

FINAL

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Johnson County Courthouse Square 081 - 222 - 21626
and/or common

2. Location

street & number Court House Square not for publication
city, town Franklin vicinity of congressional district 6th
state Indiana code 018 county Johnson code 081

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Board of County Commissioners of Johnson County
street & number County Court House
city, town Franklin vicinity of state Indiana 46131

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Recorders Office
street & number County Court House
city, town Franklin state Indiana 46131

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date federal state county local

7. Description

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Johnson County Courthouse is located in the town of Franklin, and shares the Courthouse square with two war memorials and a modest heating plant.

The courthouse is a red brick structure whose facades are three-part compositions arranged symmetrically with respect to two central axes. The low-hipped metal roof is punctuated by a central square tower and smaller corner towers, whose pyramidal roofs allude to both the French Second Empire and Neo-Jacobean modes. References to other architectural styles can also be seen in the elevations, which make use of both Manneristic and Romanesque devices as well. The walls are divided horizontally into a tall basement sheathed in rusticated limestone, a first floor of smooth brick walls whose punched openings are capped by chamfered stone lintels, and a second floor whose stone window surrounds are separated by brick pilasters with limestone plinth, foliated capitals, and Composite entablature. At the center of each elevation a frontispiece of superimposed pilasters supports a broad pediment; these central elements are made even more prominent by horizontal bandings of stone and brick on the wall behind the pilasters and above, on the base and walls of the tower. The roofline is punctuated by a balustrade of dies separated by a solid parapet. Each side of the central tower is decorated with a central circular opening circumscribed by a square and flanked by a tall narrow window on either side; each of the three elements is enframed by pilasters and a low pediment. The circular openings, now filled with metal grillwork, originally held the clockfaces; at the turn of the century these were remounted in the roof above to increase their visibility.

The interior of the courthouse is organized around a central east-west hallway with a pair of curved open staircases at its midpoint. Other prominent features are the Neo-Jacobean enframements of windows and doors, and the ceilings, which are shallow barrel vaults sprung between the webs of steel joists. Although numerous minor changes have occurred, the interior is basically intact.

The other structure which occupies the square is a boiler house on the southwest corner. Although the equipment shed is of later brick construction, the chimney is contemporaneous with the courthouse. The inclined surfaces of the plain brick stack are broken by panels recessed in the sides, a prominent belt course, and a corbel table at the apex.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1879-81

Builder/Architect George W. Bunting

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Johnson County Courthouse is architecturally significant as the work of one of the most prolific designers of county courthouses in nineteenth century Indiana. It is also significant for its role as the center of county government for over a century.

The Courthouse, probably the most forceful architectural statement in the county, is the earliest known work by George Bunting. Although Bunting used a classical vocabulary in later designs (Madison and Clinton County Courthouses, 1881) before adopting the Richardsonian Romanesque (Wells County Courthouse, 1889, and Union County Courthouse, 1890), the Johnson County design is particularly interesting, since it is an unusual hybrid of the French Second Empire and Neo-Jacobean styles.

The Johnson County Commissioners built a brick courthouse on the present square in 1831. This building burned in 1849, and a second brick structure was built. In 1874, the second brick courthouse also burned. Work on the present building began in 1879.

Bunting was born in 1829, the son of a Pennsylvania sea captain, and was first apprenticed as a ship builder. Later he studied architecture at Girard College. Drifting south, Bunting joined the Confederate Army during the Civil War, and served as a colonel of the First Mississippi Cavalry. He lived in Bloomington, Illinois, for five years before moving to Indianapolis. Bunting designed at least seven courthouses in Indiana. Additional courthouses in Kansas, Michigan, West Virginia, and Tennessee attest to his abilities.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Banta, D.D. History of Johnson County, Indiana . Chicago: Brant & Fuller, 1888
- Brannigan, Elba L. History of Johnson County, Indiana. Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Co., Inc., 1913
- Hermansen, David R. "Indiana County Courthouses of the Nineteenth Century," Ball State University (SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately two acres

Quadrangle name Franklin, IN

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>	B				
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing	
C				D				
E				F				
G				H				

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property consists of the Public Square, bounded by Jefferson St. on the North, Monroe St. on the South, E. Court on the East and W. Court on the West.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Todd R. Mozingo

organization

date August 20, 1975

street & number 1140 North Drive

telephone 317: 736-4905

city or town Franklin

state Indiana 46131

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

James M. Rideron

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 2/26/81

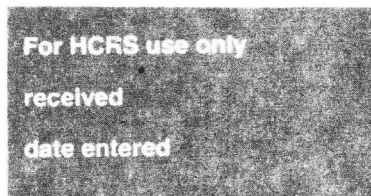
For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

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Continuation sheet

Item number 9

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County Commissioners Records . Johnson County, Indiana