

POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Columbus, NC

Owner: Polk County Board of Commissioners
Architect: Harris Architects, PLLC

Built in 1859, this courthouse is a fine example of vernacular Greek Revival architecture and is the oldest surviving courthouse in Western NC. After years of weathering and poor repairs, the exterior was in poor condition with an actively leaking roof.

The first phase of construction restored the original cupola based upon detailed physical investigation and historic photographs. The Italian Palladian cupola is one feature of the Courthouse that is not of the Greek Revival style. The arched "window" is called Palladian and was named after Andrea Palladio, an Italian Renaissance architect.

Housed inside the cupola is the cast bronze bell that was used to ring when announcing court was in session and election results were in. Sometime in the middle 1980's complaints caused the ringing bell to stop. The Courthouse bell has remained upside down ever since a mischievous student pulled a little too hard on the rope used to ring it.

Construction returned missing details, installed new flashing and roofing, and repaired and repainted the wood siding with work completed on time and within budget.

