly decorative terra cotta panels and window and door surrounds. The two pair of full-light, bronze entry doors with a transom above and the flanking window openings are enframed by terra cotta in a floral motif. Above the doors is a terra cotta panel enframed with a floral motif and with incised letters reading "CHARLES MIX COUNTY COURT HOUSE." This panel has a decorated panel at each end which is repeated in panels above the windows.

The rear of the building is divided into three bays of windows in a solid mass slightly lower and narrower than the main block of the building. A single full-light door is approached by a flight of stairs.

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An architectural rendering of the building indicates that the original windows were one-over-one double hung units with transoms above. These have all been replaced with anodized aluminum hopper units with infill transoms.

The interior of the courthouse is laid out in a compact square with a grand staircase from the vestibule reaching the central rotunda. The staircase rises between balconies rounded at the front. The interior is richly embellished with highly contrasting materials. The use of brick, terra cotta, and tile reflects the Prairie School style's philosophy of obscuring the division between interior and exterior spaces. The interior decoration, however, displays a certain fussiness of design which is not reflected on the exterior.

Interior walls of the first floor are of the same brick as the exterior of the building. Topping the first floor brick walls is a Sullivanesque-style terra cotta border. Above the border are plaster panels defined by brick piers with Sullivanesque-style terra cotta capitals. The ceiling is deeply coffered. The vestibule and rotunda floors are terrazzo with an elaborate green and gold Wrightian-motif mosaic tile border set in a white background. The stair and other railings in the building are composed of slender metal balusters below a circle set in a square.

An unusual architectural feature with the appearance of an altar is located on the north wall of the first floor rotunda. An elevated five-side brick "table" projects into the rotunda. Two brick piers rise from the table to the height of the terra cotta border. These piers are topped with Sullivanesque-style capitals which are in-turn topped with a thin projecting board. Between the piers is a terra cotta "altarpiece" of Sullivanesque-influence. A modern water fountain has been cut into the front of the table. The top of the table retains a wood grill work suggesting it may have been part of the buildings mechanical system.

Double-return stairs rise from the first floor to the second floor. Five vertical bands of Wrightian-style leaded and stained glass windows light the stairway. The walls of the second floor are yellow ceramic tile to the head of the doors. The tile is topped with a Sullivanesque-style border. Yellow ceramic tile faced piers separate the plaster into panels. The piers are topped with Sullivanesque-style terra cotta capitals. Above the capitals is a projecting terra-cotta fascia of Sullivanesque-style terra cotta. Wood vault ribs rise from above the piers--two from each wall--to create a flat, square panel in the middle of the ceiling. Within this square is an octagonal stained-glass dome.

The Prairie School style of the Charles Mix County Courthouse is not carried into the courtroom, which is in the Craftsman style. The room is surrounded by tall, paneled wood wainscotting. The courtroom railing is a balustrade composed square balusters. A wood cornice molding encircles the room at the window heads.

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The ceiling has been dropped with suspended acoustical tile and the original light fixtures replaced with fluorescent units. The courtroom furniture is original.

The design and materials of the Charles Mix County Courthouse have been slightly diminished by the replacement of the historic windows and the lowering of the courtroom ceiling. The building otherwise retains almost complete architectural integrity—both exterior and interior—from the time of its construction.

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#### Narrative Statement of Significance:

The Charles Mix County Courthouse is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criteria "A" and "C." The building is historically significant for its role as the symbolic and functional seat of government for Charles Mix County. Since the building's construction, it has housed virtually all of the county's administrative, operational, and judicial functions, while simultaneously serving as the official repository for county records. The courthouse is the most important single physical element in the historic and contemporary governance of Charles Mix County, and is an important local visual reminder of the importance of county government.

The Charles Mix County courthouse is architecturally significant as a representative example of twentieth-century public and institutional architecture in South Dakota. The building's utilization of Prairie School design elements is is unique among South Dakota's courthouses. The building is an exceptionally well-crafted example of Prairie School architecture, and remains among the largest and most visually striking examples of architecture in Lake Andes and Charles Mix County.

#### Historical Narrative:

Charles Mix County was established in 1862 during the first session of the Dakota Territorial Legislature, though its present size and location were not established until 1873. Although the 1871 legislature designated "the house of Fellicia Fallas" as the Charles Mix county seat, the county remained unorganized until 1879. That year, the county seat was established at Wheeler, a tiny village near the Missouri River in the northern portion of the county.

The first Charles Mix County Courthouse was constructed at Wheeler in 1881. The work of erecting the \$2,000.00 building was contracted to N. B. Reynolds, a local resident. The finished structure was similar to many wood-framed vernacular courthouses constructed during South Dakota's frontier period. The 1881 courthouse measured approximately 38' by 50' and was 2 stories tall. The building had a largely utilitarian design, but featured a pyramidal hip roof topped with a small, open bell tower or cupola. One historic photograph of the building shows a round or gambrel-roofed single-story addition attached to one end of the building. (After the county's abandonment of the 1881 courthouse, the building was used for agricultural storage; it was razed as part of the land clearing process for Lake Francis Case Reservoir in the early 1950s.)

Charles Mix was one of many South Dakota counties which engaged in a spirited "county seat war" during its developing years. The county's settlement

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pattern changed dramatically during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, shifting somewhat away from the Missouri River and towards a railroad branch line which had been constructed through the county beginning in 1890. Consequently, the town of Wheeler remained a tiny hamlet, while the communities of Lake Andes, Wagner, Platte, and Geddes were increasing in size and importance. The first attempts to move the county seat from Wheeler were made by Geddes, which tried unsuccessfully to obtain the seat in 1900, 1904, and 1908. Later elections saw Lake Andes and Wagner enter the fray, and Lake Andes finally prevailed in 1916. The night following the official canvas of the 1916 county seat election, Lake Andes residents secured their hold on the seat by dispatching a 30-vehicle motor caravan to Wheeler to obtain the county records.<sup>2</sup>

Following the move, Charles Mix County utilized the Lake Andes Carnegie Library as an interim courthouse. Less than three weeks after the county seat's removal, however, the county commissioners formalized plans for the construction of a large new courthouse in Lake Andes. A special election was called for December 19, 1916, to vote on the issuance of \$150,000.00 in courthouse construction bonds.<sup>3</sup> (The amount of the bond issue was surprisingly high for the time; most South Dakota counties of comparable size which built permanent courthouses during the period did so for well under \$100,000.00.) A slightly elevated site on the south side of Lake Andes was chosen for the building, and the necessary lots were purchased.<sup>4</sup>

The bond election passed by a vote of 720-700, and the bonds were issued in March, 1917. Commissioners advertised for construction bids the following month, and contracts were awarded on May 22, 1917. The primary construction contract was awarded to the A.M. Wold Construction Co. of Brookings, South Dakota, at a price of \$98,877.00. Smaller contracts were simultaneously awarded for heating and plumbing, electrical work, jail equipment, and for vault doors. Wold's contract called for completion of the courthouse in 275 working days, and excavation at the building site was underway by the end of May.<sup>5</sup>

The new Charles Mix County courthouse was designed by architect William L. Steele, an important regional advocate of Prairie School designs. Steele (1875-1949) was a graduate of the University of Illinois and a former employee of Louis Sullivan. He maintained an office in Sioux City, Iowa, beginning in 1906, and over the next 20 years was responsible for a number of Prairie and Sullivanesque commercial and residential designs in western Iowa. Steele designed several buildings in southeastern South Dakota, although there is apparently no documented explanation for his receiving the Charles Mix contract. Local county commission records are uncharacteristically silent about the architect selection process. Newspaper advertisements promoting the 1916 bond election, however, include detailed renderings made by Steele of the proposed courthouse, suggesting that Steele was preparing a design for Charles Mix County even before the county seat

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location was formally settled. Steele apparently had family connections in the area, however, and this may have played a major role in his selection.

At the same time William L. Steele was undertaking his design for the new Charles Mix courthouse, he was also participating in the design phase of a second courthouse project, for Woodbury County, Iowa. The Woodbury County building, largely designed by George Elmslie in association with Steele, is widely considered to be among the finest Prairie School buildings ever constructed. Although the Charles Mix courthouse is of a much more restrained design, the two buildings share a number of visual elements indicative of both Prairie and Sullivanesque philosophies. This suggests the possibility that Elmslie may have influenced the Charles Mix design to some degree. Both buildings were largely constructed during 1917.

Construction of the new Charles Mix courthouse continued throughout 1917, and the building's cornerstone was placed on August 24, 1917. The cornerstone ceremony featured a "monster decorated automobile parade" and an address by South Dakota governor Peter Norbeck "full of hope and good advice." Architect Steele also presented a report on the building's progress. As the winter of 1917-18 arrived, the county commissioners turned their attention to the building's interior and detail work, purchasing furniture, lighting fixtures, and a new safe.

The courthouse was not ready for occupancy until mid-October, 1918, a full sixteen months after construction had begun. At a dedicatory program for the courthouse held that month, the new building was well-admired by county residents, and the local reporter covering the event described the facility as "about the swellest courthouse you was ever in." He also congratulated the county on completing the courthouse project within the budgetary constraints imposed by the bond issue. Finishing touches on the new courthouse continued into the following year, when county commissioners, acting on Steele's recommendation, contracted with O.D. Arp of Sioux City to landscape the courthouse grounds.<sup>8</sup>

The Charles Mix County courthouse remains in use in 1992, little-changed from its 1918 completion. It remains one of South Dakota's most unusual and well-detailed courthouse buildings, and is the state's finest example of Prairie School architecture.

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#### **ENDNOTES**

- 1. "Dakota's Counties," The Wi-Iyohi 13 (1959): 4; "History of Charles Mix County," Centennial Atlas of Charles Mix County (Watertown, South Dakota: Centennial Atlas, Ltd., 1989).
- 2. "Ghost Town Once Bustling Charles Mix County Seat," undated newspaper clipping (from the Sioux Falls [South Dakota] Argus Leader) in the files of the Charles Mix County Auditor; "Commissioner's Record, Charles Mix County, South Dakota," manuscript volume 4 (1914-1922), p. 182 (November 10, 1916); "County Records Removed to Lake Andes," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, November 17, 1916.
- 3. "Commissioner's Record, Charles Mix County, South Dakota," manuscript volume 4 (1914-1922), p. 188 (November 28, 1916).
- 4. "Court House Site Chosen," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, January 11, 1917.
- 5. "Commissioner's Record, Charles Mix County, South Dakota," manuscript volume 4 (1914-1922), pp. 195-247 (December 21, 1916 May 22, 1917); "Court House Contract Awarded," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, May 24, 1917; "Excavating at Court House Site," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, May 31, 1917.
- 6. For basic information on Steele and his work, see Richard Guy Wilson and Sidney K. Robinson, The Prairie School in Iowa (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1977), 24-26, 112-123; and H. Allen Brooks, The Prairie School (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), 296-301.
- 7. "Corner Stone of Court House to be Laid Friday," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, August 23, 1917; "Corner Stone of Charles Mix County's Court House Laid Last Friday," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, August 30, 1917; "Commissioner's Record, Charles Mix County, South Dakota," manuscript volume 4 (1914-1922), pp. 283 (November 6, 1917).
- 8. "Occupy New Court House Next Week," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, October 3, 1918; "Exercises at Court House," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, October 17, 1918; "Commissioner's Record, Charles Mix County, South Dakota," manuscript volume 4 (1914-1922), pp. 357-376 (December 20, 1918 April 1, 1919).

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#### Bibliography:

- Brooks, H. Allen. The Prairie School. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972.
- "Commissioner's Record, Charles Mix County, South Dakota." Manuscript volumes maintained at the County Auditor's Office, Lake Andes, South Dakota.
- "Corner Stone of Charles Mix County's Court House Laid Last Friday," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, August 30, 1917.
- "Corner Stone of Court House to be Laid Friday," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, August 23, 1917.
- "County Records Removed to Lake Andes," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, November 17, 1916.
- "Court House Contract Awarded," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, May 24, 1917.
- "Court House Site Chosen," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, January 11, 1917.
- "Dakota's Counties," The Wi-Iyohi: Monthly Bulletin of the South Dakota Historical Society 13 (1959): 1-16.
- "Excavating at Court House Site," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, May 31, 1917.
- "Exercises at Court House," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, October 17, 1918.
- "Ghost Town Once Bustling Charles Mix County Seat," undated newspaper clipping (from the Sioux Falls [South Dakota] Argus Leader) in the files of the Charles Mix County Auditor.
- "History of Charles Mix County," Centennial Atlas of Charles Mix County.

  Watertown, South Dakota: Centennial Atlas, Ltd., 1989.
- "Occupy New Court House Next Week," The Lake Andes [South Dakota] Wave, October 3, 1918.
- Wilson, Richard Guy, and Sidney K. Robinson, The Prairie School in Iowa. Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1977.

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#### Verbal Boundary Description:

All of Block 26, Original Townsite of Lake Andes, South Dakota.

#### Boundary Justification:

The nominated property includes the courthouse building and the landscaped grounds immediately surrounding it. It coincides with the legal description of the tract of land historically set aside as the courthouse grounds. It does not include adjacent city streets, or the unrelated urban development surrounding the block.

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#### Index to Photographs

Photographer: Lon Johnson Date: January 15, 1992

Location of original negatives: South Dakota State Historical Preservation

Center, Vermillion, South Dakota

Photograph Number	Description	Direction of View
1	Architect's drawing of proposed courthouse	
2	North and west exterior elevations	Southeast
3	West (primary) and south exterior elevations	Northeast
4	West exterior elevation	East
5	East and north exterior elevations	Southwest
6	Detail of exterior terra cotta	
7	Detail of exterior terra cotta	
8	First floor rotunda area	
9	Detail of interior wall treatments	
10	First floor "altar" feature	
11	West entry area and main stairs	
12	View up from first floor rotunda	
13	Rotunda area, second floor	
14	Courtroom interior	

Main Street



Scale: 1" = 50'

**CHARLES MIX COUNTY COURTHOUSE** 

Lake Andes, South Dakota

All of Block 26 - Original Townsite

Fourth Straet