1 NAME
HISTORIC

** Cottonwood County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

Cottonwood County Courthouse

LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER

10

CITY, TOWN
Windom

VICINITY OF

STATE
Minnesota

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Sixth

COUNTY CODE
Cottonwood 033

CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY

__ DISTRICT
__ BUILDING(S)
__ STRUCTURE
__ SITE
__ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

X PUBLIC
__ PRIVATE
__ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS
BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

X OCCUPIED
__ UNOCCUPIED
__ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED
YES: UNRESTRICTED
__ NO

PRESENT USE

__ AGRICULTURE
__ COMMERCIAL
__ PARK
__ EDUCATIONAL
__ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__ ENTERTAINMENT
__ RELIGIOUS
__ GOVERNMENT
__ SCIENTIFIC
__ INDUSTRIAL
__ TRANSPORTATION
__ MILITARY
__ OTHER

OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME

Cottonwood County

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Windom

VICINITY OF

STATE
Minnesota

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cottonwood County Courthouse - Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Windom

STATE
Minnesota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE

Statewide Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1976

_FEDERAL X STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Minnesota Historical Society, Building 25, Fort Snelling

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

STATE
Minnesota
DESCRIPTION

CONDITION
-Excellent
-Good
-Fair

CHECK ONE
-UNALTERED
-ALTERED

CHECK ONE
-ORIGINAL SITE

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Constructed by Jacob B. Nelsen of Mankato in 1904 according to designs by Saint Paul architects O-Meyer and Thori, the Cottonwood County Courthouse exemplifies an integration of elements from the Neo-Classic and Renaissance Revival modes. These styles replaced the Richardsonian Romanesque in application to public building design in Minnesota during the first decade of the twentieth century. The Cottonwood County building is situated on the center of the public square in Windom, Minnesota. Principal facades on east and west are embellished by monumental Corinthian porticoes. The center of the essentially rectangular mass is crowned by a domed tower; a statue of Justice surmounts the tower. Corners are defined by low domed pavilions. All facades are symmetrical.

The courthouse is two storeys in height and is set upon a high basement. Sandstone of a deep red hue is used in the construction of the rusticated basement, first floor window arches and sills, east and west porticoes, pilaster capitals and ball-type finials on the parapets. A buff-colored brick with pigmented mortar joints is used for the facing of the two principal floors and parapets. Domes are sheathed with metal. The dominant feature of the interior is a central domed atrium which rises through the two upper storeys and off of which circulation is provided to offices and chambers. The plan of the dome itself is square with corners beveled to create the impression of an octagon. The interior face of the dome is divided into four tympani each bearing individual allegorical subjects; i.e. "government", "justice", "freedom of the press", and "freedom of religion". The short legs of the octagon bear emblems relating to history, art, government, and science. These are the work of the artist L.A. Thiel. The entire interior decoration was undertaken under the supervision of Odin J. Oyen of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, who personally executed the gold-leaf embellished mural of "Justice" above the bench in the second floor courtroom. This mural is patterned after the painting "Justice" in the Palace of Justice in Paris. The paintings throughout the courthouse have been restored and are presently in excellent condition, as is the entire building.
Since its construction in 1904 the Cottonwood County Courthouse in Windom has served as the seat of county government. It is executed in the Neo-Classic mode of architectural design. The influence of such is evident in the design and construction of many turn of the century public buildings. Similarly, the treatment of the interior spaces with architectural and artistic features represents a carry-through the Neo-Classicism from exterior to interior. The dome and courtroom are embellished with painted murals depicting allorigical and classical themes; these works are the products of regional artists and craftsmen.

The Cottonwood County Courthouse has recently undergone preservation/restoration work. It is significant as a local landmark and future plans ensure its continued use.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cross, Marion E., Minnesota Courthouse. (Minneapolis?), Colonial Dames of Am. in Minn. 1966.

Lewis, Lucille, Cottonwood County Courthouse, 1976.

"Windom pioneer built enduring 'monuments'," Worthington Minnesota Daily Globe, 9 March 1974, p. 9

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

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FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Charles W. Nelson, Architectural Historian and Susan Zeik, Research Associate

ORGANIZATION

Minnesota Historical Society

ADDRESS

Building 25, Fort Snelling

TELEPHONE

612-726-1171

CITY OR TOWN

St. Paul

STATE

Minnesota

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL _ 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Russell W. Fridley 11/29/76

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

4/1/88

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3/18/79
REFERENCE NUMBER: 77000728

STATE: Minnesota

COUNTY: Cottonwood

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Cottonwood County Courthouse

CITY/TOWNSHIP: Windom

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: 900 3rd Ave.

COMMENTS: Address Correction

Jan R. Stewart
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer