OMB Control No. 1024-0018
expiration date 03/31/2026

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Ashley County Courthouse
Other names/site number: AS0164
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 205 E Jefferson St
City or town: Hamburg State: AR County: Ashley
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national **___statewide** **✓ local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A **___B** **✓ C** **___D**

Scott Kaufman 8-16-23

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

OMB Control No. 1024-0018
expiration date 03/31/2026

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

1. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

2. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: ☐

Public – Local ☑

Public – State ☐

Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) ☑

District ☐

Site ☐

Structure ☐

Object ☐

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
1		structures
1	1	objects
4	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

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3. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
GOVERNMENT/courthouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
GOVERNMENT/courthouse

4. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
MODERN MOVEMENT/New Formalism

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Glass (windows), Brick (veneer), Cast Concrete (façade)

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Ashley County Courthouse is located in Hamburg, Ashley County, at 205 E. Jefferson Street. The Courthouse consists of the main structure, rectangular in form, that is connected via a covered walkway to an annex building that houses the state revenue office and the Ashley County Cooperative Extension Service. The two buildings were constructed in 1969 by Renshaw & Taylor Architects, a firm based out of North Little Rock. The Courthouse also has a war memorial built by the Veterans of Foreign Wars in 2000 on the southeast corner of the lot. Both the Courthouse and the Annex have hipped roofs made of sheet metal. The Courthouse is a two-story, steel-frame, brick building with cast-concrete accents and a full basement, while the Annex is a one-story building. The Courthouse and Annex have wide, cast-concrete cornices and brick beams that flank the windows and doors and support the overhanging cornice, though the Courthouse has rounded corners. The windows are all stationary with larger plate-glass panels on the top and a smaller, square window below.

The buildings have hipped metal roofs that were installed in 2006 due to water seepage that had damaged the original flat roof. The original front fountain has also been refaced on the inside

with concrete. The Courthouse has seen little to no change in the interior of the building, besides some maintenance. The courtrooms have kept their original wall paneling and the specially designed acoustic lighting fixtures. The terrazzo floors, jail cells, and interior staircase have also not been modified in any significant way since their construction in 1969.

Narrative Description

COURTHOUSE (contributing – building)

South Façade (Front)

The south façade is symmetrically arranged with a center pair of glass doors that have a pane of glass in the middle and three panes above the doors. The doors are set in a recessed face of cast concrete with "ASHLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE" in silver metal letters above. The seal of Ashley County is above the metal letters. On either side of the main doors, the façade features three pairs of recessed concrete faces with brick beams separating the faces, and the pairs are equally spaced from each other. The recessed faces have stationary, plate glass windows that stretch the entire height of the building. The second-floor panes cover the entire floor with a smaller window below. The first-floor windows mostly take up the entire first-floor height with a smaller pane on the top and bottom of the main window. The rest of the façade is covered by red brick in a running bond, but the top five courses nearest the roof are concrete molded into recessed squares.

East Façade (Side)

The east façade has four equally spaced columns that support the roof and the covered walkway to the annex sits between the two inner columns. There are three pairs of recessed concrete faces with brick beams separating the faces, and the pairs are equally spaced from each other. Within each recessed face, the second-floor level is blank concrete. The pair of faces on the left have stationary, single-pane windows with plate glass. Instead of windows, the innermost faces are taken up by a double door that leads into the courthouse from the covered walkway. On the right of the façade, there is a one-story, enclosed room that protrudes from the façade. It has a metal shed roof and no windows. The enclosed room and the rest of the façade are covered by red brick in a running bond, but the top five courses nearest the roof on the main façade are concrete molded into recessed squares.

North Façade (Rear)

The north façade has eight square columns that support the roof. The façade is faced in brick with a running bond, but the top five courses nearest the roof are concrete molded into recessed squares. There are seven pairs of recessed concrete faces with brick beams separating the faces, and the pairs are equally spaced from each other. The leftmost and rightmost pairs have windows identical to the south façade. The next inner pair on the left and right are blank concrete on the second floor with a single door and a stationary, plate-glass window on the first-floor level. From the innermost three pairs are obstructed on the first floor by a one-story, brick addition, original to the courthouse. Above the addition on the second floor, the three pairs have stationary, plate-glass windows that stretch the entire height of the building between the roof and the addition. The leftmost and rightmost faces of the inner three pairs are blank concrete.

The addition has no fenestration on any of its elevations. It has a wide concrete cornice and is faced with brick set in a running bond.

West Façade (Side)
The west façade has four equally spaced columns that support the roof and there is limited parking just past the columns. There are three pairs of recessed concrete faces with brick beams separating the faces, and the pairs are equally spaced from each other. Within each recessed face, the second-floor level is blank concrete, and the first floor has stationary, single-pane windows with plate glass. There is an exterior staircase that extends along the façade, providing access to the basement. The basement level has a metal door that is padlocked and identical stationary windows to the first floor along the right side of the basement level. The rest of the façade is covered by red brick in a running bond, but the top five courses nearest the roof are concrete molded into recessed squares.

ANNEX (contributing – building)
South Façade (Front)
The south façade has a protruding block that is centered on the façade. Both it and the main façade are void of fenestration with brick set in a running bond with a course of soldier bricks at the bottom above the concrete foundation.

East Façade (Side)
Three stationary windows are set to the right side of the façade, and another is to the left of centerline. There is a double metal door to the left of the façade. The rest of the façade is blank brick, and all the windows and doors are flanked by brick beams. The façade of the protruding block is set with three recessed stationary windows.

North Façade (Rear)
The north façade has three, equally spaced, stationary windows under a wide, cast-concrete cornice. The rest of the façade is red brick set in running bond with a course of soldier bricks at the bottom above the concrete foundation. On the left side of the façade, there is a double metal door. The door and the windows are framed by brick beams.

West Façade (Side)
The west façade of the Annex is connected to the Courthouse by the covered walkway on the far right of the facade. The main entrance into the building is through the double glass doors with sidelights and transom that are recessed into the façade under where the covered walkway meets the Annex. The portion of the façade to the right of the covered walkway is blank brick. On the right of the walkway, there are three more, equally spaced stationary windows with flanking brick beams. There is another double glass door with sidelights and transom to the left of the third stationary window. This door provides access to the state revenue office. To the left of the double doors, there is a final stationary window with flanking brick beams.

The protruding block has three recessed stationary windows that dominate the west facade.

WAR MEMORIAL (non-contributing – object)

The war memorial is set on the southeast corner of the Courthouse plaza. The memorial is set on a quarter-round circle of brick pavers with two concrete benches on the circular edge. Two rectangular granite blocks are set on the south and east straight sections of the brick pavers and are connected in the southeast corner by a larger granite slab with a triangular top. The south and east walls are inscribed with the names of fallen military servicemembers from Ashley County. The corner stone is inscribed "In memory of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice" and the triangular top has the inscription "LEST WE FORGET" along with the seals of the five miliary services. The memorial was constructed in 2000 and was funded by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9360 and private donations.

PARKING LOT (contributing – structure)

The parking lot was constructed concurrently with the Courthouse. As the main reason for the location of the Courthouse away from the main square, the Parking Lot is considered a contributing resource. The parking lot is located behind the Courthouse to the north and was originally two parking lots according to the architectural model. Whether that plan was immediately scrapped or the two lots were later combined into one is unknown. A narrow, paved area to the west of the Courthouse was also paved and is now used for maintenance and employee parking.

FOUNTAIN (contributing – object)

The fountain is located to the south of the main entrance to the Courthouse. It consists of two rectangular brick basins, one slightly higher than the other. The fountains were coated inside the basin with concrete in the last five years in order to address a leakage issue. The fountain is original to the Courthouse and is contributing due to its significance as a landscape aspect that was important to New Formalist architecture.

Setting

Ashley County Courthouse is located in the town of Hamburg, Ashley County, Arkansas, and is one block north of the Hamburg Commercial Historic District (NR listed 3/23/2009) boundary. The main town square, which has always been the commercial heart of the town, is two blocks south of the Courthouse. The buildings in the commercial district are brick, early twentieth-century commercial structures, eighteen of which were constructed before 1920. Two other municipal buildings, the post office and the police department, are located across the street to the south of the Courthouse. They are both Plain Traditional in style with buff-colored bricks and hipped roofs, likely built in the 1980s or later. Based on several pedestrian and Google Earth surveys in 2019 and 2022, no other building in Hamburg has been classified as being built in the New Formalist style, making the Courthouse an eye-catching sight due to its height and architectural form.

The Courthouse itself has a landscaped plaza in front of the building adjacent to the south façade. There is a brick and concrete fountain (original to the property) and symmetrical walkways around the Courthouse that lead to the main entrance, Annex, and parking lots. The Courthouse has a large parking lot to the north of the building on the back, as well as a smaller lot for employees and work vehicles to the west. The main façade of the building is slightly obscured by

several mature oak trees that were planted in the early 2000s, as well as two larger trees in the plaza itself.

Interior

Upon entering the Courthouse through the main entrance, there is a floating staircase on the right that winds around a wood-paneled elevator shaft. The space beneath the staircase has been bounded by a course of bricks and filled with river stones. The floors are mainly terrazzo tile on the first floor, while the courtrooms and meeting spaces on the second floor have carpet. The second floor has two courtrooms on the east side of the building, and the courtrooms are unique in Arkansas for their circular shape. They also still retain the acoustic ceiling light that amplifies sound without the need for microphones. There is a large conference room with original carpeting and paneling in the north part of the building. The jail cells on the second floor are plain concrete and can be accessed by a doorway next to the courtrooms and through the warden's office next to the conference room. The basement, used for storage, housed the "drunk tank" with a shower and toilets, a few solitary confinement cells, and women's cells, all of which are still there.

Integrity

The Ashley County Courthouse has seen few renovations since it was built in 1969. The only major alteration was the replacement of the roof in 2006. The original roof was flat, a characteristic feature of New Formalism, but the replacement roof is a hipped roof with sheet metal. However, the pitch of the hipped roof is extremely shallow and almost invisible at ground-level; the Courthouse roof still looks like a flat roof when viewed at ground-level. The exterior appearance of the building and the landscaping have also seen minor changes. The fountain has been refaced with concrete at some point in the past, and some of the plaza has been lost to additional parking space.

The Courthouse still retains much of its historic integrity. The windows are original to the building and there have been no additions added to the Courthouse or the Annex. The interior features are likewise intact from 1969. The two courtrooms still have their original acoustic ceiling lights, and the wood panels are still present throughout the building. The jail cells are also intact, though some of the bars have been removed for easier access and to create larger storage spaces. The first-floor terrazzo tiles and the staircase to the second floor are intact and original. Even the elevator itself has not been replaced. Despite the replacement of the roof and some changes to the exterior landscaping, the Ashley County Courthouse has kept the majority of its historic features and has retained both its integrity and character-defining features of a New Formalist structure.

5. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [✓] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1969

Significant Dates
1969 – Construction completed

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Renshaw & Taylor, Architects
Simmons & Sons (builder)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The current Ashley County Courthouse is the fifth courthouse in Hamburg and the first to not be constructed in the main square. When the 1924 courthouse's foundations began cracking and water leaking from the roof, the county decided to demolish it and build a new courthouse off the main square. The courthouse Planning Committee settled on the design put forward by Renshaw & Taylor Architects, a firm out of North Little Rock. The courthouse, with a jail in the basement, and annex were completed in 1969 for a total of $750,000. The New Formalism style the two architects chose for the courthouse was a highly popular one for government buildings in the 1960s and 70s and grew out of some architects' dissatisfaction with the reigning International style. Rather than rejecting Classical forms, New Formalism attempted to modernize past styles by simplifying and abstracting their forms or by adapting them to new building materials and technologies.

The Ashley County Courthouse exhibits many of the characteristic features of New Formalism. The façade is symmetrical in arrangement, the columns are unadorned, and the building is set on a raised platform base with a fountain and plaza in front, giving the Courthouse an imposing presence. The interior is characterized by wood panels and terrazzo floors, and the exterior uses cast concrete that simulates more expensive cast-stone. The two round court rooms are the only ones of their type in Arkansas and feature special acoustical ceiling fixtures that amplify sound without the use of a microphone or speaker. The combination of modern materials with simplified forms highlighted the symbolic and communal importance of the Courthouse, harkening back to historic architectural motifs that suggested republican ideas while implying a forward march into the future through the application of new building technologies. For its excellent New Formalist architecture, the Ashley County Courthouse is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C: Architecture** with **local significance**.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

The land of Ashley County had always been a productive area for crops and wild game and was inhabited for thousands of years prior to European immigration by various Native American groups. The Quapaw were the last to live in the area and had to cede their control of the land in Ashley County in 1818 in an unequitable treaty, which opened the land to European settlement.[1]

[1] Deirdre Kelley and Bill Norman, "Ashley County," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/ashley-county-746/, accessed 18 May 2023.

Incorporated in 1848, Ashley County only had 2,058 residents by 1850, despite being the sixth-largest county by area.[2]

Due to its fertile land, Ashley County relied heavily on agricultural produce to underpin its economy, and cotton, rice, soybeans, wheat, and grain sorghum were the staple crops.[3] The cultivation of cash crops was a labor-intensive industry, and as a result, Ashley County had many enslaved persons who worked in the fields, approximately 3,761 African Americans to 4,829 whites.[4] Timber harvesting also became a lucrative trade, and Ashley County became home to the Crossett Lumber Company, one of the largest industrial enterprises in Arkansas in the 1890s.[5] Timber continues to be Ashley County's most important economic export and the industry employs a full 26% of the county.[6]

When the county was incorporated in 1848, legislation was included stipulating that the county seat had to be within five miles of the county's geographic center.[7] As there was no pre-existing town in that area, Ashley County platted out the new settlement of Hamburg in 1849 and named it as the county seat.[8] Like the county at large, Hamburg's economy was based on agriculture and timber, and a few paper and sawmills operated in the town as well. The town grew from 747 residents in 1880 to nearly 3,000 in 1960, and despite the loss of population as farms closed and jobs moved away, Hamburg remains the educational and political center of Ashley County.[9]

The current Ashley County Courthouse is the fifth courthouse in Hamburg and the first to not be constructed in the main square. From 1849 to 1854, court was held in Fountain Hill at the home of Isaac Denson who received $5 per session for the use of his property and then at the home of S.F. Maines in Hamburg. The county commissioners secured the funds to construct a proper courthouse in 1850 in Hamburg, but construction didn't begin until four years later.[10] The log building cost about $5,000 and was used as the courthouse, schoolhouse, and church.[11] It burned down in 1869 and this time was swiftly replaced with a $14,000, two-story, brick structure with a cupola and front and back porches.[12] This courthouse survived until 1905, when population growth in the county prompted Hamburg to construct a new, larger courthouse. F. W. Gibbs

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[2] Rev. Silas Emmett Lucas, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas* (St. Louis, MO: Goodspeed, 1890), pp. 874.
[3] *Ibid*, pp. 878.
[4] *Ibid*, pp. 882.
[5] Deirdre Kelley and Bill Norman, "Ashley County," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/ashley-county-746/, accessed 18 May 2023.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] David Moyers, "Hamburg (Ashley County)." *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/hamburg-822/, accessed 18 May 2023.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] "Ashley County," *Association of Arkansas Counties*, https://www.arcounties.org/counties/ashley/, accessed 19 May 2023.
[10] Rev. Silas Emmett Lucas, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas* (St. Louis, MO: Goodspeed, 1890), pp. 876.
[11] *El Dorado Times*, "Crossett's City Council Will Consider Bid for Courthouse," (El Dorado, AR: 13 Nov. 1965), pp. 2.
[12] "Images for Ashley County Courthouse," *Courthousehistory.com*, https://courthousehistory.com/gallery/states/arkansas/counties/ashley, accessed 19 May 2023.

designed the third courthouse with a belfry and clock tower in an Italianate style, but it burned down in 1921. The fourth and final courthouse constructed on the square was built in 1924 at a cost of $120,000 and designed by architect Charles Thompson.[13] The courthouse served the community for another forty-one years, but the structure developed major problems in the 1960s. "Cracks extend from its foundations up the side walls, its roof leaks, and there is no longer room for the many services demanded by the exploding population of the county," declared the *El Dorado Times* in 1965.[14]

W. T. Higginbotham, the presiding county judge, appointed a sixteen-person Building Committee in addition to the four Commissioners of Public Buildings to oversee all aspects of building a new courthouse, including finding an architect and selecting the building site. The latter proved especially contentious. Since 1854, the courthouse had been located at the geographic center of the county, reducing travel time for residents that lived nearer Louisiana or in the corners of the large county. When Crossett's City Council approved a resolution to recommend that the courthouse be moved to Crossett, there was "strenuous opposition from the eastern part of the county."[15] In addition to the city move, the Planning Committee had another location change to consider: that of remaining in the main square. While some residents wanted the courthouse to stay in the same spot as per tradition, others pointed out the need for more parking and space for the expansion of facilities, should they be required. The Planning Committee considered both proposals in its December 1965 meeting, and ultimately decided that the courthouse would remain in Hamburg but be moved outside the main square.[16] The new location of the courthouse was a block and a half from the square, a compromise between the two opposing opinions, with enough parking for a modern facility yet still within walking distance of the main square.

With the location settled, the Planning Committee began looking for an architect in 1966, awarding the contract to the newly founded firm of Renshaw & Taylor Architects, based out of North Little Rock. Courtney M. Renshaw (1923-2018) was a native of Virginia and a respected student athlete who held the Virginia state record in the 100-yard dash. His athletic success earned him a scholarship to the University of Southern California where he began his studies in architecture, though they were cut short in 1942 when he was drafted into the 104th Infantry Division. Renshaw was captured and transported to a POW camp in Germany, where he spent six months before being released at the end of the war. Without the funds to continue his studies at the University of Southern California, Renshaw earned his architectural license in 1963 through self-study and soon founded his own architectural firm with Joe Byron Taylor in 1966.[17]

Joe Byron Taylor (1925-2018) lived in Texas for most of his childhood and never planned on attending college. Through the guidance of a Farm Service agent who recognized Taylor's ability

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[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *El Dorado Times*, "Crossett's City Council Will Consider Bid for Courthouse," (El Dorado, AR: 13 Nov. 1965), pp. 2.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] *Monroe Morning World*, "Committees Give Ideas on Building," (Monroe, LA: 18 Dec. 1965), pp. 19.
[17] "Courtney M. Renshaw," *Findagrave.com*, last updated 15 Aug. 2018, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/192332181/courtney-m.-renshaw, accessed 19 May 2023.

and mentored him, Taylor gained admission to Texas A&M University. Like Renshaw, Taylor's studies were put on hold when he entered the military in WWII as a paratrooper. Sent to the Pacific Theater, Taylor was waiting in the Philippines when the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, and he entered Japan with occupying forces after their surrender. Taylor returned to the U.S. and completed his degree in 1947. He settled in Little Rock with his wife and worked for Principal, Trapp, Clippard & Phelps until he left the firm to open his own practice with Renshaw.[18]

Besides the Ashley County Courthouse, the firm completed several other major projects, including Meadow Park Elementary School in North Little Rock (1967), the Magnolia Low Rent Housing Project in Magnolia (1969), and the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in North Little Rock (1970).[19] Renshaw and Taylor continued to work together until their respective retirements in the 1980s. Both passed away within months of each other in 2018.[20]

The courthouse and annex were completed in 1969 for a total of $750,000. With a jail in the basement, the county saved a significant sum by folding the new jail into the courthouse. The courthouse also featured county officials' offices, a jury room, a conference room, a law library, two court rooms, and the county judge's office. The round court rooms are the only ones of their type in Arkansas and feature special acoustical ceiling fixtures so that "no amplification of the human voice is necessary."[21] The courthouse was further designed so that corridors leading to or from the holding areas for prisoners never crossed public hallways. Prisoners could be unloaded in the basement, brought up by elevator to the second-floor courtrooms and back without ever crossing paths with the public.[22] Renshaw and Taylor's design was utilitarian, modern, and considerate of the specialized needs of a detainment facility.

The Ashley County Courthouse has not been majorly altered since its construction. The unique round court rooms with acoustic ceiling fixtures, the jail cells in the basement, and the main floor staircase have all been retained and speak to the building's excellent historic integrity. The most significant change was the replacement of the flat roof with a hipped roof in 2006, which was done due to the flat roof's problems with water leakage. The Ashley County Courthouse has remained in use as a courthouse and the office of the county judge, though the jails are now used only for storage and not for the detainment of offenders.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The New Formalism style the two architects chose for the courthouse was a highly popular one for government buildings in the 1960s and 1970s. The style grew out of some architects'

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[18] "Roll Call Tribute: Joe Taylor '47," *Aggie Network, Texas A&M University*, last updated 19 Oct. 2018, https://www.aggienetwork.com/news/149849/roll-call-tribute/, accessed 19 May 2023.
[19] R. R. Bowker, "1970 American Architects Directory third edition," https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20873518/1970+American+Architects+Directory, accessed 19 May 2023.
[20] "Courtney M. Renshaw," *Findagrave.com*, last updated 15 Aug. 2018, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/192332181/courtney-m.-renshaw, accessed 19 May 2023.
[21] Janice Clark, "Courthouse News Headliner," *Monroe Star* (Monroe, LA: 01 Jan. 1970), pp. 1.
[22] *Ibid.*

dissatisfaction with the reigning International style, and the most well-known proponents of New Formalism were Edward Durell Stone and Minoru Yamasaki. Rather than rejecting Classical forms, New Formalism attempted to modernize past styles by simplifying and abstracting their forms or by adapting them to new building materials and technologies.[23] New Formalist architecture frequently used Classical elements, such as the arch, columns and colonnades, and building proportion and scale, and carefully curated the sense of space to place emphasis on the building itself. Many were constructed on a raised base to further make the building look monumental in scale.[24] The vast majority of New Formalist structures were public buildings, as the larger massing did not lend itself well to residential architecture, although there are some significant examples in Texas designed by Edward Durrell Stone.[25]

In addition to the massing and Classical elements, New Formalist architecture returned to traditional materials or used cheaper materials like concrete or cast stone to imitate more expensive marble. Rich woods, terrazzo tiles, and marble or cast stone, were common building materials, and the walls of New Formalist structures were left smooth and blank to accentuate the simplicity and beauty of the materials themselves. Formal landscaping outside the structure and the incorporation of plazas, fountains, and sculptures also typified New Formalist buildings.[26]

In keeping with the simplicity of modern architecture, architects designing in the style would often use flat roofs, symmetrical elevations, and geometric shapes to update Classical motifs. Columns were slender and unadorned, providing a clear separation from Neoclassical design. Concrete or cast stone was a favorite material due to its plasticity and ability to be formed to whatever shape the architect desired.[27]

The Ashley County Courthouse exhibits many of the characteristic features of New Formalism. The façade is symmetrical in arrangement, the columns are unadorned, and the roof significantly overhangs the building. It is also set on a raised platform base with a fountain and plaza in front, giving the Courthouse an imposing presence. The materials used in the Courthouse are also in keeping with New Formalism. The interior is characterized by wood panels and terrazzo floors, and the exterior uses cast concrete that simulates more expensive cast-stone. The combination of new materials with simplified forms highlighted the symbolic and communal importance of the Courthouse, harkening back to historic architectural motifs that suggested republican ideas while implying a forward march into the future through the application of new building technologies.

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[23] Alan Higgins, "Architectural Movements of the Recent Past," in the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.
[24] "New Formalism, 1955-1975," *Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation*, https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/historic-buildings/architectural-style-guide/new-formalism, accessed 19 May 2023.
[25] Virginia Savage McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), pp. 664.
[26] "McGregor Memorial Conference Center," *National Park Service*, https://www.nps.gov/places/mcgregor-memorial-conference-center.htm, accessed 19 May 2023.
[27] "New Formalism, 1955-1975," *Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation*, https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/historic-buildings/architectural-style-guide/new-formalism, accessed 19 May 2023.

New Formalism was never a popular style of architecture in Arkansas, and less than thirty examples are listed in the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program's database. Only three other courthouses in Arkansas are classified as New Formalist: Cross County, Nevada, and Lawrence County Courthouses. The Cross County Courthouse has had a series of alterations to the windows, façade, and roof that make it ineligible for inclusion on the National Register. Both Nevada County Courthouse and Lawrence County Courthouse are listed on the National Register (listed 05/24/18 and 09/28/15, respectively).[28] The aforementioned courthouses are one-story structures and do not have the circular courtrooms that make Ashley County Courthouse distinctive. The Ashley County Courthouse is the only public building in the Hamburg vicinity that was constructed as a New Formalist building. A pedestrian survey of Hamburg conducted in April 2023 by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program and augmented by Google Maps confirmed the absence of other similar styled structures in the vicinity of the Courthouse.

As the only courthouse in Ashley County built in the New Formalist style, the Courthouse is a unique building in downtown Hamburg and a significant example of New Formalist architecture. The Courthouse also fits within the larger architectural context in Arkansas, as it was designed in a time when many architects were using New Formalism for civic buildings to present a modern, yet classical, aesthetic.[29] By employing New Formalist features, Renshaw and Taylor ensured that the building would continue the tradition of providing an impressive presence while still giving the courthouse a modern style. Thus, the Ashley County Courthouse is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C: Architecture** with **local significance** for its New Formalist architecture designed by Renshaw & Taylor Architects.

[28] David Collins, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Nevada County Courthouse," *Arkansas Historic Preservation Program*, 24 May 2018, https://www.arkansasheritage.com/docs/default-source/national-registry/ne0035_nr-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=3574bfe7_0, accessed 19 May 2023; Ralph Wilcox, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Lawrence County Courthouse," *Arkansas Historic Preservation Program*, 28 Sept. 2015, https://www.arkansasheritage.com/docs/default-source/national-registry/ne0035_nr-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=3574bfe7_0, accessed 08 Aug. 2023.

[29] *Ibid.*

6. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_✓__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): __ AS0164_____

7. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property One acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: Longitude:
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☑ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15	Easting: 612172	Northing: 3677142
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

COURSON & CLARK HAMBURG ORIGINAL PT BLK 1, REPLATTED TO BE LOTS 1,2,3,6,7,8,9,12,13,14,15,16,1 7 AND PART OF NORMAN STREET, ALL IN COURSON & CLARK. A PARCEL OF LAND DESCRIBED AS STARTING AT THE SE CORNER OF BLOCK 1 OF BUNN'S SURVEY OF THE ORIGINAL TOWN OF HAMBURG, ARKANSAS, THENCE RUN WEST ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF JEFFERSON AVENUE FOR 152 FT TO THE P.O.B.; THENCE RUN NORTH FOR 328 FT; THENCE RUN EAST FOR 27 FT; THENCE RUN NORTH FOR 40 FT TO NORTH SIDE OF NORMAN AVENUE AS PLATTED; THENCE RUN WEST FOR 27 FT; THENCE RUN NORTH FOR 126 FT TO NORTH LINE OF BLOCK 10 OF BUNN'S SURVEY; THENCE WEST FOR 258 FT, MORE OR LESS, TO THE NW CORNER OF SAID BLOCK 10; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY FOR 87 FT TO A POINT DUE NORTH OF THE NW CORNER OF BLOCK 2 OF THE ORGINAL TOWN OF HAMBURG, ARKANSAS; THENCE SOUTH 419.5 FT INTERSECTING THE NW CORNER OF SAID BLOCK 2 AND TO THE SW CORNER OF SAID BLOCK 2 AS LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF JEFFERSON AVENUE; THENCE EAST FOR 312 FT, MORE OR LESS, ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF JEFFERSON AVENUE, BACK TO P.O.B.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the land historically associated with the 1969 Ashley County Courthouse.

8. Form Prepared By

name/title: Megan Willmes, National Register Program Manager
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 1100 North Street
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72202
e-mail megan.willmes@arkansas.gov
telephone: (501) 324-9192
date: 08/15/2023

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

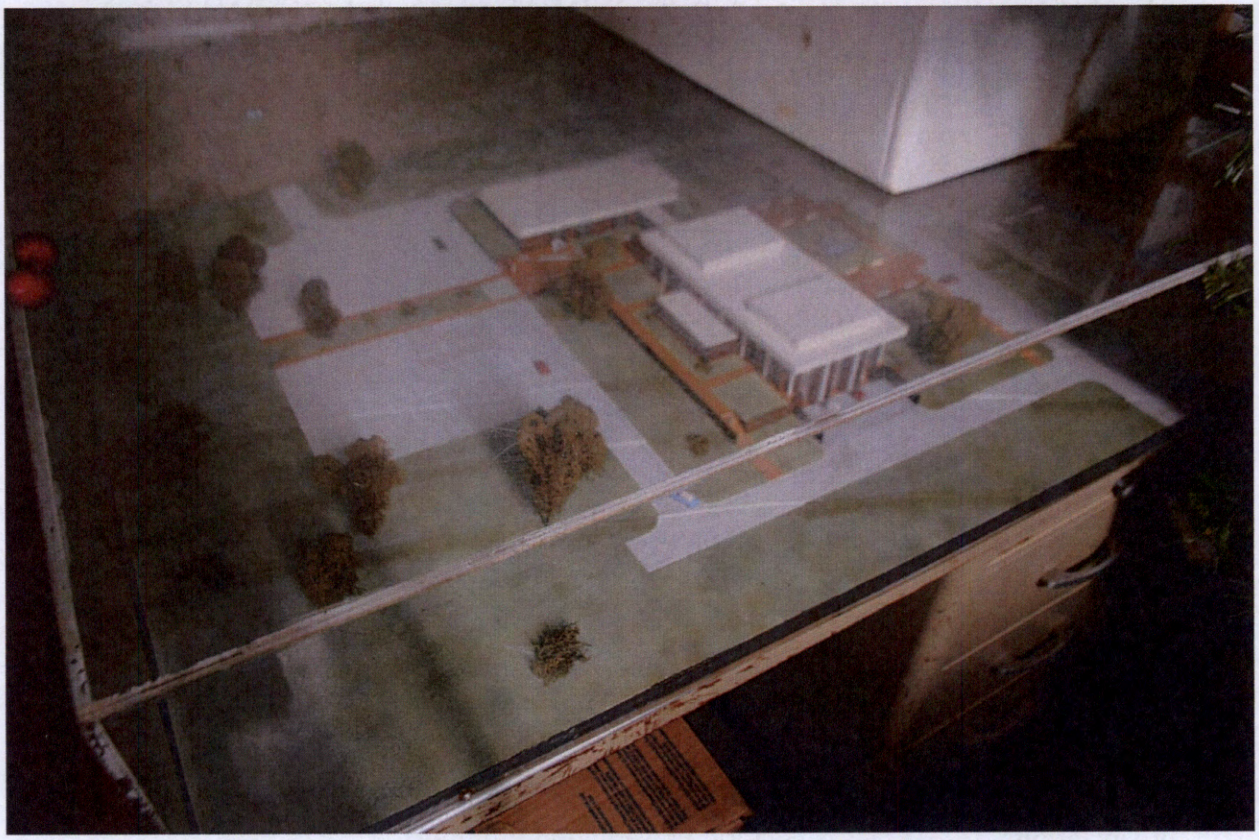


Figure 1: Photograph of the original architectural model for the Courthouse that is now stored in the basement (*photo taken by Ralph Wilcox of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program on 19 April 2023*).



Figure 2: The front of the Nevada County Courthouse (*photo taken by David Collins, graduate assistant, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 06 Sept. 2017*).



Figure 3: The front of the Lawrence County Courthouse (*photo taken by Ralph Wilcox of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program on 17 March 2015*).

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Ashley County Courthouse

City or Vicinity: Hamburg

County: Ashley State: Arkansas

Photographer: Ralph Wilcox

Date Photographed: 19 April 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of **17**. View of the south façade of the Courthouse, facing north.

2 of **18**. View of the south and west facades of the Courthouse, facing northeast.

3 of **18**. View of the west facade of the Courthouse, facing northeast.

4 of **18**. View of the north and west facades of the Courthouse, facing southeast.

5 of **18**. View of the north façade of the Courthouse, facing southwest.

6 of **18**. View of the south and east facades of the Courthouse, looking northwest.

7 of **18**. View of the Annex's south façade, looking northeast.

8 of **18**. View of the Annex's east façade looking northwest.

9 of **18**. View of the Annex's west façade, looking southeast.

10 of **18**. View of the Annex's north façade, looking south.

11 of **18**. View of the War Memorial, looking east.

12 of **18**. View of the War Memorial's back, looking southwest.

13 of **18**. View of the outside fountain, looking northeast.

14 of **18**. Detail of one of the courtrooms.

15 of **18**. Detail of the floating staircase to the second floor and elevator shaft.

16 of **18**. Detail of the main entrance and lobby.

17 of **18**. Detail of one of the jail cells in the basement.

18 of **18.** Detail of the dedication plaque inside the lobby.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

























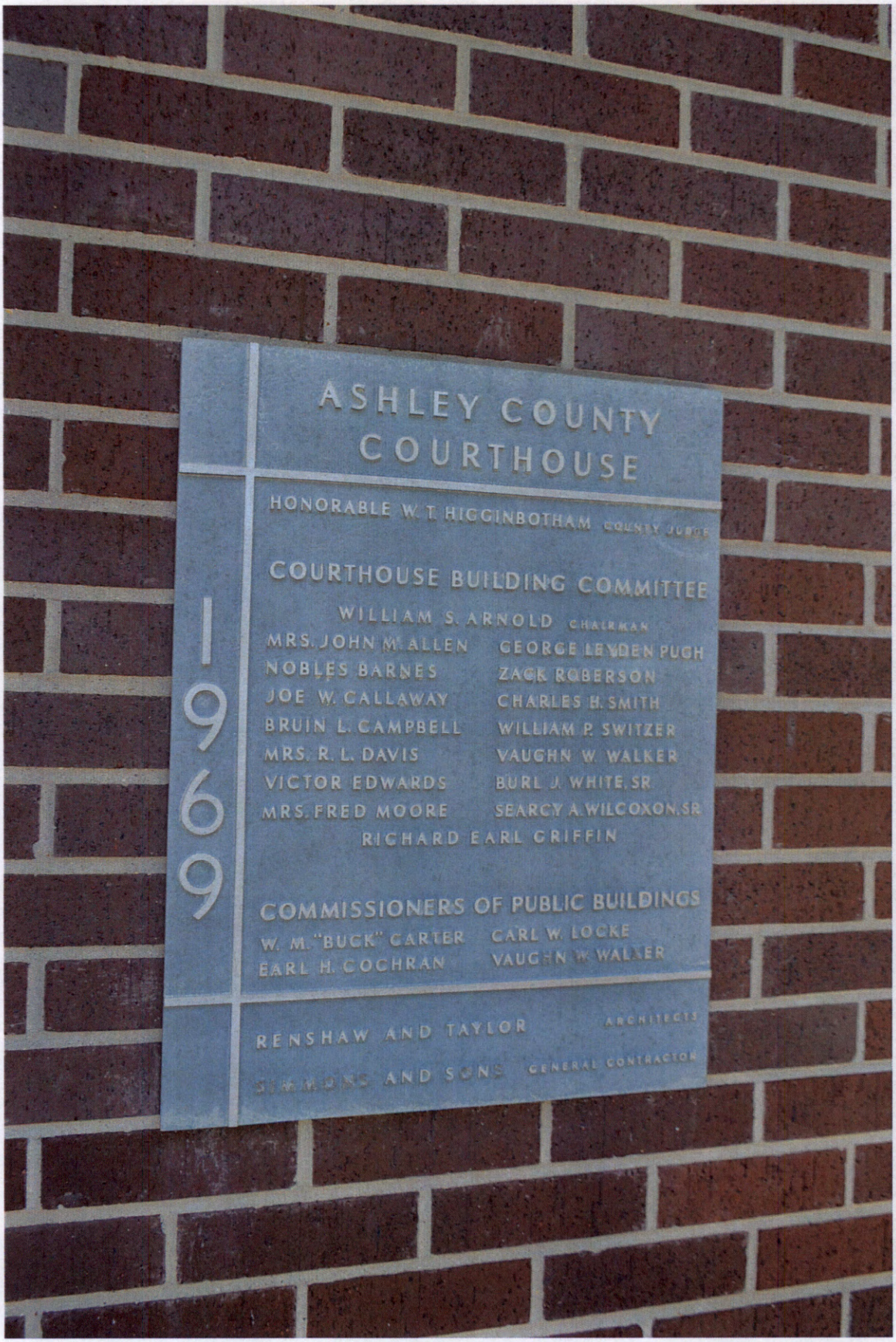




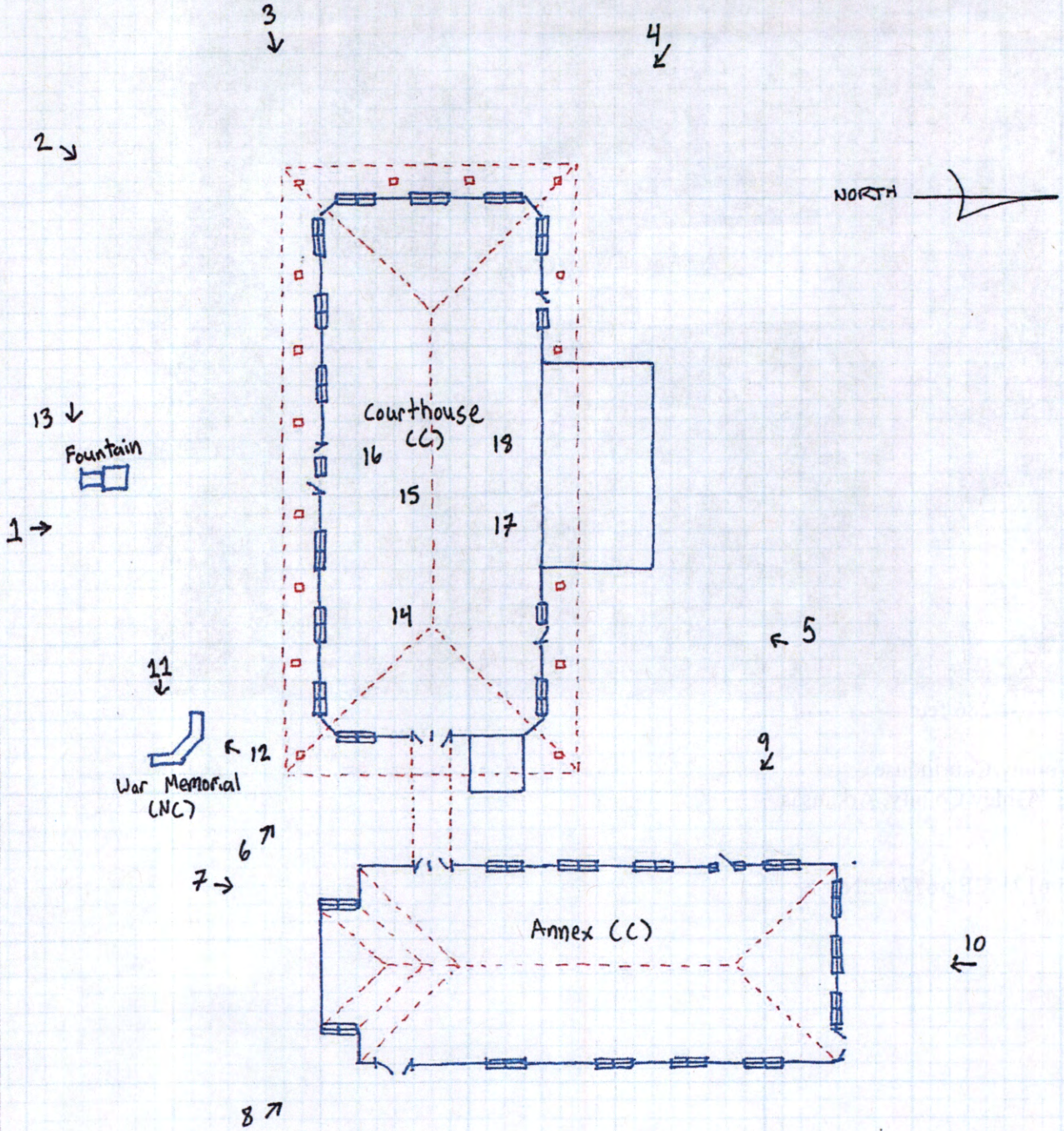



DIRECTORY




ASHLEY COUNTY
COURTHOUSE
HONORABLE W. T. HIGGINBOTHAM COUNTY JUDGE
COURTHOUSE BUILDING COMMITTEE
WILLIAM S. ARNOLD CHAIRMAN
MRS. JOHN M. ALLEN
NOBLES BARNES
JOE W. CALLAWAY
BRUIN L. CAMPBELL
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BURL J. WHITE, SR.
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CARL W. LOCKE
VAUGHN W. WALKER
RENSHAW AND TAYLOR ARCHITECTS
SIMMONS AND SONS GENERAL CONTRACTOR

ASHLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE
HAMBURG, ASHLEY COUNTY
AS0164





|----------286 feet----------|

Ashley County Courthouse
Hamburg, Ashley County, Arkansas

UTM: 15 612172E 3677142N

↑
North



|----------672 feet----------|

Ashley County Courthouse
Hamburg, Ashley County, Arkansas

UTM: 15 612172E 3677142N

↑
North