

DORCHESTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
206 High Street  
Cambridge  
Dorchester County  
Maryland

HABS MD-1425  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## DORCHESTER COUNTY COURT HOUSE

HABS No. MD-1425

- Location: 206 High Street, Cambridge, Dorchester County, Maryland. The Dorchester County Courthouse is located at latitude: 38.572014, longitude: -76.075718. This point was obtained in 2016, using Google Earth (WGS84). There is no restriction on its release to the public.
- Significance: The Dorchester County Courthouse was built in 1852 and is significant as the work of prominent Boston architect, Richard Upjohn. It is an excellent example of Italianate architecture and includes many of the defining characteristics of the style. By choosing the nationally known Upjohn, Dorchester County officials signaled the economic importance of Maryland's lower eastern shore in the antebellum era.
- Description: Dorchester County Courthouse has a three-part front elevation, with each corner accented by quoins. The recessed center section has three round arch doorways on the ground floor outlined by thick moldings springing from pilasters. The north section is a three-story tower with a low pyramidal roof while the two-story south section shares a shallow hipped roof with the center. The brick is painted yellow with strong horizontal lines provided by belt courses at each floor.
- History: Founded in 1669, Dorchester County was a thriving agricultural and maritime settlement during the Colonial period. Court was being held in the county seat of Cambridge as early as 1695. A brick courthouse built during the 1770s burned in 1852, prompting city officials set about commissioning a replacement on the same site. Richard Upjohn, the prominent Boston architect, provided plans for a new Italianate government building. His composition included characteristic features of the style such as a square tower placed asymmetrically, round arch openings, and wide eaves with bracketed gables. Upjohn was best known for his ecclesiastical architecture, as well as his skilled use of a variety of mid-19th century revival modes.
- While the original Upjohn design is still apparent on the exterior, extensive interior renovations took place in the twentieth century, particularly during the 1930s. These changes, which favored a Georgian Revival approach, were overseen by Baltimore architect William F. Stone, Jr. Stone's alterations included additions to the southeast elevation of Upjohn's original structure.
- Sources: Tolley, Allen B. and Michael Bourne, "Dorchester County Courthouse," Salisbury, Dorchester County, Maryland. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1982.
- Historian(s): Lisa P. Davidson, Historian, HABS, 2016