

**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 Armstrong County Courthouse

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Market and Jefferson Streets ___ not for publication

city, town Kittanning ___ vicinity of congressional district 12th

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Armstrong code 005

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

4. Owner of Property

name Armstrong County

street & number Market and Jefferson Streets

city, town Kittanning ___ vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Armstrong County Courthouse

street & number Market and Jefferson Streets

city, town Kittanning state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1973 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

city, town Harrisburg state Pennsylvania

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Armstrong County Courthouse was built by Hulings and Nickey in 1858-60. This two story structure is constructed of brick and stone and measures 105' x 65'. The hipped roof is topped by a cupola and bell. A fine example of local Greek Revival structure, the courthouse has a four-column Corinthian portico on its (west) front. The first story is rusticated stone with windows, one over one with rounded arches. The main doorway is approached by a double flight of stone steps leading through three stone archways under the portico. The second story is stone fronted with brick side walls and has flat pilasters between long many-paned windows topped by circular windows. A three story white brick structure has been added to the rear of the courthouse against the hillside. This addition cannot be seen from Market Street.

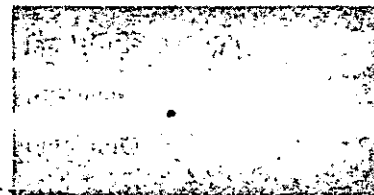
The first floor interior has a cross hall with English variegated tile. Located on the first floor are witness rooms, the grand-jury and the offices of the prothonotary, register, recorders, sheriff and county treasurer. The 62' by 58' courtroom is located on the second floor. The frescoed ceiling is 23 feet high. The acoustics in the court room were found to be poor so on December 9, 1873, a 12 foot wide screen was hung from the ceiling to stop echoing. Also located on the second story are the jury rooms.

The Armstrong County jail was constructed of stone, brick and iron in 1870-73 and measures 114' x 50'. It contained 24 cells each of which measures 8' by 13' at construction. Foundations are 24' deep from ground surface and 7' deep at the bottom. The tower is 96' high, 18' square at the base and 10' square at the top, all of solid stone neatly tooled and surmounted with battlements. All the outer surfaces of the building including gutters and cornice are an ashlar facing of stone. The outer walls are 2½' thick and lined on the inside with brick 4" thick. All stonework was laid with hydraulic cement no lime having been used except in plastering the inner walls.

Windows have rounded solid concrete arches with keystones. The interior woodwork is pine. Floors are brick and 13" thick. The front bay areas are used as jailers residences. An arched walkway connects the jail and courthouse which are 13' apart.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Armstrong County Courthouse and Jail, Armstrong County

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

ADDITIONS AND REMODELING 1931-1953

The need for additional courthouse facilities was apparent as early as 1914 when Mr. J. H. Beers makes reference to this problem in an early history of Armstrong County. ⁽¹⁾ Actual enlargement plans were not formulated, however, until 1945 when the County Commissioners passed a resolution placing two mills for the road bond levy and an appropriation from the road bond account to a courthouse building fund. Other monies continued to be added to this fund annually.

In 1950, Messers William H. Claypoole, Ray Delancey and Walter A. Miller served as Armstrong County Commissioners. Although consideration was given to the possibility of erecting an entirely new courthouse, the final decision to enlarge and remodel the existing courthouse and jail were made. Architects Charles J. Marr, of New Philadelphia, Ohio and Tillman Scheeren, Jr., and Walter F. Rittenhouse, of Kittanning, Pennsylvania were employed to design the improvements. Final total project costs amounted to \$909,298.10. The improvements were made without a bond issue, or an increase in County millage, and was paid for upon completion.

Improvements to the jail included an adequate heating system and remodeling and modernizing the jail kitchen. The building was sandblasted, water-proofed, and the masonry was repointed. A recent photo is enclosed.

The Courthouse addition consisted of a rear three story structure. Total floor space was increased from 16,000 square feet to 51,000 square feet. Cement floors and plastered walls on steel lath were utilized in order to make the structures as fireproof as possible. Acoustic ceilings were placed in the two court rooms and a self operating elevator was installed.

The buff brick addition has a stone belt course between the first and second floor, above the third story windows, and along the flat roof line. The six part casement windows have stone sills and brick inset panels below the sills to compliment similar panels in the original Courthouse. The rear portion of the addition extends horizontally beyond the central portion. The attached site plan details the existing courthouse, additions, and jail floor plan and immediate environment. The enclosed photos document the addition.

1. J. H. Beers, Armstrong County, Pennsylvania, Her People, Past, and Present, Embracing a History of the County and a Geneological and Biographical Record of Representative Families (Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1914), Vol. 1, Page 105.

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 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 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 1858-60, 1870-73 Builder/Architect Hulings & Dickey

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

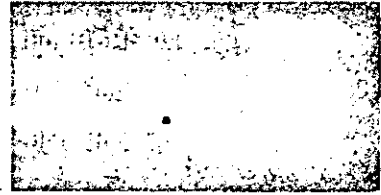
The present Armstrong County Courthouse and jail have served as the center of local governmental operations from 1858 to today. No other existing structures have held as great a position of importance in Armstrong County's judicial and political processes. The building's location in Kittanning Borough, chosen for Armstrong County's seat by the Pennsylvania legislature in 1800 and incorporated in 1821 as the first officially chartered Borough in Western Pennsylvania, adds to the building's governmental significance.

The Armstrong County Courthouse and jail are located at the terminus of Market Street overlooking Kittanning Borough, the County's oldest and most populated municipality. Their hillside location and towering appearance combine to make the structures a focal point of architectural attention. According to R. W. Smith in the History of Armstrong County, "The material and workmanship of it (the Courthouse) and the jailers' house are such that both will stand for centuries unless they are purposely torn down by official authority and human instrumentality". ⁽¹⁾ No other architecturally and politically important comparable structure exists in Armstrong County.

The Armstrong County Courthouse, although dating from the Greek Revival Style period, is highly indicative of Neo-Classic architecture. This symmetrical building is of monumental proportion. The facade of the structure is covered with a smooth arcaded stone surface. A colossal two-tiered pedimented portico with Corinthian columns highlights the building's facade. An impressive octagonal cupola with a domical roof dominates the roof line and repeats the portico's full pediment and Corinthian columns. The three story rear addition to the Courthouse does not detract from the architectural design of the building. Hidden from the front view, the addition did not destroy the architectural features of the original facade which conveys the feeling of the historical period when the structure first achieved significance.

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

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



Armstrong County Courthouse and Jail, Armstrong County
Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

Closely associated with the Courthouse and connected to the building by an arched walkway is the Armstrong County jail. Completed between 1870 and 1873 at a cost of \$252,000, the jail was considered at that time as one of the strongest, securest, and most substantial buildings in the United States. (1) The building is a stone castle version of the Gothic Revival Style. Two front facing towers topped with battlements frame the structure's entrance. A central battlemented tower with recessed carved stonework in the shape of medieval crosses on each side tops the structure. A plaque on the front of the building states: "Armstrong County Prison, Built 1871, Commissioners D. Slagle, P. Miller, T. Pontius, and T. Montgomery." Improvements in the jail in 1951-53 did not alter the exterior of the structure's appearance.

(1) Robert Walker Smith. History of Armstrong County, Pennsylvania (Chicago: Waterman, Watkins and Company, 1883) p. 35.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1

Quadrangle name Kittanning, Pa.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

17	62	5	11	0	4	5	1	92	1	0
Zone	Easting			Northing						

B

Zone	Easting			Northing						

C

Zone	Easting			Northing						

D

Zone	Easting			Northing						

E

Zone	Easting			Northing						

F

Zone	Easting			Northing						

G

Zone	Easting			Northing						

H

Zone	Easting			Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lorraine Allen

organization Armstrong County Economic Develop. date 1981

street & number 402 East Market Street telephone 412-543-2500 Ext. 223

city or town Kittanning state Pennsylvania 16201

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

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Armstrong County Courthouse and Jail, Armstrong County

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Armstrong County Commissioners. Armstrong County Courthouse. Kittanning, Pennsylvania, 1953.

Beers, J. H. Armstrong County, Pennsylvania, Her People, Past, and Present, Embracing a History of the County and a Genealogical and Biographical Record of Representative Families. 2 vols. Chicago: J. H. Beer and Company, 1914.

Smith, Robert Walker, Esq. History of Armstrong County, Pennsylvania. Chicago: Waterman, Watkins and Company, 1883.

ARMSTRONG COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL
ARMSTRONG COUNTY

#10

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the site of the new Courthouse, thence $37\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ west, 80 feet to a post; thence north $75\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ east 179 feet to a white oak; thence south 34° east 152 feet 6 inches to a post; thence by street now vacated south $52\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, west 198 feet to the place of beginning. Containing 95 square perches being the said piece of land.

Recorded April 22, 1852. Located in Deed Book 18, page 616, 617, Register and Recorders Office, Armstrong County Courthouse, Market Street, Kittanning, PA. A copy of the deed is enclosed.

ARMSTRONG COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL
ARMSTRONG COUNTY

GENERALIZED SITE PLAN OF ARMSTRONG COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL
(Not to Scale)

