

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NR 9/20/07

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Crossett Municipal Building

other names/site number Site #AS0107

2. Location

street & number 307-309 Main Street

not for publication

city or town Crossett

vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Ashley code 003 zip code 71635

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 for 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

nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cecilia Matthews

7/5/07  
Date

Signature of certifying official/Title

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the  
National Register.  
 See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

removed from the National  
Register.

other, (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Crossett Municipal Building  
Name of Property

Ashley County, Arkansas  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
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1	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	_____	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT:city hall \_\_\_\_\_

GOVERNMENT:correctional facility \_\_\_\_\_

GOVERNMENT:fire station \_\_\_\_\_

GOVERNMENT:government office \_\_\_\_\_

GOVERNMENT:courthouse \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION: library \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: correctional facility \_\_\_\_\_

GOVERNMENT:fire station \_\_\_\_\_

GOVERNMENT:government office \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT:Art Deco \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete \_\_\_\_\_

walls Brick \_\_\_\_\_

Limestone \_\_\_\_\_

roof Asphalt, Slate, Copper \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property

National Register listing.)

[X] 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.

[X] 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.)

Property is:

[ ] A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] B removed from its original location.

[ ] C birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.

[ ] D a cemetery.

[ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[ ] F a commemorative property

[ ] G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

Politics/Government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1953-57

Significant Dates

1953-57

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Trapp, Clippard & Phelps—architect

C.W. Vollmer & Company Inc.—builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

[X] State Historic Preservation Office

[ ] Other State Agency

[ ] Federal Agency

[X] Local Government

[ ] University

[ ] Other

Name of repository:

Crossett Municipal Building  
Name of Property

Ashley County, Arkansas  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property Less than 1 acre

**UTM References**

(See additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>596877</u>	<u>3665787</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Cherub Alford, edited by Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date May 31, 2007  
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787  
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Crossett  
street & number 201 Main Street telephone 870-364-4825  
city or town Crossett state AR zip code 71635

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

As has proven true throughout the history of Crossett, "defeat" was a dangerous word to use. It only made some of the residents more determined to get the bond issue passed. In 1953, a progressive group of citizens joined together to once again seek passage of this bond issue. All forms of communication were used to get the message to the citizens of Crossett. Civic groups were contacted, newspaper editorials were published, and extensive research was conducted to prove to the average citizen that the new municipal building would save the citizens money. Voter Education was centered on the facts of why the proposed municipal building would benefit the town:

- 1) City government and facilities must keep pace with the rapid industrial, commercial and residential growth of Crossett.
- 2) Relocating industries place considerable emphasis upon the physical appearance of a city and our present city quarters do not come up to the "Crossett Standard."
- 3) The City Library has a large space reserved in the new building—the Library Board endorses the new building enthusiastically since it means that funds which they have been accumulating for expansion of their present building can be used for buying more books, which they wish to do. Also, the Library Board will gain additional funds by the sale of their present building. The new quarters will provide space for colored library patrons, as well.
- 4) The new Municipal Building will offer enlarged and greatly improved facilities for Council Meetings, city offices, and meeting rooms for general civic use.
- 5) The combination of the new city auditorium, which is being constructed at no cost to Crossett taxpayers, and the new Municipal Building will give Crossett citizens the finest civic facilities of any city of our size in the South.
- 6) A city jail is incorporated in the plans for the new building, which will replace the present inadequate and unheated jail near the ice plant.
- 7) A fire-proof vault, long needed for city records, will be included in the new building.
- 8) Word has been received from the Arkansas Rating Bureau that with the improved fire station facilities for fire trucks and a permanent fire department employee that will be included in the new building, plus a 500 GPM pumper that is to be voted on at the same time, Crossett's general fire rating should be reduced from Class 7 to Class 6, which means a savings of 10 cents/\$100 of insurance coverage. This savings in nearly every case will be greater than the annual cost to the taxpayer for the new Municipal Building.
- 9) Cost for the residential taxpayer of Crossett for the new building will be surprisingly low. The average cost was computed for 12 blocks in Crossett, representing a good cross-section of the entire city, and it was found that the average valuation for the taxpayers in these 12 sample blocks was \$851. At a 3.5 mill levy, this would mean an average of \$2.98 per year or roughly 25 cents per month. Less than a pack of cigarettes a month to build the new building.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

### SUMMARY

The Crossett Municipal Building at 307-309 Main Street in Crossett, Ashley County, Arkansas, represents an excellent example of the Art Deco style in Crossett. As a result, it is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance**. The building is also significant for its associations with the efforts of the town to provide governmental facilities for the community after it ceased to be a company town and for its associations with early self-governance in Crossett. The Crossett Municipal Building is also being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion A** with **local significance**.

### ELABORATION

Crossett was founded around the turn of the nineteenth century in southeast Arkansas. The town was founded to house a sawmill and lumber company. Most of the leadership and capital for the establishment of the Crossett Lumber Company came from three families. The Crossett Company was started as a lumber operation, but soon developed into a number of wood-using industries. The first mill manager and co-owner of the company, E. W. "Cap" Gates, was the visionary behind the town.

During this era, company owned sawmill towns were common. This meant that the company owned "everything." You worked for the company, lived in a company house, shopped at the company store, sent your children to company-owned schools, and received company scrip as pay. Until 1946, every business and building in town, except a café, pressing shop and post office were company owned and operated. In 1946, due to the increasing size of the town, a new development plan was established and homes were sold to company employees. At this time, Crossett began its evolution from a company-owned town to a town with a thriving company at the base of its economy.

Crossett was named one of the 100 finalists in the 1953 All-America Cities Contest, sponsored by *Look Magazine* and the National Municipal League. "The City with a Plan" was the town's slogan, and it was true. In 1940, Crossett became the first planned city in Arkansas when the nation's leading city planners prepared the first plan for a future Crossett of 5,000 people. In 1953, the renowned firm planning firm of Harland Bartholomew & Associates of St. Louis, Missouri, completed months of tedious effort and presented to the City of Crossett a plan for a future Crossett of 25,000 people—five times the size. Crossett was the only city in the United States under 100,000 population having a comprehensive city plan embracing all elements of community facilities.

Prior to 1953, all Crossett's municipal facilities—city hall, fire station, police station, jail and library—were scattered around the community. These facilities were inefficient and needed to be updated. At this point, Crossett had been a company town for nearly half a century. For the first time in the history of Crossett, the town's voice was heard through an election of a bond issue for municipal improvement. The first bond issue proposal for the construction of a \$200,000 Municipal Building appeared before the voters in 1952 but was defeated by only 35 votes. The City Council agreed that this defeat was due to the general public being misinformed about the actual cost per year of the facility.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

- 10) Industrial and commercial tax valuation in Crossett represents 75-80% of the total valuation, leaving only 20-25% of the cost of the new building to be borne by all of the residential taxpayers in Crossett.
- 11) While the bond issue to build this building is set for 20 years, it is estimated that the building will be paid off in much less time since the new industrial plants that are scheduled to be built in the near future will add substantially to the valuation for Crossett. This will permit paying off the outstanding bonds over a shorter number of years.

On September 15, 1953, Crossett citizens took the first progressive step on their own during a special election by passing, by an overwhelming majority, the bond issue for the \$200,000 Municipal Building. The vote was 391-261 in favor of the structure and the new fire engine.

The Crossett Municipal Building was dedicated on May 14, 1954, with a luncheon, a parade and a ceremony with then Governor Orval Faubus as guest speaker. Construction costs for the new structure totaled \$85,000. The library was housed in the north end of the building, where spacious rooms were decorated in blonde wood. This area boasted an abundance of daylight thanks to the skylights. The library was moved out of this building in the mid-1960s. The north end of the building has served as home to the city's Police Department ever since. The center area of the building originally housed the Mayor's office and conference rooms, Judge's Chamber, Treasurer's office, and Police Chief's office. These rooms were decorated with blonde wood paneling and green carpet in the offices. The Court Room is located in the center of this building. Located in the south end of the building is the Fire Department. The second story of the building, constructed of "cut-proof" steel, originally housed the city jail.

The Crossett Municipal Building remains the centerpiece of the community's government. The building is still an important building to the Crossett residents and occupies a prominent location on Main Street. The continued use and preservation of the building is a testament to Crossett's government and residents.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Crossett Municipal Building at 307-309 Main Street in Crossett, Ashley County, Arkansas, represents an excellent example of the Art Deco style in Crossett. As a result, it is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance**. The building is also significant for its associations with the efforts of the town to provide governmental facilities for the community after it ceased to be a company town and for its associations with early self-governance in Crossett. The Crossett Municipal Building is also being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion A** with **local significance**.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Newspaper/local magazine clippings from City of Crossett 1953 Scrapbook.

Newspaper/local magazine clippings from Crossett Company 1953 Scrapbook.

Oral History interview with Fire Chief Jimmy Launius

Oral History interview with Assistant Police Chief Ronnie Rickman

Oral History interview with Mayor Scott McCormick

Crossett Municipal Building  
Name of Property

Ashley County, Arkansas  
County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Subdivision Crossett Original; Block 40 Parcel # 706-00380-000E

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This is all the land that is historically associated with the Crossett Municipal Building.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

### SUMMARY

The Crossett Municipal Building was constructed in Art Deco Style. The north end of the building originally housed the City's library, but now houses the Police Department. The center area of the building houses offices and the Municipal Courtroom, and the south end of the building is home to the Fire Department.

### ELABORATION

The Crossett Municipal Building was constructed in Art Deco Style. The north end of the building originally housed the City's library, but now houses the Police Department. The center area of the building houses offices and the Municipal Courtroom, and the south end of the building is home to the Fire Department. The building rests on a continuous concrete foundation, has brick walls, and is topped by a mainly flat roof. The center part of the building, however, is crowned by a pyramidal roof with decorative cupola.

### Side/North Façade

The north façade of the building is brick with limestone accents and original light fixtures. The west end of the north façade—the front entrance to the Police Department—is brick with limestone accents. To the right of the entrance are three three-paned awning windows.

### Front/West Façade

Beginning at the north end of the façade, three three-paned awning windows flank the door and are accented by limestone windowsills. A limestone frieze adorns the top of the door indicating the area's original purpose as the library.

The façade then recesses and is fenestrated by six three-paned awning windows. The west-central façade is the showpiece of the building and encompasses the main entrance. The walls are brick with limestone accents. Limestone flowerbeds adorn either side of the front door, which is encircled by limestone and topped with a limestone frieze that reads "Crossett Municipal Building." A flag pole is in front of this entrance with a limestone base that matches the detail in the flowerbeds. The historic jail, now used mainly for storage, is topped with a copper cupola.

To continue the building's symmetry six more three-paned awning windows lead you further south. The south end of the west façade, which projects, is brick with limestone accents. A limestone frieze accents this wall indicating its designation as the Fire Station.

### Side/South Façade

The south façade is brick with large bays to house the fire trucks and ambulance.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   2  

### Rear/East Façade

The east end of the south façade continues in brick and is accented with original light fixtures. The east central façade is brick and serves as the back entrance. Heavy metal doors and three-paned awning windows with limestone windowsills accent this area. The north end of the east façade continues with brick as well.

### Interior

As for the interior, the center section of the building has seen the least amount of changes over the years. The main entry way contains most of its original materials, though some areas are in great need of repair. Brown and beige terrazzo floors, blonde wood panels, polished granite walls, fresco reliefs and pewter light fixtures welcome visitors. The Municipal Courtroom also contains most of its original design and materials with granite windowsills, blonde wood wall panels and even the original chairs. Original skylights can also be found throughout the building.

Some alterations have been made over the years to accommodate growth, with most of the alterations occurring on the north and south ends of the building. Vinyl tile, new light fixtures and paneling were added at some point in an effort to make economical repairs and when the functions of the areas changed. An addition was added which extended the east wall of both the north and south ends of the building. These extensions were made in the 1980s, with care being taken to use similar materials making the alterations virtually unnoticeable.

### Integrity

The Crossett Municipal Building retains good integrity. The building retains many of its original features and still remains an excellent example of the Art Deco style. In addition, the area of Crossett where the Municipal Building is located retains the small-town feel that it would have had when the building was built in 1953.





















