

AURORA COUNTY COURTHOUSE



Location: 401 N. Main Street, Plankinton, SD 57368

Date: Constructed in 1939-40 (Dedicated on July 9, 1940).

Architects: Kings & Dixon of Mitchell, SD

Description: The Aurora County Courthouse is a flat roofed rectangular three story poured-in-place concrete building constructed in the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles. The facade and sides are symmetrical with seven bays on the front and five bays on each of the sides. The concrete foundation extends up to the sills of the first floor windows. Above that, the first floor concrete has a rusticated appearance of incised mortar joints, creating the appearance of a podium or pedestal upon which the upper stories rest. The second and third floors are smooth concrete. Between the first and second floors is a projecting belt. The center bay on the front facade has a recessed entrance on the ground floor framed by slightly projecting fluted piers. The stairs to the front entrance rise between projecting concrete rails with lamp standards on either side. On the second and third floors each of the bays of windows is separated vertically by fluted piers which run the height of the second and third floors and horizontally by cast concrete spandrel panels. The building is topped by a parapet with a geometric motif. The interior is decorated with oak woodwork and terrazzo floors. The building is raised on a terrace created by a low concrete wall.ⁱ It was designed by Kings & Dixon of Mitchell, who also designed the courthouses in Davison, McCook and Miner counties, and was built by the county with locally employed workers at a cost of nearly \$100,000.ⁱⁱ It was constructed with Federal funding assistance.

History: Aurora County was established by the 1879 Territorial Legislature and organized in 1881.ⁱⁱⁱ Plankinton was named as the temporary county seat in 1881 and won an election to serve as permanent county seat in November, 1882. In 1883 the voters split the northern part of the county off and formed Jerauld County. In 1883-1884 a 2 1/2 story wood framed courthouse, with a mansard roof and bell tower, was constructed at a cost of \$11,000. In 1936, voters turned down a \$66,000 bond issue for the construction of a new courthouse, but in 1938 another election was held and a \$22,000 bond issue was approved. The present courthouse was built on the same site as the 1884 courthouse.

ⁱ United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form - Aurora County Courthouse (September 1, 1992).

ⁱⁱ Id. and Dedication Program “New Aurora County Courthouse” (July 9, 1940).

ⁱⁱⁱ SL 1879, ch 12, § 10.