

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Clark County Courthouse  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 1200 Franklin Street  not for publication  
city or town Vancouver  vicinity  
state Washington code WA county Clark code 011 zip code 98660

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria

X A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

WASHINGTON SHPO  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**Clark County Courthouse**  
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**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
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
1		object
<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

None

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse/government office/

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

Correctional facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN/Art Deco PWA Moderne

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: CONCRETE

roof: ASPHALT/COMPOSITION – Built Up

other: BRONZE/exterior lighting/sculpture

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Paragraph**

The Clark County Courthouse, located in Vancouver, Washington, is a five-story concrete building with a raised basement. Designed by local architect, Day Walter Hilborn, the building was dedicated on November 29, 1941, just eight days before the attack on Pearl Harbor. The stepped back massing, series of straight lines and angular, recessed, geometric shapes along with a sleek surface, exemplify the Art Deco/Art Moderne style, a style popular for public construction projects in the 1930's and early 1940's. The building mostly consists of a plain, board formed concrete surface except for the articulated vertical fluted spandrel panels. The primary entrance was slightly modified in 1963 with the addition of an enclosed entrance portal.

The current exterior doors of the 1963 entrance enclosure consist of four anodized bronze framed doors with push and pull bars. The interior doors of the enclosure into the building are the original ribbon of four, bronze, glazed triple panel light doors. Flanking this entrance to the building are the original art deco bronze lanterns poised on the wing walls of the concrete stairs leading up to the doors. The original bronze awning projects from the enclosure and above this entrance is the large two story tall bronze angular grill transom window with fluted glass. Above this massive transom window is the six-and-a-half foot by twelve-foot tall bronze sculpture recreated (1990) depicting two rugged explorers clad in buckskins and an Indian with a canoe. The original bronze eight pane awning style windows of the building were replaced during the 1987 courthouse remodel, with single pane aluminum windows.

The two original secondary entrances are identical and are located on the north and south side of the building. Both have concrete steps leading up to a landing with original bronze art deco railings. The recessed entryways each have the original double bronze, glazed triple panel light doors with a bronze angular grill transom window similar to the primary (front) entrance, however with a slightly different angular pattern. All three entrances include concrete steps leading up to an entryway with bronze doors and railings, bronze transom windows, and bronze art deco light fixtures. These secondary entrances are no longer used due to security.

In addition to the window alterations and portal enclosure of the east primary entrance, the west side of the building (rear) was modified during a 1987 remodel. The original garage was converted to a courtroom. There are single pane windows that run vertically up the spaces in the rear to coordinate with the rest of the historic building. The addition of an enclosed fire stairwell was also added to this side of the building and is constructed in metal siding. It replaced the exterior fire escape ladder system.

Further modifications to the west side of the property came in 1984 when a four-story brick correction center was constructed to relocate the jail out of the courthouse. The new correction center connects to the courthouse via a covered public breezeway and enclosed sky-bridge (for inmates and jail personnel). This structure is not part of the nominated property.

**Setting**

The Clark County Courthouse is located on the east side of a 4.96-acre parcel fronting east on Franklin Street between 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets in downtown Vancouver, Washington. The courthouse property more than doubled in size with the development of the adjoining 1984 Correction Center, attached by a pedestrian breezeway and inmate sky-bridge, located directly behind or to the west of the courthouse. The location of the courthouse is in a downtown urban setting with adjacent buildings used for services related to government business. The site is across 13<sup>th</sup> Street from the Clark County Public Service Center (County elected officials,

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county departments and offices) and across Franklin Street from the Juvenile Justice Center. The site is landscaped with a well-manicured grass lawn, shrubs and trees, which includes six Giant Sequoia trees.

The grounds of the courthouse retain a high degree of integrity. Historically sitting on what was two city blocks, the parcel doubled in size when the Corrections Center was built in 1984. However, the grounds surrounding the courthouse building have not changed much since the building was constructed in 1941. The only change that is evident from a 1955 aerial is that the paved walkways from the north and south entrances have been removed and are now just grass/landscaped space. The north parking area shown in the 1955 aerial is gone and is now part of the grass/landscape area along 13<sup>th</sup> Street. Another change that is evident is the addition of retaining walls along the front lawn that were not part of the site in 1941.

**Building - Exterior**

The courthouse is a 78,062 square foot, 5-story plus basement structure surrounded by continuous light well. It was designed by Vancouver architect Day Walter Hilborn in the Art Deco/Art Moderne design. The geometric design of a central block with stepped back wings is finished in board formed concrete. The use of a light well around the ground floor has the effect of raising the building above ground, allowing plenty of sunlight into that lower level. The layered asphalt composition roof is flat with a parapet which has an angular pattern formed at the spandrel panels.

The foundation of the building is concrete matching the upper walls. It was built of reinforced concrete using at the time, a new, modern method called pozzolith. Pozzolith is a process that disperses cement evenly through the concrete, which increases its strength, cutting the cost by reducing the amount of cement required. Surrounded at the base of the building by the light well, the structure rises two stories out of the ground and then diminishes, forming an well-proportioned, stepped-back shaft of four additional stories. These graceful setbacks reduce the building's mass and create distinct geometric shapes familiar of the ziggurat style.

The main form of the structure was cast using "board formed concrete" laid horizontally on the exterior to provide a rough surface in the concrete. The result is a network of minute horizontal lines balancing the vertical architectural lines of the building. As was described in the courthouses' dedication booklet, "The building is utterly without applied ornamentation however its simplistic design attains dignity and commands attention by its very mass and proportion."

The Clark County courthouse features bronze and metal doors. Historically, the courthouse windows were bronze, eight-pane (four over four) awning-style windows. During the 1987 courthouse remodel, the windows were replaced with single pane aluminum windows. The building's fenestration is organized in vertical bands, separated by wide concrete pilasters, creating a strong vertical expression. These bands of windows have articulated vertically by molded spandrel panels which rise to the parapet. Windows on the east (front) and west (rear) elevations are symmetrical, while north and south elevations are not.

On the east elevation (front) of the building the main central block includes seven vertical rows of windows starting from the ground floor all the way to the fifth (top) floor. The step back on each side of the central block includes two rows of vertical windows from the second to the fifth floor. The third stepped back side bays consist of three rows of vertical windows starting at the second floor through the third floor with the spandrel elements running all the way up from the third floor windows to the roof line. The lower front side blocks flanking the front entrance of the building consist of six rows of windows that have the added element of framing that runs along the side of the window all the way down the spandrel area. These windows begin on the ground floor through the first floor, also with articulated spandrel elements. This lower block window configuration and design is carried around the entire building at this level.

The north and south sides of the building are symmetrical and include six rows of framed windows – three on each side of the entrance. The central blocks have two rows of windows that begin on the 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 3<sup>rd</sup>



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floor and then end with the spandrels continuing the rest of the way up to the roofline to form the angular-design parapet. The side setback walls from the central block on the north and south sides of the building include on the northeast and southeast side - one row of windows starting at the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> floors with the spandrel running the rest of the way up to the roof line. The northwest and southwest sides include one row of windows that begin on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor through the 5<sup>th</sup> floor with the window on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor on this west side being of half the size of all the rest of the windows of the courthouse. This half-size window carries through to the rear of the building on both of the side bays.

On the west side (rear) of the building the main central block is set back from the slightly shorter side bays. The central block includes six rows of vertical windows with a large concrete pilaster dissecting the center. This central block originally held the exterior fire escape ladder system which was modified by the addition of enclosed fire exit stair shafts constructed with a metal siding material. The stepped up side bays each include five vertical rows of windows starting from the second floor all the way to the fifth floor with the fifth floor windows being the half size of the rest of the windows (jail dayroom). The lower blocks encompassing the ground and first floors encircle the building and as stated before, consist of six rows of windows except for those that are covered by the fire escape stairwell shaft. These windows begin on the ground floor through the first floor, also with articulated spandrel elements. This lower block window configuration and design of the extra panel around the frames of the windows is carried around the entire building.

The west side of the building has been the side most altered from the original building. In 1984 the new correction center was built adjacent to the west side and was connected to the courthouse by a pedestrian breezeway and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor sky-bridge to transport inmates from the correction center to their arraignments. When the correction center was built the west side also had courtyard landscaping added. In addition to the addition of the enclosed metal fire stairwell during the 1987 remodel, the west side of the building (rear) was further modified by the conversion of the original garage that was used for storage of county cars - to a courtroom. Also on this side of the building is another public entrance (ADA entrance) that gains access to the ground floor and is part of the pedestrian public breezeway that connects to the Clark County Corrections Center.

On all faces of the building, the plain concrete surface contrasts with the articulated vertical angular panels of the spandrels, decorative bronze lanterns, bronze transom windows, and bas-relief lettering of "Clark County" on the north and south entrances and the large Buckskin Brigade sculpture above the transom window of the east (front) entrance. The Art Deco period saw numerous experimentations with metal alloys. Bronze metal work was used functionally and aesthetically for the exterior elements of the courthouse, as in the case of the large bronze transom angular grill windows over the east, north and south entrances, the railings and decorative lanterns.

***East Entrance (Primary)***

At the east (main) entrance, several flights of concrete steps lead to the main entrance portal. The entry, located under a projecting bronze canopy, has been pushed forward by an enclosed vestibule finished in marblecrete. Two sets of anodized bronze color doors with push and pull bars to form the entrance. Two bronze plaques adorn either side of the doorway that read "Clark County Courthouse". The original ribbon of four, bronze, glazed triple panel light doors are still in their original place as the interior doors of the entrance portal. The interior of the enclosed portal is marble of a light cream color. The front steps and entrance are further embellished by bronze handrails and balcony railings (added in 1987) including two original decorative bronze lanterns with obscured glass panels designed in the Art Deco idiom and mounted on concrete pedestals flanking the steps to the entrance. The flat roof of the courthouse is mimicked by a projecting, original bronze awning over the portal with the numbers "1200", the courthouse's address (numbers were added recently). Above this bronze awning, is the large original bronze transom angular grill window with fluted glass panels. Above this grand window is bronze sculptural relief. The sculpture is six and a half-foot tall by twelve-foot wide and is a replacement.

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Many of the original bronze embellishments of the front entrance remains, such as the bronze art deco lanterns, bronze awning, and bronze transom window. The original bronze balcony railings that ran from the building to the bronze lanterns were replaced to taller bronze railings for safety reasons.

***North and South Entrances (Secondary)***

The north and south entrances are no longer used for public access however they both have remained mostly unchanged over time. Both of these entrances are highlighted by raised concrete steps with bronze handrails (added during the 1987 remodel) that led to a landing with the original art deco style porch railings. The recessed entry ways have the original bronze and glass doors with the original bronze art deco lanterns adorning the wall on either side of the entryways. The entrances also have the bronze transom window with a slightly different pattern than the main entrance - also with original fluted glass panels. Above the decorative window, a bas-relief "Clark County" is part of the building's wall. Per historic images, when the courthouse was built, these secondary entrances originally included a projecting slab awning and bronze flag pole. According to the construction specifications, the original flag poles were a continuous tapered bronze outrigger flagpole projected at an angle of 45 degrees from the vertical. The main free standing flag pole on the southeast corner of the site is still there in the same spot as when the courthouse was built in 1941.

***Buckskin Brigade Sculpture***

The original Buckskin Brigade sculpture on the east (main) entrance, conceived by Hilborn and executed by Portland, Oregon sculptor Victor J. Schneider, was reportedly poured as an integral part of the wall of the structure. As stated by the courthouse's dedication booklet, *"Not a cent was spent on architectural frills. Even the imposing figures above the main entrance were poured as an integral part of the wall of the structure, which is a monolithic pour, a one piece monument to the civilization of Clark county, A.D. 1941."* (Figure 40) The bas-relief sculpture depicted an Iroquois Indian in breech clout and braids, two tall trappers in fringed buckskin jackets, wool pants, and colorful sashes - all staring toward the Columbia River. The sculpture symbolized the role played by frontier settlers and Native Americans in the development of Clark County as a center of government and business.

The Buckskin Brigade stood over the main Courthouse entrance from 1941 to 1978. In 1978, when the building was being prepared for painting it was noticed that the sculpture was damaged and it was taken down. After many years of grassroots fundraising, enough money was collected to recreate the sculpture. Oregon sculptor, Bill Bane, was the chosen to recreate the original sculpture. Using photographs of the original as a guide, the Buckskin Brigade was recast in bronze, and installed above the main building entrance in the location of the original sculpture on September 13, 1990. (Figure 41)

**Courthouse Interior**

Overall, the interior retains a relatively high degree of integrity. Much of the public spaces have maintained their historic features and finishes. The two original courtrooms on the fourth floors have much of their original features which include wood paneling; linoleum flooring; the wooden judge's bench; the wooden benches (pews) for the public; the wood furniture (tables/chairs) for the attorneys; and original wood jury chairs. Modifications are limited to altered office spaces (1987) which accommodated additional courtrooms. Over time, most county departments have moved out and today the building houses fifteen courtrooms and subsequent courtroom offices/spaces.

***Ground floor***

The ground floor, with three exterior entrances/exits, originally held the offices of the Sheriff (Figure 34), the welfare department; the district supervisor of the state division of forestry; the Red Cross and justice of the peace. The blueprint and Photostat room, a drafting room for the county engineers, the garage for storage of county cars, and a storage vault were also provided on this floor. The 1987 remodel altered the ground floor offices fairly extensively. The interior public spaces such as the lobby, hallway, elevators, and bathrooms with many of the historic finishes remain unchanged. This includes the bronze mail chute; terrazzo stairs and

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flooring; marble wainscot, soffits and wall coverings, and the original elevator doors. However many interior walls of the perimeter offices were removed to allow for larger county offices which then included Assessment and Mapping; the county clerk; District Court administration; and the Board of Equalization. The ground floor remodel also included the removal of the storage vault and conversion of the original garage (used for county cars) to the new arraignment courtroom. The ground floor now consists of the arraignment court, two other courtrooms and District Court offices. The wheelchair accessible entrance is also located on the west side of the ground floor.

**First floor**

The first floor includes the main entry into the building with the red terrazzo steps up into the main two story tall open atrium lobby. Many of the historic features remain in this interior entranceway. This includes the terrazzo floor and geometric pattern terrazzo floor design; marble wall covering; bronze heat grates; bronze dedication plaque; and the bronze handrails on the stairs up from the entrance doors. The dedication plaque reads:

*Clark County Court House  
1940  
Commissioners  
Lewis Shattuck... Chairman  
1940                      1941  
Charles Garber            Claude Bone  
Ray B. Woolf              William Elliott  
Day W. Hilborn A.I.A Architect*

Looking up from the entrance you see the original bronze art deco lantern hanging from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor ceiling. Looking up to the transom window you see the original bronze railing with decorative glass panels of a flower detail. This railing is mimicked on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor that overlooks the first floor. From the entrance, a few steps of red terrazzo stairs takes you to the first landing of cream terrazzo and the first glimpse of the geometric patterned red, yellow, and blue terrazzo floor running down the center of the landing and flanking either side of the alcove spaces. These built in alcoves include a marble panel insert on the wall. The southern alcove originally housed the information desk and telephone switchboard, while the northern alcove at some point became a snack bar.

As was typical with many PWA-era courthouses, the first floor originally housed the treasurer (Figure 35) and assessor offices. Each occupied about one fourth of the floor. The auditor's office proper occupied another fourth, while across the hall was the license department. The county engineer's office was tucked into the northwest corner of the floor, with a circular stairway connection to the drafting rooms on the ground floor below (the circular stairway is still there, but now enclosed). The Farm Security administration had a small office near the elevator. The offices of the treasurer, assessor and auditor were protected by actual vault doors, with the additional protection of steel shutters on the windows which would fall into place automatically in case of fire.

As with almost all of the floors, the 1987 remodel did not alter the public lobby hall and its historic materials. The materials that remain include the bronze elevator surrounds and elevator wood panel doors; the bronze mail chute; the terrazzo floor; and the original plaster ceiling – all in excellent condition. The perimeter interior offices were slightly altered to accommodate the expanding county departments. The same departments that were housed in 1941 moved back in after the remodel in 1987, aside from the Farm Security administration. The auditor then had the entire north side of this floor, the law library remained in the southwest corner (as it is today) and the treasurer remained in their southwest corner of the building. Today, the clerk's office occupies the entire north end of the building, the law library remains in the southwest corner, and the southeast corner now houses the jury assembly room; courthouse deli; and court facilitator's office.

The secondary entrances on the north and south sides of the building bring you into the first floor. These entranceways are essentially unchanged except for the ceiling fluorescent light which was most likely similar in

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style as the original. The original bronze doors lead you into the building with the geometric colored pattern terrazzo floor. The original bronze framed building directory still hangs on the marble walls. The terrazzo stairs with bronze handrails lead you into the main lobby of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, just as they did in 1941. The north and south entrances however are no longer used as public entrances as the public must go through the security of the front (east) entrance or the rear (west) accessible entrance. Today, you can only access from the inside, the south entryway because the north entryway is part of the Clerk's offices.

**Second floor**

Originally, the second floor housed the county-city health department office, the county superintendent of schools' office, the county agricultural agent, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration offices and the county commissioners and hearing room. This was the first time that the commissioners had separate offices with a provision for a secretary to keep the office open to provide services at all times between official sessions of the board. The 1987 remodel converted these offices into two district courtrooms. Now, this floor houses six courtrooms for District Court.

The interior public lobby area remains largely unchanged over the last seventy years. The lobby walls are marble and the floor has the geometric patterned blue, red and yellow terrazzo floor with the bronze art deco railing with the decorative glass square of a flower design that overlooks the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. This railing mimics the bronze decorative railing above the front interior entryway. Still intact is the bronze mail chute, elevator doors, and plaster ceiling.

**Third floor**

Originally the third floor of the courthouse housed the juror and bailiff quarters; the law library; county attorney's office; the accounting and mapping department of the Columbia national forest; and the public assembly hall that also had a kitchen. The 1987 remodel as with almost all the floors, kept the internal public lobby hall intact with most of the historic furnishings to include the terrazzo floor, the marble wainscot, cornice trim, bathroom configuration, and elevator door trim and wood paneling. All other perimeter spaces were modified to house the Prosecuting Attorney offices and Superior Court. Today, the spaces are used entirely for three Superior courtrooms.

**Fourth floor**

Historically the fourth floor was designed to house the two main superior courtrooms – courtroom #1 and courtroom #2. Also found on this floor were associated court room offices (Figure 36) and spaces, as well as the juvenile court room and jury room. When the building was dedicated in 1941, only courtroom #2 was finished (Figure 39). Court room #1 was later finished in 1947 under another architect's direction – however the room layout and decorative details seem to match court room #2.

An excerpt from the dedication booklet about "the Courtroom":

*Visitors as well as culprits instantly are impressed with the air of quiet dignity that reigns in the superior courtroom. The warm beauty of the black walnut finish, the lofty proportions of the room, contributes to this impression. The room was designed entirely without windows to eliminate any outside distractions. The lighting, too, is designed to concentrate attention upon the witnesses and the court.*

*The skylight features a new Coolite glass which not only diffuses the light from above, but absorbs all heat. A special ventilating fan assures air conditioning of the courtroom at all times. Acoustical treatment of the panels on the ceiling and walls enables a spectator even in the back row to hear the witnesses distinctly. The rubber tile floor also helps to eliminate noise. Courtrooms recently built in the new federal buildings in the east have emulated Clark County's courtroom almost exactly in size and design.*

*The seating capacity of the room is limited to about 75 persons, to discourage large crowds and further preserve the dignity of the court. A railed enclosure provides a press box to balance the jury box at the front of the room.*

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The 1987 remodel reconfigured the east side of the floor from a work vault and offices to a third courtroom. Today, courtroom #1 has more historic features than courtroom #2. The layout of the floor remains the same today. Both the 1941 courtroom #2 and 1947 courtroom #1 retain a high degree of integrity.

The 1947 courtroom #1 remains almost historically intact. This includes all of the black walnut finishes of the walls, benches, judge's bench, railings and doors; the ebony used along the wall (chair rail) and along the top and bottoms of the wood dividers of the room as well as the desks of the judge's bench and associated courtroom staff desks. The judge's bench sits inside an insert of the room with a decorative geometric patterned wood panel with the bronze words, "The impartial administration of justice is the foundation of liberty". The original wood furniture remains which includes: the jury seating (chairs); and attorney/client table and chairs. The original doors have their original hinges and doorknobs/doorplates. Changes that have been made include the cover of the acoustical tiles that were within the wall panels throughout the room; new modern lighting; and the covering of the skylight of the ceiling.

The 1941 Courtroom #2 has seen more change over the years but still retains a great deal of integrity. This courtroom was made to be more handicapped accessible over the years therefore slight changes were made to the layout. Such changes include the removal of two rows of benches and the alteration of one row to accommodate wheelchairs. Also, a ramp was installed to access the steps down from the court area to the public spaces. A new wooden storage closet was also built. Historic details that remain include the bronze heating grilles along the top of each insert panel of the room as well as the wood grill with diffused glass of the skylight. All the doors are original with their accompanying door fixtures and hardware.

**Fifth floor**

Of all the floors, this floor has seen the most dramatic modification and does not retain much of its historic significance. The fifth floor was originally designed and was used for over 40 years as the county jail. When built in 1941, the jail could handle 70 prisoners and was designed to expand to twice that capacity. The jail cells were surrounded by steel bars but also steel plates in the floor and tool-proof steel bars above. The dedication booklet reads:

*The public in using the courthouse would never know it contained a prison. The building has been designed deliberately to protect the public from any contact with the jail or its inmates. The prisoners may be handled from the police car to their cells "untouched by human hands"... There is no exit from the elevator except on the prison floor or on the fourth floor where the prisoners may be taken directly to the courtroom.*

According to the dedication booklet for the building, prisoners were confined in a 40-man cell block operated by remote control (Figure 36) with a spacious sunny day-room (Figure 38). At night, the prisoners were locked in separate cells, all by remote control. The steel furniture was welded immovably to the steel plate beneath the concrete floor. The jail kitchen, laundry and storage room were also located in the north end of the jail behind bars. At the south end of the jail a separate cell-block was included to house a hospital cell, an isolation cell, an observation cell which was also used as a padded cell.

The fifth floor also provided space for the women's ward which could house four adults and six juvenile girls, with the adjoining matron's quarters where a matron was on duty whenever girls or women are being held in the jail. The jail also included an exercise room. A federal prison inspector at the time, Barnard Anderson, wrote Hillborn the following:

*"You and the officials are to be complimented on the plans as to the appearance, safe building and adequate equipment such as locking devices, toilet facilities, natural lighting, sanitation, and visiting facilities."*

After the jail was relocated to the new correction center to the rear of the courthouse, new plans for an additional courtroom were developed to be part of the 1987 remodel. Today, there are two superior courtrooms on the fifth floor.

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***Public Safety Memorial – contributing object***

Incorporated in the center of the first bank of steps leading up to the building is a concrete memorial that was placed to honor veterans of World War I. The memorial is a concrete column shaped monument with the protruding vertical slats design, similar to the molded spandrels of the main building - with a concrete base and a bronze eagle on top. While eagles had long been used as symbolic ornamentation on courthouses, they became a standard sculptural adornment to public buildings funded by the federal government during the Depression.

In 1998, a group of local residents, led by District Court Judge John Wulle, studied the possibility of converting the old war memorial, which was then outdated (a new Clark County Veterans War Memorial had been installed at Vancouver Barracks), into a memorial for public safety officers who have died in the line of duty. Among the names affixed there are those of an undetermined number of firefighters and at least six police officers, including two slain Prohibition agents. The new public safety plaques were added to the existing memorial monument in 1999. The inscription on the plaque reads, "*Clark County Public Safety Memorial – Dedicated to all those past, present and future, who have served to make our community a safe place to live*".

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B 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 individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Politics/Government

**Period of Significance**

1941

**Significant Dates**

1941

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Hillborn, Day Walter (architect)

Ross Hamond Co. (builder)

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Clark County Courthouse in Vancouver, Washington is historically significant under Criteria A, as a property that is directly associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the growth, development and industry of Clark County. The building is also significant under Criteria C, as a good example of its type and as a building that represents the work of a master architect, Day W. Hilborn. Hilborn, was the premier Vancouver area architect of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, who helped shape the built environment of the southwestern Washington region for over 40 years.

Completed in 1941, the building was designed by local architect, Day Walter Hilborn and was originally intended to be constructed using monies provided by the federal governments Public Works Administration (PWA) program. The period of significance begins and ends in 1941, the year of the building's completion. Today, the building remains in use as the county courthouse, although there is now a separate building for the county jail and Sheriff's office.

As the county courthouse, the building is historically significant and eligible under Criterion A as the seat of county-level government and politics in Clark County, which is the oldest county in the state of Washington. The courthouse functioned as the headquarters for county government, an important administrative division of state law. Here political decisions were made and regulations carried out that affected the county road system, taxation laws, county judicial system, county records and licenses, and hospitals.

Additionally, under Criterion A, the courthouse is historically significant on the local level with its association with work projects financed by the Public Works Association, a new Deal-era building program that helped revitalize the economy during the trying years of the Great Depression. Although the PWA grant that Clark County applied for was never executed for the project, the building still derives a strong association with the historic context of the PWA-Era Courthouses because an application was made, plans prepared, and a county referendum approved for it under the PWA program's application process. Furthermore, the courthouse is eligible under Criterion C, as it is architecturally significant as an excellent example of an Art Deco/Art Moderne style, public building in Clark County and the State of Washington.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Local history buffs call Clark County the "Cradle of Pacific Northwest History," reflecting the importance of the 656-square mile southwest corner of Washington State. One of the oldest counties in the state, Clark County is bounded on the south by the Columbia River, on the east by the Cascade Range and Skamania County, on the north by Cowlitz County and on the west by the Columbia River and Cowlitz County. The county can trace its modern roots to the arrival of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1806. Captain Meriwether Lewis wrote at length in his journal that "this valley would be competent to the maintenance of 40 or 50 thousand souls if properly cultivated and is indeed the only desirable situation for a settlement which I have seen on the west side of the Rocky mountains."<sup>i</sup> However, it took another twenty years for the first Euro-American settlement to develop. Military conflicts at home and abroad (including the War of 1812) virtually ended European exploration in this area at the conclusion of the eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century<sup>ii</sup>.

**Fort Vancouver and the Hudson's Bay Company**

Fort Vancouver, named for British naval captain and explorer George Vancouver, was one of the oldest settlements in the State of Washington, and the location of today's county seat, the City of Vancouver. It took shape on the north bank of the Columbia River in 1825, 20 years before Clark County became a reality. Founded by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) during the winter of 1824-1825 as a fur-trading post and supply depot, Fort Vancouver for the next twenty years was the most important settlement in the Pacific

<sup>i</sup> Hussey, J. A., *Champoeg: Place of Transition*. Oregon Historical Society, Portland, OR, 1967.

<sup>ii</sup> Freed, Robert, Holly Chamberlain, and Barbara Kubik, *Clark County Historic Resource Survey and Inventory Report*. Vancouver: Clark County, Washington, September, 2000. (page 10).



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Northwest, from San Francisco Bay to the Russian outposts in Alaska. Additionally, it served as the headquarters for all of the Hudson's Bay Company's activities west of the Rockies. The fort provided supplies for all the many interior posts which included the fur brigades which ranged as far distant as the present Utah and California, and for the vessels and forts of the coastal trade, which extended well up the shore line of the present Alaska. This was where the furs of the entire western trade were gathered for shipment to England.<sup>iii</sup>

The fur trading era ended in 1840, which marked the beginning of intensive settlement of the northwest. The national economic downturn in 1837 stimulated public interest in new beginnings, as did federal efforts to populate the west with Americans and solidify an American political hold. Beginning in 1843, around 500,000 people moved west during the Great Migration. Many of them followed the Oregon Trail, the first transcontinental route from Independence, Missouri to Fort Vancouver.<sup>iv</sup>

In 1846, land south of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, previously occupied jointly by the United States and Great Britain, became solely American territory by virtue of the Oregon Treaty. The treaty contained provisions that allowed for a continued British presence on the Columbia River and at Fort Vancouver. However, the Hudson's Bay Company soon shifted its headquarters to a new fort in Victoria, British Columbia and Fort Vancouver's importance was diminished. The fort eventually closed for good in 1860, but the importance of its role in the development of this region cannot be overemphasized.<sup>v</sup>

**History of Clark County**

Clark County had its formal beginning as the District of Vancouver established by the Oregon Provisional Government at Champoeg, Oregon on June 27, 1844, two years prior to the signing of the Oregon Treaty. The district encompassed all of what is now the state of Washington. In 1845, the provisional government changed "district" to "county" and the boundaries ran south and east of the Cowlitz River and all the way north to the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. In 1849, the provisional government changed "Vancouver" to "Clarke" in honor of the explorer William Clark of the 1804-1806 Lewis and Clark Expedition. The first territorial legislature of Washington managed to attach an "e" to the last name of the famous explorer – a mistake that went uncorrected until 1925. When Congress established Washington Territory in 1853, Clarke County became a political subdivision of the new territory.<sup>vi</sup>

The first census determined the population of the territory, which encompassed all of the land from the Pacific to the crest of the Rockies between the forty-sixth and forty-ninth parallels (except where the Columbia River formed the border) to be 3,965 white persons.<sup>vii</sup> Clark County's final eastern border was created in 1854 with the separation from Skamania County. The final boundary was established in 1873, when the North Fork of the Lewis River was declared the northern border.

In 1849, the United States Army established Columbia (now Vancouver) Barracks and an official American military presence in the area. In addition to the military company at the barracks, a civilian town sprang up nearby at the intersection of two important roads – to Fort Steilacoom to the north, and Fort Dalles to the east. The military presence was a vital stimulus to overall eventual settlement of the county. Businesspeople moved in to supply the military. Immigrants settled here partly because they felt protected by the military. Soldiers from all parts of the nation, as well as many who were recent immigrants to the United States, mustered out of the army here after completing their military service at the barracks. They often stayed on in the county to work in a variety of capacities – as farmers, business owners, teachers, railroaders, and lumberjacks. Virtually

<sup>iii</sup> National Park Service, *Fur Trade Era Fort, Headquarters and Depot – Fort Vancouver National Historic Site*, Web, November 15, 2013.

<sup>iv</sup> Freed, Robert, Holly Chamberlain, and Barbara Kubik, *Clark County Historic Resource Survey and Inventory Report*. Vancouver: Clark County, Washington, September, 2000.

<sup>v</sup> Freed, Robert, Holly Chamberlain, and Barbara Kubik, *Clark County Historic Resource Survey and Inventory Report*. Vancouver: Clark County, Washington, September, 2000.

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid*, 11

<sup>vii</sup> Avery, Mary M., *Washington: A History of the Evergreen State*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965), pp. 171-173..

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all of the first settlers in the area had a connection with one of the forts, whether the earlier HBC or later United States Army.<sup>viii</sup>

Many early Clark County Euro-American residents became settlers by virtue of being able to take advantage of various federal land disposition programs, including Donation Land Claims and Military Land Grant Warrants to veterans. The Donation Land Claim Act, passed by Congress in 1850, was a major factor in the settlement. Individual men over 18 years of age who had settled in the Oregon Territory prior to December 1, 1850, could claim 320 acres of land. Married couples received 640 acres. The Donation Land Act expired in 1855.<sup>ix</sup> The Homestead Act, passed in 1862, opened land ownership once again to men 21 years of age or older by making 160 acres of land available for only \$200.00.

By whatever means they staked a claim, the residents of Clark County did their part to increase the Euro-American population sufficiently to gain statehood. The 1862 census recorded 1,661 Euro-Americans, while the 1870 census recorded an increase to 3,081, a figure that also included Native Americans. The 1880 census, the last one prior to statehood, documented 5,480 Euro-Americans, 134 Native Americans, and 48 Chinese.<sup>x</sup> Washington Territory achieved statehood in 1889.

The City of Vancouver came close to being the capitol of the state. According to a local news article from the 1970s, Vancouver was Olympia's toughest opponent for obtaining the capitol status. "The Vancouver area, with a little more population than any Puget Sound community when Washington Territory was organized, battled strongly to move state facilities here. In the legislative session of 1860-61, a bill was passed relocating the seat of government to Vancouver. But the enacting clause was left out. After a spirited legal hassle, the state's judges decided the legislature had exceeded its authority in voting to move the state government."<sup>xi</sup>

**History of Clark County Government and its Courthouses**

The first Clark County commissioners, originally called probate judges, were elected June 3, 1850 and met for the first time on July 1, 1850.<sup>xii</sup> The county's first commissioners were Amos Short, John C. Allman, and William Goodwin, and the first County Clerk was Richard H. Lansdale. The court was held three days a month at Amos Short's log cabin, about one-half mile below Fort Vancouver. Amos received \$20 a month for the use of his home.<sup>xiii</sup>

By early 1854, after four years of meeting in Short's cabin, it was decided by the commissioners that the new county needed a real courthouse. On March 7, 1855 notices were "posted up in twelve different places in the county" requesting sealed bids for the furnishing of materials and building a new courthouse at the County seat of Clarke County W.T. (Washington Territory). The first courthouse, a frame building with a cedar shingle roof was 30x45 feet, two stories high and was completed October 1, 1855, by C.C. Stiles at a cost of \$440 (Figure 20). It stood on West Reserve Street between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets. In 1856, a \$1,155 county jail was built nearby.<sup>xiv</sup> This courthouse served the county until 1883.

In 1871 the Washington Territorial Legislature approved an act to build a new courthouse and jail in Vancouver however it wasn't until 1881 that the county commissioners had the official authorization to float bonds to build a new courthouse and jail.<sup>xv</sup> A notice was posted for the project and an architect with the last name Williams submitted plans for a three-story frame building with an attic and basement<sup>xvi</sup>.

<sup>viii</sup> Freed, Robert, Holly Chamberlain, and Barbara Kubik, *Clark County Historic Resource Survey and Inventory Report*. Vancouver: Clark County, Washington, September, 2000.

<sup>ix</sup> Speulda, Lou Ann, *Oregon's Agricultural Development: A Historic Context 1811-1940*, Salem: State Historic Preservation Office, 1989, p. 7.

<sup>x</sup> Alworth, Louise McKay *Battle Ground...In and Around*, Vancouver The Write Stuff, 1984. Print.

<sup>xi</sup> Unknown, "Vancouver came close to getting capitol", *The Columbian*, [Vancouver], November 3, 1974.

<sup>xii</sup> "Clark County Capitol – Dedication", Clark County, Washington, November 29, 1941, Vancouver WA.

<sup>xiii</sup> Beck, Bob, "Courthouses come and go" *The Columbian* [Vancouver], September 21, 1981.

<sup>xiv</sup> Dietrich, Bill, "County's first courthouse was built for a whopping \$440", *The Columbian* [Vancouver], March 1979.

<sup>xv</sup> Washington State Legislature, *Memorials and Resolutions of Territorial*, Washington State Legislature, Web, November 15, 2013.

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On September 1, 1883, a grand three-story-and-attic building was finished at a cost of \$44,460 by contractors J.T. Goss, R.W. Downing and C.B. Wilcox.<sup>xvii</sup> It stood between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, Grant and Franklin streets for a brief seven years (Figure 21). This structure was located at the site of the present courthouse.<sup>xviii</sup> It received accolades in the August 1882 edition of the *West Shores* magazine. "In the matter of public buildings, it surpasses any town of its size on the coast," the publication stated. "A two-story and basement brick courthouse has just been completed at a cost of \$35,000, and it is handsome."<sup>xix</sup>

Although the county's population and government were growing, its fire system was not keeping pace. In 1888 the *Vancouver Register* newspaper stated the imperative need for an electric fire alarm system. "The present system of running a half mile to the engine house and screaming, 'fire, fire,' is too ridiculous to think of in a city of 4,000". The newspaper suggested that the city invest in a team of its own horses to pull the firewagon.<sup>xx</sup>

On the night of Tuesday, February 25, 1890, the building went up in flames in one of the city's most spectacular fires (Figure 22). There were ten people asleep in the courthouse that night and five prisoners in the jail. The building was consumed by flames which destroyed it within an hour. Differing news articles have stated that the blaze was caused by defective furnace pipes<sup>xxi</sup> and another stated arson<sup>xxii</sup>. Nonetheless, the building was beyond repair of any type. All the records of the Superior and District Courts and probate records dating back for 40 years were destroyed. The sheriff, superintendent of schools and the surveyor records were also destroyed. Up in smoke went mortgages, deeds, and tax receipts whose loss cost property owners and the county thousands of dollars, and started a chain of suits which clogged the courts for a generation.<sup>xxiii</sup> Of the total of four courthouses eventually built, this one had by far the shortest span of use. For a period following the fire, county offices were scattered throughout the area in office buildings and private homes.

On June 3, 1891 the County Commissioners held a special meeting to "let the contract" for a new courthouse. W.A. Ritchie, a well-known Seattle architect (who designed courthouses for Jefferson, King, Whatcom and Thurston Counties) designed for Clark County a Romanesque style three-story brick building with a large clock tower had entrances and windows openings trimmed with Tenino Stone, a metal shingle roof, vaults in all offices, and was heated with steam (Figures 23 and 24). The building construction finished in March of 1892, and cost \$65,000<sup>xxiv</sup>. This red brick courthouse was the pride of the territory in its day as it embodied all that was known of architecture in the 1890s. For nearly fifty years this building continued as the seat of county government before giving way in 1941 to the present courthouse.

With the growth of the county and necessary expansion of county government, by the 1930s the old brick courthouse became inadequate. Clerks and equipment were crowded into every nook and cranny in the old building. Even the attic, not built for such use, was converted into office space. Irreplaceable records such as deeds, mortgages, and tax receipts, affecting the title to most of the land in the county, were no longer adequately protected. Not all of them could be crowded into the limited vault space. Even the best of the vaults were condemned by fire insurance underwriters as insufficient to withstand a major fire. The risk of such a fire was so great as to be reflected in increasing insurance rates on the old building. The hazard to life became so extreme that the judge of the superior court forbade the housing of jurors in the attic dormitory. Floors in some of the rooms had to be reinforced, as they sagged under the weight of years of use. Many county departments were forced to rent space elsewhere, at the county's expense.<sup>xxv</sup>

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<http://www.leg.wa.gov/HISTORY/TERRITORIAL/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>xvi</sup> Starr, Laura. "The Court Houses of Clark County". Clark County History, Volume XXXIV, 1993.

<sup>xvii</sup> Unknown, "Building is Fourth for The County" *The Columbian* [Vancouver], Date Unknown.

<sup>xviii</sup> Starr, Laura. "The Court Houses of Clark County". Clark County History, Volume XXXIV, 1993.

<sup>xix</sup> Beck, Bob, "Courthouses come and go" *The Columbian* [Vancouver], September 21, 1981

<sup>xx</sup> Dietrich, Bill, "County's first courthouse was built for a whopping \$440", *The Columbian* [Vancouver], March 1979.

<sup>xxi</sup> Unknown, "Building is Fourth for The County" *The Columbian* [Vancouver], Date Unknown

<sup>xxii</sup> Dietrich, Bill, "County's first courthouse was built for a whopping \$440", *The Columbian* [Vancouver], March 1979.

<sup>xxiii</sup> "Clark County Capitol – Dedication", Clark County, Washington, November 29, 1941, Vancouver WA.

<sup>xxiv</sup> "Clark County Capitol – Dedication", Clark County, Washington, November 29, 1941, Vancouver WA.

<sup>xxv</sup> Ibid

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**Public Works Administration (PWA)**

In January of 1937, the Clark County Board of Commissioners authorized their chairman to apply for a Public Works Administration (PWA) grant and for the county engineer to “furnish to Uncle Sam whatever information may be required incident to securing the funds”<sup>xxvi</sup> (Figure 25). In an effort to assist citizens in distress and stimulate the national economy during the trying times of the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt legislated twenty-nine different acts between 1933 and 1939<sup>xxvii</sup>. Collectively, these bills formed President Roosevelt’s New Deal for the American people as pledged in his 1932 campaign speeches. The programs were structured to sustain various parts of the economy with the majority seeking to provide some type of relief for the unemployed. Prominent among these programs was the PWA. Formally known as the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, the PWA was enacted to prepare a comprehensive program of public works. In doing this, the PWA was intended to create employment and aid industry by the construction of useful public works of enduring social value.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Similar to other New Deal-era programs, the PWA relied on a partnership between the federal, state, county, and city governments to stimulate employment. Local public bodies submitted applications to the PWA for the construction of desirable improvements. The PWA then reviewed the application to ensure that 1.) the application was submitted by a public body which represented the people and that the project complied with applicable local, state and national laws; 2) the project was financially sound and the applicant was in a financial position to provide its share of construction costs; and, 3) the project was feasible from an engineering standpoint.<sup>xxix</sup>

Unlike other New Deal-era programs, most specifically the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the PWA was intended to stimulate private industry. By bolstering private industry, the PWA created an increase in private employment which helped relieve the widespread local, state and national unemployment problem without resorting to subsidies. The WPA, in contrast, was aimed specifically at employing the jobless on worthwhile public work projects for which the workers received public relief money. The PWA made grants and loans to public bodies for the hiring of architects, contractors and laborers to construct useful public works. It did not provide direct relief to the unemployed in the sponsoring community.<sup>xxx</sup>

These public works programs literally rebuilt Washington State, from Olympic National Park and the Tacoma Narrows Bridge to city parks, backcountry trails, and rural homesteads. Most dramatically, the construction of Grand Coulee and Bonneville dams changed the state’s waterways and provided the power that fueled the Northwest’s war industries—most notably, aircraft—during World War II. In its first year the regional state relief agency received \$10 million in federal aid to support the construction of the Deception Pass Bridge, county roads, expanding the state penitentiary, and financed scientific mineral and natural resource surveys. Public works projects soon expanded to include locally proposed, small-scale projects in counties and townships across the state. Over 54,000 people were at work repainting county buildings, fixing roads, making clothes for the Red Cross, and clearing land by the end of 1933. In the islands of San Juan County alone, over 10% of the adult population was employed by the federal government.<sup>xxxi</sup>

In Clark County, the City of Camas received new deal funding for the U.S. Post Office building and for the mural painted inside. In Vancouver the State School for the Blind was constructed in 1936 with a PWA grant. A two-story office building for various welfare agencies was funded by the WPA in 1939. Smaller projects included roads, parks and school improvements, funding for the Vancouver Barracks and other public utility

<sup>xxvi</sup> Unknown, “Board Seeks PWA Aid for Court house” *The Columbian* [Vancouver]. January 16, 1937.

<sup>xxvii</sup> *The Story of the PWA: Building for Recover*, (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1939, 1.

<sup>xxviii</sup> *Ibid*, 1

<sup>xxix</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>xxx</sup> *Ibid*., 3-4 and 8.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Dorpat, Paul and Genevieve McCoy, *Building Washington: A History of Washington State Public Works* Seattle: Tartu and the Washington Chapter of the American Public Works Association, 1998, 11.

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projects. Most of the spending came in two waves in 1933-35, and again in 1938. The PWA funding ended in 1939<sup>xxxii</sup>.

Proposals for PWA projects originated at the local level. A community decided what it wanted and hired a local architect or engineer to design it. Although the PWA did not tell communities what they should want or how a structure should look, proposals were reviewed in Washington, D.C. for structural, legal, and fiscal soundness. Most proposals were read by the president himself. If approved, funding was shared: 30 percent came from the PWA; the remaining 70 percent was provided by the sponsors. If they could not come up with the money, the PWA loaned it to them. In 1935, the split became 45 percent from the PWA and 55 percent from the sponsors. By that time, bond markets had recovered and most communities were able to sell bonds, which had to be approved in a local election. There were very few defaults on PWA loans, and interest from them went into a revolving fund to provide more grants.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Once approved, the projects were executed by local contractors using local labor. A resident engineer inspector guarded against fraud, waste, or poor construction, and an investigation division in Washington, D.C., sent its agents to the site in response to any complaint of impropriety. Thus, most questionable conduct was stopped before it got very far, and scandals never besmirched the PWA's reputation. Its administrator, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, was known as "Honest Harold." Because the architectural style of the project was determined by local taste, there is no standard way to recognize a PWA project. There was, however, a style popular with architects at the time, which featured a combination of a classical facade, simplified columns and entablature, and Art Deco details that is sometimes referred to as PWA Moderne or Stripped Classical.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

### **A PWA grant for the new Clark County Courthouse**

Early in 1938, the county engineer's office had prepared tentative plans for a modern building to replace the overcrowded brick courthouse, which stood on the south side of the present structure. Prominent local architect Day W. Hillborn was retained and drew up plans for a building which would contain 97,862 square feet of floor space and would cost an estimated \$546,000 (Figure 26).<sup>xxxv</sup> In September of 1938, the county voters authorized a \$300,000 bond for a new courthouse<sup>xxxvi</sup>. This bond was to match a \$246,000 Public Works Administration grant which had been applied for. Soon after this vote, a lawsuit challenged the legality of the bond election, but was later rejected by the State Supreme Court<sup>xxxvii</sup>. Clark County however never received the PWA grant. A letter dated November 7, 1938, from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works notified Clark County's State Senator Homer Bone that the Clark County Courthouse would not be receiving PWA funding as all the funding for the year had already been granted. The letter stated:

*"In accordance with the purpose of the Act, namely, to create employment quickly, allotments were made for projects as early as favorable conclusions could be reached on the applications in order that construction could be started and employment furnished with the least possible delay. Consequently, substantially all of the money appropriated by the 1938 Act has now been allotted and we can offer you no encouragement at the present time regarding an allotment for this project"*<sup>xxxviii</sup>.

And by the next year, the program had sunsetted. Although there was no federal assistance for the project, the county commissioners were determined to move forward with the building, as they believed the need was great. The cost to build a new courthouse would fall entirely into the hands of the county taxpayers.

<sup>xxxii</sup> George Washington University, *Public Works Administration – The Eleanor Roosevelt Paper Project*, Web, November 15, 2013.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Leighninger, Robert. "Public Works Administration Architecture." *KnowLA Encyclopedia of Louisiana*. Ed. David Johnson. Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 1 Feb. 2011. Web. 14 Nov. 2013.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Ibid, Leighninger

<sup>xxxv</sup> Unknown, "County Courthouse is now 'Owned' by Clark Citizens", *The Columbian [Vancouver]*, August 31, 1960.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Unknown, "57 Per Cent Vote Cast At Election", *The Columbian [Vancouver]*, September 22, 1938.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Dietrich, Bill, "County's first courthouse was built for a whopping \$440", *The Columbian [Vancouver]*, March 1979.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Gray/ Assistant Administrator, H. A. Letter to Hon. Homer T. Bone, United States Senator. 7 Nov. 1938. MS. Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Washington, D.C.

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In December of 1939, the county purchased the Central School building located north of the existing courthouse and closed 12<sup>th</sup> Street between Franklin and Grant<sup>xxxix</sup>. With all the necessary land obtained, the original plans were cut by 19,800 square feet and \$146,000. Although the voters had authorized a bond issue up to \$300,000 the commissioners could sell an issue of only \$246,000 because of other county bond indebtedness<sup>xi</sup>. In July, 1940, contracts totaling \$351,981 were awarded<sup>xli</sup>.

On August 14, 1940 actual work began on the building however the lack of funds made it impossible to provide such items as an elevator (though the shaft was put in), linoleum on the floors, steel shutters on the vault windows and marble wainscoting in the halls under the original contracts that were let. Consequently the commissioners turned to the citizens again in 1941, and again the local residents passed a special “three-mill levy” which provided an additional \$64,071<sup>xlii</sup>.

**Clark County Courthouse Construction**

The courthouse’s architect, Day Walter Hilborn designed many buildings and sites in Clark County and throughout the Washington/Oregon region. He designed one other county courthouse in the State of Washington (Klickitat County), also of the restrained PWA Moderne design. He also designed a courthouse for Jefferson County, Oregon. For unknown reasons it was never built. Hillborn’s projects span a 40 year period and define many of the cultural institutions of Clark County and the region. The Ross B. Hammond Company, of Portland, Oregon, was hired as the general contractor for the construction of the building.

The Ross B. Hammond Company specialized in the reinforced concrete type of construction. The firm has an impressive list of buildings that they constructed. Such buildings include the 1938 Oregon State Capital building in Salem and several of the campus buildings at the University of Oregon in Eugene. In Portland, the company built the Dolphi Building (NRHP), St Mary’s Academy, the Jordon Schnitzer Museum of Art among others. Ross B. Hammond founded the firm and was born in Pittsburg, PA and is a graduate of Carnegie Tech. Before coming to Portland in 1923, Hammond was employed by several of the larger construction firms in the east.

Subcontractors employed for the courthouse were W.G. Rushlight and Co, of Portland for the Plumbing and Heating; Rasmussen Book and Stationary Co. of Vancouver for furniture and equipment; Demitre Electric Co. of Portland; Birchfield Boiler, Inc. of Tacoma; W. L. Reid Company of Portland for finishing hardware; Baker Barkon Co for design and fashioning of electrical fixtures; DuBois Lumber Co. of Vancouver for the construction lumber; Artcraft Linoleum and Shade Co. for the Linoleum and Rubber Tile; and Clyde Clefton Co. for the Jail contract.

The new building with its five floors and boiler-room-basement provided 78,062 square feet of floor space – three times the 26,000 square feet available in the old courthouse (Figures 27-30). According to a local newspaper article, the courthouse was cited by the American Institute of Architects as an outstanding example of a concrete building poured in place. It was built to withstand hurricanes, earthquakes, and fires. According to the dedication booklet for the new building, “*It was built in the nick of time and could not be built today at any price, as the vital materials are no longer available*”<sup>xliii</sup>. It allowed 15,165 square feet of floor space for expansion – on paper. When the building opened in 1941, every foot of space in the new building, except the unfinished rooms in the jail, were in use. The overflow space was intended for expansion in the future was used by a variety of public service offices such as the Red Cross, Farm Security Administration, Columbia National Forest and the Old Fort Vancouver Museum. The plan was for these organizations to utilize the space until county needed it back.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Unknown, “Central School Bought by County for \$12,100”, *The Columbian*, [Vancouver], December 13, 1939. .

<sup>xi</sup> Ibid 26

<sup>xli</sup> Specifications for the General Contract- Clark County Courthouse, *Clark County, Washington*, July 27, 1940.

<sup>xlii</sup> Unknown, “County Courthouse is now ‘Owned’ by Clark Citizens”, *The Columbian [Vancouver]*, August 31, 1960.

<sup>xliii</sup> “Clark County Capitol – Dedication”, Clark County, Washington, November 29, 1941, Vancouver WA.

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On November 29, 1941, the county celebrated the opening of the new courthouse by hosting a colorful dedication in which Governor Arthur B. Langlie was part of the ribbon cutting ceremony. The *Columbian* newspaper dedicated various articles on the dedication and spoke about the pomp and circumstance for the big public opening (Figure 27). "*Once the governor cuts the ribbon, open house inside will begin, with 15 members of the Clark county league of women voters acting as guides and county employees staying on duty until 10 p.m. to explain their offices to visitors.*"<sup>xliv</sup> The county closed the streets to traffic during the ceremony and had various high school and local bands play music for the occasion. The article further states that floodlights would be used to light up the courthouse at night. "*At dusk 18 powerful floodlights, each with 1,000 candlepower, will be switched on, making the upper four stories of the capitol a colorful, eye-filling sight.*"<sup>xlv</sup> The tour even included the jail where one of the jailers would be available to explain their operations.

The dedication booklet titled, "Clark County Capitol", which was distributed to the public for the grand tours had the following text:

*Modern Miracles Performed*

*The new building is a veritable museum of the latest and most modern developments in the building arts. It owes its Gibraltar-like strength to the use of a new "magic powder" called pozzolith. This mysterious agent disperses cement evenly throughout the concrete, thus increasing its strength, at the same time cutting the cost by reducing the amount of cement required.*

*A six inch column of concrete in the new building for instance, will support a weight of more than 47 tons, by actual test. To insure perfection the county's own inspector, John Redenius, examined every form, every piece of reinforcing steel, every fixture, every partition, and tested every day's pour of concrete.*

*From every 50 cubic yards of concrete poured into the forms Redenius took four samples, which were poured into moulds and allowed to cure. Then they were tested in a special scientific laboratory. It took an average of 87,000 pounds to break each of the 169 test cylinders thus obtained. Strength of the concrete ran as high as 5477 pounds per square inch. Actual weight of the building is supported by columns throughout. The walls bear only their own weight.*

*All light wires, heating and water pipes, sewer mains, even the telephone lines, are centralized in two vertical shafts, built into the walls, which run vertically through the building from top to bottom. All wires and pipes serving offices on each floor are built into the concrete floor itself, converging on the central service shafts.*

*The shafts, in turn converge into one central control room in the sub-basement boiler room.*

*A ventilating fan in the same control room forces air under pressure to all inside rooms in the building where such ventilation is necessary. The steam heating system is so designed that any one floor or any one room may be heated separately. The jail, for instance, and the sheriff's office may be heated separately at night, in order to cut heating costs. (In the old building every room had to be heated in order to heat the jail).*

*The hardware throughout the building was especially designed and built for Clark County's courthouse. The doors, which look solid, are really hollow, made of a new type of heavy plywood. They have the strength of solid wood, but are much lighter. They are hung on ball bearing hinges designed to last a lifetime.*

*Some Facts and Figures*

*It took about 95,000 man hours of hard labor to build the new courthouse. In other words, it would have taken one man 95,000 hours, or more than 47 years of hard labor to do the job, all of which does not take into account the miracles performed by the modern construction machinery employed on the project.*

*The general contract required 66,345 man hours of work; the plastering along 9314 man hours; and installation of the plumbing and heating system 9963 man hours.*

<sup>xliv</sup> Unknown, "County Invites Public to See Courthouse", *The Columbian* [Vancouver], November 28, 1941.

<sup>xlv</sup> Kuokka, Hubard, "New Clark Courthouse One of the Finest Plants in Northwest", *The Columbian* [Vancouver], November 28, 1941..

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*In the building's walls, floors and columns are 20,201,400 pounds, or more than 10,000 tons, of concrete; 270 tons of heavy reinforcing steel, 92,500 pounds of steel mesh reinforcing in the floors; and 170 tons of steel in the jail.*

*The forms for the concrete walls and columns alone required 557,111 board feet of lumber and 360 kegs of nails. Nearly 13 miles of wire was required for the lighting system.*

*It took 82,000 square feet, or nearly two acres of linoleum and other floor covering to cover the offices alone in the new building. The terrazzo floors in the halls contain 172 cubic yards of sand and five and a half tons of marble chips.*

The courthouse contains several unique features. One of which is the Buckskin Brigade sculpture above the main entrance. Conceived by the Hilborn and executed by Portland sculptor Victor J. Schneider, the sculpture was a significant element of the courthouse building. The original sculpture was poured as an integral part of the wall of the structure, which was a monolithic pour<sup>xlvi</sup>. The bas-relief sculpture depicted an Iroquois Indian in breech clout and braids and two tall trappers in fringed buckskin jackets, wool pants, and sashes (Figure 40). The life sized figures, cast in concrete were done with an accuracy of high artistry. It symbolized the role played by frontier settlers and Native Americans in the development of Clark County as a center of government and business. It was a unique piece of public art and history. As stated in the dedication booklet, "*Architect Day W. Hilborn conceived and Vic Schneider, architectural sculptor, executed this masterpiece. Men have gained immortal fame for lesser works of art.*"<sup>xlvii</sup>

In 1978, the sculpture was unfortunately damaged and had to be removed from the courthouse. Thanks to a group of passionate citizens, \$21,000 was raised in private donations for a replacement sculpture. The fund-raising group was known as the Buckskin Brigade Committee. Using photographs as the original as guides, the Buckskin Brigade was recreated in bronze by Oregon sculptor, Bill Bane and unveiled on September 13, 1990, twelve years after the original was removed.<sup>xlviii</sup> (Figure 41)

Other interesting features of the courthouse when built included a circular stairway, modern amenities in the jail, modern phone service and elevators. The engineer's drafting room was on the ground floor directly under the engineer's main office. For the engineer to access both offices easily, a spiral stairway was put in to connect the two spaces. As was typical of many PWA-era built courthouses, the jail on the top floor also included many modern touches. This included escape alarms on all windows, grills and skylights and doors. The alarm operated automatically when a bar was cut. A remote control system made it possible for one jailer to open, close or lock any door in the 40 man felon block or the day room without exposing himself to the prisoners. Another special feature of the jail were special cells for detaining juveniles, a solitary confinement cell, a padded observation ward, a hospital cell, an eight-man trustee dormitory, women's ward and a living suite for the cook.<sup>xlix</sup>

Hilborn designed the building specifically to be expanded if necessary. As stated in the *Columbian*, "Although 10 per cent additional space was provided in the present building to allow for departmental expansion the county need never have fear of any future growth beyond that, Hilborn explained. By adding wings to flank the garage on the west side of the building, a space equal to two thirds of the present building volume can be attained without detracting from the beauty or disturbing the present building."<sup>1</sup>

The county however continued to grow at a rapid pace, perhaps more rapid than was ever imagined during the era it was designed and built. Although many modern enhancements were installed in such areas as the jail, the inmates seemed to find a way to wreak havoc. In the late seventies, a rain shield had to be erected in the county clerk's office to protect employees from dripping water when prisoners upstairs plugged the plumbing in

<sup>xlvi</sup> "Clark County Capitol – Dedication", Clark County, Washington, November 29, 1941, Vancouver WA.

<sup>xlvii</sup> Ibid

<sup>xlviii</sup> Koeningger, Tom, "These frontiersmen have a lot to say about our future", *The Columbian*, [Vancouver], September 23, 1990.

<sup>xlix</sup> Kuokka, Hubard, "'Guests' Stay put in New County Jail", *The Columbian*, [Vancouver], November, 28, 1941.

<sup>1</sup> Kuokka, Hubard, "New Clark Courthouse One of the Finest Plants in Northwest", *The Columbian* [Vancouver], November 28, 1941.



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the jail.<sup>li</sup> Many remodels have also occurred to accommodate the court system. Eventually the non-judicial county departments moved out of the building to make room for the expanding county judicial system and in 1984, the jail was moved into a new building directly behind the courthouse.

**Architectural Significance**

The Clark County Courthouse is significant as an outstanding local example of the Art Deco/Art Moderne architecture of the New Deal era. The courthouse is the only public building in downtown Vancouver designed in the Art Moderne/Art Deco style. It incorporates the essential features of a visually dominant central section with subsidiary wings. The stepped back massing, series of straight lines and angular, recessed, geometric shapes along with a sleek surface exemplify this style. The use of Art Deco or Moderne style ornamentation in the metal grillwork of the transoms and Art Deco exterior lighting was typical of most of the PWA-Era courthouses.

The "modernistic" designs more frequently chosen for the non-federal buildings funded through the PWA have come to be known as "Depression Modern"<sup>liii</sup> or "PWA Moderne."<sup>liiii</sup> This stream-lined style described by one author as "scraped Classical with Art Deco touches"<sup>liiv</sup> was lamented by contemporary critics for its boxy forms and dismal pallet of materials. As time passed however critics would offer more positive reviews celebrating the streamlined nature of many buildings and recognizing the use of bronze, marble, and stone as long-lived, quality materials. The integration of Art Deco and Moderne designs in cut stone, interior and exterior light fixtures, plaster ornamentation, courtroom millwork, and signage allowed the PWA Moderne buildings to be statements of their time - as is true for the Clark County Courthouse.

The combination of Art Moderne/Art Deco style ornamentation was popular in the 1930s and early 1940s for public buildings, especially those funded with PWA monies. As is stated above, Clark County applied for a PWA grant, however did not receive funding. Surprisingly no county courthouses in the State of Washington received PWA funding. Counties and municipalities throughout the state received grants for various transportation projects, schools, parks, post offices and dams, but not any for county courthouses.<sup>liiv</sup>

On the local level, there are several examples of Art Deco style commercial buildings in downtown Vancouver, the Vancouver Telephone Exchange Building (1934, NR listed), the CC Store (1932 - Hilborn design), and the Kiggins Theater (1936 -Hilborn design, NR listed).

**Architect: Day W. Hilborn<sup>liiv</sup>**

Day Walter Hilborn was born on a farm near Brow City, Michigan on February 1, 1897. Early in his life the family moved a variety of times finally settling in Ford's Prairie outside of Centralia where Hilborn graduated from high school in 1916. Soon after graduation, Hilborn enlisted in the Army and was sent to the Texas/Mexican border. When Hilborn returned home, he enrolled for classes at Washington State College in Pullman. However, after the draft was authorized by Congress in May of 1917, Hilborn was shipped out on one of the first U.S. ships to sail for France in WWI.

Even though Hilborn lived through extreme war conditions, he was able to find postcards of buildings and houses that he would send home with comments about the local architecture. By the end of the war Hilborn had risen to the rank of 2nd Lieutenant and returned home on one of the last troop ships to leave France.

He immediately returned to WSC campus in late 1919, eager to develop his skills as an artist. While in Pullman, Hilborn was active in a variety of social circles. Hilborn soon changed his major from art to

<sup>li</sup> Dietrich, Bill, "County's first courthouse was built for a whopping \$440", *The Columbian* [Vancouver], March 1979.

<sup>lii</sup> Grief, Martin, *Depression Modern: the Thirties Style in America*, New York: Universe Books, 1975, p. 113.

<sup>liiii</sup> Gebhard, David *The National Trust Guide to Art Deco in America*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996.

<sup>liiv</sup> Pare, Richard, *Courthouse0A Photographic Document*. New York: Horizon Press), 1978, D. 244.

<sup>lv</sup> "The Living New Deal – States and Cities": Washington, Web, November 15, 2013 <http://livingnewdeal.berkeley.edu/us/wa/>.

<sup>lvi</sup> Houser, Michael, "Day W. Hilborn – 1897-1971", Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation – [www.dahp.wa.gov](http://www.dahp.wa.gov).

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architecture and engineering. Under the tutelage of the School of Architecture Director Rudolph Weaver, Hilborn received a strong pragmatic application in the theory of design in the Beaux Arts tradition.

By 1930 however, Hilborn had moved to Vancouver and began working as a construction superintendent for architect Richard V. Gough; whom he most likely met in Centralia. The two set up offices in the Central Building in downtown Vancouver and began receiving commission almost immediately.

Together Gough & Hilborn's work included a variety of period revival pieces from the remodeling of the A.L. Curtin House (Spanish Revival) to the Tudor Revival style T.W. Jeffers House. One of the largest projects was the four-story Arts Building at 11th and Main, which celebrated the Beaux Arts training that Hilborn received at WSU. Important commissions followed. Constructed as a mixed-use building the Columbian Building and Storm King Ice Cream Store at Evergreen Blvd and Broadway was a unique project. Two distinct facades, for two uses under one roof. It brought the young firm and Hilborn in particular, lifelong connections with Vancouver's political and social elite.

By the 1930s, Hilborn began exploring a new mode of architectural designs keeping with the architectural fashions of the day. Many of his buildings exhibit both architectural details and design forms of the Art Deco style.

A good example is Hilborn's design for Vancouver City Hall. Completed in 1930, the buildings simple central bocks and subsequent lower side wings are typical of many Deco structures. Originally painted all white, architectural detailing is limited to the relationships of solid to void, smooth exterior surfaces, and three recessed cartouches on the main façade. The \$65,000 building housed the administrative offices, a fire station and police station and was built by Portland contractor P.L. Reed.

Other Deco designs include the CC Store (1932) in Vancouver and the Stoller Building in Camas.

Among Hilborn's more celebrated works during this time was Kiggins Bowl. An engineering masterpiece at the time, Hilborn utilized all his engineering skills he acquired at WSU. The dedication ceremony in 1933 was a gala event filled with music, speeches, a relay race, a march by school children, flag raising ceremony, and short a circus. The same year Hilborn designed the Art Deco style Columbia Mausoleum. Located east of the city limits, the \$150,000 Mausoleum was only partially constructed. Due to lack of money the mausoleum sat for years, half-finished and rusted until it was demolished in 1939.

Driving Hilborn's business during the late 1930s was a series of Art Deco inspired movie theaters. Designed for then mayor John P. Kiggins, the Kiggins Theater was hailed in the local press as a "design masterpiece" and was the first of other theaters to come around the PNW. The Kiggins Theater was a mixed use project; housing a state of the art movie theater and four business spaces. Hilborn designed every detail of the building, from the elaborate marquee, and stylized Art Deco sandblasted sculptural relief's on the exterior to the lobby snack bar, and vanity stands in the women's rest room. Word quickly spread throughout the movie industry of Hilborn's design and soon commissions came rolling in.

In 1939, Hilborn became a member of the AIA. Newspaper reports indicate that that his admittance was based on his work in designing the Kiggins Bowl, the Kiggin's Theater and the Centralia Armory. A crowning achievement in Hilborn's career was the Clark County Courthouse. Designing a county courthouse permanently put Hilborn on the map and brought him nationwide recognition. The courthouse included a bas-relief sculpture above the front entry door of two rugged explorers clad in buckskins and an Indian with a canoe. The life size figures were originally cast in concrete. The sculpture designed by Hilborn, also became the county seal and is used on the Flag of Clark County.

Hilborn's work was so respected that county commissioners asked him to design a courthouse for Klickitat County. The restrained PWA Modern style Klickitat County Courthouse was completed in 1942. In the 1950s' Hilborn was asked to design yet another courthouse for Jefferson County, OR. For unknown reasons, the design was not executed.

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It was also during this time that Hilborn completed work on the City Hall & Library Building in Camas. Used today as the main library, the building originally housed city offices, the police station and a fire station, as well as an attached library wing. Hilborn liked grand plans and at the request of the City of Vancouver in 1945 he proposed a traditional, multi-block civic center which would reach out east of the courthouse in a three-block area. The civic center would contain a federal building, a public auditorium, city hall, a museum, the post office, and the library all facing a boulevard and a monument.

In 1941 the city of Vancouver's population was 18,778 and the city was still a relatively quiet place. However when the U.S. entered WWII and news broke out that Vancouver had been selected for a huge Kaiser shipyard things changed rapidly. Overnight people flocked to Vancouver to work in the shipyards, 45,000 people, and housing was needed. Six mini cities were developed by the Vancouver Housing Authority. They included 12,343 dwelling units (temp and permanent), and two 5,000-bed dormitories. Along with the development came 8 schools, roads, sewers, water, shopping centers and care centers. In 18 months the east side of Vancouver was transformed. McLoughlin Heights, Ogden Meadows, Fruit Valley Homes, Fourth Plain Village, Bagley Downs and Burton Homes. Hilborn designed several of the row houses and individual homes, as well as the elementary school for the Vancouver Housing Authority. After the war, Hilborn proposed a way to remodel the homes into more attractive units.

All of these projects may have been of note at the time of their construction; however Hilborn continued to design for another thirty years. To date, over 700 designs have been documented. Other projects include the Gateway Building (1949), Salvation Army Building (1952), and Vancouver Federal Savings and Loan (1960), all in Vancouver. Day Walter Hilborn died in Vancouver on November 8, 1971 at the age of 74. The Clark County Courthouse is perhaps Hilborn's greatest legacy. Designing a county courthouse permanently put Hilborn on the map and brought him nationwide recognition.

**Conclusion**

Overall, the Clark County Courthouse is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for its association with local politics and government as the seat of county government. Further, the building derives significance as a representative of the efforts of the PWA to stimulate the local, state and national economies during the Great Depression. Although the grant was never received, the plans and design were prepared in anticipation for those monies. Architecturally, the building is an excellent example of an Art Deco/Art Moderne style, public building built in Vancouver, Washington in the early-1940s.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: Clark County

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**Clark County Courthouse**  
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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Approx. 2.5 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**Or Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>45°37'52"N</u>	<u>122°40'37"W</u>	3	<u>45°37'47"N</u>	<u>122°40'32"W</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	<u>45°37'52"N</u>	<u>122°40'32"W</u>	4	<u>45°37'47"N</u>	<u>122°40'37"W</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property encompasses approx. 2.5 acres that is bounded on the east by Franklin Street, bounded on the north by 13<sup>th</sup> Street, bounded on the south by 11<sup>th</sup> Street, and bounded on the west by Grant Street.

The nominated property is located in the NW ¼ of Section 27, Township 2 North, Range 1 East, of the Willamette Meridian, in Clark County, Washington and is legally described as Slocums Addition, Block A: Lot 1-8 and Block H: Lot 1-8. It is otherwise identified as the eastern half of parcel number 50490000.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property encompasses the eastern half of urban tax lot (50490000) that is occupied by the Clark County Courthouse. The nomination does not include the newer jail/correction center building.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jacqueline E. Kamp, AICP (Edited by DAHP Staff)  
organization Clark County Department of Community Planning date November 15, 2013  
street & number 1300 Franklin Street telephone 360-397-2280 ext.4913  
city or town Vancouver state WA zip code 98660  
e-mail Jacqueline.kamp@clark.wa.gov

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Clark County Courthouse  
**City or Vicinity:** Vancouver  
**County:** Clark **State:** Washington  
**Photographer:** Jacqueline E. Kamp  
**Date Photographed:** June 16, 2013 and July 1, 2013

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

- 1 of 37: East elevation (front)
- 2 of 37: East elevation front steps
- 3 of 37: East entrance light fixture
- 4 of 37: East (front) entrance, doors, window, sculpture
- 5 of 37: Public safety memorial
- 6 of 37: North elevation
- 7 of 37: North entrance
- 8 of 37: North entrance 2
- 9 of 37: North entrance art deco railing detail
- 10 of 37: South elevation
- 11 of 37: West (rear) elevation
- 12 of 37: Secondary entrance lighting fixture detail
- 13 of 37: Moat detail 1
- 14 of 37: Moat detail 2
- 15 of 37: Secondary entrance doors and transom
- 16 of 37: Main entry lobby bronze pendant light
- 17 of 37: First floor interior entry bronze grate and plaque
- 18 of 37: First floor elevator and terrazzo
- 19 of 37: First floor lobby bronze mail chute repository
- 20 of 37: Typical bronze mail chute
- 21 of 37: Terrazzo first floor detail
- 22 of 37: Front entrance lobby alcove
- 23 of 37: Secondary entrance terrazzo detail
- 24 of 37: Second floor terrazzo detail- 1
- 25 of 37: Second floor terrazzo detail- 2
- 26 of 37: Second floor balcony railing glass floral square detail
- 27 of 37: Second floor balcony art deco bronze railing detail
- 28 of 37: Courtroom 1 facing dais
- 29 of 37: Courtroom 1 attorney tables-chairs-jury box
- 30 of 37: Courtroom 1 dais detail
- 31 of 37: Courtroom 1 public entrance doors
- 32 of 37: Courtroom 1 public entry door hardware detail
- 33 of 37: Courtroom 1 facing public seating
- 34 of 37: Courtroom 2 wall-bronze grates
- 35 of 37: Courtroom 2 skylight bronze grille detail
- 36 of 37: Interior doorknob detail
- 37 of 37: Interior door hinge hardware detail

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**Property Owner:** (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

---

name Clark County General Services  
street & number 1300 Franklin Street telephone (360) 397-2323  
city or town Vancouver state WA zip code 98660

**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 request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

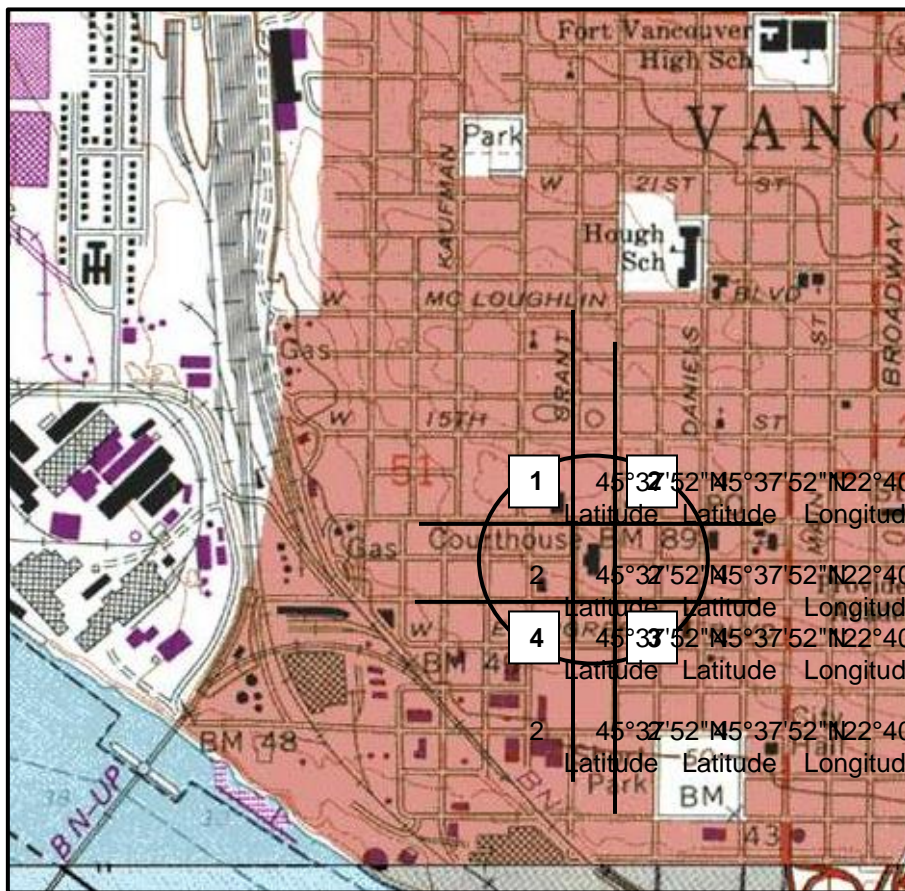


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1	45°37'52"N	122°40'37"W	3	45°37'47"N	122°40'32"W
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	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
4	45°37'52"N	122°40'37"W	3	45°37'47"N	122°40'32"W
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	45°37'52"N	122°40'32"W	4	45°37'47"N	122°40'37"W
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude



Figure 1: U.S. Geological Survey Topographic Quadrangle map

1	<u>45°37'52"N</u>	<u>122°40'37"W</u>	3	<u>45°37'47"N</u>	<u>122°40'32"W</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	<u>45°37'52"N</u>	<u>122°40'32"W</u>	4	<u>45°37'47"N</u>	<u>122°40'37"W</u>
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State

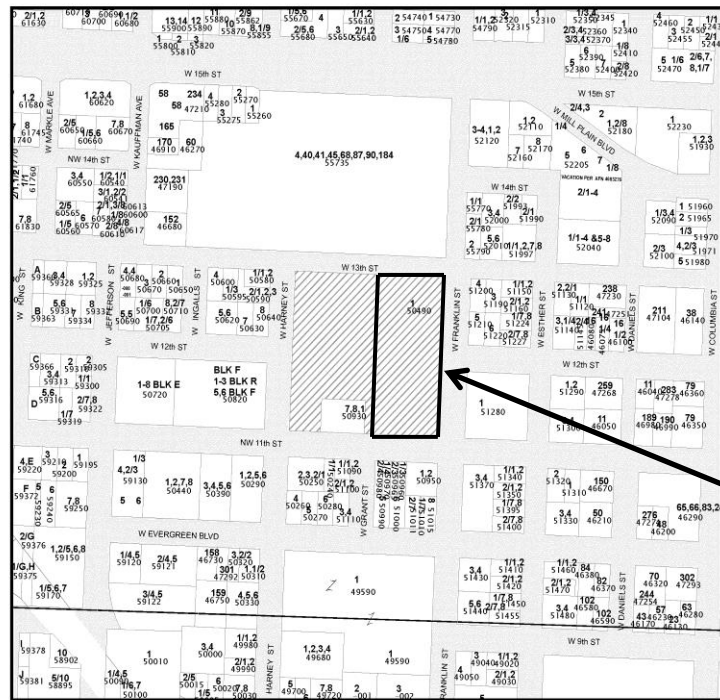


Figure 2: Clark County Assessor's Map – Nominated parcel indicated with hatch, nomination boundaries outlined in black.

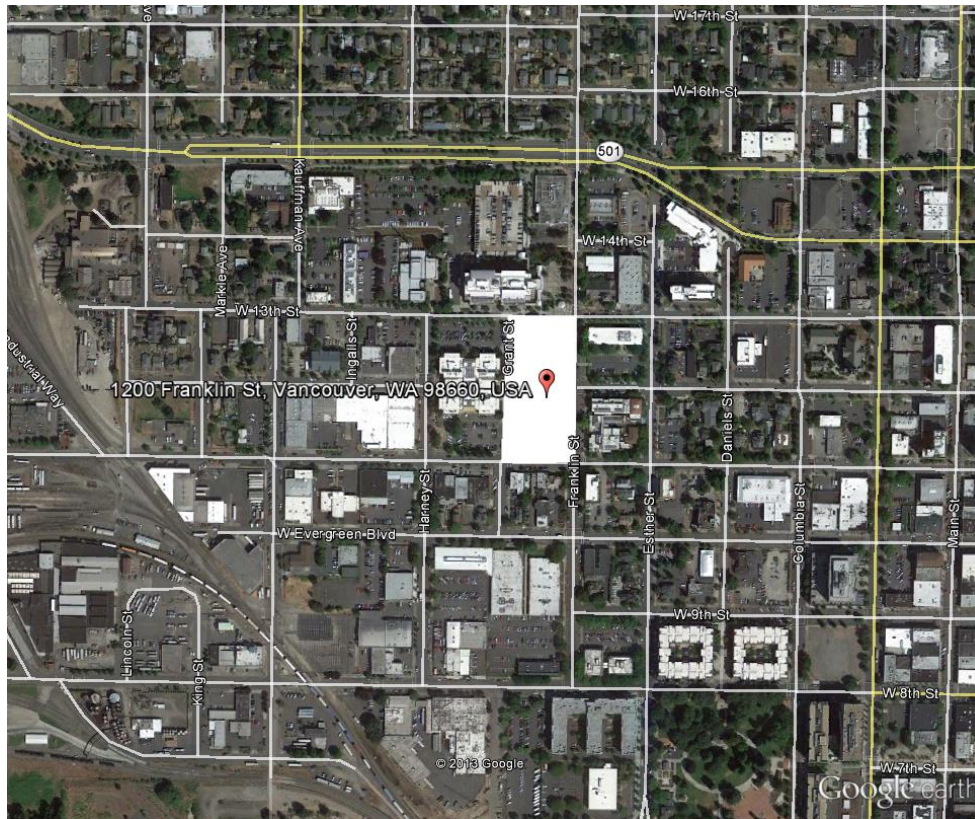


Figure 3: Google Earth View of courthouse parcel with nominated property highlighted in white.



**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State

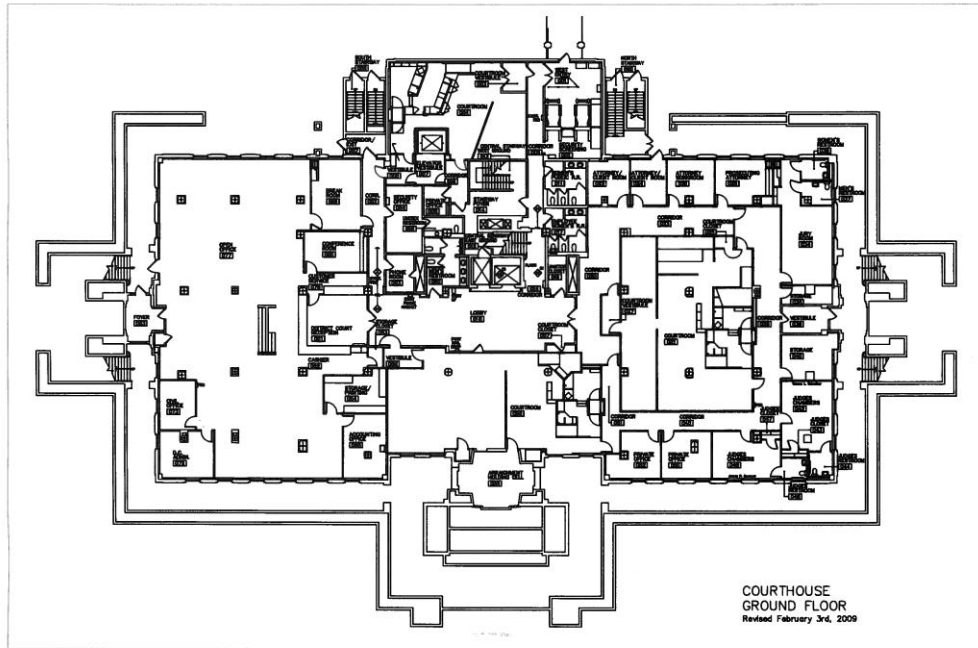


Figure 4: Courthouse Floor Plan – Ground Floor

COURTHOUSE  
GROUND FLOOR

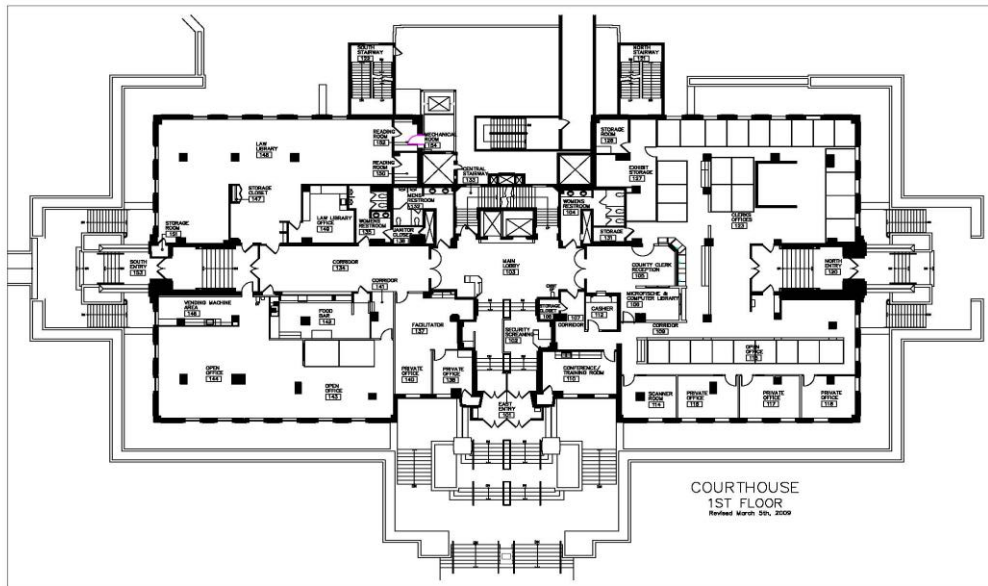


Figure 5: Courthouse Floor Plan – First Floor

COURTHOUSE  
FIRST FLOOR

**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State

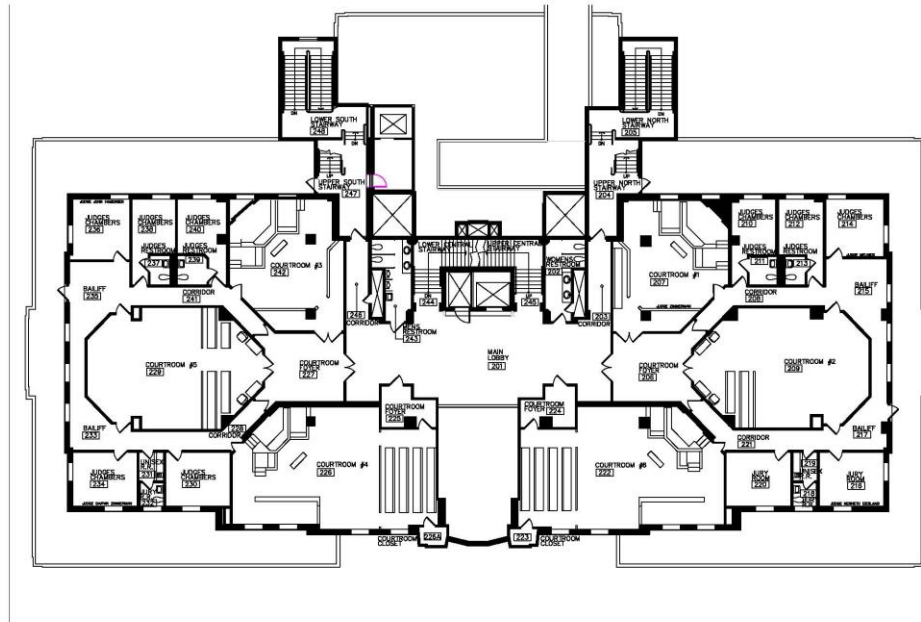


Figure 6: Courthouse Floor Plan – Second Floor

COURTHOUSE  
SECOND FLOOR

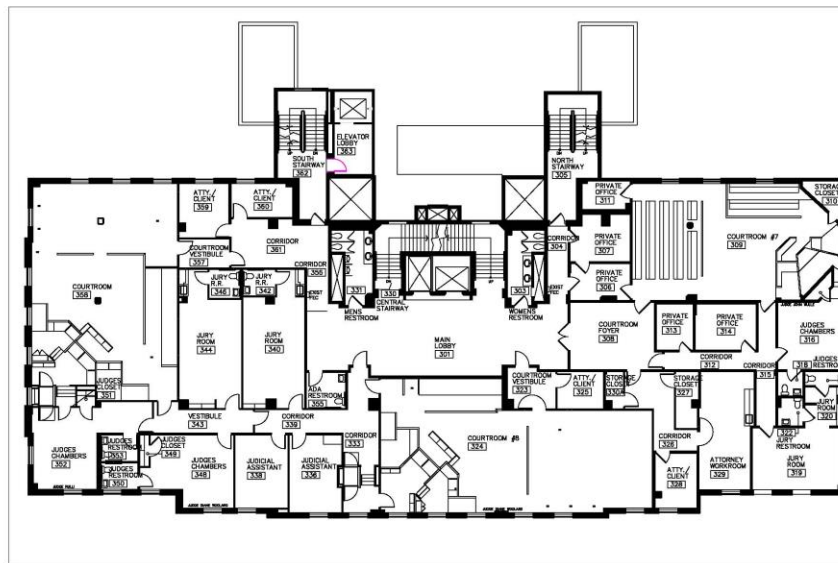


Figure 7: Courthouse Floor Plan – Third Floor

COURTHOUSE  
THIRD FLOOR

**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State

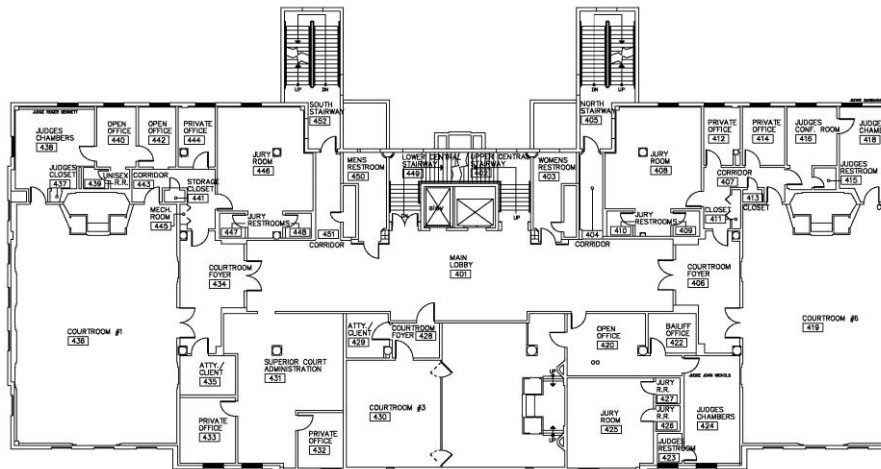


Figure 8: Courthouse Floor Plan – Fourth Floor

COURTHOUS  
FOURTH FLOOR

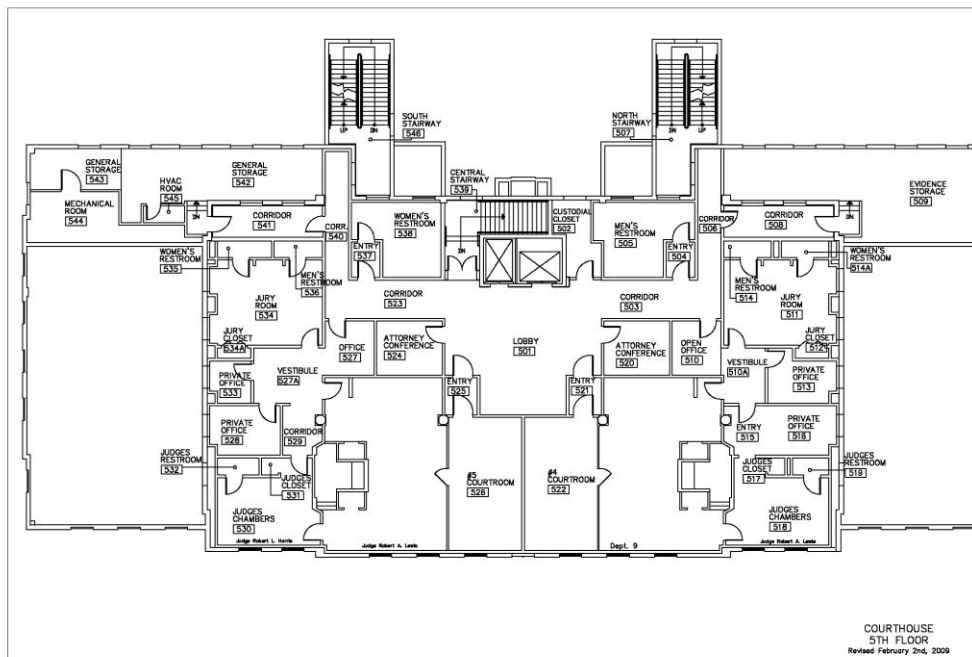


Figure 9: Courthouse Floor Plan – Fifth Floor

COURTHOUS  
FIFTH FLOOR

**Clark County Courthouse**  
Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**  
County and State

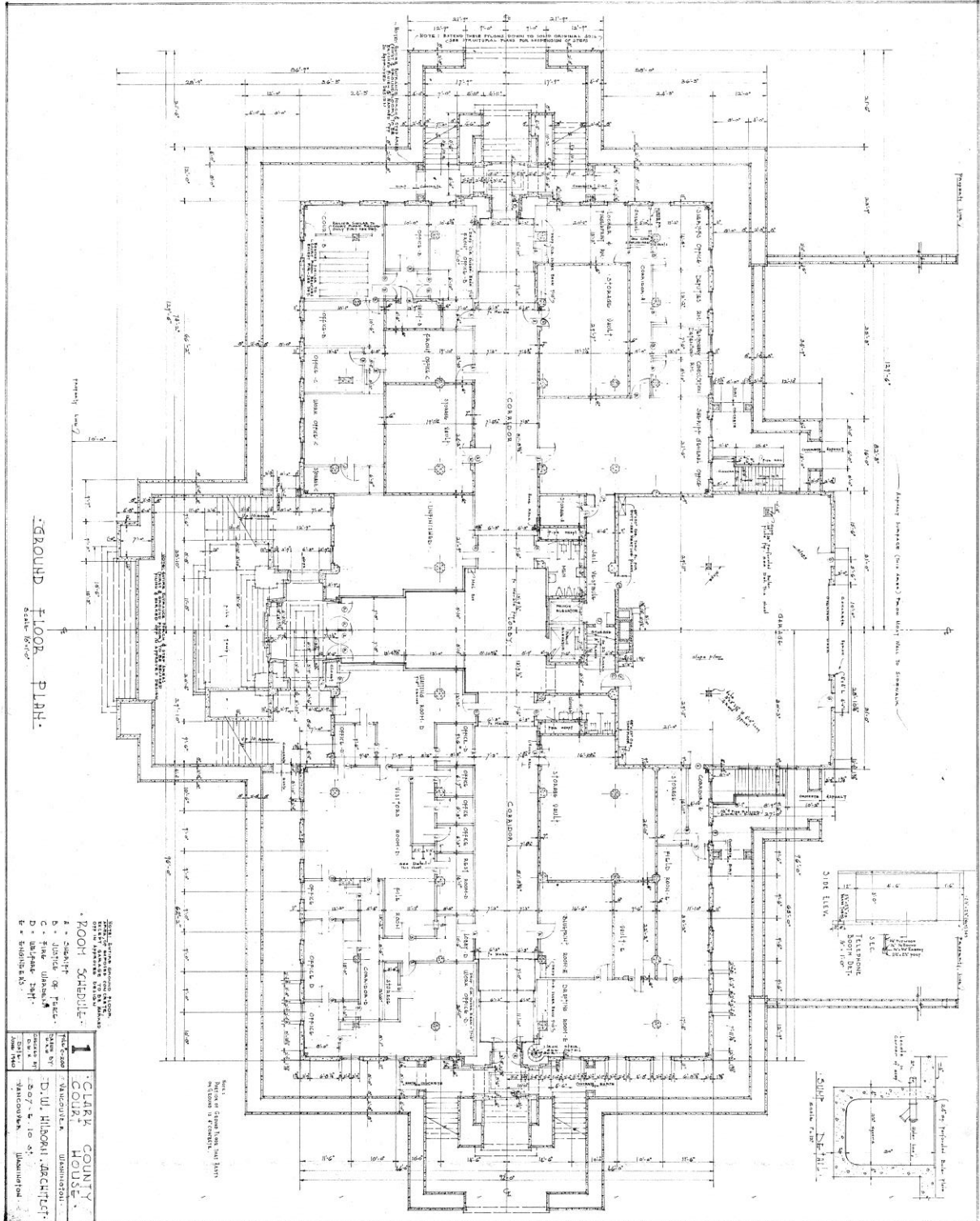


Figure 10: Circa 1940 Day Walter Hilborn Courthouse Floor Plan Drawing – Ground Floor



**Clark County Courthouse**  
 Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**  
 County and State

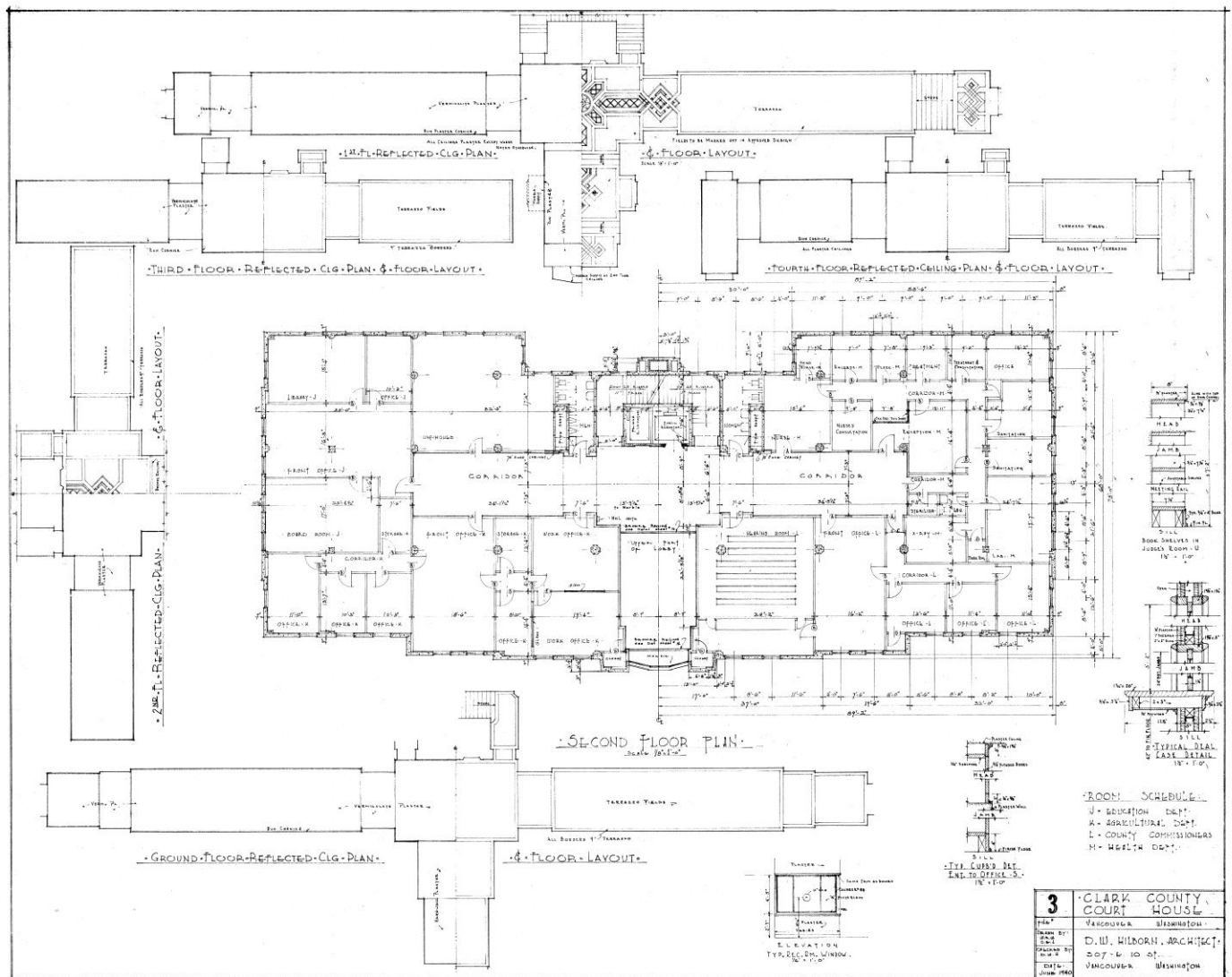


Figure 12: Courthouse Floor Plan Drawing – Second Floor



**Clark County Courthouse**  
 Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**  
 County and State

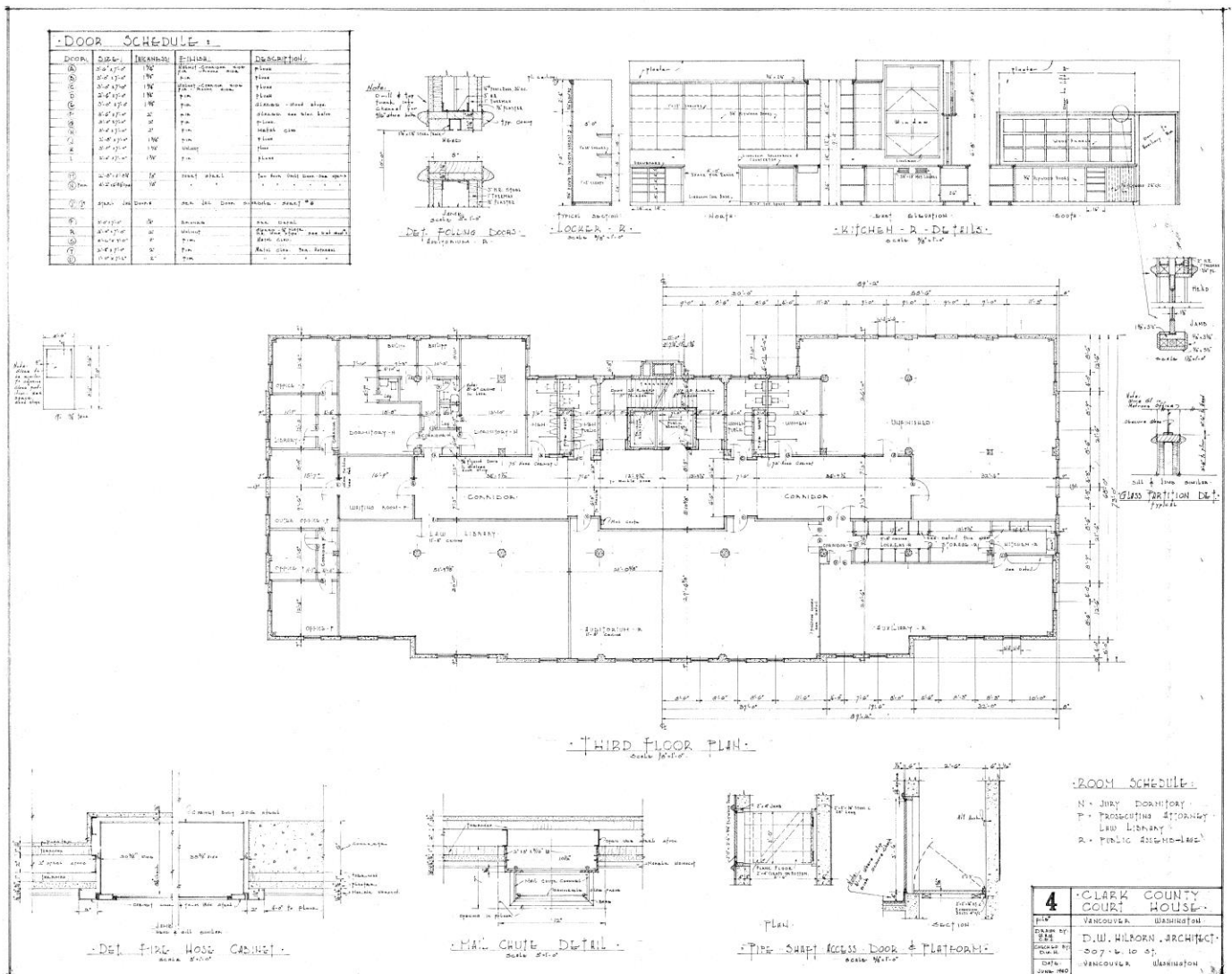


Figure 13: Courthouse Floor Plan Drawing – Third Floor

**Clark County Courthouse**  
 Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**  
 County and State

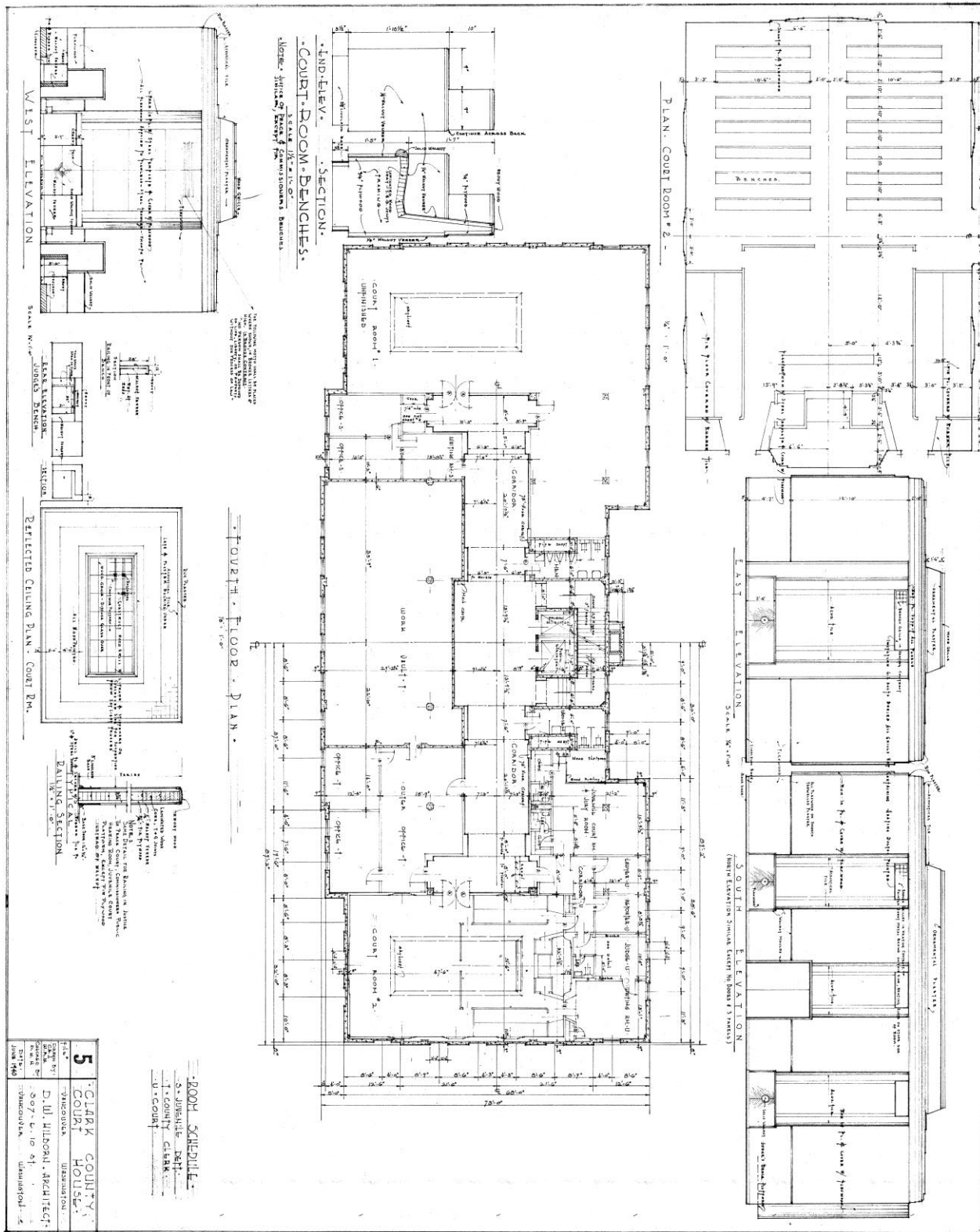


Figure 14: Courthouse Floor Plan Drawing – Fourth Floor & Courtroom details

**Clark County Courthouse**  
 Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**  
 County and State

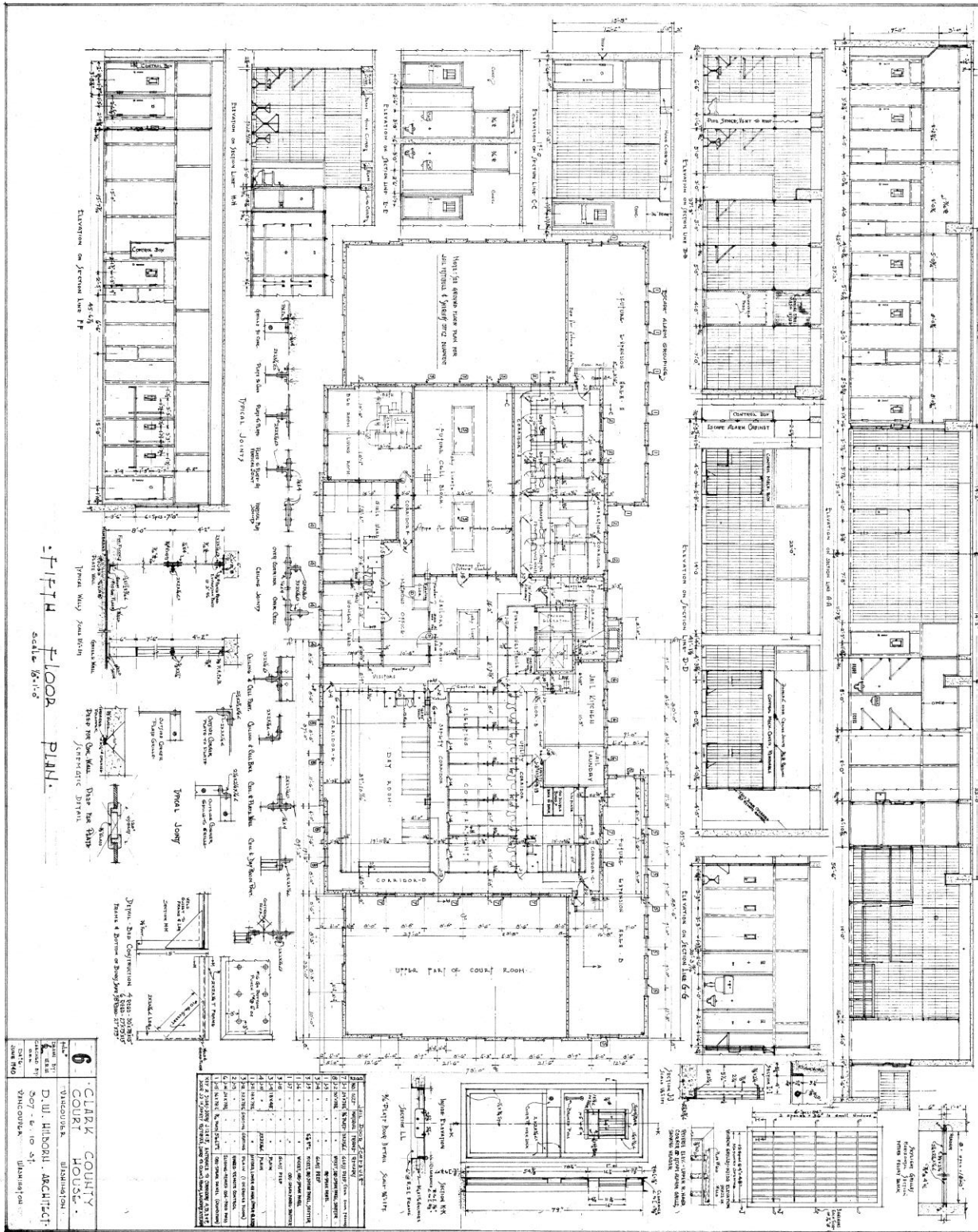


Figure 15: Courthouse Floor Plan Drawing – Fifth Floor & Jail details

**Clark County Courthouse**  
 Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**  
 County and State

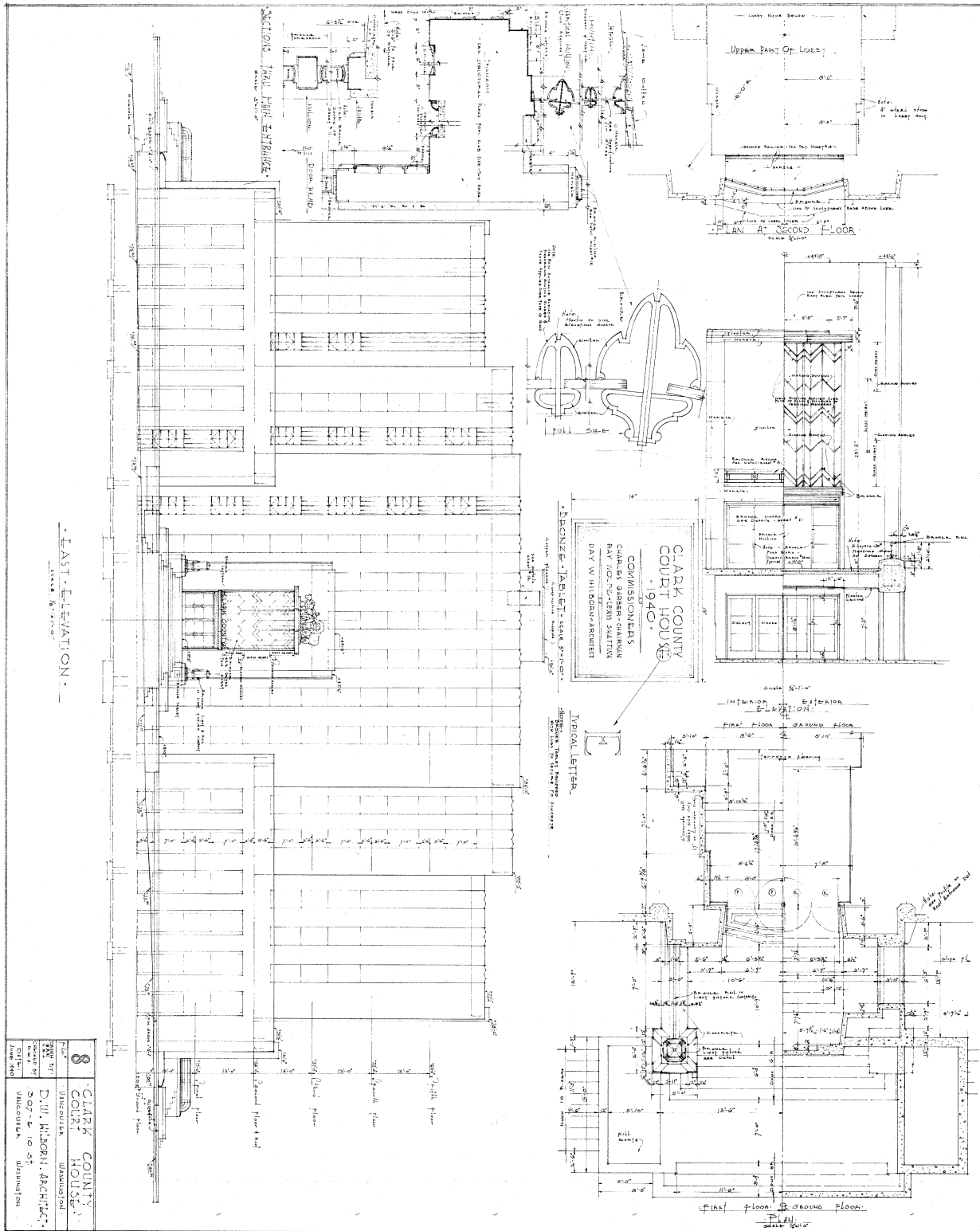


Figure 16: Courthouse Elevation Drawing – East Elevation (front) with design details

**Clark County Courthouse**  
 Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**  
 County and State

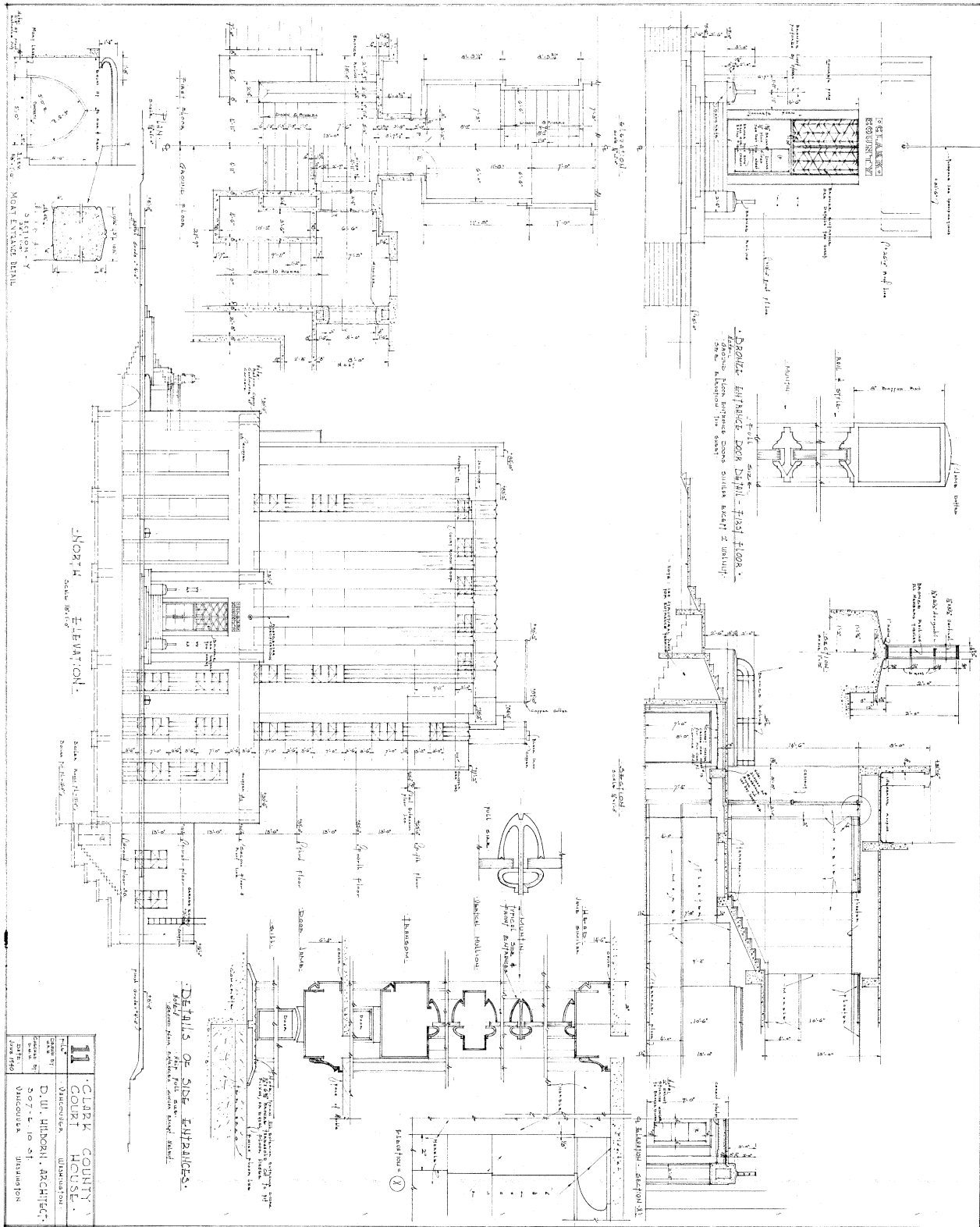


Figure 17: Courthouse Elevation Drawing – North Elevation



**Clark County Courthouse**  
 Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**  
 County and State

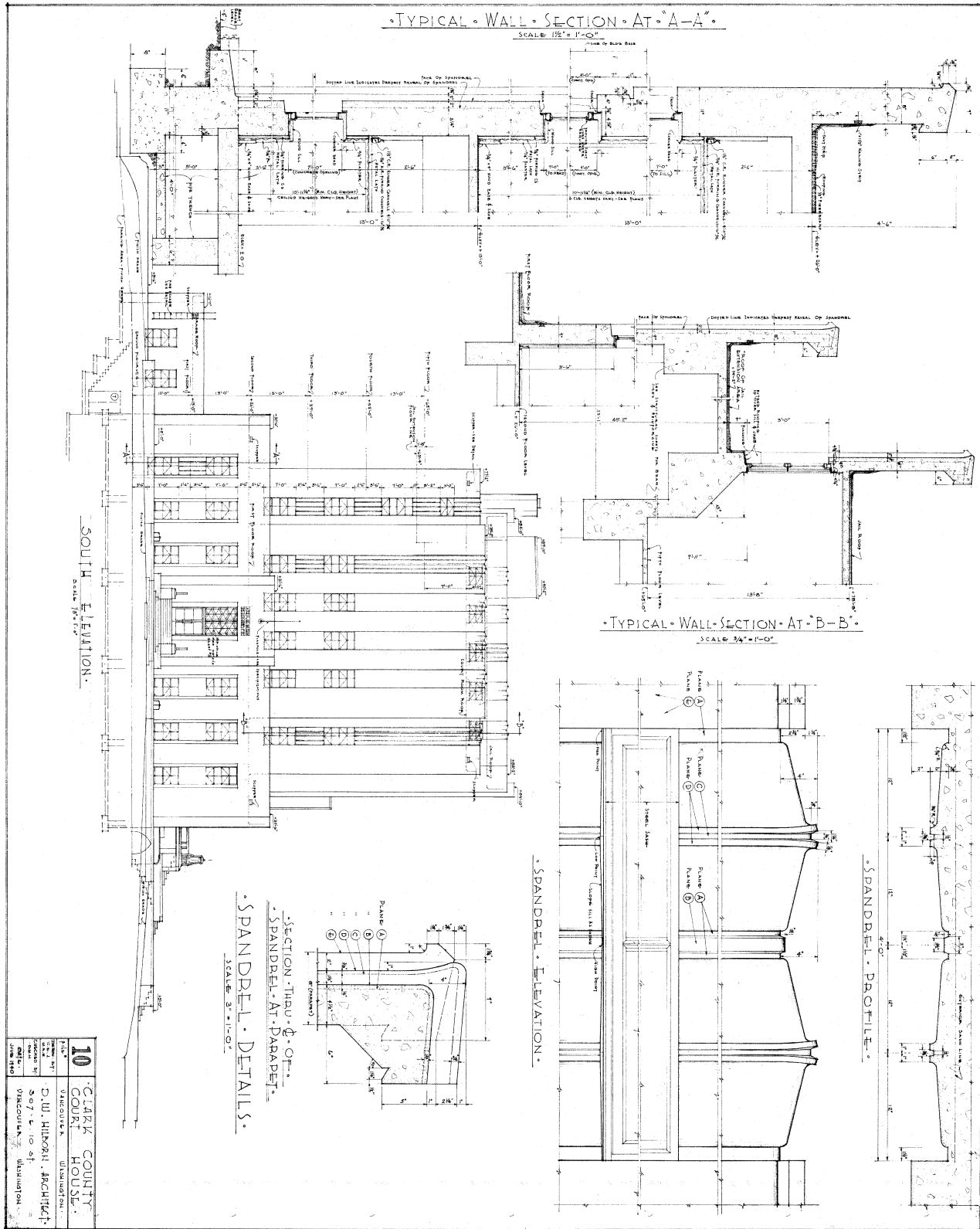


Figure 19: Courthouse Elevation Drawing – South Elevation with spandrel details



**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State

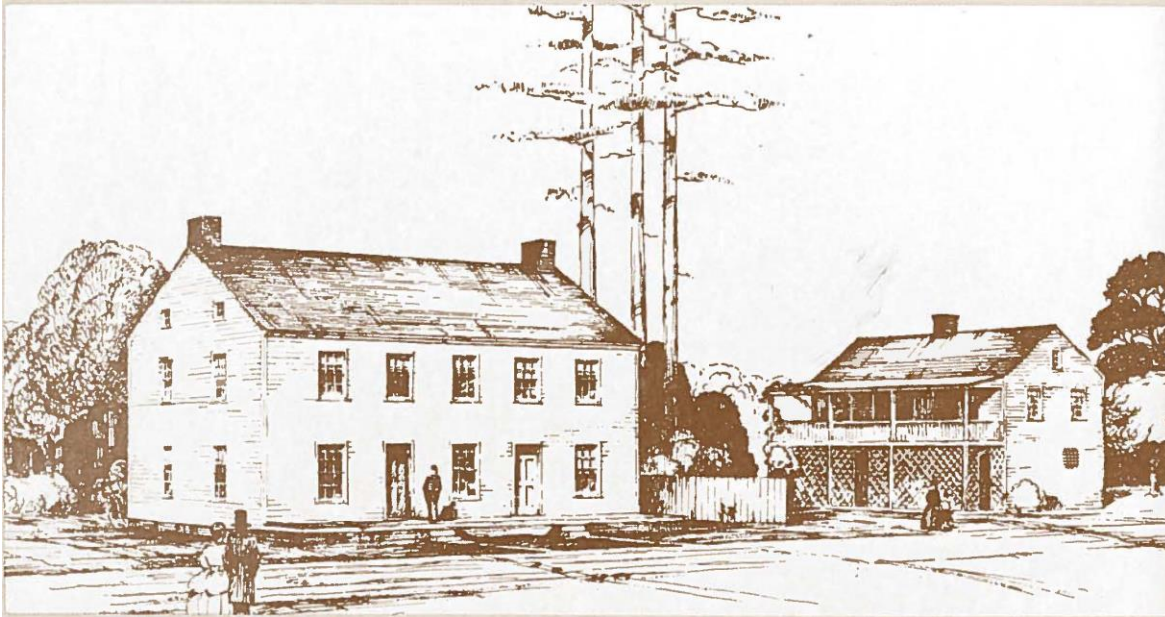


Figure 20: First Clark County Courthouse and Jail, October 1855- October 1883.  
1944 Artist sketch of how the county's first courthouse probably looked. It was located at Ninth and Reserve streets.  
Illustration was hung in the county commissioner's room in the present courthouse in 1944.



**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State

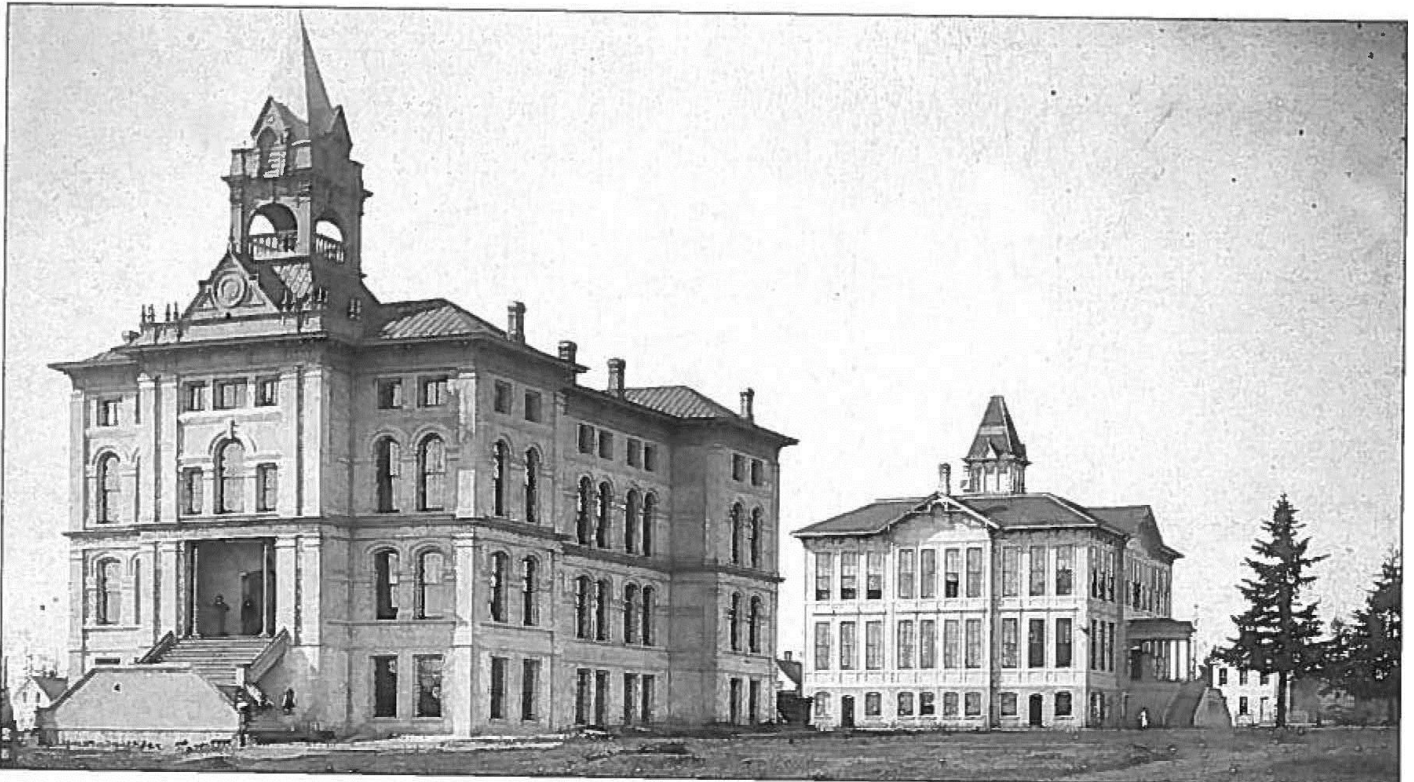


Figure 21: Second Clark County Courthouse, built in 1882 and destroyed by fire in 1890. Behind the courthouse is the Central School which was purchased and demolished by the county in preparation for the present day courthouse. – Photo courtesy of *The Columbian*.

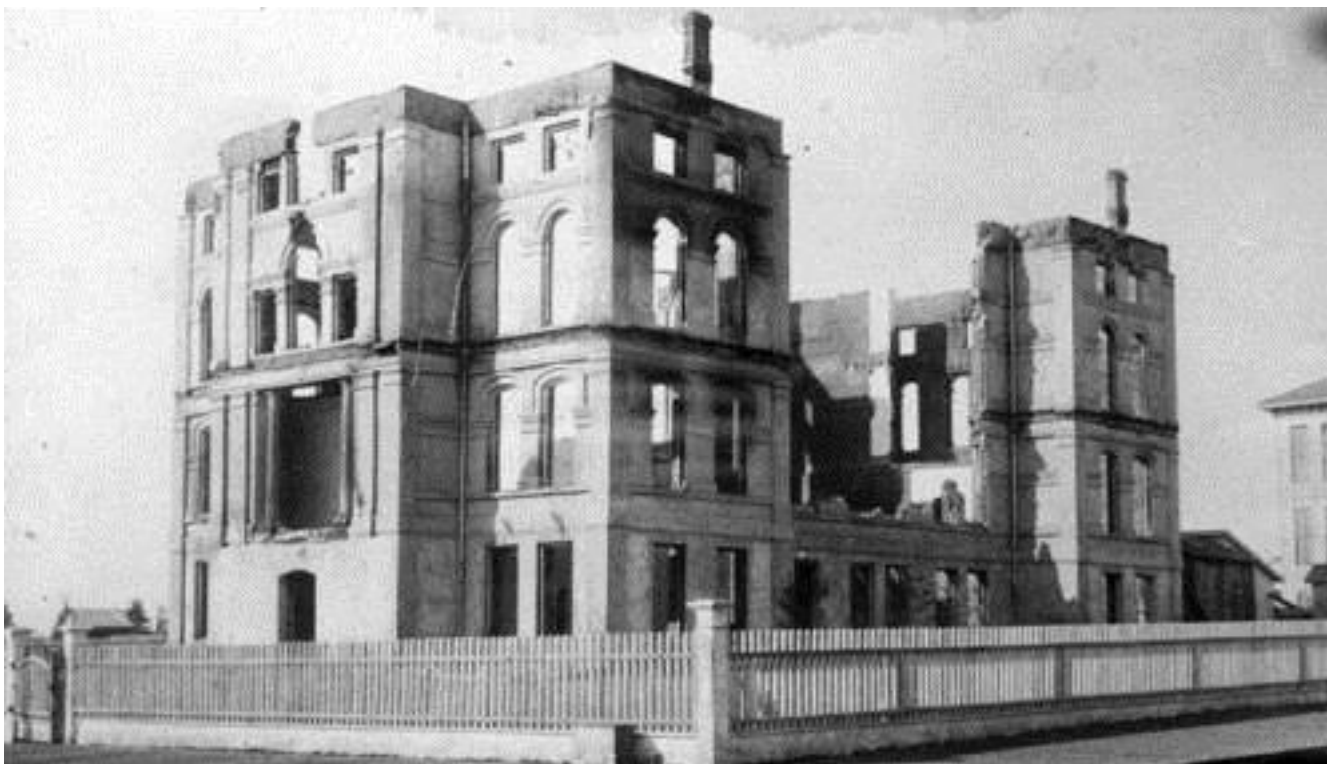


Figure 22: Image of burned out second Clark County Courthouse built in 1882 . Destroyed by fire in 1890.

**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State

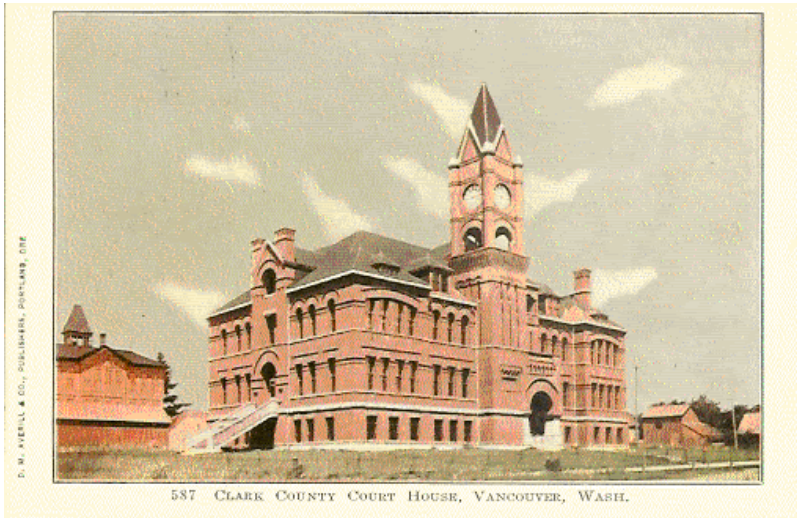


Figure 23: Postcards of third Clark County Courthouse, built in 1892.



Figure 24: Photograph of third Clark County Courthouse, built in 1892. Willis Richie, Architect  
Photo courtesy of *The Columbian*.



**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State

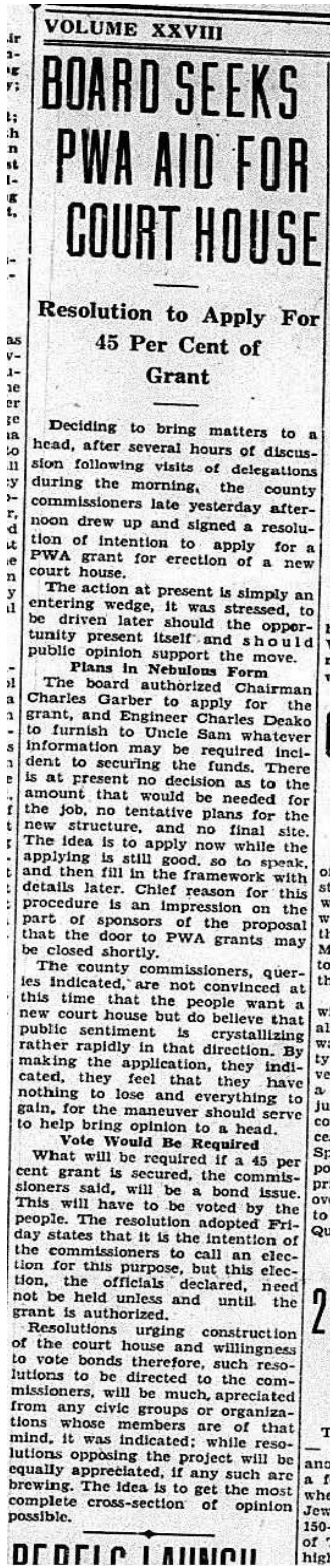


Figure 25: January 16, 1937 Vancouver Columbian article indicating the county applying for the Public Works Administration grant for courthouse.



Figure 26: July 14, 1938 Columbian article notifying of commissioner's approval of Hilborn's stream-line designed county courthouse. PWA grant still possible.

**Clark County Courthouse**  
Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**  
County and State

Page 6 The Columbian, Vancouver, Washington Friday, November 28, 1941

# New Clark Courthouse One of Finest Plants in Northwest

## County Offices All Housed and Room Remains

By Hubert Kuokka

When the new courthouse doors are formally thrown open Saturday afternoon, the county will at last realize a need increasingly felt for the past decade or more—a need for a spacious, fireproof plant for its official business, centrally located, modernly convenient, reflecting the dignity of the county capital, and with room for future expansion. Without doubt it is one of the finest in the entire northwest.

The new building changes the status of the county from that of a tenant with orphaned offices scattered throughout the city to that of a landlord with all his children under the home roof and collecting rent from non-county offices besides.

### First Floor Busy Spot

Finding new quarters in the county capitol are the county welfare office, the justice court, the district attorney's office, the county health department, and the fire warden's office, all county functions. Furthermore, the accounts department of the Columbia National Forest, the farm security administration, and the Red Cross have utilized extra office space included in the building for future expansion.

On the first floor the busiest offices are located, the auditor's office with its marriage license counter, and the treasurer's office. Also on the main floor are the assessor's office, the engineer's office and the farm security administration.

The county commissioner's suite, including a spacious meeting room, accommodating 200 spectators, and private offices, is on the second floor. The county agent's office, the office of the agricultural adjustment administration, the health department, and the school superintendent are located on this floor which overlooks the high vaulted front lobby from a brass railed balcony.

### Engineer on Two Floors

The drafting room of the engineer's office is on the ground floor directly under its main office. A spiral stairway connects the two branches. The sheriff's office, also on the ground floor, has a special entrance through the garage in the rear of the building for use when the main portals of the building are closed. Also on the ground level are the justice court, welfare department, the fire warden's office and the Red Cross.

As far away from the sheriff's office as it could possibly be placed, but in the safest spot in the entire building, is the county jail—on the entire top floor. A private elevator opening only upon the fourth floor, where the courtroom is, connects the sheriff's office with the jail.

### Spare Court Room in Reserve

Two courtrooms were included in the fourth floor plans. One, designed for future use whenever the county should use two superior court judges, will temporarily be used to house a county historical museum. The completed courtroom is one of the most striking rooms in the entire building. The judge's bench, chairs, railings, jury boxes, pews for the audience, and even the walls have been finished in black walnut. The extra jury box was planned for use by the press on any officials attending court sessions. Architect Day Hilborn explained.

The county clerk's office and the juvenile department are also housed on the fourth floor.

The principal feature of the third floor is the assembly room, designed for use by veterans organizations or other public functions. The long room can be divided into two parts by a sound proof curtain, when two separate meetings are being held simultaneously, and a kitchen at one end can be utilized for preparing refreshments at various functions.

### Jury Dormitories Included

Other offices on the third floor are the jury dormitory, the prosecuting attorney's office, the law library, relaxation rooms for county personnel, and the offices of the Columbia national forest.

It took almost half as long to plan the building and to draw up working drawings as it did later to construct the building. The

## Simplicity of Design Enhances Beauty of Clark County's Capitol



## 'Guests' Stay Put in New County Jail

The new jail on the top floor of the courthouse is a far cry from the dark, hot, and noisy basement of therickety old building, where escapes and attempted escapes have been so numerous that even the sheriff's office has lost count.

Whereas with the old jail the deputies once had to keep men welding as fast as the padlocks saved their way out of the "tank," they now have the bad boys "sailed away" on the top floor of the courthouse with a nice six-story drop to the ground from the windows and escape alarms, and numerous locked doors between them and freedom.

### Space Ample

The new jail will accommodate 70 prisoners and an unutilized portion can be utilized for housing an equal number more if the present quarters become overcrowded. C. M. Clegh, manager of the jail-building concern, explained today.

Highlights of the new post-house-battle are escape alarms at all windows, grills and lights and doors. The alarm operates automatically when a bar is cut. A remote control system makes it possible for one person to open or close or to lock with open or closed any door in the 40-man felon block or the door room without exposing himself to the prisoners.

Another safety precaution in the visiting panel through which prisoners can talk to their friends, although separated by inch-thick bullet-proof glass, a complicated system of baffles in the walls will permit sound to travel through but will not permit anything to be passed from visitor to prisoner. And there can be no tele-sets. It takes a loud voice to penetrate the baffles.

### Special Features Include

Other features of the jail are special cells for detaining juveniles, a solitary confinement cell, a padded observation ward, a hospital cell, an eight-man trustee dormitory, women's ward and a living suite for the cook.

## Modern Phone Service Used

It's simple enough when you telephone the courthouse, giving the number—2000—you hear a pleasant voice say, "Courthouse," and next you're connected with the desired office.

Back of that elementary

## Elevator? Nix! Engineer Has Own Stairway

There's a nautical touch to the office of County Engineer Charles Deako that is reminiscent of a companionway deep in the engineroom of a navy destroyer.

When Deako wants to go from his office, on the first floor of the courthouse, to the drafting rooms, one level below on the ground floor, he doesn't bother with the elevator. Instead, he walks to the corner, squeezes into a narrow opening and descends 17 steps on a circular stairway.

It's the only stairway of its kind in the courthouse and was installed to draw Deako's separated quarters closer together.

## Woodwork Job Especially Fine

Depending on mass and proportion for its dignity and beauty Clark county's new courthouse

**Linoleum and Rubber Tile**  
for the New  
**Clark County Courthouse**  
by  
**Artcraft**  
**Linoleum and Shade Co.**  
839 S. W. Stark St. Portland, Oregon

**All Construction Lumber**

Figure 27: November 18, 1941 Columbian articles on the new Clark County Courthouse.

**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State



Figure 28: 1941 Postcard image of Clark County Courthouse, c. 1943.  
Photo taken from the southeast corner on Franklin Street.



Figure 29: 1941 Postcard image of Clark County Courthouse – north side of building.



**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State



Figure 30: Circa 1941 color image of Clark County Courthouse – showing it painted white -south west corner side of building.



A Thing of Beauty and a Monument Forever

Figure 31: Clark County Courthouse used for the November 29, 1941 Dedication Booklet.

**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State

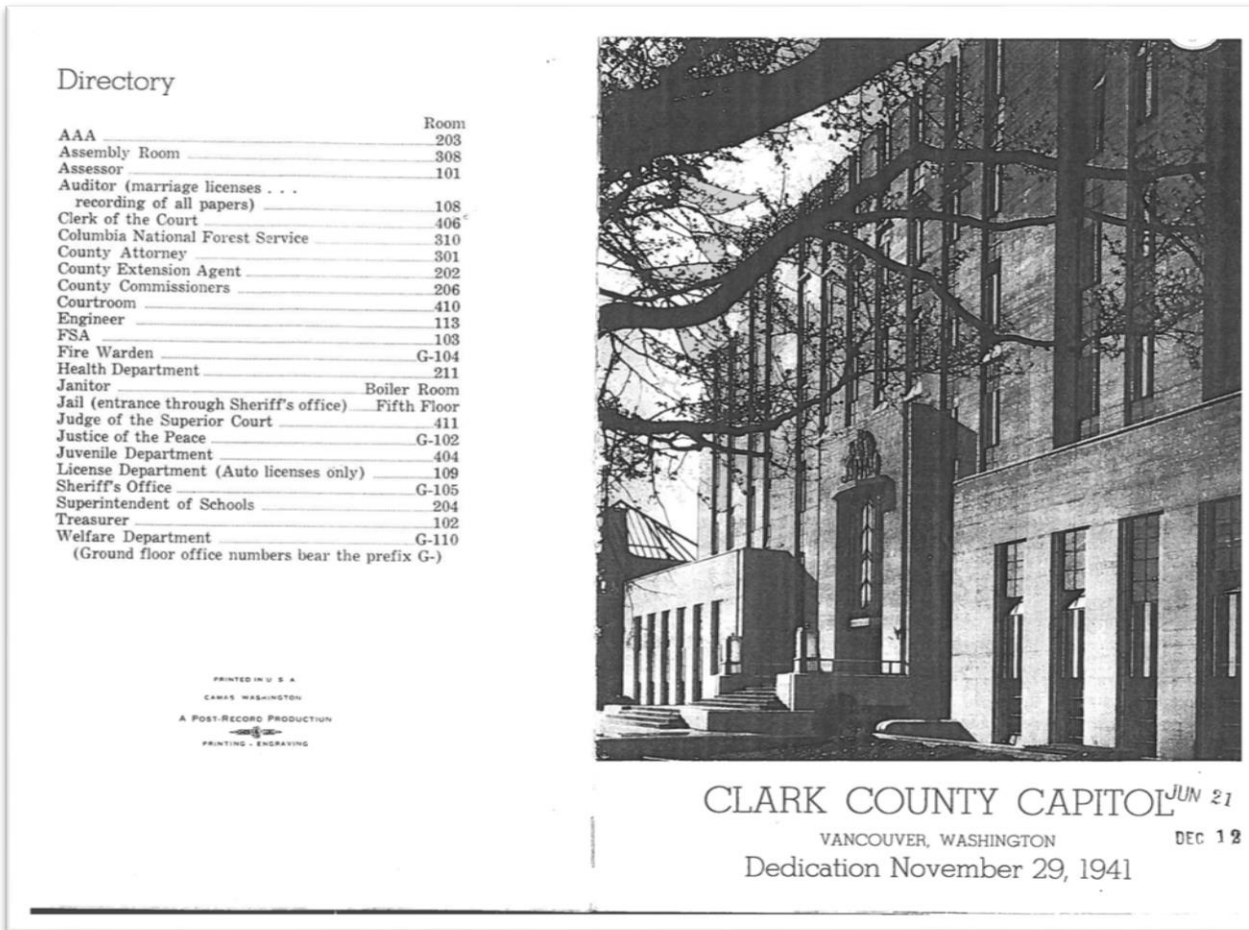


Figure 32: November 29, 1941 Dedication Booklet - Cover.

DAY W. HILBORN, who designed and supervised construction of the county's new capitol. Three years of his life are built into its rugged walls.



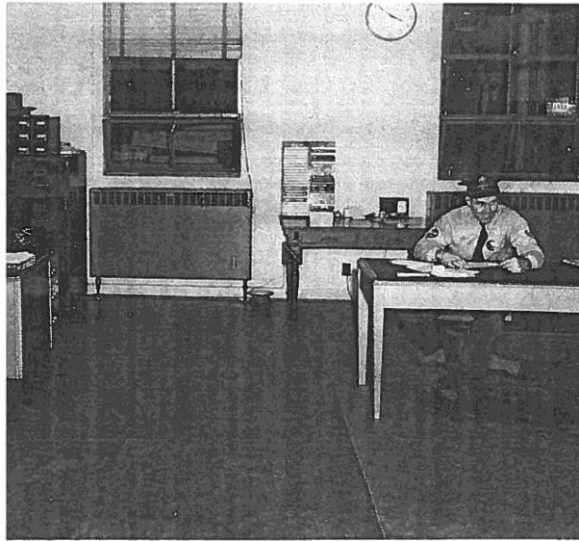
Figure 33: Architect – Day Walter Hilborn. Photograph and caption from Dedication Booklet

**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State



Resplendent in its new steel furniture the sheriff's office affords heretofore unknown elbow room for installation of fingerprint files and accumulative criminal records. The picture shows Chief Deputy R. E. Brady, left, and Deputy Clarence McKay.

Figure 34: Sheriff's office in new county courthouse. Photograph and caption from Dedication Booklet.

Ample room, abundant light and ventilation for efficient conduct of county business are evident in this picture of the treasurer's office.



Figure 35: Treasurer's office in new county courthouse. Photograph and caption from Dedication Booklet.



**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State



The Clerk's office on the fourth floor is adjacent to the courtroom. This picture plainly shows that the whole room is a vault with steel shutters at the windows which close automatically in case of fire. Separate rooms in the Clerk's suite are provided for naturalization hearings.

Figure 36: Clerk's office in new county courthouse. Photograph and caption from Dedication Booklet.

**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

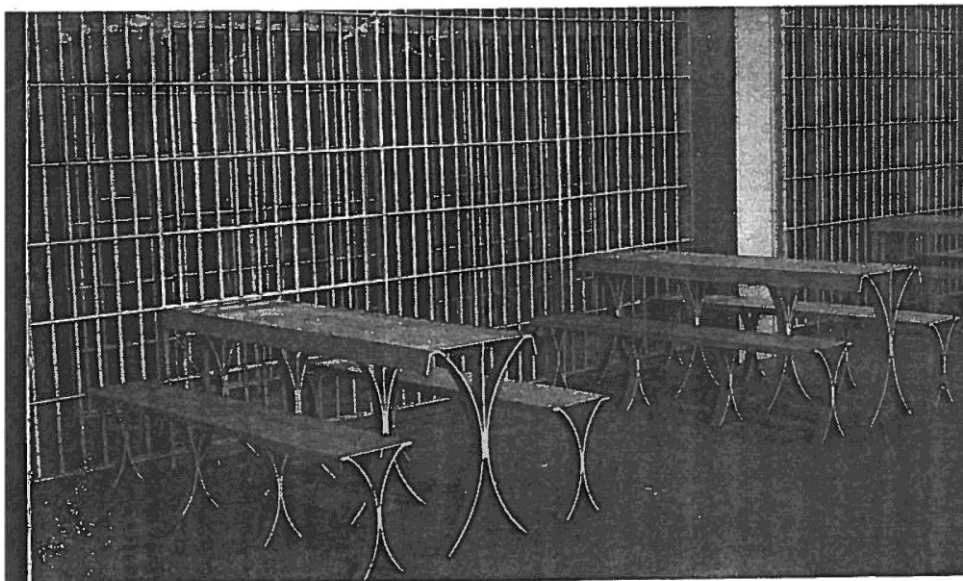
**Clark County, WA**

County and State



The new bastille is virtually a "one man jail". Sheriff Leland Morrow here shows how the cell doors in the main cell block can be operated by remote control while prisoners are transferred "untouched by human hands." The cells are protected behind the steel walls in background.

Figure 37: Sheriff Leland Morrow in the jail on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor in new county courthouse. Photograph and caption from Dedication Booklet.



Light, clean, and airy this day room gives prisoners in the county's new jail a wholesome place to spend their time during the day. They are locked in separate cells at night.

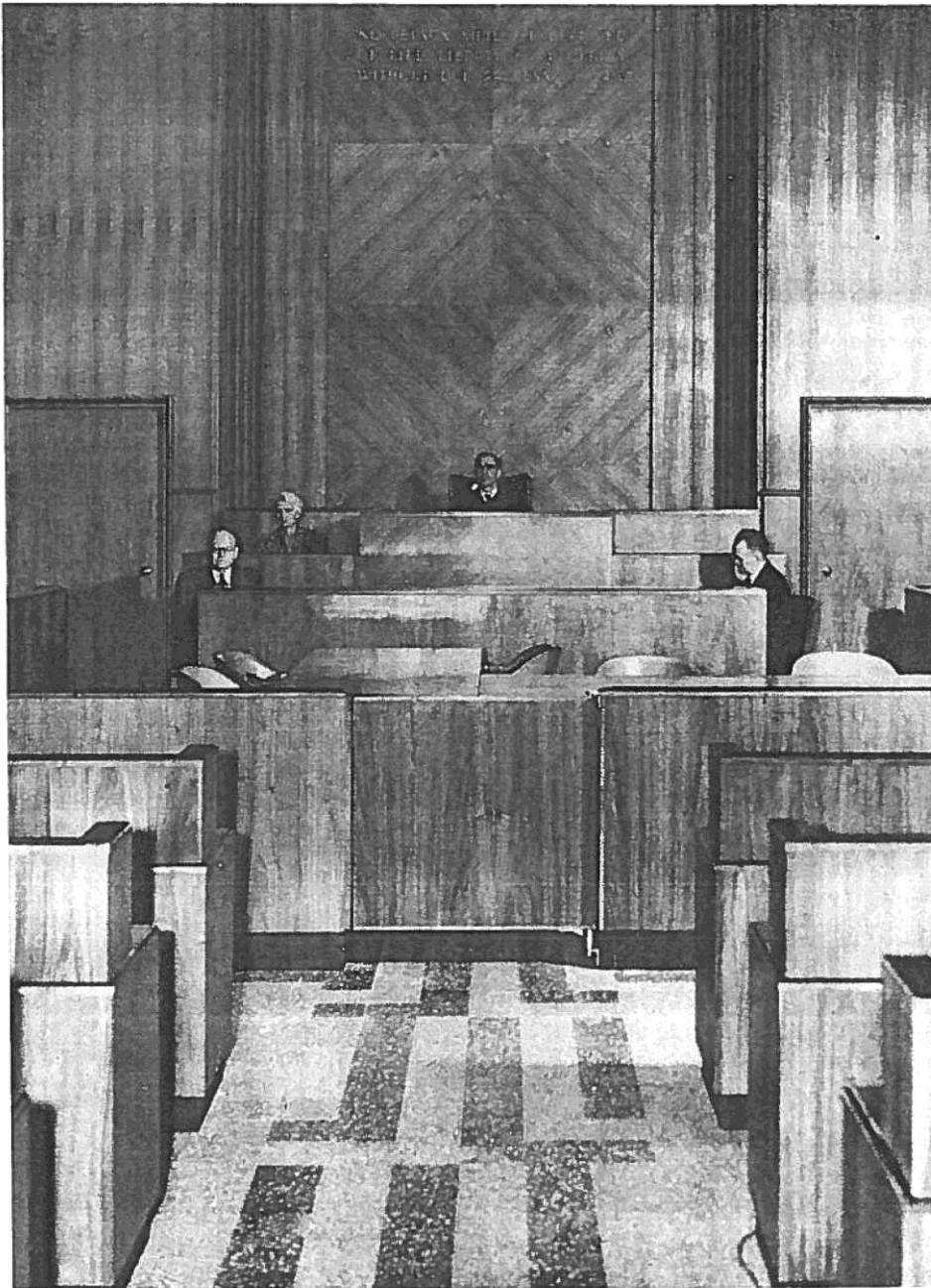
Figure 38: Jail's day room in new county courthouse. Photograph and caption from Dedication Booklet.

**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State



First picture ever taken of the Superior Court in session: Left to right: the bailiff, John Ernst; the clerk, Eva Burgett; the judge, Charles W. Hall; the reporter, Ira Holcomb.

Figure 39: Superior Courtroom #2. First picture ever taken of the Superior Court in session. Photograph and caption from Dedication Booklet.

**Clark County Courthouse**

Name of Property

**Clark County, WA**

County and State

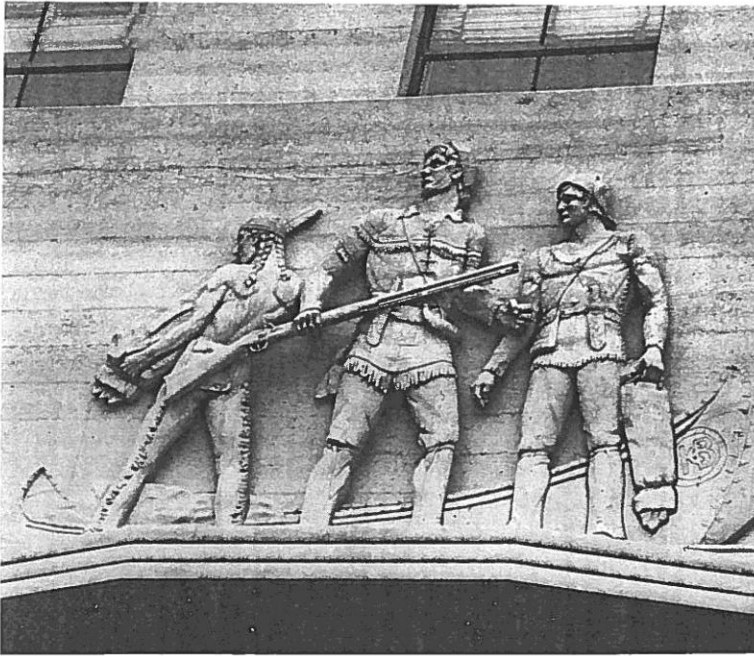


Figure 40: Buckskin Brigade bas-relief sculpture.  
Photograph from Dedication Booklet.

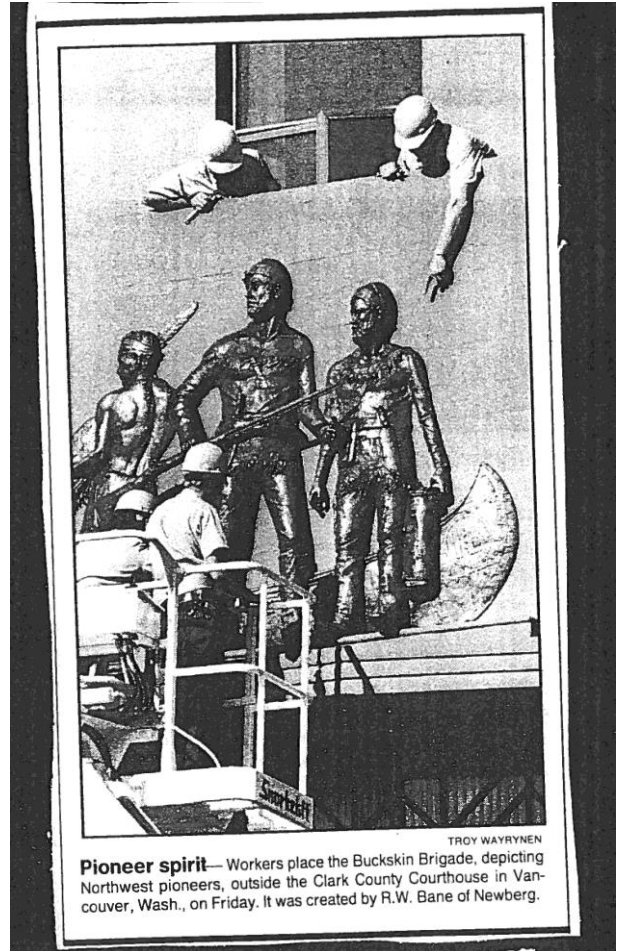


Figure 41: 1990 photograph of the recreated Buckskin Brigade bronze sculpture. Photograph from *The Oregonian*, Sept 1, 1990.