

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bethalto Village Hall
other names/site number Old Village Hall

2. Location

street & number 124 Main Street not for publication
city, town Bethalto vicinity
state Illinois code 012 county Madison code 119 zip code 62010

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official *[Signature]* Date 10-7-87
Director, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

1. Government/City hall
2. Social/Meeting hall
3. Government/Fire station
4. Government/Correctional facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

1. Social/Meeting hall
2. Transportation/Road-related

7. DescriptionArchitectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/ Italianate
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone, concrete
 walls Brick, concrete
 roof Asphalt
 other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Bethalto Village Hall is located at the northeast corner of Oak and Main Streets in Bethalto, Madison County, Illinois. The two-story rectangular brick building with an L-shaped one story concrete addition stands two short city blocks south of the former business district on Central Street and one block north of the former railroad line (the tracks were removed in the 1960s), now Erwin Plegge Boulevard. The building stands approximately ten feet from the street edge to the south and west, and it faces directly onto a rear alley and parking lot to the north and east. A small grass yard to the east is a remnant of the open lot which existed next to the building before the additions were built.

Constructed in 1873 on lots 23 and 24 in the Joel U. Starkey Addition, the Bethalto Village Hall originally measured approximately 20' by 40'. In 1885 a 12' extension was built to the north of the original structure. This extension is identical to the original building in terms of its height, configuration, brickwork, cornice and roofline finishes, and window and door designs. In 1938 a separate one story, one bay wide, concrete fire station was constructed to the north of the building. In 1944 an identical second bay for the fire station was built to the south, thereby filling the gap between the earlier station and the hall. The final addition to the Bethalto Village Hall was built in 1952. The one story concrete block extension to the east and south of the fire station envelopes 30' of the east wall of the two story village hall. Although the village hall has had several additions, the exterior fabric of the brick building has had very few alterations. A concrete handicap entrance with a raised platform and ramp has been constructed on the west side of the building, and the original roofing material has been replaced with asphalt shingles. Also, the original stone front step has been removed and replaced with two concrete steps. (The stone step now functions as a bench to the side of the front door.) The 20th century additions have only covered up portions of the first story walls of the brick building, and there is no interior connection between the two sections.

Although the village hall and fire station additions are being considered as one building for National Register purposes, the following information will describe in detail the 19th century brick village hall, followed by a general description of the 20th century fire station additions. The term "village hall" will refer to the 19th century portion of the building and "fire station" will denote the 20th century concrete extensions.

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Bethalto Village Hall

The Bethalto Village Hall is constructed of soft red brick laid in seven course American bond with a stone foundation below grade. The building is two full stories in height with a hip roof. The front, or south, entrance facade has a projecting wooden cornice with brackets and a shallow gable over the central bay. This facade has three bays with segmental arched door and window openings on the first story and round arched window openings on the second story. Each opening (this is true for the entire building) has a projecting brick crown, and the windows have four over four double sash with a stone sill. The central opening on the first story is a door with a panelled wooden transom and sidelights. Central paired windows within a single round arch are on the second story. Single windows flank the central openings. The original 1873 building was three bays deep, and the 1885 addition created a fourth bay slightly separated from the other evenly spaced bays. The east facade has four bays, each with a segmental arched window on the first and second story. Below the wooden eave is a decorative brick entablature with expressed dentils. This decorative brick detailing is only on the side and rear facades. The west facade also has four bays, each with a segmental arched opening on the first and second story. The rearmost bay has a first story door with transom window and window above. The next bay also has a first story door (with handicap entrance ramp) and window above. The two frontmost bays each have a single window on the first and second stories. Older photographs of the hall show a interior chimney between the second and third bay on the east facade. It no longer exists. The rear facade, which is enclosed by the newer addition on the first story has a single window at the west end of the second story. It is covered with a metal grille.

The interior plan of the village hall is very simple. (See sketch plan.) The first floor is divided into three basic sections: a front room, or former office space; a middle space composed of a lateral corridor with access to a closet, jail, and bathroom; and a rear hall with a staircase to the second floor. It is not clear whether the building originally had three jail cells, or just the one in the center which is still intact. Where the closet and bathroom are now, there may have once been two other cells. The second floor has the same arrangement with a front meeting room, a kitchen to its rear, and a stairway to the first floor at the rear of the building. There is no full basement or attic space.

The interior finishes of the building have been altered, in that most of the original interior walls and ceilings have been covered with modern panelling and dropped ceilings. Also, the original wood floor on the first floor has been removed and a poured concrete floor installed. The first floor front room has a decorative pressed metal ceiling beneath the acoustic tile dropped ceiling, and the rooms to the rear have tongue and groove panelled ceilings. The original 2"x6" walls of the jail cell are intact, as is the

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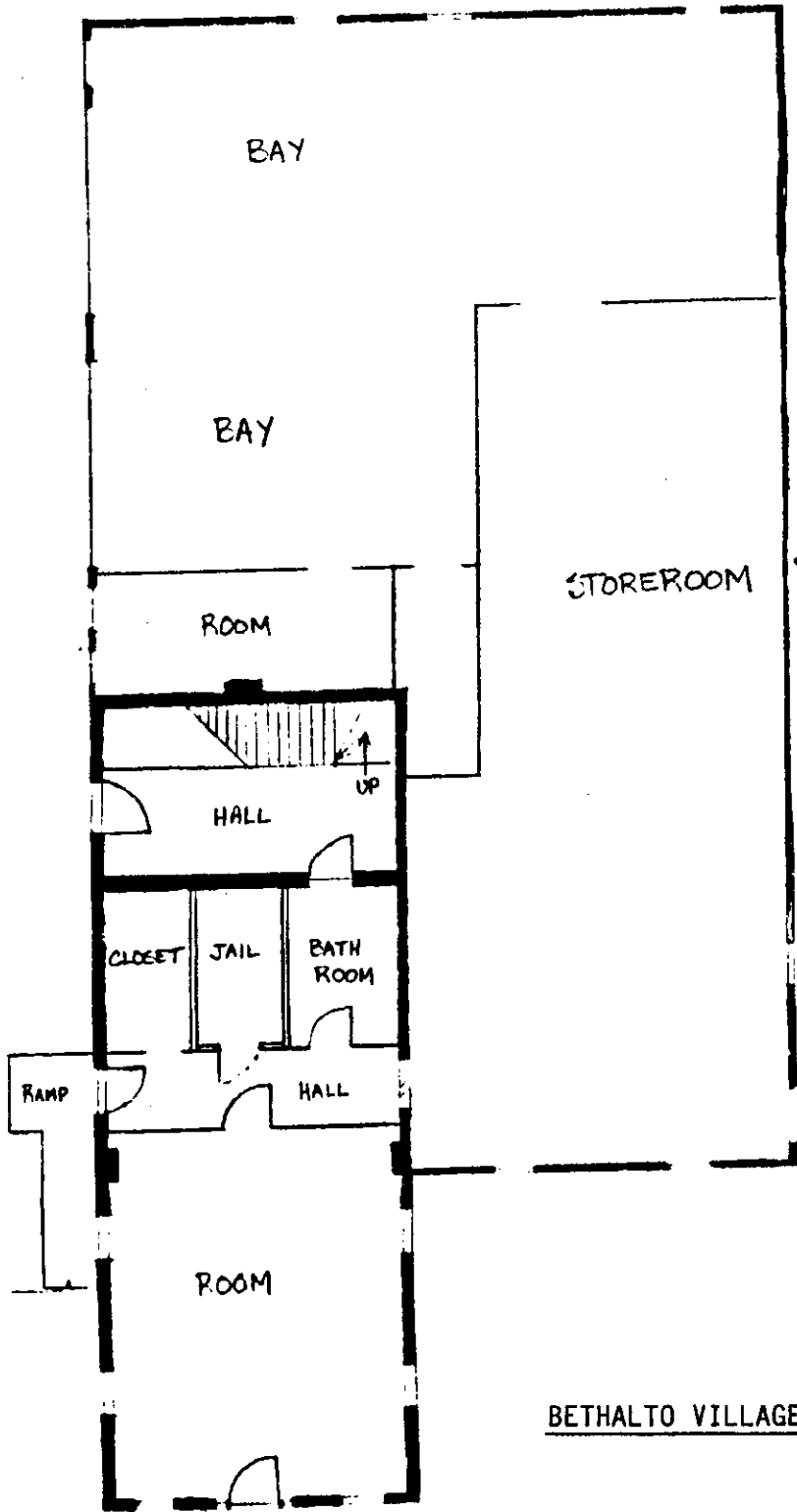
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metal grille door. The bathroom is finished in modern materials and fixtures. The rear hall has been drywalled and carpeting installed on the rear staircase. On the second floor all the original walls and ceilings have been covered with panelling or dropped ceilings. The side windows have also been covered over with modern panelling. At the south end of the room is a low dias, approximately 7' deep. The rehabilitation of the interior spaces to uncover the original fabric of the building is possible.

The flat roofed fire station to the rear and east of the village hall was constructed in three stages. The 1938 bay and the 1944 bay appear to be identical in terms of their materials. The exterior walls are constructed of rusticated concrete blocks and the roofing is asphalt. The 1952 section has a rougher exterior finish as it is constructed of modern, unfinished concrete block. The two bay doors on the west facade of the fire station are flanked by door openings. Above each bay door in the concrete lintel is the inscription "19 B.F.D. 38" (left bay) and "19 B.F.D. 44" (right bay). Photographs dating from the 1960s show a neon sign with the words "FIRE DEPT." above the bays. The building is no longer being used as a fire station and the sign has been removed. The north facade has three windows, and the east facade also three glass block windows, bay door, and a door at the southern end of the wall. The south facade, facing Main Street, has two glass block windows. The interior of the fire station is finished with concrete floors, drywalled walls and tile ceilings. Its plan is as follows: a narrow office room (now used for storage) immediately next to the village hall rear wall, two vehicle bays, a small closet, and a large storage room within the 1952 addition. The additions have excellent integrity.

The Bethalto Village Hall has undergone many changes since its initial construction, however, the fabric of the original building is essentially intact. Although the additions to the rear of the building are less than fifty years old they are unobtrusive. The most serious loss of integrity is the visual impact of the 1952 addition which wraps around the side of the village hall. The interior meets minimal integrity standards in that the original floor plan remains, however, the interior finishes have for the most part been covered with modern materials.



BETHALTO VILLAGE HALL

FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Politics/Government

Period of Significance
1873 -- 1937

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Bethalto Village Hall meets Criterion A for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It is a locally significant building associated with the governmental/political administration of the community beginning in 1873. Bethalto was incorporated as a town in 1869, and for four years the town Board of Trustees met in rented rooms. Within months after the vote to incorporate as a village in April 1873, the construction of a new village hall and jail was completed. The Village Hall was the first publicly-owned hall for the community, and it served as the focal point of all political functions in the community until 1963. The period of significance for the Bethalto Village Hall is from its construction in 1873 to 1937, the latter date arbitrarily set at the fifty year mark

The architectural and locational characteristics of the Bethalto Village Hall are representative of American town and city halls during the 18th and 19th centuries. Traditionally city, village, and town halls in the United States included both an assembly room and space for record keeping and administrative use. Often times, the building was two or more stories high to accommodate the two separate functions within the building.¹ Small communities, such as Bethalto, had no need for a more complex building. Indeed, Bethalto Town Board discussions in 1872 regarding a publicly-owned building had first been about a jail. The idea of a village hall was not considered until a year later following a public request for a larger building. The Italianate style of the Bethalto Village Hall is representative of the style popular in the United States between 1850 and 1875. Town and city hall designs from the first half of the 19th century were classical in plan and exterior form. The main entrance facade was symmetrical with a pronounced central bay. Either the entrance itself had more elaborate moldings, or the bay was emphasized with a pediment, porch, or full portico. The front facade of the Bethalto Village Hall follows this tradition with a fully articulated wooden cornice with a shallow gable (in contrast to the brick cornice of the side and rear facades) and a wide central entrance. The location of the Village Hall is also indicative of the placement of public buildings in American city and towns during the 19th century. It is apparent that the appropriate location for a jail and a village hall were perceived of as quite different at the time. The jail was to be located on a lot several blocks away from the commercial center of the community. While the village hall was prominently situated on a street running parallel to the railroad, and one block away from the main commercial street.

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Bethalto Village Hall

The geographical context for the Bethalto Village Hall is the community itself. However, in terms of city, village, and town halls in Madison County, the Bethalto Village Hall is the oldest in the county. The Hall is the only building in Bethalto associated with the governmental administration of the community between 1873 and 1963. The historic building has been altered since the period of significance. However, in terms of its historic integrity, the Hall has retained sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and association to meet the National Register criteria. The building stands in its original location, and although the railroad line has been removed, the Hall faces the main boulevard in the community. The historic building is visually distinct in terms of its materials and scale from the later additions. It has had three additions, they are as follows: 1938, a one story, one bay concrete fire station to the rear of the station, 1944, an additional fire station bay, and 1952, a large one story storage room to the side of the Hall. Although the fire station bays do not contribute to the significance of the building, they are in keeping with the community service function of the original building. Finally, the first addition was built immediately following the period of significance and within months will be an historic addition in terms of the National Register criteria. The interior alterations have not changed the original floor plan of the building. This is in part due to the presence of the jail cell in the center of the building with its thick walls of 2x6 boards laid on their sides. The front rooms on each floor have been panelled with synthetic panelling, and the walls of the rear hall have been finished with modern drywall. Nevertheless, the original arrangement of interior spaces is immediately apparent.

The development of Bethalto from its beginnings in the 1850s was associated with the railroad, flouring mills, and coal mining. By 1856 the Alton & Terre Haute Railroad was completed through to St. Louis. With the coming of the railroad, and the proximity of a grain supply, mills were started in Bethalto early. As early as 1859 the President Merchant Mill and Elevator was established by James Neimrick. It produced 100 barrels of flour daily with "three run of stone." Barrelmaking, or coopering, was in turn a sizeable industry in the community. As a result of several fires during the 1880s and 1890s the mills were rebuilt to accommodate increased production. Following a disastrous fire in 1882, the Kauffman Milling Company (successor to the President Merchant Mill) built a new brick mill which had a daily output of 2,500 barrels of flour daily, and shipped wheat to other points in the midwest. All farmers from the surrounding communities took their grain to Bethalto, and by the 1880s the President Merchant Mill was reputed to be "one of the largest and most extensive flouring mills in Madison County." Coal mining had been a thriving industry since the 1850s. Madison County had rich coal deposits, and in Bethalto the railroad extended to a Mississippi River

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dock for coal shipping by steamboat up and down the river. One operation, the Madison County Coal Company, shipped from 3,000 to 5,000 tons of coal each month from its Bethalto mine. Local production also supplied the needs of businesses and residents in the area. Mining was an intensive industry as it was done by hand, and powered by horse power. Several hundred workers were employed by the coal companies in the Bethalto area during the late 19th century.²

The need for a permanent governmental hall in Bethalto did not arise until the community instituted a village form of government in 1873. Although Bethalto had been platted in 1854, it was not until 1869 that the community, which had experienced economic prosperity and a growing population, took steps to formalize its administration. In that year Bethalto was incorporated as a town under a special charter granted by an act of the state legislature. Discussion concerning the construction of a calaboose, or jail, took place as early as July 1872 at town board meetings. The town board members approved the purchase of lot No. 63 located several blocks from the commercial center and the railroad for the site of the future jail. In April 1873 an election was held which resulted in the town's incorporation as a village under the Cities and Villages Act of 1872. Following the election of the Village Board of Trustees on May 5, board members in turn appointed the Village Clerk, Police Magistrate, Constable, Superintendent of Streets, and the Treasurer. Several months following the general election, board members formally voted to construct a calaboose. \$250 was appropriated for the building and the Committee on Streets and Alleys was instructed to "fence the whole of Calaboose [sic] lot."³ In July 1873 the Board received a public petition for the construction of a building which would serve as both a jail and a village hall "at a cost of not exceeding \$1,000." As a result on August 20, 1873 the Board of Trustees voted to hire Mr. J. A. Miller (a fellow board member) to "draw up the plan and specifications and superintend the building of the calaboose [sic] and Hall, for 20 dollars." On September 2 the Village bought for \$90 Lot No. 23 of J. U. Starkey's First Addition for the new village hall. The lot was one block south of the main commercial street and it faced the Indianapolis & St. Louis Railroad line. By September 16 bills for digging the foundation for the village hall had been authorized and paid, and Town lot No. 63 was advertised for sale. Final construction bills were paid in November 1873. The Building Committee on February 6, 1874 "ordered to have the village lots enclosed by a rough picket fence on the north end, and a dressed picket fence on the south and west sides to be of uniform height." At the Trustees meeting the following day a fraternal organization, the Druids, made the first request for renting the second floor hall for a festival on February 16. The Druids were charged \$3.00.

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The village hall accommodated both political and social functions in the community. Village Board of Trustees meetings were regularly held in the hall. The first floor jail cell was the responsibility of the Constable. City laws and records were enacted and maintained there. By 1885 additional village officials were appointed, and a Village Attorney, Police Magistrate and Justice of the Peace also used the village hall as their offices. Village administration included the Fire Department, sewerage, police force, elections, tax collection, and licensing. School groups, lodges, and other social organizations rented the second floor meeting room on a regular basis. Beginning in July 1884 village board meeting minutes refer to negotiations with the Masons, Odd Fellows, and Druids about an addition to the Village Hall. Although the specifics of the negotiations are not known, it is likely that the fraternal organizations using the second floor wanted an interior entrance for the second floor at the rear of the building. It may be that the original entrance was an exterior stairway. Negotiations were completed and by January 1885 a 12 foot extension to the rear of the building which provided a separate interior hallway and stair to the second floor was under construction. The Village Hall accommodated the Bethalto Lodge No. 406, A.F. and A.M., the Bethalto Chapter No. 847 of the Order of the Eastern Star, the United Ancient Order of Druids, Teutonia Grove, No. 25, and the Order of the Odd Fellows at various times during its history. The building continued to accommodate the political administration until the end of the period of significance.

ENDNOTES

1. Lebovich, William L., America's City Halls, (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984)
2. Souvenir History for the Bethalto Centennial, 1854-1954, printed by the Bethalto Chamber of Commerce, 1954.
3. Village Board Minutes, June 10, 1873 and June 27, 1873.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY (Continued)

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Lebovich, William L., America's City Halls. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984.

Miller, Patricia and Panapinto, Deborah. Bethalto Volunteer Fire Department, The First 100 Years 1885-1985. 1985.

Municipal Government in Illinois. Compiled by Workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration. 1941.*

Norton, W. L., ed. Centennial History of Madison County, Illinois and Its People, 1812-1912. Vol. 1. Chicago and New York: The Lewis Publishing Company. 1912.

Prehn, Leslie E. "Bethalto Through the Years." Unpublished article, no date.

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Town and Village of Bethalto Board Minutes, 1870 - 1937. Bethalto Municipal Building.

Zimmerman, Henry W. "His Story of Bethalto", unpublished article, no date

9. Major Bibliographical References

Alton Evening Telegraph. September 3, 1954.

Fairlie, John A. "County and Town Government in Illinois," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, May, 1913.

Gillon, Edmund V., Jr. Early Illustrations and Views of American Architecture. New York: Dover Publications. 1971.

Hair, James T., ed. and compiler. Gazetteer of Madison County. Alton, IL. 1866.

History of Madison County, Illinois. Edwardsville: W.R. Brink & Co. 1882.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

* Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	5
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7	5	6	5	2	0
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4	3	1	0	7	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property follows a line ten feet from the exterior walls of the building.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary line includes the full extent of the historic building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ann V. Swallow, Assistant National Register Coordinator date _____

organization Illinois Historic Preservation Agency street & number Old State Capitol telephone 217-785-4512

city or town Springfield state Illinois zip code 62701