

# COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES NOMINATION FORM

**SECTION I**

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**Name of Property**

Historic Name Adams County Courthouse

Other Names Brighton City Hall

**Address of Property**

[ ] address not for publication

Street Address 22 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue

City Brighton County Adams Zip 80601

**Present Owner of Property**

(for multiple ownership, list the names and addresses of each owner on one or more continuation sheets)

Name City of Brighton

Address 22 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Phone (303) 655-2000

City Brighton State Colorado Zip 80601

**Owner Consent for Nomination**

(attach signed consent from each owner of property - see attached form)

**Preparer of Nomination**

Name Patricia Reither Date May 1, 2006

Organization Brighton Historic Preservation Commission

Address 1548 Manor Way Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City Brighton State Colorado Zip 80601

**FOR OFFICIAL USE:**

Site Number 5AM.92

5/19/2006 Nomination Received

Senate # \_\_\_\_\_ House # \_\_\_\_\_

8/11/2006 Review Board Recommendation  
 Approval  Denial

8/31/2006 CHS Board State Register Listing  
 Approved  Denied

**Certification of Listing:** President, Colorado Historical Society

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Property Name Adams County Courthouse

**SECTION II**

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**Local Historic Designation**

Has the property received local historic designation?

no

yes ---  individually designated  designated as part of a historic district

Date designated \_\_\_\_\_

Designated by \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of municipality or county)

**Use of Property**

Historic GOVERNMENT/ courthouse

Current GOVERNMENT/ city hall

**Original Owner** Adams County

Source of Information Brighton Blade newspaper; deeds

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**Year of Construction** 1906

Source of Information Historic photos; Brighton Blade newspaper 1905-1908;  
History of Brighton Colorado & Surrounding 1887-1987.

**Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist or Designer** 1906- John J. Huddart, Architect; A.B. McDonald, Builder;

1939- Lester L. Jones and Richard O. Parry, Architects; Public Works Administration, Builder

Source of Information Architectural drawings; Brighton Blade newspaper; History of Brighton, Colorado  
& Surrounding Area 1887-1987

**Locational Status**

Original location of structure(s)

Structure(s) moved to current location

Date of move \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION III**

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**Description and Alterations**

(describe the current and original appearance of the property and any alterations on one or more continuation sheets)

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Property Name Adams County Courthouse

**SECTION IV**

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**Significance of Property**

**Nomination Criteria**

- A** - property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history
- B** - property is connected with persons significant in history
- C** - property has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan
- D** - property is of geographic importance
- E** - property contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history

**Areas of Significance**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Economics                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Education                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology – prehistoric                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Law                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology – historic                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/ Recreation     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Heritage               | <input type="checkbox"/> Military                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration/ Settlement       | <input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Geography/ Community Identity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Politics/ Government |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Planning and Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Medicine               | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                         |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Social History                  |
|  |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                  |

**Significance Statement**

(explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**Bibliography**

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

**SECTION V**

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**Locational Information**

Lot(s) All Block 25 Addition Walnut Grove, Second Addition

USGS Topographic Quad Map Brighton

**Verbal Boundary Description of Nominated Property**

(describe the boundaries of the nominated property on a continuation sheet)

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Property Name Adams County Courthouse

**SECTION VI**

**Photograph Log for Black and White Photographs**

(prepare a photograph log on one or more continuation sheets)

**SECTION VII**

**ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY NOMINATION**

**Owner Consent Form**

**Black and White Photographs**

**Color Slides**

**Sketch Map(s)**

**Photocopy of USGS Map Section**

**Optional Materials**

**For Office Use Only**

Property Type:  building(s)  district  site  structure  object  area

Architectural Style/Engineering Type: LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/ Classical Revival

Period of Significance: 1906-1956

Level of Significance:  Local  State  National

Acreage 1.86

P.M. 6<sup>th</sup> Township 1S Range 66W Section 7 Quarter Sections NW, NW, NW, NW

UTM Reference: Zone 13 Easting 515615 Northing 4426051

Site Elevation: 4982 feet

Property Name Adams County Courthouse

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### DESCRIPTION and ALTERATIONS

The Adams County Courthouse is located on the southeast corner of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bridge Street, two main thoroughfares in the City of Brighton. It is located within three blocks of the downtown commercial district. The original 1906 building was a two-and-a-half-story brick building that served as the Adams County Courthouse. This original red-tiled roof building was 6,586 square feet with a cupola 91 feet from the base to the top.

In 1939, a Public Works Administration (PWA) project added 5,277 square feet to the west end of the original building, creating a total of 11,863 square feet, nearly doubling the size. Since the 1906 building was constructed with locally produced green glazed brick and red pressed brick, the materials of the carefully detailed addition were perfectly matched to the original section. The red-tiled hipped roof and cupola of the original building were removed and replaced with a flat roof. An impressive pedimented entrance in the Classical Revival style was created on the west elevation of the building with massive concrete Tuscan columns.

Exterior areas of the property are landscaped with lawns, trees and flowers. The grounds are dotted with a variety of trees, many original to the site. A monument located on the northeast corner depicting early Indians is dedicated to the citizens of Brighton. The east side faces a parking lot for city vehicles, city employees and visitors' automobiles. The area adjacent on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the east is occupied by early residences. To the south, the property is bordered by early residences on Court Place Street. To the north is a commercial bank and to the west, on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, are a used car lot and several commercial buildings. This building demonstrated a new level of aesthetic sophistication, created by artisans, stonemasons, carpenters, plasterers, and metalworkers of great skill and competence. The Adams County Courthouse is in excellent condition and exhibits an excellent degree of historic integrity through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The building currently houses the Brighton City Hall government offices.

Essentially, this Classical Revival style building is a two-story, flat roofed edifice with a rectangular plan oriented on an east-west axis. The Adams County Courthouse measures 138'9" east to west and 86'9" from north to south. The base of the building exhibits a band of red decorative sandstone 4'x12"x9", followed by a 12" tapered band of concrete simulated to look like sandstone. These bands continue around the entire building. Constructed upon a brick foundation, the exterior walls of the raised basement on all sides are faced with a locally made green glazed brick with a recessed course every sixth course. The green brick gives weight and tone to the building. The upper stories are comprised of locally made red pressed brick. These walls are topped by a white metal frieze band a white wood cornice, again continuing around the entire building.

The interior of the building contains many of the original maple finishes in doors, door frames, baseboards, and window frames. Most notable are the etched glass windows with a variety of patterned designs in many of the doors. Some of the doors still contain the name of the original use, such as Library and Judge's Chambers (see photos 10 & 11). The flooring is a tongue and groove vertical grain of pine, though a great deal of the flooring is now carpeted. The Heritage Room, with pressed tin ceilings, complements the displays of historic paintings describing the stories of the history of Brighton and its culture (see photo 12). Original vaults are still used for storage; the doors of which can be seen on each floor (see photo 9). The building lit at night is as eye catching as it is during the day.

#### West Facade

The west section was an addition to the west facade of the original building as part of a 1939 Public

Property Name Adams County Courthouse

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Works Administration project. The primary entrance faces 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a main thoroughfare that runs north and south in the city. A prominent pedimented portico, which creates a porch, shelters the main entrance, accessible by ten steps with a wrought iron handrail. Wood glazed double doors are centered on the façade. Though they have been replaced twice in the past 20 years, the current doors were custom-made to replicate the original ones. Four massive Tuscan columns support the portico and rest on green glazed brick pedestals. The columns are topped by a plain white frieze and white cornice. The words **CITY HALL** are inscribed across the metal pediment face. Above the main entrance is a white wrought iron balconet with an ornamental railing placed at the base of a large glass block window. Four red pressed brick pilasters are evenly spaced across the west facade. Each pilaster has four simulated sandstone bands evenly placed for ornamentation. Arched entries facing west lead to the area below the portico, one on the north and one on the south. Two rows of green glazed brick are laid vertically to form an arch over each lower entrance.

#### North Elevation

The north elevation faces Bridge Street. In addition to the above listed features, the north side contains 26 1/1 double hung sash windows with original wood frames and 13 smaller 1/1 double hung windows along the raised basement level. The windows on the first stories have a continuous stone sill while the second story has separate sandstone lug sills. All first and second story windows have white boarded transoms topped with sandstone lintels. Some of the transoms have air conditioning units placed within them. The sandstone lintels of the second floor have a keystone, adding another element of the Classical Revival style to the building. Between each of the upper and lower story windows is a rectangular panel of recessed brick. Three pilasters, one at each end and one in the center, where the addition was joined to the original building, give a nice decorative display and make it impossible to determine where the addition occurred. Four horizontal sandstone bands, evenly spaced, complete these pilasters.

#### East (Rear) Elevation

The east elevation of the Adams County Courthouse overlooks a paved parking lot and adjacent residences. Though this is the rear of the building, it is the most-used entrance to the building today for security reasons. A center wrought iron railing leads up nine stairs to the rear entrance. Wood glazed double doors are centrally placed on this side. Above the doors is a very attractive, intricate divided-light transom. Surrounding the doors are decorative pilasters on each side beginning with sandstone plinths, green glazed brick and red pressed brick topped with decorative capitals, frieze, cornice, and then a sandstone ledge. On either side of the pilasters, red pressed brick is arranged in rows of three with every fourth row being recessed, imitating quoining. Windows on the east are identical to the windows on the north and south sides. Five windows are found on the first floor and seven on the second floor; the raised basement level contains five windows. Four symmetrically placed pilasters grace this elevation. Each of these pilasters has four horizontal sandstone bands as decoration. An elevator shaft of darker red brick was added to the building in 1977 to accommodate handicapped individuals. This addition caused an upper and a lower story window immediately to the north of the entrance to be obscured. A corbelled chimney is located at the southeast corner of this elevation. The chimney is brick capped with sandstone.

An entrance to the lower level, where the jail was once located, is accessible underneath the stairs. It is similar to the arched entrance under the west façade stairs. The area is composed of green glazed brick as it is part of the basement, but with a flat arch opening. Concrete stairs descend to the opening and to paired doors. The architectural drawings by John J. Huddart in 1905 show bars on the basement level windows along the entire south wall as well as the south side of the east wall, though the bars are no longer extant.

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South Elevation

The south elevation overlooks a landscaped area with adjacent older residences across the street. This side is identical to the north side of the building in materials, number of windows, and window placement.

Facilities Building

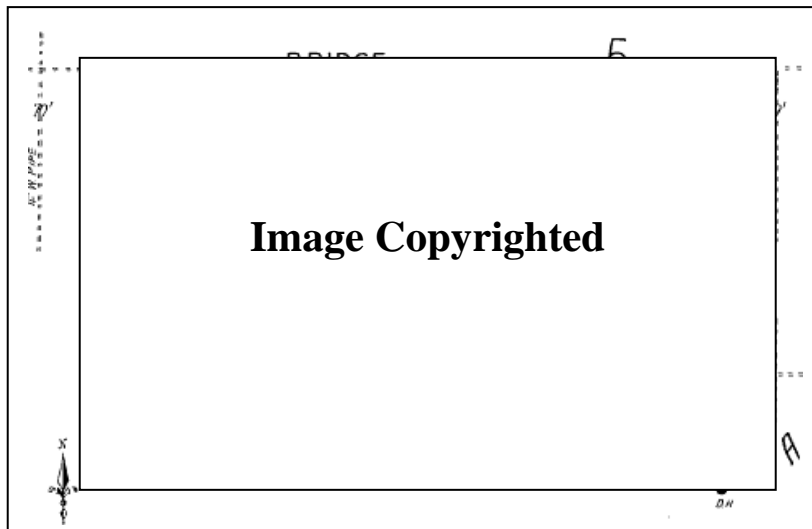
This rectangular shaped building is 43' long and 26'6" wide. It is approximately 1054 square feet. It was built with red brick and has a flat roof. A door with an adjacent fixed-pane window is placed to one side of the west wall. Former garage doors on the south wall have been filled in with wood and windows. Industrial lights are placed high on the brick walls in various places on the building.

The current Facilities Building appears to be the original garage at the rear of a dwelling constructed between 1920 and 1928 behind the Courthouse on the east part of the grounds. This house was probably constructed to alleviate crowding in the Courthouse building. It contained the sheriff's office and dwelling, two jail rooms (most likely separate areas for males and females) and a garage for the sheriff's car. It is very likely that three of the walls are the original garage but that they were veneered with the current red brick when the fourth (north) wall, which attached to the jail building, was constructed in 1953. The garage portion was renovated into the Annex or Facilities Building in that same year. The south wall of the Facilities Building has two large infilled garage door openings, further offering proof of the use as the garage for the sheriff. In the 1960s, the building housed large key punch machines for data processing. For many years the Drivers License Bureau occupied the small building. Currently it is used as office space. This building is non-contributing due to multiple alterations.

Gazebo

Constructed in 2004, the gazebo is an octagonal shaped structure. The asphalt shingled roof is capped by a finial-topped cupola that sits atop an octagonal platform, which then sits upon the larger octagonal roof. The frieze, platform support, and balustrade are all composed of straight wood sticks while the chamfered posts support sculpted brackets. The gazebo sits on a large concrete pad towards the southeast corner of the Courthouse building. A round picnic table provides seating under the gazebo. This structure is a non-contributing resource due to its recent construction date.

May 1928 Sanborn Map- Brighton



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### **SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT**

The Adams County Courthouse, currently known as Brighton City Hall, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development as well as Politics/Government. The existence of this John J. Huddart-designed building is a direct consequence of the birth of Adams County and the election of Brighton as the county seat. The building, completed on May 10, 1906, demonstrates the contribution a courthouse makes to the legal system of a society and the architectural contributions a building of this stature provides a small town as a symbol of growth and prosperity. The building housed the county's governing board and administrative offices, the courts and judicial offices, the sheriff and the county jail, and public meeting rooms. As a legal institution, much of the county's early legal precedents were set here. County offices remained in this building for decades, finally vacating the space for new quarters in 1975. The period of significance begin in 1906 with the completion of the building and ends in 1956, a date in keeping with the National Register 50-year rule, though governmental activities still occur in the building on a city level.

The courthouse is also significant under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government for its association with the Public Works Administration (PWA), a New Deal era program of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. By 1939, Adams County had outgrown the existing building and the county received money for an expansion project through the PWA. Denver architects Lester L. Jones and Richard O. Parry were selected as the architects to design the addition that nearly doubled the square footage of the original building. Because the hipped roof and cupola were removed, the original style of the building was significantly changed from Eclectic to Classical Revival. However, Jones and Parry duplicated Huddart's choice of original building materials wherever it was possible and mimicked trim details where appropriate. The period of significance is 1939, related to the year the federal agency provided funding for the construction of the addition.

Finally, the Adams County Courthouse is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction. The two-story, Classical Revival brick building exhibits architectural ornamentation typical of the style such as a prominent pedimented portico, pilasters with plain capitals, Tuscan columns, and keystones in the window lintels. The building also displays a prominent cornice with wide frieze, classical details that were common to public buildings in this period. The building is an excellent representative example of the Classical Revival style applied to a government building in a small Colorado plains agricultural community. The period of significance for Architecture is 1939, the year of construction and the year the building took on its Classical Revival appearance.

### Historical Background

Built in record time and completed May 10, 1906, the Adams County Courthouse served for decades as the center of local and county government in the small agricultural community of Brighton. The building's origin reflects the evolution of Brighton from an emerging pioneer farming town to a twentieth century agricultural town that increasingly served as the commercial and administrative center of the surrounding farming economy. The County Courthouse serves as a testimonial to the integral part it played in the community and the county. It is a versatile building that has served the public well and is representative of the democratic process of county and town government as well as planning of the infrastructure on the local and county levels. This attractive building and the activities it contained over the decades contributed significantly to the political and social well-being of the town of Brighton and Adams County. It enhanced growth, it provided employment, and it gave stability to an agricultural community in rural Adams County. This notable landmark attests to the fundamental historic



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importance of an early twentieth century town building to the community of Brighton, the newly formed Adams County and the state of Colorado. Today, the Adams County Courthouse appropriately houses the government of the City of Brighton in its use as City Hall.

The town of Brighton was platted on February 16, 1881, by city father Daniel F. (D.F.) Carmichael. Brighton had been a railroad stop at the junction of the Denver Pacific (later the Union Pacific) and the Denver & Boulder Valley railroads and was known as Hughes Station. By 1879, Hughes Station was already being called Brighton, believed to be named by Carmichael's wife Alice. When the plat was filed, there was a depot, wind mill, water tower, and station master's house situated at a railroad junction of the open prairie. The community quickly grew into a supply and shipping center for a thriving agricultural region populated by immigrants from Germany, Russia, Japan and Mexico. With Brighton's importance established, the town was incorporated July 26, 1887. At this time, within the boundaries of the town were a school, church, post office, blacksmith shop, hotel, meat market, telegraph station, newspaper, creamery, two general stores, three saloons, a railroad with three crews, and 175 residents. Brighton was originally part of Arapahoe County, which ran clear to the Kansas border. Arapahoe County was so large it was not efficient to operate. Two attempts to divide the county in General Assembly in 1887 and 1889 failed. Finally, Senator Emmet Bromley, who had a distinguished record of public service, introduced a bill creating Adams County from Arapahoe County on November 15, 1902. Brighton promised if they were named the county seat, they would provide the land to build a courthouse. The ratification of Article XX made the division an official reality. Brighton was made the temporary county seat of the new Adams County. The first Board of Commissioners met on December 4, 1902. The Commissioners were Wilson R. Smith, John Benbow and Fred P. Watts. Smith and Benbow were appointed by the governor and Watts was a former Arapahoe County Commissioner elected from the Brighton district. Smith resigned after one month and Edward Fitzpatrick was appointed in his place.

D.F. Carmichael leased his house for \$100 a month as the temporary quarters for the Adams County Courthouse. On January 22, 1904, at 1:55 a.m., fire struck the Carmichael House. Two men saw flames coming from the building and sounded the alarm. When the fire department arrived, the entire front of the house was in flames. The roof collapsed when the side walls fell outward. The fire was brought under control, saving a rear room and the jail. All of the tax lists, the county records and \$20,000 were lost. Herman Reuter offered his home, located at 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Bridge Street, for \$100 a month and allowed the county to place a vault in the basement and construct a jail on the back of the property.

On November 8, 1904, an election was held to determine what town would become the county seat. The towns of Brighton, Fletcher (Aurora), Adams City, Hazeltine and Harris (Westminster) were all on the ballot. Brighton won with 1,103 votes and became the permanent county seat. On July 12, 1905, an agreement was made between Brighton and Adams County; the city and county each paid \$750 to purchase land from D. F. Carmichael to build the new county courthouse. John James Huddart was chosen as the architect and A. B. McDonald as the general contractor. Huddart was already a prominent Denver architect at the time, but this was a significant choice as Huddart had designed other public buildings. This would be his first commission for a courthouse.

Creating a design that incorporated elements from the Classical Revival and Italianate resulted in an eclectic architectural style that was a huge success for Huddart and later led to him being referred to as "the courthouse architect." His use of an ornate cornice around the roof of the building as well as different color brick for the elevations made the building "the handsomest in the west," as printed in the local paper December 15, 1905. The use of a red tile roof around a cupola became symbolic of

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Huddart's other courthouses, including Arapahoe, Washington, Summit, and Cheyenne counties.

Historic Image- Adams County Courthouse Shortly After Completion in 1906

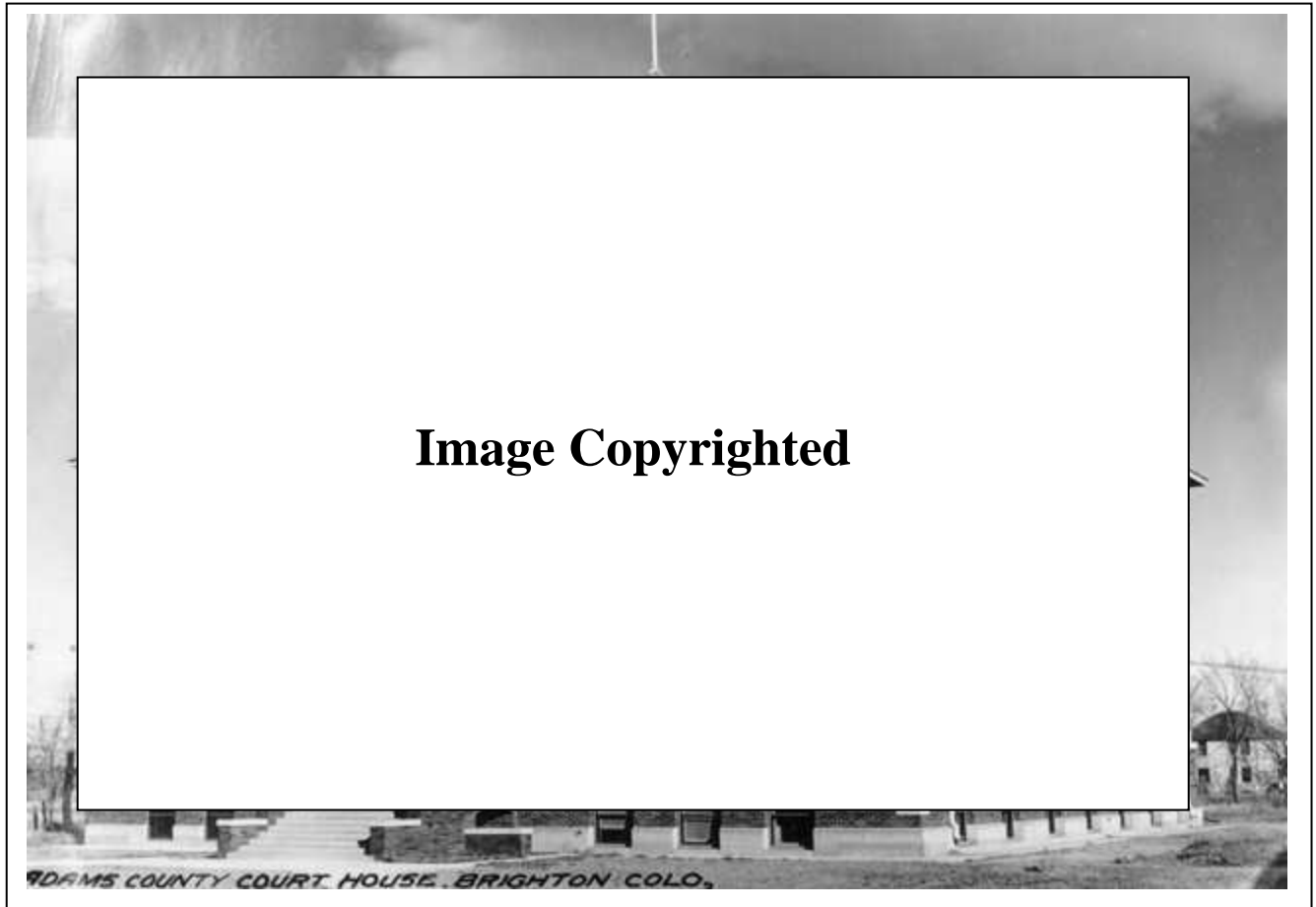


Image courtesy of Western History/Genealogy Dept., Denver Public Library, Image # X-7210

The building was completed May 10, 1906. The Huddart-designed building serving as the Adams County Courthouse was a two story brick building sitting upon a raised basement. The original red-tile roofed building contained 6,586 square feet with a cupola measuring 91 feet from the base to the top. On May 19, 1906, the officials of Adams County took up residence in this elegant, spacious, and substantial building and were ready to begin county transactions. Fortunately, the jail was empty at the time and the removal and transfer of the jail cells to the basement of the new building was easily completed. The cost of the building came to \$41,725.

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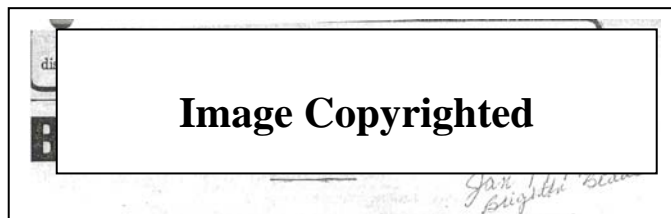
Historic Painting Depicting the Construction of the Adams County Courthouse



Image courtesy of Brighton Historic Preservation Commission

The business of the county became more complex as the needs of the county multiplied. Growth was steady and the 1916-17 construction of the Kuner Canning headquarters and plant as well as a large Great Western Sugar Company factory in Brighton caused a more rapid expansion of the local population. Efforts to modernize the county's infrastructure placed an increasingly challenging administrative burden upon government services. Public welfare became a permanent institution, the vaults were jammed to capacity and the situation became acute. The Great Depression of the 1930s dampened enthusiasm for a much-needed courthouse expansion.

Brighton Blade Newspaper Headline- January 17, 1908



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However, in 1938, the county applied for and received a grant from the federal government under the Public Works Administration (PWA). The PWA is often confused with the more prolific Works Progress Administration (WPA), both relief programs under President Roosevelt's self-proclaimed New Deal administration. While the WPA hired the unemployed to work on a wide variety of public infrastructure and betterment projects, the PWA provided grants to supplement local funding for the construction materials related to the expansion of schools, colleges, libraries, town halls, courthouses and other public buildings. Not only did the PWA grant to Adams County ensure the construction of the new addition, it also provided employment for skilled and unskilled workers from the community during the entire job. Like the original portion, the brick for the addition was produced locally and J.N. Counter, Brighton's mayor, received the contract to provide lumber and other supplies for the construction. On August 10, 1938, the county received word from Washington that the PWA grant of \$33,390 for an addition to the Adams County Courthouse had been approved. This sum was 45% of the total cost of \$74,200. As John J. Huddart died in 1930, the county commissioners hired Denver architects Lester L. Jones and Richard O. Parry to plan the new addition. They presented drawings of two floors and an entrance in a Classical Revival style, popular at the time. The working plans were submitted to George M. Bull, the PWA regional director.

According to State Business Directories, Richard O. Parry first shows up as an architect in Fort Collins in 1916, but by 1918 was located in the Interstate Trust Building in Denver. By the early 1920s he was in an office with an architect named Gardner and on his own again in 1925. Lester L. Jones appears to have started out his architectural practice in Fort Collins in the Colorado Building on College Avenue in 1918. He then occupied an office on Mountain Avenue from 1922 to 1929. Other buildings attributed to Jones include the 1923 Armstrong Hotel in Fort Collins and the 1938 Empire School in Empire, Colorado. Apparently his practice was doing well enough for him to secure an office in Greeley in 1920. It is perhaps in Fort Collins that the two architects were introduced to each other as they seemed to have an intermittent affiliation with each other over the years leading up to the construction of the Adams County Courthouse addition. They shared an office in Denver in 1929, 1931, 1932, and again in 1939, the year of the Adams County PWA project. In the interim years, they are found in neighboring buildings or different offices within the same building in Denver. Both architects disappear from the State Business Directories in 1941.

Bids on contracts for the addition to the Adams County Courthouse were approved December 2, 1938, by the board of Adams County Commissioners and George M. Bull. N.R. Nielsen of Denver submitted the low bid of \$57,811 and was the general contractor under the supervision of R.H. Woodmansee, the engineer-inspector for the PWA. McCarty-Johnson was approved with the low bid for the heating plant at \$4,834 and \$1,866 was granted to Samson's for the plumbing as it was the only bid. The term of the new contracts called for a total of 240 days, or approximately eight months, in which to complete the project. Work started December 3, 1938, with the building site being staked out. On December 6, 1938, groundbreaking for the new addition took place. Four evergreens were removed and replanted, shrubbery next to the old building dug up, and light poles removed. By January 6, 1939, workmen started on the footings for the actual construction. Finishing touches were completed in laying out the boundaries and additional work was done on the excavation.

The addition was to be 5,277 square feet, almost doubling the size of the original building. It would be 60'9" in length and the width would be the same as the original building at 86'9". Architects Jones and Parry carefully matched the building materials of the addition's exterior walls to correspond with those of the original building. The addition was attached to the west facade of the original courthouse. Though Jones and Parry took great care in duplicating the original materials, they significantly altered the general appearance. The red tiled roof and cupola were removed and replaced with a flat roof. The

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new main entrance on the west was designed in the Classical Revival style. Four majestic Tuscan columns were placed under a large portico.

The building was to be completed September 3, 1939, but the *Brighton Blade* newspaper reported on September 5, 1939, that R.H. Woodmansee, the PWA engineer-inspector at the courthouse since work started in December, was transferred to Pueblo. John F. Lamb was put in charge for the remainder of the work. He commuted from his office in Boulder. G.E. Nichols was the assets inspector. The fireproof building was completed October 1, 1939, and by October 3, 1939, a large amount of new equipment was being installed in the new portion of the building. County officials moved into their new quarters or already occupied them. The new building accommodated the offices of the county welfare department and the county extension agent in the basement. The commodity warehouse for federal commodities would adjoin the welfare department to facilitate work between the two departments. Vault space was available on all floors. The county's clerk and treasurer occupied offices on the main floor. The second floor was a commodious space for the district court while the old district court rooms were partitioned into jury rooms. Some remodeling was undertaken in the old building including the installation of a new roof and a new heating unit that heated both the old and new sections.

Ben Tyler, with the Adams County Treasurer's office for 40 years, used to bag the county money every day at noon, put on his hat, and walk down the street from the courthouse with the bag in his hand. He deposited the money in the First Bank of Brighton on the northwest corner of Main and Bridge streets. Tyler was known by many people as he lived in Brighton with his wife, Lena, and two children. As he walked to the bank, people would wave and toot their car horns. Tyler would tip his hat to each of them. Today, armored cars do this job. Employees remember sending out tax notices to farmers in Adams County using an address-o-graph machine. Starting in November, everyone in the office would prepare tax notices to be sent out in the middle of January. Each letter of the name had to be placed by hand in a typesetter, then ink was fed to the machine and the machine was cranked by hand. Each notice was larger than legal-size paper and consisted of three pages. One page went to the homeowner to keep, one page was sent back to the county, and the last page was used as a receipt. To modernize the system in the 1960s, huge IBM computers with key punches were installed on the second floor. When in operation, they would shake the entire building clear down to the basement. It was feared the weight of the machines would cause structural damage, so the machines were moved to the Annex/ Facilities Building in the southeast area of the parking lot.

In 1961, the courtrooms moved into the new Hall of Justice building in the county complex on Bridge Street. Today, the round Hall of Justice building houses a Brighton Charter School. The county administrative offices remained in the courthouse. In 1975 the Adams County Board of Commissioners approved construction of a new building further south on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The old courthouse was sold to Frank Mann in exchange for 527 acres that became the Adams County Regional Park. During this time, Brighton was looking for new quarters to house the city government. Ron Hellbusch, then city manager, was instrumental in getting city officials to consider using the old courthouse for a city hall. Frank Mann sold the building to the city for \$175,000. To accommodate new quarters for the city, some immediate renovations were necessary. To make the somewhat dismal interior more presentable, the city completed some painting and floor-finishing repairs. A new boiler was installed and it was suggested that treated water be used. A boiler could last 50 years with treated water and 10 years with untreated water. Gutters were replaced on the south side of the building. The building had been wired in 1907 and rewired over the years, but it was apparent that new wiring was again needed. A brick shaft for an elevator was installed on the exterior of the east wall around 1977 to make the building ADA-accessible. The rest of the renovations were spread out over five years. Part of the building was leased and the rent paid for the \$20,000 due each year to pay off the mortgage. The Municipal Building was

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dedicated to the citizens of Brighton on September 11, 1977, to serve the needs of the people. A county government began and a city government continued in a building that is 100 years old in 2006. It is a tribute to the craftsmen who created this grand building.

During the decades that the Adams County Courthouse in Brighton served as the county seat of government, the Adams County Commissioners and committees met frequently there to discuss and vote upon many issues critical to the county's proper functioning and development. Inside these walls, people implemented county government policies and practices and planned the future of the county. From this building, the sheriff worked to protect the community and county from a variety of hazards. The judicial courts decided the fates of individuals within the county. The first elected sheriff, J.P. Higgins, occupied his own jail for failure to pay a fine for contempt of court. The Adams County Courthouse/Brighton City Hall has served for 100 years as the center of the county and city of Brighton in administrative and community functions. The building represents the early maturation of Adams County and Brighton into a thriving center of agriculture and commerce and its first successful democratic effort to create an adequate home for local and county services.

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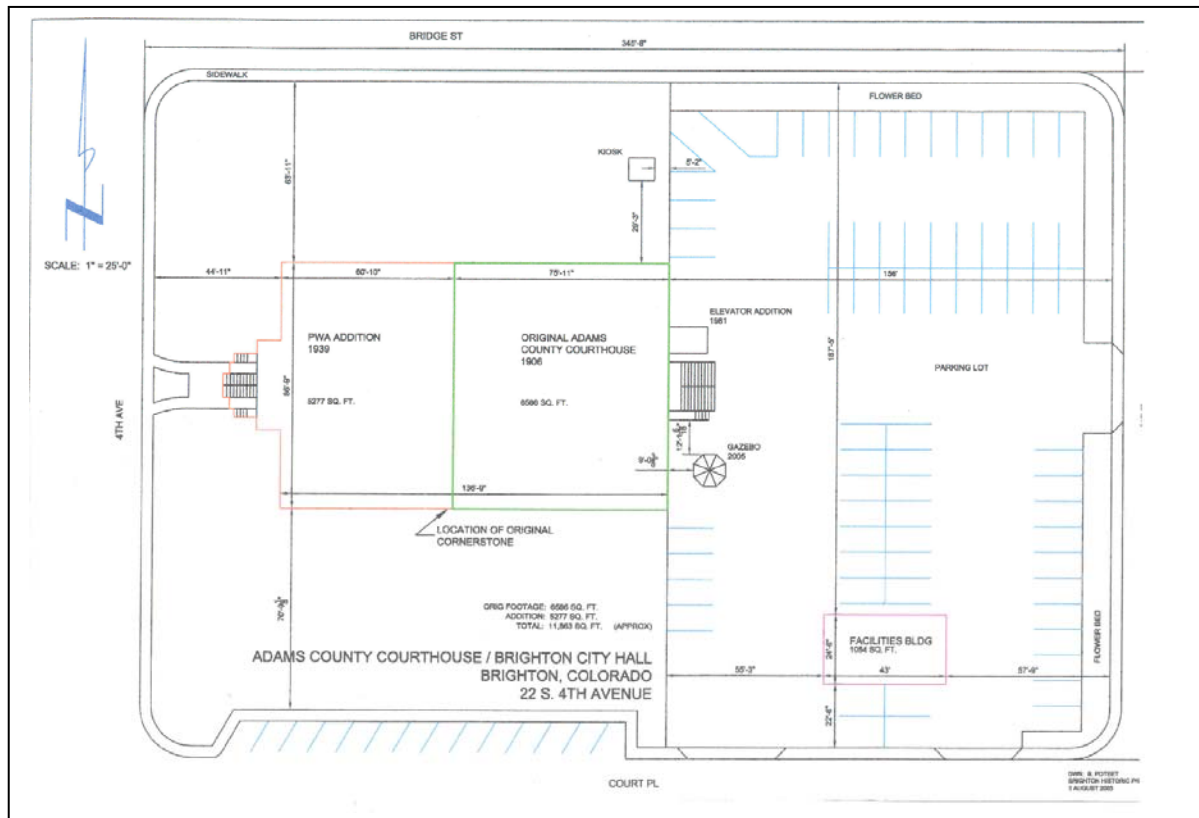
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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

SUB:WALNUT GROVE SECOND ADD DESC: BLK 25 N OF CT PL DESC AS BEG 70 FT E AND 35 FTS OF NW COR NW4 SEC7 TH S ALG E LN OF 4<sup>TH</sup> ST TOWN OF BRIGHTON 215 FT TH E 320 FT TH N 215 FT TO S LN BRIDGE ST TH W 320 FT TO POB.

**SITE PLAN**



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### PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-14 except as noted:

Name of Property: Adams County Courthouse  
Location: Adams County, Colorado  
Photographer: Brian Poteet  
Date of Photographs: March 4, 2006  
Negatives: Brighton City Hall

Photo No.                      Photographic Information

- 1 View of west façade, camera facing east.
- 2 View of north elevation, camera facing southeast.
- 3 View of east elevation, camera facing west.
- 4 View of south elevation, camera facing northeast.
- 5 View of window, lintel with keystone.
- 6 Tuscan column and pediment detail.
- 7 Tuscan column base detail.
- 8 Interior- 1906 radiator on 1<sup>st</sup> floor.
- 9 Interior- 1906 safe in basement.
- 10 Interior- Original door to Judges' Chambers on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.
- 11 Interior- Original door to Library on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.
- 12 Interior- Heritage Room ceiling on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.
- 13 View of original west façade frieze taken in the attic.
- 14 View of west facade at night, camera facing east.

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**USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**  
Brighton Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series

