

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY
NOMINATION FORM

SEP 18 1981

OCT 30 1981

Continuation Sheet Item Number Page

Name Historic-Dillon County Courthouse Location-1303 West Main Street, Dillon
Common Classification - building

Owner- Dillon County
c/o County Administrator
P.O. Drawer 431
Dillon, S. C. 29536

Representation in Existing Surveys: Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina, 1981

Description: Dillon County Courthouse was built in 1911. William Augustus Edwards, A.I.A., was the architect; J.A. Jones was the contractor.

The courthouse is a monumental brick and stone Neoclassical building with a central colossal Ionic portico in antis and two flanking wings. The composition of the building reflects its cross-axis plan, with central, axial entrances on all four elevations, and the offices in the four quadrants defined by the two axial halls. The elevations are unified by the discipline of the Ionic portico, which imposes its order on all elements of each elevation.

The portico is executed in stone. Four massive, unfluted Ionic columns with pilaster responds feature Scamozzi Ionic capitals with festoons suspended from the volutes. The columns support a major entablature, also executed in stone. This entablature consists of an architrave, composed of three quirked fascias and a leaf-and-tongue cyma reversa;*

Significance

Dillon County Courthouse is the first and only courthouse to serve Dillon County, which was formed by an act of the state legislature 5 February 1910 from the upper portion of Marion County.¹ A building committee of eleven citizens appointed in the act selected the site, which was donated by the Dillon family, who also contributed \$25,000 to the building fund.² The committee also arranged for a bond issue to raise additional financing for construction.³ The design of Edwards was chosen for the courthouse which, when completed at a cost of \$100,000, had every modern convenience including steam heat and and individually designed offices with fireproof vaults.⁴ **

Acreage 2.1

Verbal Boundary Description The boundary of the Dillon County Courthouse nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying Dillon County Tax Map #59-10, drawn at a scale of 100 feet to 1 inch. The boundary includes the courthouse and its encompassing landscaped block.

UTM Reference Point 17/649290/3809510

Other Information

*a plain frieze; and a cornice, composed of an egg-and-dart ovolo, a dentil course, a cyma reversa, a course of plain modillion blocks with a cavetto course at their heads, a soffit and corona, a small cyma reversa, and a crowning cavetto. This entablature is carried, in its entirety, around the building.

The portico is based on a stone basement story, which girds the entire building. The walls above the basement are of brick with every sixth brick course recessed to simulate rustication. The recessed courses are also the bonding courses, with alternating headers and stretchers; this brick bond, common in the Edwards courthouses, is described as American Flemish bond. The mortar joints are raked.

The facade, behind the portico, is five bays, with a central double door framed by a stone surround with a bracketed architrave supporting a balustraded balcony on the second floor. The windows of the first floor also feature stone surrounds with crossetted architraves, stone tablets, and a crowning cornice. The windows of the second floor have round-arched heads. The two flanking bays of the facade have stone Scamozzi pilasters framing a recess, which includes the windows of the first and second story. The first story windows have crossetted stone architraves, which support voluted tablets, and pedimented cornices. The second story windows are crowned with flat brick arches with stone key and terminal voussoirs.

A tall attic story rises above the main entablature. This attic story is of brick over the end bays of the facade, and of stone over the portico. Stone escutcheons are located over the ends of the portico, while the central stone section is engraved "DILLON COUNTY COURTHOUSE." A second entablature is located above the attic story; this entablature is composed of an architrave with a tripartite fascia and a cyma reversa; a plain frieze; and a cornice with a cyma reversa, a soffit and corona, a fillet, and a crowning ovolo. A brick and stone parapet rises above this second entablature. Centered on the parapet above the portico is a stone escutcheon, framed by stone fasces and tomes inscribed "LAW" and "JUSTICE." The escutcheon bears the date 1911. A blindfolded female figure looms over the escutcheon. Heraldic lions' heads of stone flank this central composition in the parapet.

The side elevations of the Dillon County Courthouse are three bays wide and feature the same basement, major entablature, secondary entablature, and parapet of the facade. The central entrances of the side elevations are framed by two-story stone Scamozzi pilasters. The entrances have stone surrounds with console brackets supporting the architraves and volute-framed tablets located beneath and within the architraves. Volute-flanked heraldic escutcheons are located above the entrances. The windows of the central second story bays above the entrances are enclosed by round stone arches. The side bays of each side elevation repeat the fenestration of the side bays of the facade, except for the absence of the enframing pilasters.

The rear elevation has a recessed central five-bay section, opening onto a balustraded porch, with the first-floor windows topped by brick soldier courses and the second-story windows topped by semicircular brick arches. The central door on the first floor has a simple stone surround. The flanking pavilions are two bays, with the fenestration of the side bays of the side elevations repeated.

The interior of the Dillon County Courthouse has a cross-axis plan, with the offices on the first floor located in the corner quadrants defined by the two halls. The floors of the courthouse are terrazzo, while the walls have marble wainscoting. The county treasurer's office retains its original wooden and metal cages. The stairways, at either end of the longitudinal cross-axis, have iron balustrades and marble treads.

The courtroom is located on the second floor, along the longitudinal axis. The room is enriched by fluted Scamozzi pilasters along all walls, which feature festoons suspended from their volutes. An arcade, behind the pilasters, incorporates the arched windows of the facade and rear elevation. A wooden tabernacle frame, behind the judge's seat, is in triumphal-arch form. Fluted Scamozzi columns, of dark wood, support an entablature and pediment, and enframe an arch, which bears in its tympanum an allegorical sculpture, consisting of an open book laid over a sword with framing fasces and an olive-branch backdrop. The courtroom has been altered by the installation of a suspended tile ceiling, which encroaches upon the interior cornice.

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**National Register of Historic Places
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SEP 18 1981

OCT 30 1981

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Dillon County Courthouse occupies a large city block in Dillon. A monument to J. W. Dillon, a fountain, and numerous oak trees are located on the grounds. The commercial and governmental buildings of Dillon are located on adjacent blocks.

** Dillon County Courthouse is the most elaborate of the courthouses designed by W. A. Edwards. The composition of the courthouse follows a basic Edwards pattern—a colossal portico defining the entrance and primary axis, with the scale and discipline of the portico carried through the remainder of the building; a cross-axis plan, with the courtroom on the second floor; and monumental siting on an isolated block. Within this format, Edwards was able to expand upon his basic theme of symbolic authority expressed in architecture, and to create an exceptionally rich building. The order chosen for the building is a luxurious Ionic, with the Scamozzi capitals enriched with festoons. Carved stone ornament is used throughout the building, in clear contrast with the red brick of the walls. Heraldic devices and tabernacle frames embellish the facade. The parapet is adorned with multiple symbols of government, all in carved stone: lions' heads, fasces, tomes inscribed "LAW" and "JUSTICE," and a blindfolded female figure. The courtroom furthers this architectural symbolism: the walls are lined with fluted Ionic pilasters, which also have festoons suspended from their volutes. The tabernacle frame behind the judge's seat is composed as a triumphal arch, with the tympanum of the arch embellished with an allegorical sculpture. This tympanum repeats the theme of law and justice established by the parapet sculpture; a sword (of justice) and a book (of law) are framed with fasces (of authority) on a background of olive branches (of peace.)

¹Durwood T. Stokes, History of Dillon County, South Carolina (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1978), p. 444; Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina (Columbia, S.C.: Gonzales and Bryan, 1910, p. 863.

²Stokes, pp. 444, 189-191.

³Ibid. , pp. 189-191; Acts and Joint Resolutions, p. 960.

⁴Ibid.