

PH0691623

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUN 6 1977
DATE ENTERED	DEC 20 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Denton County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Public Square

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Denton

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE

Texas

CODE

048

COUNTY

Denton

CODE

121

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

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

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

County of Denton

STREET & NUMBER

Public Square

CITY, TOWN

Denton

VICINITY OF

STATE

Texas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk, Denton County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Public Square

CITY, TOWN

Denton

STATE

Texas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

1970

- FEDERAL
- STATE
- COUNTY
- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Texas Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Austin

STATE
Texas

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

In the Denton County Courthouse in Denton, architect W.C. Dodson, a prominent figure in Central Texas architecture, modified the traditional crossaxial plan to allow the erection of a high central masonry tower. In the three story structure, the large central spaces including the courtroom were placed on either side of a single main corridor, allowing the supporting walls for the tower to pass through the center of the structure.

A corridor running east-west provides the main circulation space. On either end is a large stair prefabricated from cast iron components. As is typical of Texas courthouses, offices of the county clerk, tax assessor, and tax collector are located on the ground floor while the large district courtroom and offices of the district clerk and judge's chambers are situated on the second floor. The third floor contains additional offices.

Handsome materials were used on the interior. A paneled wainscot adds to the richness of the corridors and stairways. This panneling along with the doors and door openings are finished with oil, highlighting the natural beauty of the wood.

Centered in the public square atop an eminence, the Denton County Courthouse is comprised of a group of imposing masses. Each facade consists of a five-part composition with a projecting pavilion emphasizing the entrance. Each entrance pavilion is enriched by a Roman-arched opening, two ranges of columns and a triangular pediment. At each corner is a series of balconies surmounted by a tower with an ogival roof.

The dominant feature of the composition is the central octagonal tower rising above a broad platform with four ancillary domes, a composition which was most certainly inspired by the dome of the French Cathedral, Florence Italy (1296). Two columns support the cornice over an observation platform in the tower base and a railing is formed with masonry units.

Openings are spanned with stone lintels throughout, except at the entrances and the corner towers. The tower openings are spanned by Roman arches. Each entrance is emphasized by a Roman arch flanked by rectangular openings resulting in a composition of voids recalling the Palladian motif. Above the entrance columns bearing on pedestals support balconies with stone rails.

Masonry of harmonizing hues produces an impressive facade. The walls were tan quarry-faced sandstone in ashlar pattern and the column capitals were carved in a basket weave motif in red stone from the Ganzer quarry. The voussoirs, water table, string courses, and lintels are of cut sandstone in light brown color. The column shafts were of pink

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CONTINUATION SHEET Denton County ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

granite from Burnet. These columns, eighty in number, were fabricated in Fort Worth and were among the first to be finished with electric equipment. They were employed in the pedimented entry pavilions at each facade and in balcony features at each corner.

Other decorative features contribute a subtle additional richness to the exterior. Stone carvings ornament the cornice which is surmounted by a balustrade, the posts of which are also enhanced by carved stone details. A bull's-eye window accents each pediment.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> _1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> _TRANSPORTATION
<input 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 1895-1896

BUILDER/ARCHITECT W.C. Dodson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Denton County Courthouse possesses both architectural and historic significance. In Romanesque style, one of Texas' most prominent nineteenth-century architects created a building with extraordinary richness incorporating a combination of forms that is similar in concept to many other courthouses but unique in composition. Since the founding of Denton, the public square on which this temple of justice is located, has been the focus of political activities in the county and the present courthouse has been the center of local government for three-quarters of a century.

Denton, county seat of Denton County, was established in 1857 and named, as was the county, in honor of John B. Denton, whose remains are buried on the courthouse lawn. On a hundred acres of land donated by Hiram Cisco, William Loving and William Woodruff, the fourth county seat of Denton County was established and lots were sold at public auction on January 10, 1857. The first courthouse was a frame building on the north side of the square. It burned in 1875 and was replaced by a brick structure designed and built by J.H. Britton in 1876-1877. The building was located in the center of the town square.

After twenty years of service this structure ceased to be satisfactory and public pressure mounted for the construction of a new courthouse. On February 16, 1895, the Fort Worth Daily Gazette reported that, "several parties secreted on the upper stairway supplies of barrels, coal scuttles, bricks and the like, and at a given signal turned them all loose down the stairs creating a fearful state of mind of those familiar with the conditions of things."

On July 3, 1895, the Commissioners' Court authorized the construction of a new building specifying "the Romanesque style of Architecture for the Denton County Courthouse as shown in the design prepared by Architect J.R. Gordon." Subsequent study of Gordon's plans resulted in his discharge for some reason not recorded. The commission was then awarded to architect W.C. Dodson who was ordered to prepare plans, specification and details, as well as to supervise construction by contractor Tom Lovell. Dodson was to receive a 5% commission based on the cost of the building which was \$100,000.00.

Completed in 1896, the courthouse continues to serve its original function.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Robinson, Willard B., Todd Webb, Texas Public Buildings of the Nineteenth Century, Autin, 1974.
Fort Worth Daily Gazette, February 16, 1895, p. 5; February 12, 1896, p.8.
Denton County Commissioners' Court Minutes, Vols. A and C.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	4	6	7	4	0	3	0	3	6	7	6	4	8	5
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The courthouse is located on the public square at the intersection of farm to market highways, 2164 and 426.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Willard B. Robinson, Professor of Architecture

S. Elizabeth Sasser-Research Assistant 12-15-76
ORGANIZATION DATE

Division of Architecture-Texas Tech University 806-742-2464
STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE

P.O. Box 4499
CITY OR TOWN STATE

Lubbock Texas

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE 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

Willard B. Robinson 6-2-77

TITLE Texas State Historic Preservation Officer DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

<u>Wm. [Signature]</u>	DATE <u>12/20/77</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: <u>[Signature]</u>	DATE <u>12-16-77</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

77001938
Denton

Property

Denton County Courthouse

State

Texas

Working Number

6.6.77.911

TECHNICAL

Photos 3

Maps 1

CONTROL

*OK pl
6.7.77*

HISTORIAN

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

*Accept.
H. Bilt 9/20/77*

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

*accept
Braham 11/23/77*

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

*Accept
Lebovich
12/15/77*

BRANCH CHIEF

*Hunting
12.16.77*

KEEPER

*W. M.
12/20/77*

National Register Write-up _____

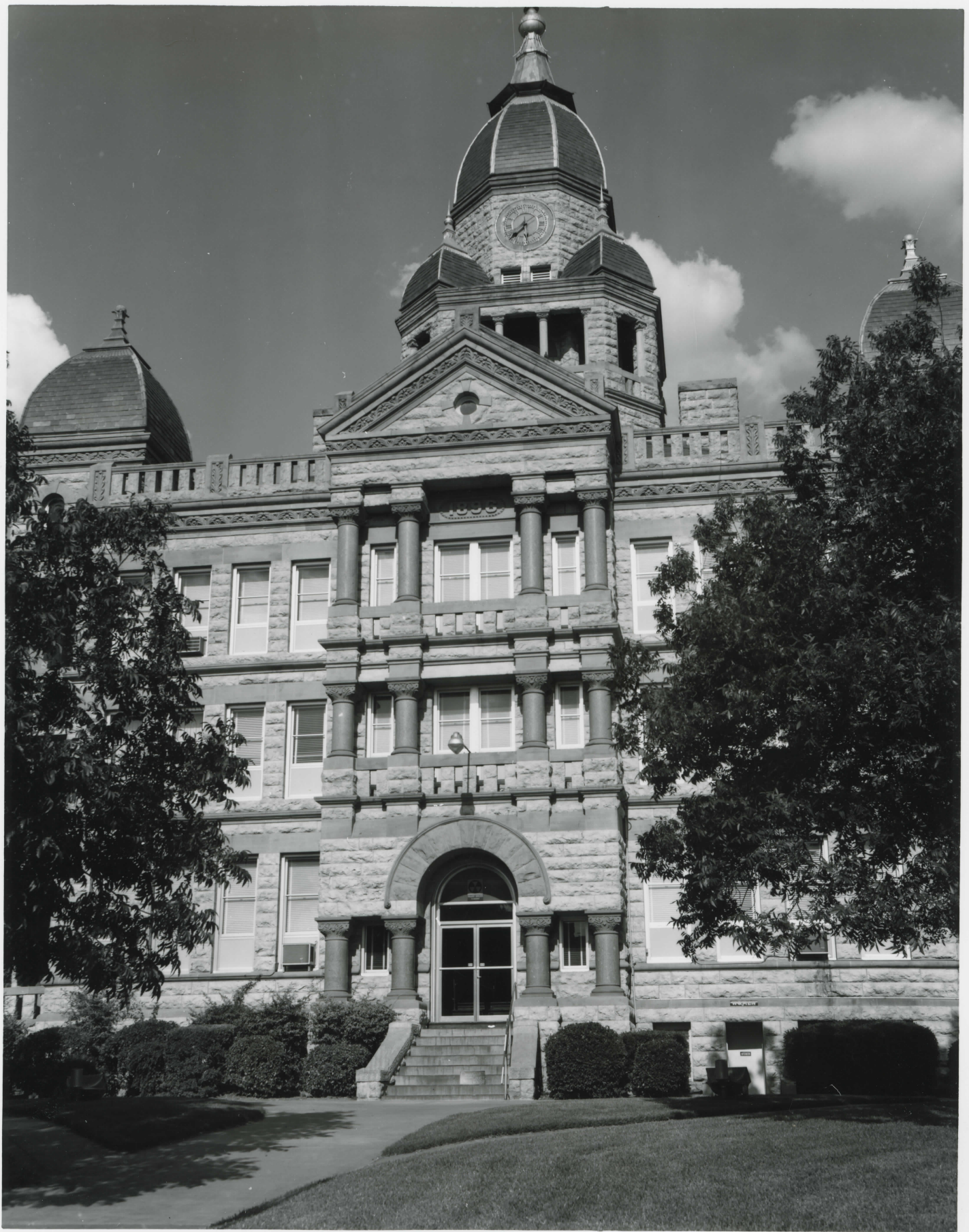
Send-back _____

Entered DEC 20 1977

Federal Register Entry 2.7.78

Re-submit _____

INT:2106-74



PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Denton County Courthouse
Denton, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, 8-3-70
THC

West elevation

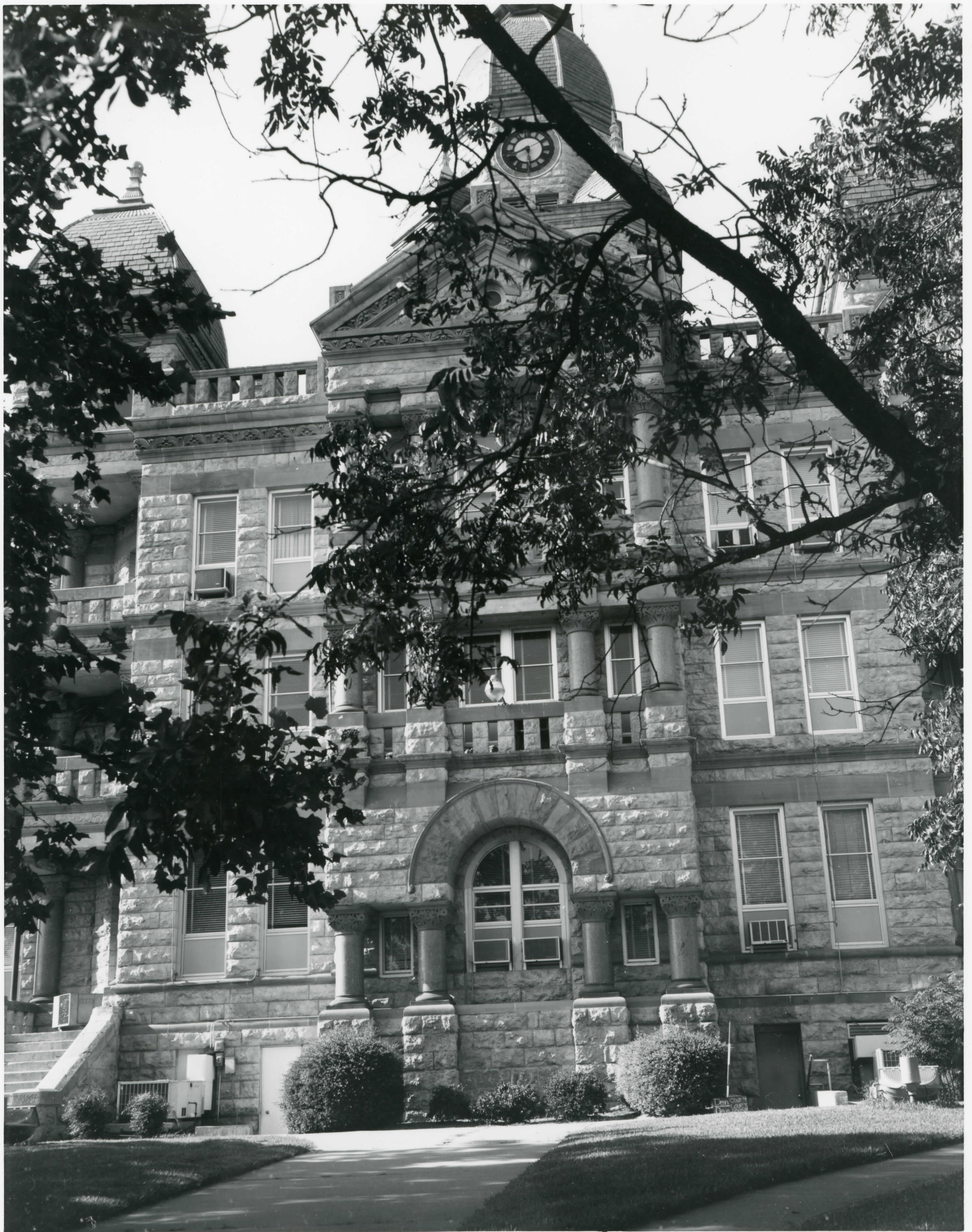
Photo #1 93

JUN 6 1977

DEC 20 1977

Completed in 1896, the Denton County Courthouse in Denton, Texas, was designed in Romanesque Style. Located on the public square, this "temple of justice" has been the focus of political activities in the county since its construction. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. (Texas Historical Commission)

Return to Toni Lee, National Park Service, 343-9520



Denton County Courthouse
Denton, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, 8-3-70
THC

South elevation

Photo #2 *73*

JUN 6 1977

DEC 20 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Denton County Courthouse
Denton, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, 8-3-70
THC

Southwest oblique

Photo #3

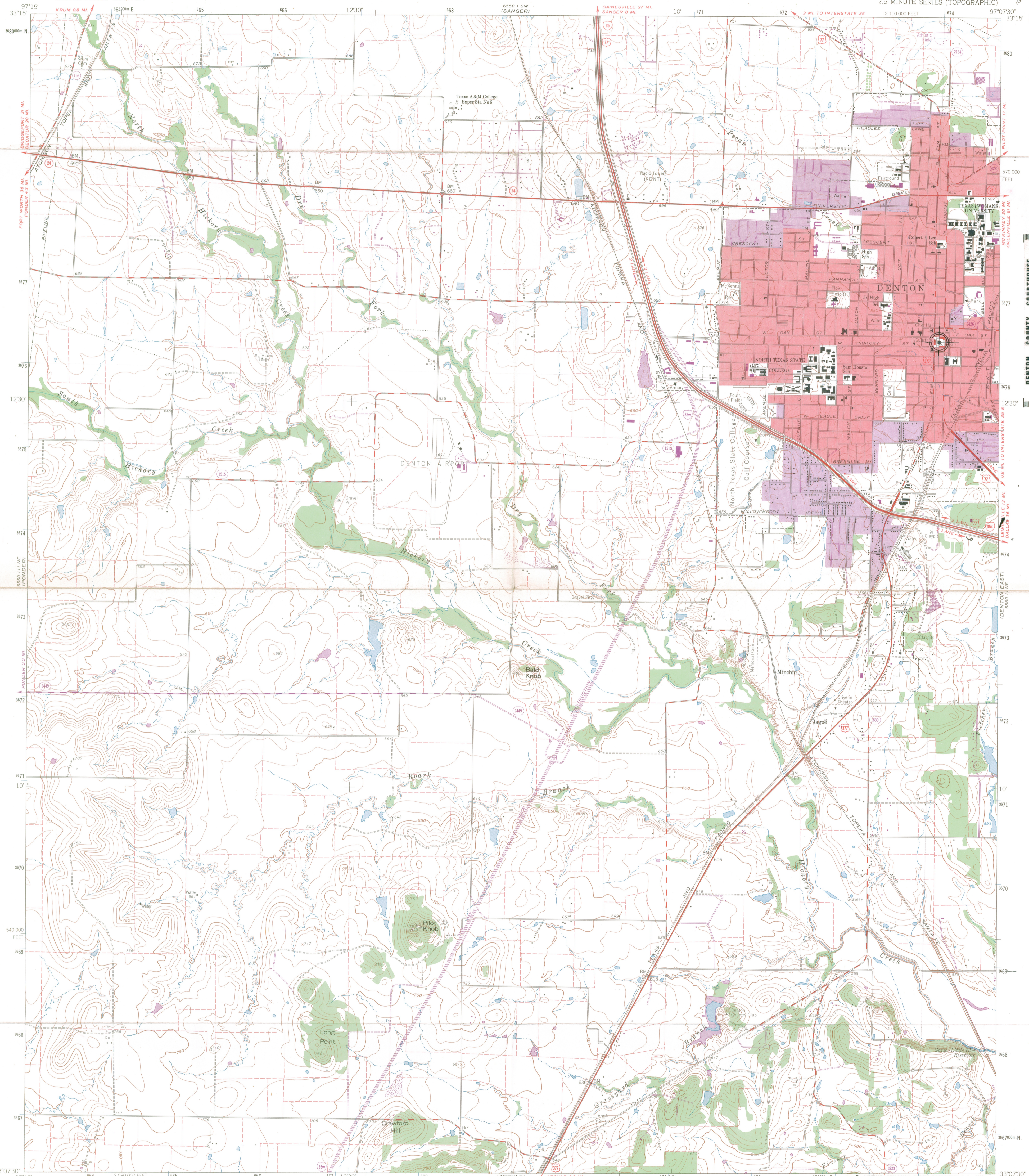
73

JUN 6 1977

DEC 20 1977

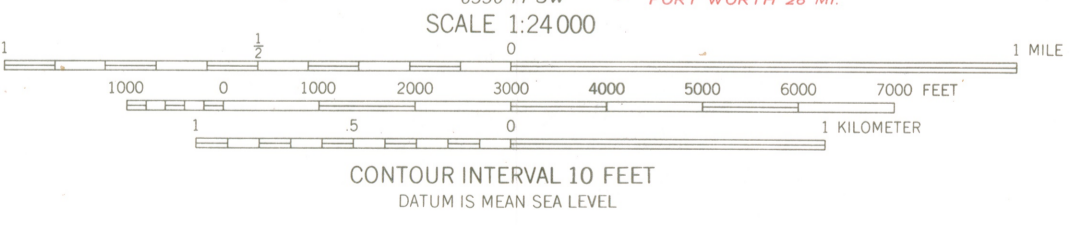
PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods
Aerial photographs taken 1957. Field check 1960
Polyconic projection 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
north central zone
1000 meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 14, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines
where generally visible on aerial photographs
This information is unchecked
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown
Area covered by dashed light blue pattern is
subject to periodic inundation to 532 feet

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from
aerial photographs taken 1968. This information not field checked
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route



DENTON WEST, TEX.
N3307.5-W9707.5/7.5

1960
3397-113

APR 17 1969

DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
PUBLIC SQUARE
DENTON, TEXAS
14764030 / 3676485

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE TEXAS

Date Entered DEC 20 1977

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Milam County Courthouse and Jail	Cameron Milam County
Bluff Dale Suspension Bridge	Bluff Dale Erath County
Denton County Courthouse	Denton Denton County
Presidio County Courthouse	Marfa Presidio County

Also Notified

Hon. Lloyd M. Bentsen

Hon. John G. Tower

Hon. W. R. Poage

Hon. Omar Burleson

Hon. Ray Roberts

Hon. Richard C. White

Regional Director, Southwest Region

State Historic Preservation Officer

Mr. Truett Latimer

Executive Director

Texas Historical Commission

P.O. Box 12276, Capitol Station

Austin, Texas 78711

12/23/77

Mott/js

880

NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

① NAME as it appears on federal register: Denton County Courthouse
 ② OTHER NAMES:
 ③ date of entry: DEC 20 1977
 ④ county code: 121

⑤ LOCATION street & number: Public Square
 city / town: Denton
 vicinity of:
 state: TX
 county: Denton
 ⑥ NPS REGION: SW

⑦ OWNER PRIVATE STATE MUNICIPAL COUNTY MULTIPLE FEDERAL (agency name)
 ⑧ ADMINISTRATOR:
 ⑨ EXISTING SURVEYS HABS HAER NHL FUNDED? YES NO ⑩ CONGRESS. DISTRICT: 24th ⑪ SOURCE of NOMINATION: STATE FEDERAL
 if state who prepared form?

⑫ WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES, NAME: NO
 ⑬ WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES, NAME: NO ⑭ ACREAGE:
 LOCAL PRIVATE ORGANIZATION

⑮ CONDITION deteriorated altered original site
 excellent ruins unaltered moved
 good unexposed reconstructed unknown
 fair unexcavated excavated
 ⑯ features: INTERIOR SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-1 NOT INTACT-0 UNKNOWN-4 NOT APPLICABLE-7
 EXTERIOR SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-2 NOT INTACT-0 UNKNOWN-5 NOT APPLICABLE-8
 ENVIRONS SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3 NOT INTACT-0 UNKNOWN-6 NOT APPLICABLE-9

⑰ ACCESS YES-Restricted YES-Unrestricted No Access Unknown ⑱ ADAPTIVE USE YES NO ⑲ SAVED? YES NO
 IS PROPERTY A HISTORIC DISTRICT? yes no

⑳ AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: ENGINEERING-11 LANDSCAPE ARCH.-15 POLITICS/GOVT.-21 RECREATION-28
 ARCHEOLOGY-prehistoric-2 COMMERCE-6 ENTERTAINMENT-26 LAW-16 RELIGION-22 SETTLEMENT-29
 ARCHEOLOGY-historic-1 COMMUNICATIONS-7 EXPLORATION-12 LITERATURE-17 SCIENCE-23 URBAN PLANNING-31
 AGRICULTURE-3 CONSERVATION-8 HEALTH-27 MILITARY-18 SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN-24 OTHER (SPECIFY)
 ARCHITECTURE-4 ECONOMICS-9 INDUSTRY-13 MUSIC-19 SOCIAL/CULTURAL-30
 ART-5 EDUCATION-10 INVENTION-14 PHILOSOPHY-20 TRANSPORTATION-25
 ㉑ CLAIMS: explain
 'first'
 'oldest'
 'only'

㉒ functions WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT: CURRENTLY:
 ㉓ dates of initial construction: major alterations: historic events:
 ㉔ ETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION

㉕ architectural style(s): ㉖ architect: ㉗ master builder: ㉘ engineer:

㉙ landscape architect / garden designer: ㉚ interior decorator: ㉛ artist: ㉜ artisan: ㉝ builder/contractor:

㉞ NAMES give role & date
 PERSONAL:
 EVENTS:
 INSTITUTIONAL:

㉟ NATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP