



OCEAN COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

OCEAN COUNTY JAIL (SHERIFF'S HOUSE)

1851 - 1857 - 1923 - 1939



Photo Credit: August 1, 1909 Ocean County Collection



Ocean County Court House and Sheriff's House c. 1904. Oil painting, Joyce Lawrence, 1998.

The Ocean County Jail (Sheriff's House) was constructed in 1851 for \$4,250 with eight jail cells (9'L x 5'W x 9'H). After the incorporation of Ocean County in February of 1850, the combination jail, office and residence was the second public building constructed after the Court House. Both buildings were based on plans by architect Robert Aikens borrowed from Hudson County. "After the construction was completed, the Hudson County architectural plans were entrusted to a local man to be returned. He did not get too far out of town on horseback before he stopped off at Hyers Tavern in Jackson. The plans have never been seen since."

Architectural	
Present day Justice Complex encompasses the original Jail & Sheriff's House building	Significant architectural features
	1. 1851 door and doorway
Original design taken from the Sheriff's office in Hudson County after Freeholders visited that site in 1850	2. Colonial revival fireplace & mantel
A representation of 20th century colonial revival aesthetics as imposed on early federal/Greek revival buildings	3. Detention cell door
	4. Paneled ceiling of livingroom
	5. Building layout with family quarters adjacent to detention rooms

Illustrations: Yezzi Associates, LLC

The structure underwent three additional builds. In 1857, a two story frame kitchen wing was added to the east façade of the house and jail. The County solicited bids for the design and construction of a major expansion in 1922. Due to bids coming in several thousand dollars over budget, the ornate 1922 design was scaled back. From 1939, various changes were made to the structure. The final structure was an example of a 20th century Colonial Revival aesthetic imposed on a Federal/Greek Revival building.

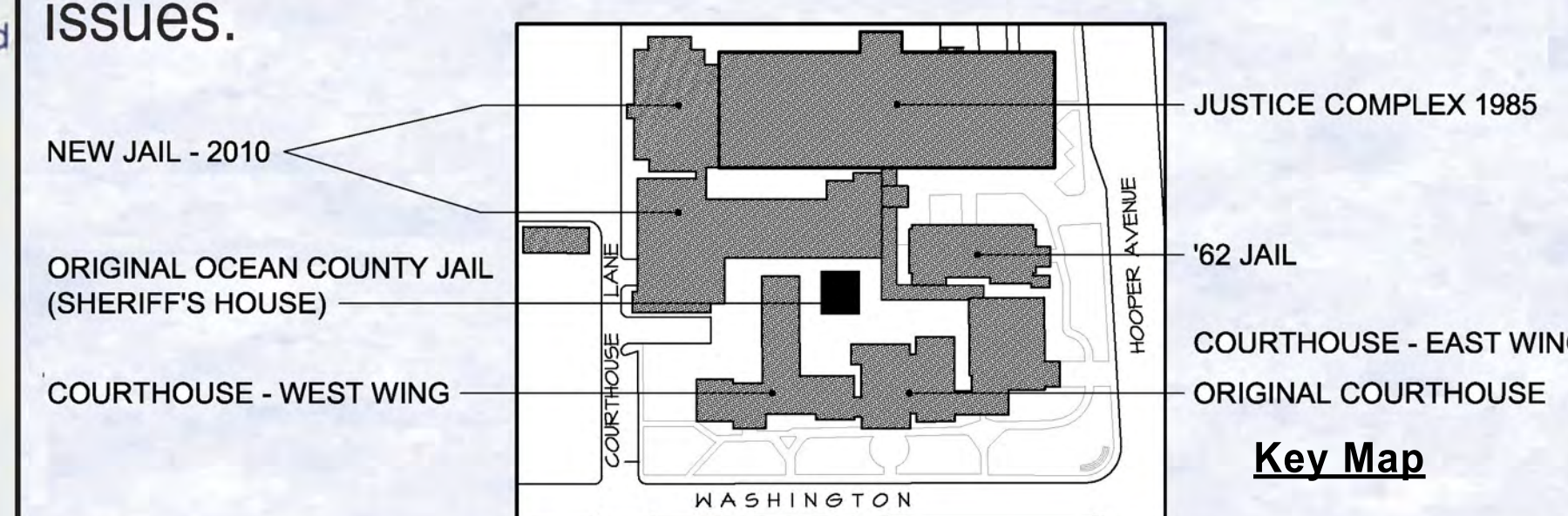
The structure is an example of the incarceration method that physically merged the Sheriff's residence with the detention facilities in one building. The Sheriff's wife would actually cook the food for the inmates. The average cost per inmate was about \$1,000 per year. The Sheriff's children played in the room next to the cells.

The bell in the Cupola on top of the building was rung to alert the village when a prisoner escaped. A number of prison escapes were attempted. Two prisoners removed bricks under a window and another prisoner dug with his wash basin under the wall below the flag stones to gain his freedom. The original bell was loaned to the Cedar Grove United Methodist Church in Toms River.

The multiple expansions of the Ocean County Justice Complex completely surrounded and therefore isolated the structure from public accessibility due to security issues.

Historical	
When Ocean County was formed by an act of the legislature in 1850, the first Freeholders decided that the Courthouse and the Sheriff's House were essential to operating the new County. It was the second structure built after the Ocean County Courthouse.	
As the County grew, so did the Ocean County Justice Complex, including the new Jail. These buildings have encompassed the original Jail & Sheriff's building	

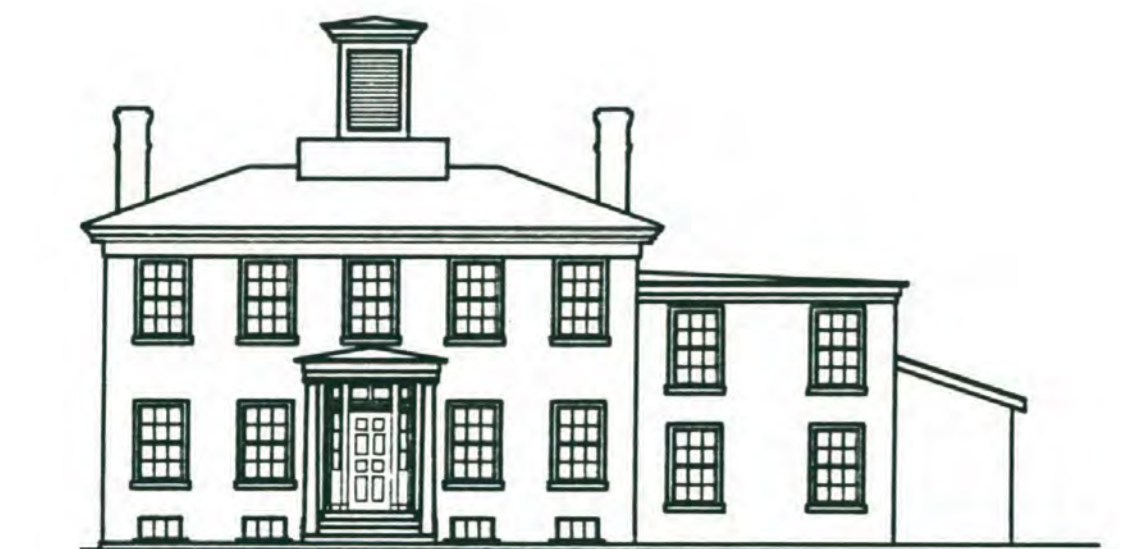
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References taken from **Ocean County: Four Centuries in the Making**, Ocean County Printing and Graphics, 2000 and Yezzi Associates, LLC report 2013.



FIRST BUILD 1851



SECOND BUILD 1857



THIRD BUILD 1923



FOURTH BUILD 1939 - 1986

Building Elevations:
Watson and Henry Associates: **Historic Structures Report** 1992

The NJ Historic Sites Council authorized the demolition of the Ocean County Jail (Sheriff's House) on April 11, 2014 (Resolution 2013-357) with several conditions including creating interpretative signage. The building was on the New Jersey (SR 6/17/1981) and National (NR 8/16/1983) registers of historic places. The building was vacated in 1986 due to structural instability. Ocean County retained the historic architectural firm of Watson and Henry Associates of Bridgeton, NJ to prepare an exhaustive "Historic Structure Report" completed in January 1992. On April 29, 2004 the Board of Chosen Freeholders applied for financial support from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust



Photo Credit: Yezzi Associates, LLC

Fund to renovate the building. This application was not selected to be funded. County architects have conducted additional rehabilitation studies. In May of 2014, the building Inspector deemed the building unsafe and recommended demolition. The building was demolished in 2018 and certain architectural fragments were saved for future reconstruction.



Photo Credit: Yezzi Associates, LLC