**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

*Type all entries - complete applicable sections*

### 1. Name
- **Common:** Beaufort County Courthouse
- **AND/OR HISTORIC:**

### 2. Location
- **Street and number:** Corner of West Second and Market Streets
- **City or town:** Washington
- **State:** North Carolina
- **Code:** 37
- **County:** Beaufort
- **Code:** 013

### 3. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Accessible to the Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Public Acquisition</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>Unoccupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Being Considered</td>
<td>Preservation work in progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Yes:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Present Use** (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Industrial
- Military
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Scientific
- Government
- Park
- Museum
- Other (Specify)
- Transportation
- Comments
- No

### 4. Owner of Property

- **Owner's Name:** County of Beaufort
- **Street and number:** West Second and Market Streets
- **City or town:** Washington
- **State:** North Carolina
- **Code:** 37

### 5. Location of Legal Description

- **Courthouse, registry of deeds, etc:** Beaufort County Courthouse
- **Street and number:** West Second and Market Streets
- **City or town:** Washington
- **State:** North Carolina
- **Code:** 37

### 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

- **Title of Survey:**
- **Date of Survey:**
- **Depository for survey records:**
- **Street and number:**
- **City or town:**
The Beaufort County Courthouse was built about 1786 as a two-story square structure, measuring approximately 42' x 42'. It was constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond with a high brick water table. Later, a two-bay brick extension was built at the rear of the building and a clock tower constructed on the gable roof.

The east (main) facade is three bays wide. It features a large lunette in the gable which is divided into two equal quadrants by a heavy wooden mullion. The central entrance contains a flat-panel folding double-door which is framed by a heavy molded architrave and surmounted by a six-pane transom.

The north and south sides contain five bays. The west two bays are a later addition and are of brick laid in one-to-five American bond. The sash in both the addition and the original portion has been replaced but the fine jack arches remain.

Above the east gable is the square clock tower which rises in two distinct stages above a plinth. The lower level forms an unadorned base for the upper stages. The second section features a pair of narrow louvered windows with segmental heads on each face flanked by two fluted pilasters and molded cornerposts. The top of the tower houses a four-faced clock. Each face is flanked by a molded cornerpost. The two upper levels of the tower have simple bracket cornices. Above the tower rises a small wooden pinnacle.

The interior of the first floor is center-passage in plan with two rooms flanking the hall on either side. A wide two-flight enclosed stair rises on the inside wall of the east facade on either side of the hall. The first floor has been greatly altered through several renovations but, a few chamfered columns and heavy Greek Revival door casings remain. The rooms have been partitioned and all the original hardware has been removed. The later additions which house the office of the Register of Deeds and the court records vault have heavy iron covers for both the doors and windows which roll into place on metal tracks.

The second floor consists of a large courtroom with the additions forming the jury room and judge's quarters. The original section of the courtroom contains a raised, stepped platform on which long benches provide gallery seating. The judge's bench, lawyer's tables, and jury seats are behind a balustrade featuring flat, scroll-saw balusters. The doors to the jury room and judge's quarters are framed by large bands of reeding with cornerblocks decorated with roundels.
On February 3, 1776, James Bonner sold to the commissioners of "an intended Township" the streets and lot 21 for the public use. At that time court for Beaufort County was held in the nearby town of Bath. But, by 1785 Bath had ceased to be a major port and was fast losing its prominence as a trading center. Therefore, on December 6, 1785, a bill was introduced in the General Assembly calling for the removal of the courthouse from Bath to Washington. The measure was approved and commissioners were appointed to build the new courthouse in Washington on "Public Lot" number 21. The minutes of the Inferior Court for March 1786 reported

that there is a sufficient sum subscribed for completing the courthouse. Ordered therefore that the Court stand adjourned until the Court in Course, then to meet at the School House in Washington.

The September minutes of the court listed the meeting place "at the school house," but the December sessions were recorded "at the Court House in Washington."

Since its completion the courthouse has been used continually as the seat of Beaufort County government. It is one of the earliest permanent public buildings in North Carolina and has served as a meeting place for the prominent political and social figures in the area for over one hundred and fifty years.

**Beaufort County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.** (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers, Census Reports).

**Reed, C. Wingate.** Beaufort County, Two Centuries of History, Raleigh, Edwards and Broughton Company, 1904.

**LIGNIFICANT DATA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corner</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** One half acre.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Code</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

**FORM PREPARED BY**

**NAME AND TITLE:**

John Wells, Survey Specialist; Greer Suttlemyre, Survey Assistant

**ORGANIZATION:**

State Department of Archives and History

**DATE:** December 18, 1970

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

109 East Jones Street

**CITY OR TOWN:** Raleigh

**STATE:** North Carolina

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

**DATE:**

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

**DATE:**