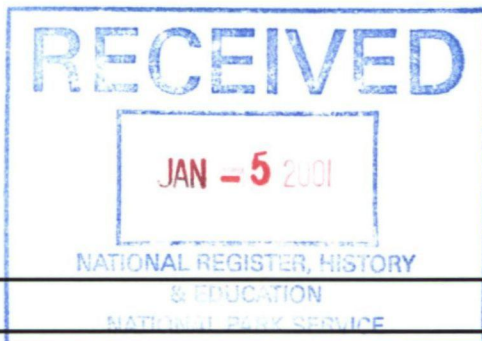


(Oct. 1990)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

60



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Washington at Church street
CITY OR TOWN: Livingston
STATE: Texas **CODE:** TX **COUNTY:** Polk **CODE:** 373 **ZIP CODE:** 77351
NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
VICINITY: N/A

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

12-20-00

Signature of certifying official

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

2/2/01

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Public-local

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	2	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	0	1 STRUCTURES
	1	0 OBJECTS
	3	1 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: Government: county courthouse; office building

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: Government: county courthouse
Vacant/Not in use

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION Concrete
WALLS Brick
ROOF Asphalt
OTHER

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-7).

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Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Description

The 1924 Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex occupy the courthouse Square, in the center of downtown Livingston, Texas, at the intersection of Washington (US 59) & Church (US 190) streets. Both buildings exhibit features typical of governmental buildings constructed during the early 20th century. The 3-story tan brick Classical Revival courthouse features a raised basement, a rectangular plan and a flat roof. The building reflects a simplified Beaux Arts classicism evident in the massive columns dominating the symmetrical facades, strong cornice-line balustrade, arched windows, rectangular plan, flat roof, lack of pediments, and a cross-axial plan. The exterior of the courthouse is in very good condition despite modifications such as the addition of an exterior elevator and air conditioning units. The courthouse annex, a 2-story red brick building on the southwest corner of the courthouse square, also features a rectangular plan and classical detailing. The exterior of the courthouse annex is in good condition, despite internal structural failures, which necessitate supporting braces on the west and south sides. Both buildings retain a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The courthouse Square is the focal point of the community. The square site is slightly elevated, with a cultivated & landscaped lawn and a recently constructed community gazebo and flowerbeds. The courthouse has an imposing presence on the square, and the building's elevated location at the intersection of two major thoroughfares, Washington and Church streets, reflect this importance. The elevation facing Washington Avenue originally served as the main entrance to the courthouse, although construction of the Hwy 59 bypass to the west reoriented the primary traffic to Church St. (US 190) and the primary approach to the north. The courthouse lawn is surrounded by sidewalks and is freshly landscaped. Existing pecan trees on the southeast corner provide shade for a newly constructed Community Gazebo (1999, noncontributing). In the northeast corner of the square are original cornerstones from two previous County Courthouses once located on the site of the current courthouse. The northwest corner has a picnic area near a historic 1901 Civil War monument (contributing). The southwest corner is the site of the courthouse Annex, circa 1905, the oldest remaining county-owned building.

Polk County Courthouse

The Polk County Courthouse, designed by the Houston architectural firm of McLelland & Fink, was built in 1923-24 to answer the needs of a growing and prosperous county. Each elevation of the courthouse is similarly detailed and arranged, the major difference being that the wider north and south elevations of the building have seven bays while the narrower south and north elevations are five bays wide. The north side facing Church Street has recently become the focal point of the building due to changes in traffic patterns along Church Street (US 190). Wide steps leading to each entrance are flanked on either side by brick pedestals that once held gas lampposts (replaced with flagpoles on the north side). Each doorway has wood and glass double doors set beneath a classical overdoor featuring a dentil course. Arched entryways lead under the stairs to the basement level. Both the north and south elevations are seven bays wide, with the five central bays inset behind white Tuscan columns, and flanked by plain brick pavilions. The narrower east and west elevations are similarly arranged, but the east side (facing Washington Avenue) is historically the front entrance to the building, facing the town's original main street. The east and west elevations feature four Tuscan columns. Each colonnade is topped with an architrave, a frieze with the words "Polk County Court House" engraved on the band, and a

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Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

cornice. The flat roof is accentuated with a white roofline balustrade. The parapets over each pavilion feature simple decorative brickwork panels.

Most of the original steel top-hinged casement windows are intact throughout the building. Each basement window is small, symmetrical and accentuated with a keystone. The windows on the first floor are rectangular and separated by spandrels from the second floor arched windows. The top of the arched windows were painted white to hide suspended ceilings that were installed in 1957 after the addition of air conditioning. The arched windows on the south side reach to the third floor, reflecting the 2-story interior height of the district courtroom ceiling. The windows on the third floor are nearly square and symmetrically placed. An exterior elevator shaft was added to the north side in 1968, resulting in the removal of windows on the west pavilion. Air conditioning units were added to the south side in the 1970s. The frieze was painted white with black lettering in the 1950s. Originally each of the friezes on the building were buff colored with white lettering, but were painted white with black lettering black in the 1950s. The overall design elements remain intact and proposed restoration plans include the removal of the exterior elevator shaft, returning the exterior window symmetry. The west facade of the courthouse is generally referred to as the back entrance, however with the addition of the parking lot adjacent to the square and the handicapped entrance and parking, this entry has become very utilitarian. The elevation on the west side of the square is at street level and faces Jackson Avenue and the railroad.

The 1924 Courthouse has a cross axial plan, dividing the courthouse into four office areas. Stairs at the east and west entrances (and an elevator, installed in 1968), provide access to the upper floors. The original drawings of the interior of the courthouse, shows many ornate details that were never implemented. The courthouse originally had oak doors with transoms, which were removed in previous remodeling efforts. One of these doors remains and there are plans to replace existing doors with wooden doors with transoms. The most significant original features are within the District Courtroom, a two-story space located on the second floor, with a balcony accessible from the third floor, which is currently filled with ductwork and air conditioning equipment. There are plans to restore the high ceilings and open this balcony space. This was the first Polk County Courthouse to include electricity and indoor plumbing, and each room had transoms and ceiling fans to allow air circulation within the interior spaces, all of which were later removed. Current restoration plans would include installing ceiling fans and transoms where possible. Over the course of many years the courthouse interior has been split into many small office spaces. Future restoration proposals call for the elimination of many of these additions.

1905 Courthouse Annex

The 1905 Courthouse Annex, by Houston architect Lewis Sterling Green, was built to alleviate overcrowding within the 1884 Courthouse. The 2-story building, on the southwest corner of the square was constructed of local red brick with stone detailing. It was built in a narrow rectangular plan (three bays on the east and west elevations; only a single bay on the north and south) and incorporates characteristic features of the Beaux Arts style, including brick pilasters, a flat roof, a wide cornice accentuated with dentils, decorative accents to the windows, and ironwork on the first floor windows and above the entrance on the east side. Its walls display skillfully brick masonry work with stone detailing. Due to structural failures to the building in the 1970s, the building was vacated and exterior bracing supports were added in the 1980s to stabilize the building for restoration. In 1998 the roof and foundation was repaired, the trim painted, the masonry tuckered and pointed and steps replaced. The original lampposts and cornerstone are stored within the

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Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

building pending further restoration. The original wooden exterior doors have long been missing, however, original photographs will aid in their reconstruction. Despite the addition of the bracing, the exterior of the building retains its original characteristics and integrity.

The Courthouse Annex is set on a concrete foundation. The building's footprint measures 23 ft. by 43 ft. and stands 32 feet from the ground at the northwest corner to the top of the parapet. Each elevation features symmetrically placed windows, with an entry door on the primary (east) facade. Original ironwork adorns the transom and the ground floor windows. Each window is framed with corbelled brick with concrete sills and decorative corners. The red brick facade is accented with gray and white trim, with brick pilasters separating each bay. A wood framed, galvanized steel friezecourse with dentils and triglyphs wraps around the entire building, which has a plain brick parapet with concrete coping. A flat roof of tar & pitch over concrete lay behind a beautifully detailed parapet wall. Two metal braces have been placed on the southeast corner to stabilize the building pending further restoration. The building retains a high degree of integrity.

Concrete steps on the east side lead to the double doors which are flanked by concrete pedestals that once held gas lampposts (the original lampposts are stored inside the building pending further restoration). The original panel doors measured 3'-0" by 8'-0", and were embellished with concentric raised circles, and had substantial thickness. The original doors were removed many years ago and have since been temporarily replaced with metal doors, pending further restoration. Photographs of the original doors will aid in their replacement. The single-bay north and south facades are identical. Both are symmetrical in design, with one 12/12 sash window on the ground floor with decorative iron grill and one smaller rectangular casement window on the second floor, set between brick pilasters. The south facade has two downspouts.

The west facade of the building faces Jackson Street, and features three windows on each floor. The windows in the outer bays are identical to those on the single bay elevations (12/12 sash on the ground floor, 8-light casements on the upper floor). The ground floor window in the central bay is a small 6/6 sash. The upper floor central bay window is a narrow 9/9 sash with a 6-light transom. Two metal braces on this elevation help stabilize the building.

The 1905 Courthouse Annex has a simple interior floor plan. The centrally located entry leads to a small foyer with an office space on the south side of the building and one on the north. Switchback wooden stairs lead to the second story. The south side of the building has no floors due to structural failures, but the north side interior is intact. There was no plumbing in the building and gas fireplaces heated each floor. The original mantels have been placed in storage. This building is almost identical in proportion, style and details to a portion of the Trinity County Courthouse in Groveton, Texas.

The 1924 Courthouse and the 1905 Courthouse Annex retain a high degree of integrity within their physical conditions. Despite modifications such as the addition of an exterior elevator, air conditioning units, exterior glass painted out above the line of new ceilings and interior modernizations, the courthouse is in good physical shape and retains a high degree of its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The courthouse Annex has very few modifications to the original design. The supporting braces on the exterior of this building and the loss of the south interior floors and ceilings are the major changes. The building retains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, workmanship, materials, design, feeling and association.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- 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 VALUE, 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: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Government

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1905-1950

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1905, 1924

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Lewis Sterling Green (1905); McLelland & Fink (1924)

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-8 through 8-16).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-24).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- 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:

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Statement of Significance

The Houston architectural firm McLelland & Fink designed the 1924 Polk County Courthouse in the county seat of Livingston to answer the needs of a growing and prosperous county. The 1905 Courthouse Annex, immediately adjacent, designed by Houston architect Lewis Sterling Green, was built to alleviate overcrowding within the 1884 Courthouse. The courthouse and annex both played a pivotal role in county politics and therefore meet Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government at the local level of significance. The 1924 Courthouse is a good example of an early 20th century Classical Revival courthouse in a rural Texas county, while the 1905 Annex is also significant for its refined classical design. Both buildings meet Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance.

Polk County is in the east Texas timberlands region on the east bank of the Trinity River. The county seat, Livingston, straddles U.S. highways 59 and 190 about 76 miles northeast of Houston. The county comprises 1,061 square miles, ranging in elevation from 100 to 300 feet. Native Americans occupied the area as early as 200-500 A. D. The Alabama and Coushatta Tribes remain in Polk County on reservation land acquired by General Sam Houston.

Permanent settlement in the area began in 1827 when Jose Vehlein became an empresario of the Mexican government and was commissioned to colonize this area. A settlement was formed on the Trinity River, but because of unsettled conditions, the people could not obtain titles to their land until 1833 when grant contracts were drawn up. The Mexican government made 35 land grants in what would become Polk County. Persons desiring grants of land applied to the Commissioner giving an oath as to their nativity and giving proof of their good conduct. The applicant then pointed out desired unclaimed lands, and agreed upon a price to pay the Government. The colonist bound himself to construct within a year a fixed and permanent monument at every angle of the tract, to cultivate the land and abide by colonization laws. A wave of immigration followed the Mexican War. The fertile lands and the abundance of wild game attracted soldiers who passed through Texas en route to Mexico to fight.

Plantations dominated the county economically and politically before the Civil War. The population of the county in 1860 was 8,300, with a slave population of 4,198. The county produced 9,307 bales of cotton in 1859. Polk County voters overwhelmingly supported secession in 1861, and produced eight companies which served in the war. Because it had been dependent on the plantation system, the county was economically fragmented after the war. The number of farms nearly doubled, while the population stayed about the same and agricultural production decreased sharply. The average value of a farm including land and buildings plummeted during and immediately after the war, and remained into the early 20th century. (McCaslin, Richard B. "Polk County," in *New Handbook of Texas*.)

The population of Polk County grew steadily from 1880 to 1940, when it peaked at 20,635, then declined sharply until 1960, only to rebound slightly through the 1980s. Despite an overall increase in rural population, agriculture has played an increasingly minor role in the economy of Polk County. The number of active farming operations fell, including those producing corn and cotton. Cattle remained a steady enterprise, but hogs and sheep practically vanished after World War II. Products such as wool, sugar, molasses, and sweet potatoes, common in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, were no longer cultivated by the late 20th century, but by 1990 the production of peaches, blueberries, and vegetables was becoming significant. Polk County remains predominantly rural, but timber rather than agriculture has become the main enterprise. In the 20th century the value of the lumber industry increased remarkably. The greatest increase came after World War II, but the lumber boom helped ease the impact of the Great Depression on the county. In

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Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

1990 Polk County was the leading Texas county in lumber products and Christmas trees. The county also yields some oil and gas. (McCaslin, Richard B. "Polk County," in *New Handbook of Texas*.)

Development of industry in Polk County was facilitated by a great improvement in transportation. By 1841 Drew's Landing and Smithfield were busy shipping points. The Houston, East and West Texas Railway was completed north across Polk County in 1881, and the tracks have been used by the Southern Pacific since 1961. Many small lines were built by lumber companies during the timber boom, but most have been abandoned. By the end of World War II, U.S. highways 59 and 287, through Livingston and Corrigan, were paved, and U.S. 190 from Livingston to Woodville, in neighboring Tyler County, was hard-surfaced by 1949. (McCaslin, Richard B. "Polk County," in *New Handbook of Texas*.)

Establishment of Polk County Government and County Seat

County governments emerged during the early days of the Republic of Texas to bring order and public planning to promising settlements. Developers knew that towns, especially county seats would increase the value of and demand for property. County seats were also attractive to settlers because the center of government represented law and order on an otherwise unruly & forbidding frontier. More importantly, to the newly independent Texan, it meant self-government. Being the seat of government placed a town above other county communities.

In March 1845, the first Texas Legislature created Polk County and named it in honor of James K. Polk, then President of the United States. This first Legislature appointed John Stubblefield, James W. Abbey, Fredrick Rankin, A. S. Ainsworth and Arthur Garner as a Board of Commissioners to meet at Swartout on the Trinity River to locate a county seat, to hold an election to select a place and to get the county government in operation. (Imma R. Haynes, *History of Polk County*, page 19). The Board of Commissioners selected Swartout, Johnson's Bluff, and Springfield as suitable places for a county seat.

Moses L. Choate, a native of Livingston, Tennessee, had started the settlement of Springfield on his land grant in 1836, and wanted the seat of government there. He offered to give the County one hundred acres of land, stipulating that if selected for the County Seat, the name be changed to Livingston for his former home in Tennessee. Another factor for selection of this site is that its location was only one-half mile from the geographical center of the County. After accepting Choate's generous offer, the Board appointed a Jury of View to sell lots in Livingston. James Andress was appointed to survey and lay off the town in blocks, lots and streets and to prepare a map of the village. The first lots were sold on September 5, 1845, with prices ranging from \$2.50 to \$20.00.

The HE & WT Railway continued to build northward from Houston and reached Livingston in 1880. As this road penetrated into the very heart of the Piney Woods, a very profitable trade in lumber began to develop, as did new saw mills and communities. Timber was the most significant component of the local economy. Towns created by the railroad and land promotion schemes transformed the area during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Early Courthouses

As with most newly organized counties across Texas, Polk County's first Courthouse was a rude affair: to accommodate the first Commissioner's meeting, Texas Revolutionary War veteran John English quickly built a one-room log cabin with a rough wooden floor at a cost of \$10.00. During this first meeting, construction of a larger courthouse was approved. (Page 23, Nov, 1846 Commissioner's Court Minutes, Archives, Sam Houston Regional Library) Bids were received and James Andress, a local civic leader and innkeeper was commissioned to build a new courthouse. The specifications for the new building were:

It must be out of good sound lumber and in a workmanship manner; and must be 26 feet in length, 22 feet in width, and 20 feet in height from lower floor to joist - five 2 light windows, 2 in each side and one in the back, the usual height from the floor. Two doors, one in front and one in the southside of the building, single story. (*Polk County Museum Archives, Pictorial History Book, Polk County, Texas 1978*)

Andress completed the new courthouse on the square in 1847 and received \$397.00 for his work. Six County Judges and District Judge Oran M. Roberts, future Governor of Texas, would use the courthouse. This building also served as the Livingston Church for six years. With the new courthouse in place, James Andress placed the original log structure onto logs, rolled it down the courthouse square hill and attached it to the Andress Inn where it was used as a kitchen. This old log room continued to serve the community since the Inn was the hub of business and social gatherings. Sam Houston was a frequent guest. (Epperson, W. T. Interview, 1930; recorded in Polk County Memorial Museum Archives) The site of the Andress Inn, demolished in 1911, has been commemorated with a Texas State Historical Marker.

By 1854, plans were underway for a two-story brick courthouse. It was 40 feet square with a wide hallway and four offices on the ground floor and one large open courtroom upstairs. The ground floor walls were 18" thick. The cost of this building was just under \$6,000. The courtroom continued to be the meeting place for local Churches and social functions until 1858. In 1884, the court authorized the enlargement and renovation of the brick building and added a new stone façade at a cost of \$17,500. The architect for this project was Eugene T. Heiner and the builder was W.C. Wells. (Commissioners' Court Minutes, Sam Houston Regional Archives) The large second floor became the town's social center. Parties, balls, and the Community Christmas Trees were located there. There was a cistern to provide water for the courthouse. A white fence was placed around the square to keep roving livestock out of the building. The Commissioners Court judged that the size of the courthouse should be increased based upon the increase of the population up to 1883. They were not expecting the rapid population increase that occurred soon thereafter, and the building was entirely too small within ten years.

In 1902, a fire swept through downtown Livingston, destroying all the buildings except the courthouse. County records were removed, then returned when it was realized that the courthouse was the most fireproof building in the town. Within a week after the fire, local entrepreneurs saw the need for brick construction and created a brick making plant on Choates Creek.

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Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

1905 Courthouse Annex

In 1905, the Polk County Courthouse Annex (also known as the County Clerk Building) was built to house the County Clerk and County records on the southwest corner of the courthouse square. The 2-story building of locally produced brick was designed in a Classical Revival style by Houston architect Lewis Sterling Green. It was built by Henderson Shearer & Miller for \$6,740. (Polk County Commissioners' Court Records, Dec. 5, 1904; page 425 Archives, Polk County Museum). The unusual building is Polk County's oldest government building.

The floor plan was symmetrically divided into two offices on each of two floors by a 40-inch wide switchback stair. At the bottom of the stair, a small entry provided access to both offices. The top landing opens up into both offices as well as a small reception or storage room. The finished floors were of tongue and grooved sealed pine. All interior openings were trimmed in a Neo-Classical/Greek style. An ornate wood baseboard wrapped around each room terminating at a highly detailed base at each doorjamb and outside corners where wood dowels would protect the delicate plaster. This building had no installed plumbing. The original lighting was gas. A fireplace heated each floor. The mantels have been removed for restoration.

Houston architect Lewis Sterling Green worked in partnership with Gehard C. Svarz until 1904. The firm produced notable commercial buildings in Houston, including the J.M. Dorrance Building (1903) and the Commercial National Bank (1904). Green later worked with Joseph Finger and later Birdsall Briscoe, both of whom became well-known and highly regarded Houston architects. Green designed a portion of the Trinity County Courthouse, probably around the same time as his work on the Polk County Courthouse Annex. The Trinity County Courthouse (1914) has been credited to Charles Page of Austin, but physical evidence reveals that the ends of the building are identical to the Polk County annex, while a plaque hanging inside a county office bears Green's name. A recently discovered letter from the Trinity County clerk to Page, dated August 5, 1914, features a image of the Green building on the letterhead. (*see Trinity County Courthouse images, page 8-15*)

Green was first listed in the Houston City Directory in 1903, along with his firm Green & Svarz. Later partnerships included Green & Briscoe (1910-12), and L. S. Green & Company (with Victor Grimmer, 1911-12). Green's projects include St. Agnes Convent, Houston (1905, dem. 1971), Brackenridge School, Houston (1905, dem.), Lufkin Theater, Lufkin (1905), Center High School, Center (1907), Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Brady Addition (1910, now parish house), and with Joseph Finger: Stowers Furniture Co., Houston (1912), Temple Freda, Bryan (1912), De George Hotel, Houston (1913), Panama Hotel, Galveston (1913), American National Insurance Co. Building, Houston (1912), Model Laundry Co. Building, Houston (1912), Galveston Cotton Compress & Warehouse Co. (1912), Dickinson High School (1912). Green died c. 1929, possibly as the result of a house fire. (*Correspondence from Stephen Fox, Architectural Historian, Rice University*)

1924 Polk County Courthouse

The 1884 Courthouse was a handsome edifice, but Polk County outgrew it and the advances of technology made it obsolete. A special meeting of the Commissioner's court on March 21, 1923, approved a resolution for a new courthouse, stating a need for a building with modern plumbing and heating, and more space for the expansion of County offices and county archives. (Commissioners' Court Minutes, Sam Houston Regional Library)

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Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

On April 18, 1923, the County received bids for construction of the Polk County Courthouse. Houston contractor Isaac Young submitted the low bid of \$189,952. but records reveal the revised contract amount was \$134,188. The plumbing/heating contract totaled \$15,165; the electrical contract \$8,093; and the furniture and equipment, \$21,294.... This totaled \$178,740 for a building of 34,220 gross square feet. The new Courthouse would be financed by the issuance of "Courthouse Warrants" with a par value of \$175,000. In order to pay the warrants, a sinking fund was created on April 26, 1923 by raising property taxes \$0.19 per \$100 of the assessed value. (Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center Archives) Construction began in June 1923 and by July 10th, Isaac Young had wrecked and cleared the old foundation, and excavated the site. The cornerstone was laid on November 12, 1923 and is still visible on the northeast corner of the square. Reflecting age-old traditions, the cornerstone was laid by the Masonic Lodge, wearing full ceremonial attire. Records indicate that the first official meeting of the Commissioners in the new building took place on October 6, 1924. (Robert Schatt, Sam Houston Regional Library, Liberty, Texas)

Polk County's fifth courthouse set new records for cost and style. The Classical Revival design illustrated a fresh concept of architectural interpretation. The building was much larger, had a more complex plan and was less pretentious in detail. Commissioners proposing the new building frequently described it as "modern" and "efficient." The identical doorways of each facade facilitated cross-ventilation and access, and resulted in a building with no "back side." Local residents, however, began to regard the Washington Street entrance (east facade) as the main entrance. This was the first Polk County Courthouse to include electricity, indoor plumbing, and a furnace for steam heating, telephones, and drinking water from a source other than roof run-off. Ventilators in the roof provided a flow of air from open windows and doors, while electric ceiling fans augmented air circulation within all but the smallest rooms. In these respects, the building was typical of 'modern' public buildings in the 1920s.

The original drawings depict several materials and ornamental features that were not implemented in the actual construction of the courthouse to keep construction costs affordable. Concrete steps shown in the original drawings were upgraded to brick. Beautiful oak doors with transoms were installed. The most significant original architectural space within the building was the District Courtroom, a two-level space located on the second floor, with a balcony accessible from the third floor.

Architect John McLelland was born in Greenock, Scotland, trained at the West of Scotland Technical College in Glasgow, graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Edinburgh, and migrated to Chicago in 1906. He left soon thereafter to work as an estimator at the Thompson Starrett Company in San Francisco, finding work during the rebuilding after the 1906 fire. After migrating to Portland, Oregon and Los Angeles, he settled in Houston in 1911, where he became a prolific designer of public schools. McLelland held the position of architect for the City of Houston in 1919-20, and died suddenly in 1929. Little is known about his partnership with Fink.

Significance, Integrity and Preservation Plans

Both the 1905 Courthouse Annex and the 1924 Courthouse are good examples of early 20th century Classical Revival style public buildings in a rural Texas county, and are thus nominated under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture. Both buildings exhibit influences from the Beaux Arts style, which was popular in public buildings from

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Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

the 1890s to the 1930s, after the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 produced a resurgence of interest in classically derived design. Both buildings exhibit influences of Beaux Arts design elements with flat roofs, balustrades, symmetrical plans, form & massing. Rick Lewis, staff architect with the Texas Historical Commission stated in a letter to the Polk County Heritage Society that the "handsomely scaled" and "uniquely-detailed" 1905 annex is "among Texas' most novel historic county governmental buildings, in addition to being one of Livingston's and Polk County's oldest and most attractive architectural accomplishments." (*Letter of August 3, 1987*)

The courthouse and courthouse annex building are highly visible in the center of downtown Livingston at an intersection of the town's principal streets (Hwy 190 and Hwy 59 Business.) The elevation is high emphasizing the importance of the structures over other low scale buildings in the town. This location was chosen in 1846 and has been the site of all five courthouses of Polk County. The annex was constructed using locally produced brick, skilled masonry work with stone detailing, while the brick and concrete courthouse was designed as a four-level structure to serve all facets of government. The courthouse was designed to serve the citizens both politically and socially. It contained a community auditorium, a library and the American Legion Hall. The jury facilities included a dormitory with showers. The indoor plumbing served more than just those who conducted business in the building. The restrooms were also used by members of the Methodist Church on Sundays and by customers of the nearby merchants, still without these facilities.

The Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex are very worthy of restoration and preservation. The Polk County Courthouse continues to provide the focal point of political activities in the county and is therefore nominated under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the area of Politics/Government. Courthouses are historic and architectural treasures bestowed by previous generations. They give each county a unique identification-no two courthouses are alike. The courthouse Annex exhibits unusually scaled architecture for a government building. Livingston lost most of its historic buildings in the fire of 1902 and continues to lose historic buildings at an alarming rate due to growth and a quest for modernization. Therefore, locally these buildings are of great importance.

Preservation efforts have been ongoing for the courthouse annex since 1976 and continue today. The major roadblock is funding. The courthouse annex received a Preservation Trust Grant from the Texas Historical Commission in 1985 for stabilization of the walls and replacement of the roof. The exterior of both the courthouse and Courthouse Annex was recently renovated and restored by the Mathes Group with funding from the 1997 ISTE A grant. Proposed restoration plans for the 1905 Courthouse Annex include rebuilding the doors to original specifications and rebuilding the floors and ceilings on the south side. This would allow the supporting braces to be removed. The lampposts would be restored and re-installed. The interior woodwork and mantels would be restored and the building could once again be utilized. Proposed restoration plans for the 1924 Courthouse include restoring the exterior appearance of the building to its original built condition by removing the elevator shaft and air conditioning units and restoring lampposts. Interior restoration plans will include replacement of wooden doors and transoms, ceiling fans and light fixtures, and the restoration of the third floor balcony space.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 14

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas



Early photograph of Courthouse Annex doors



Early photograph of Courthouse Annex entrance

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

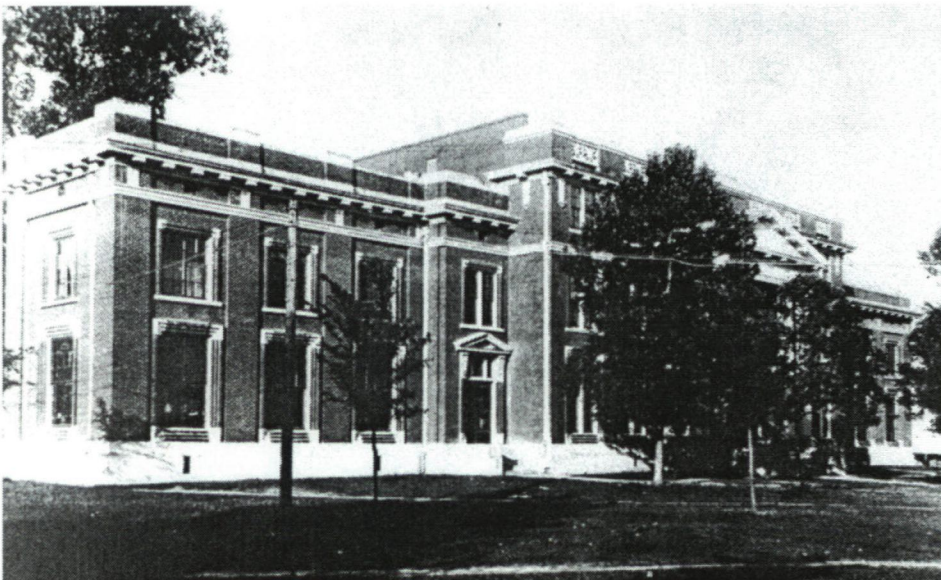
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 15

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas



Trinity County Courthouse (photo 2000)



Trinity County Courthouse (historic image, date unknown)

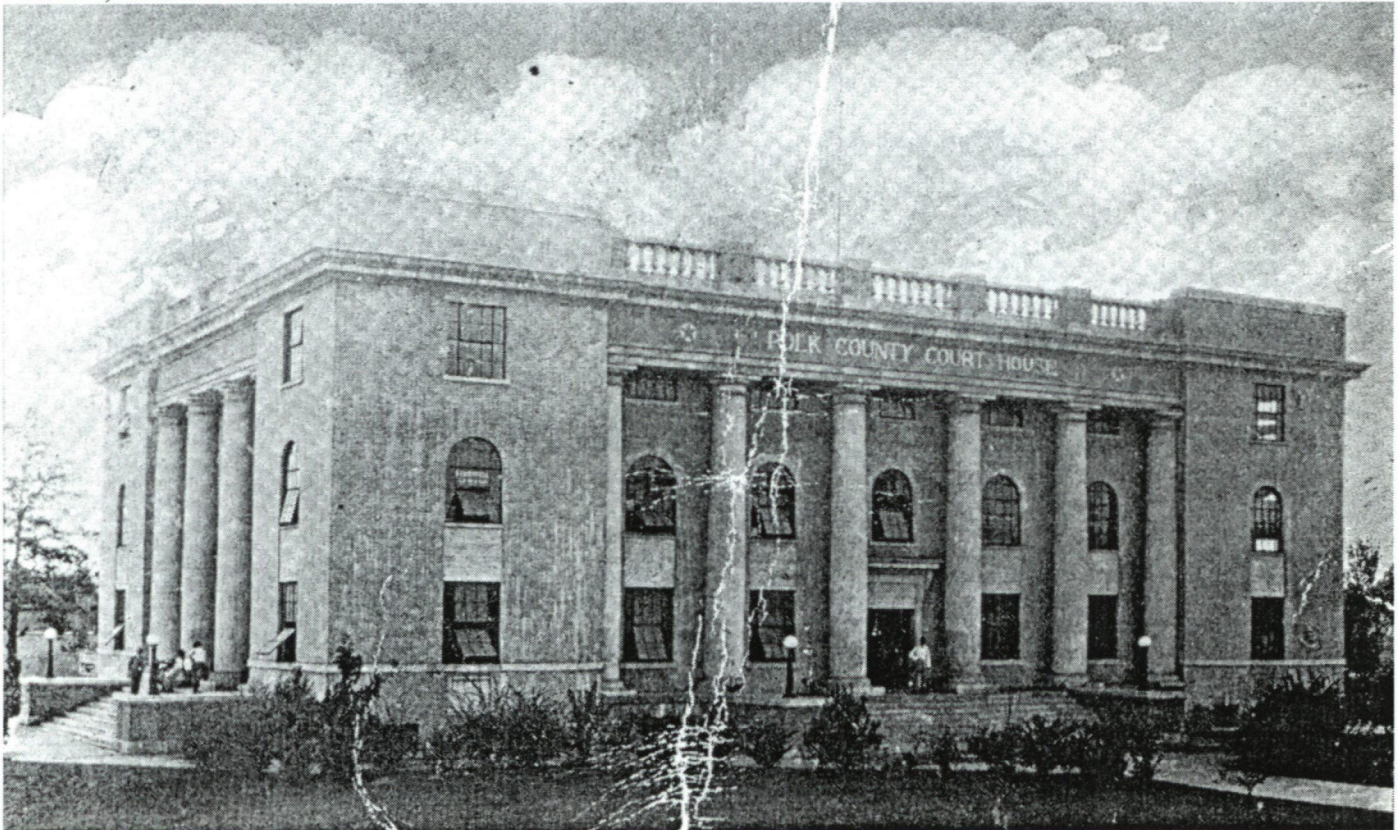
United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 16

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Postcard, date unknown



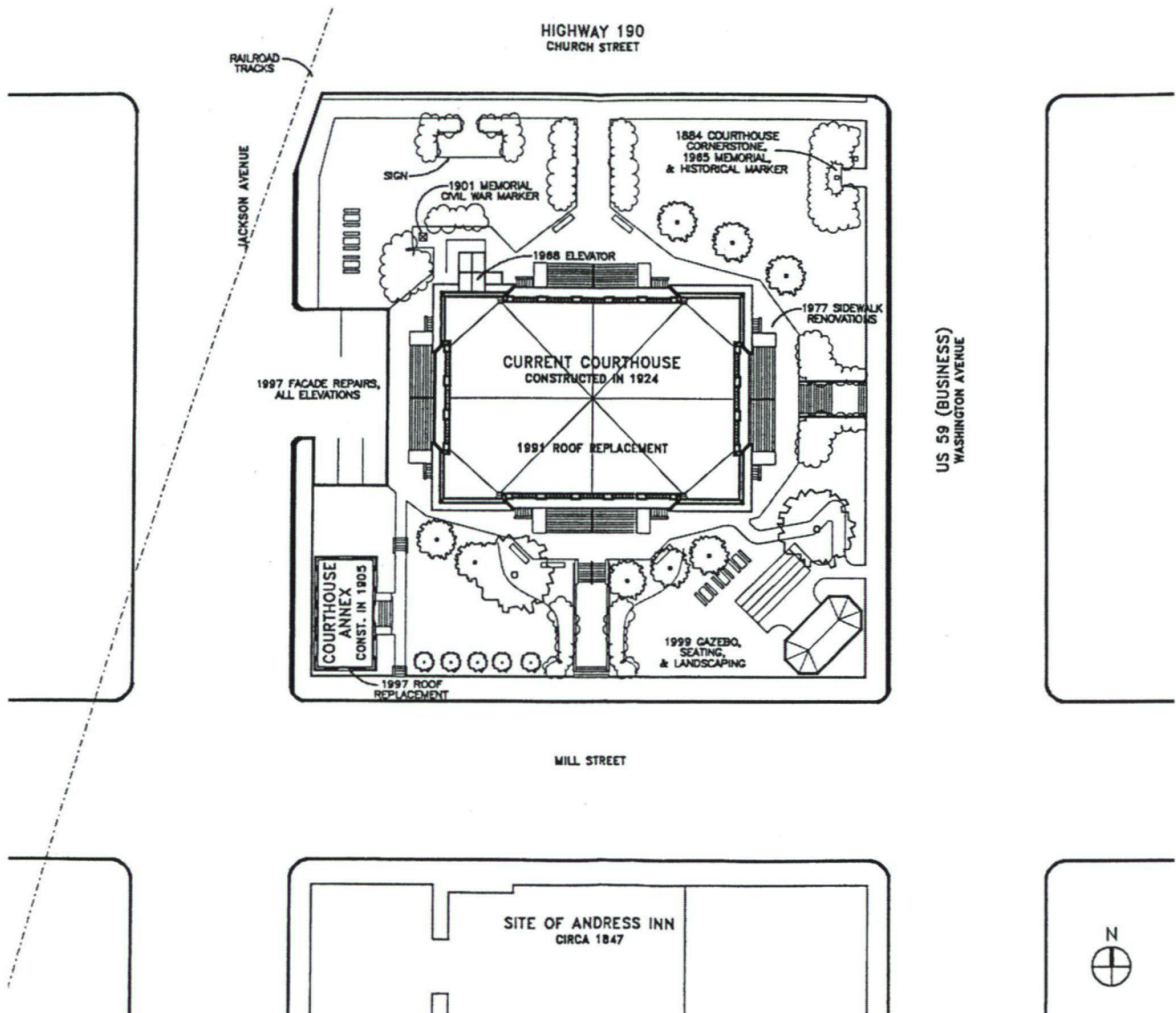
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PLAN Page 17

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Site plan (2000)



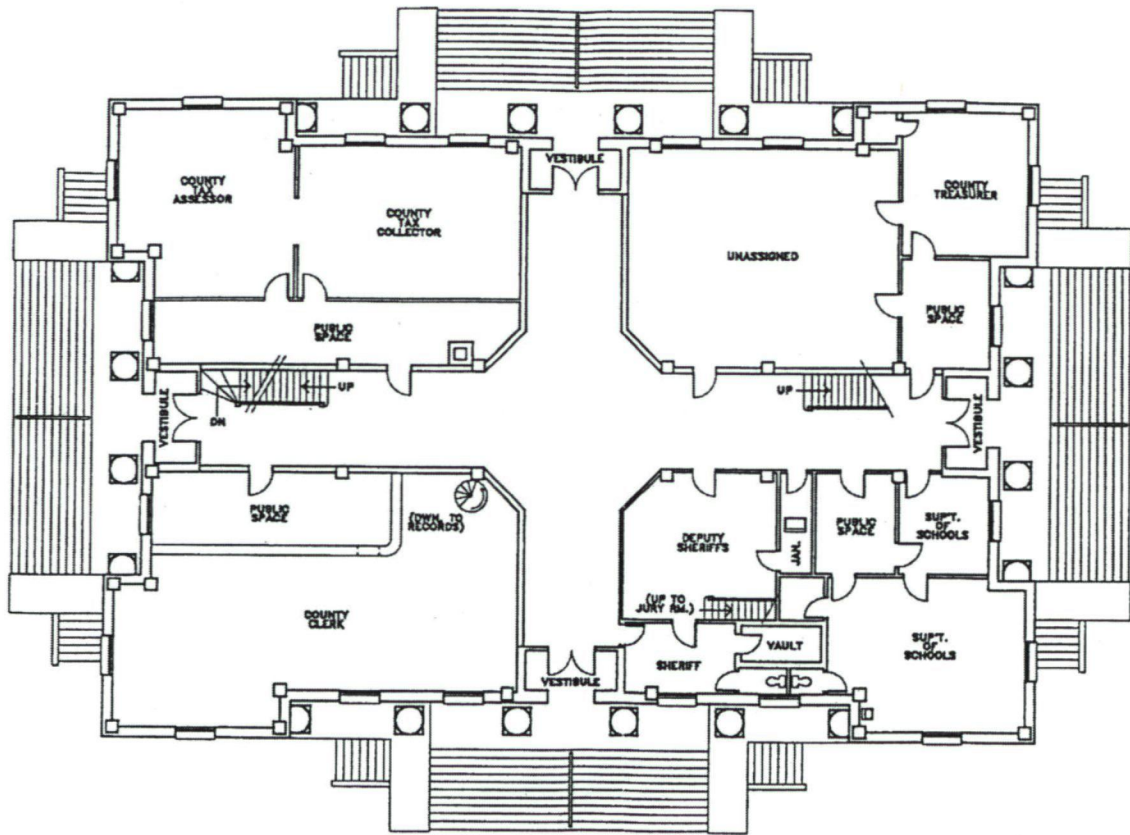
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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PLAN Page 18

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Ground floor, original plan



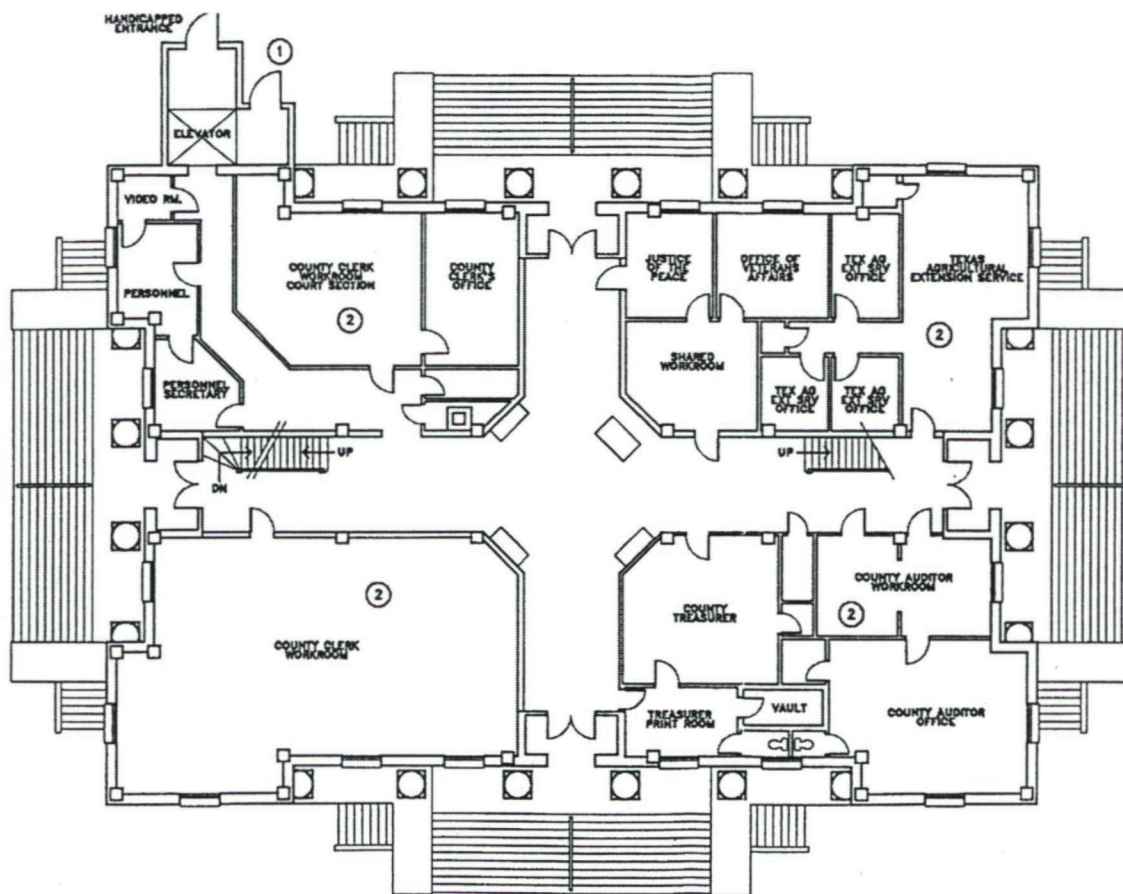
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PLAN Page 19

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Ground Floor, current plan



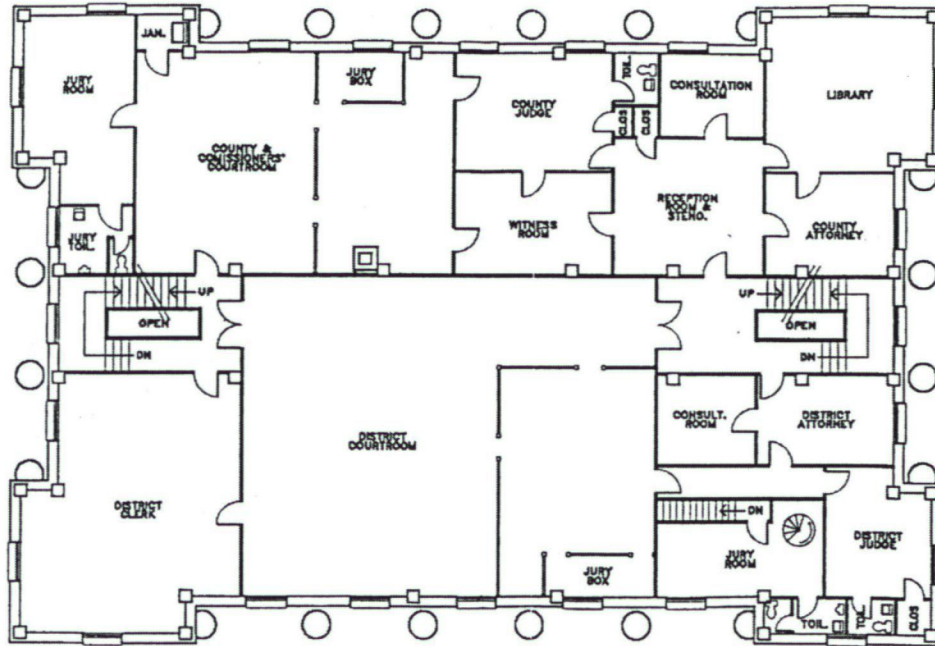
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PLAN Page 20

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Second floor, original plan



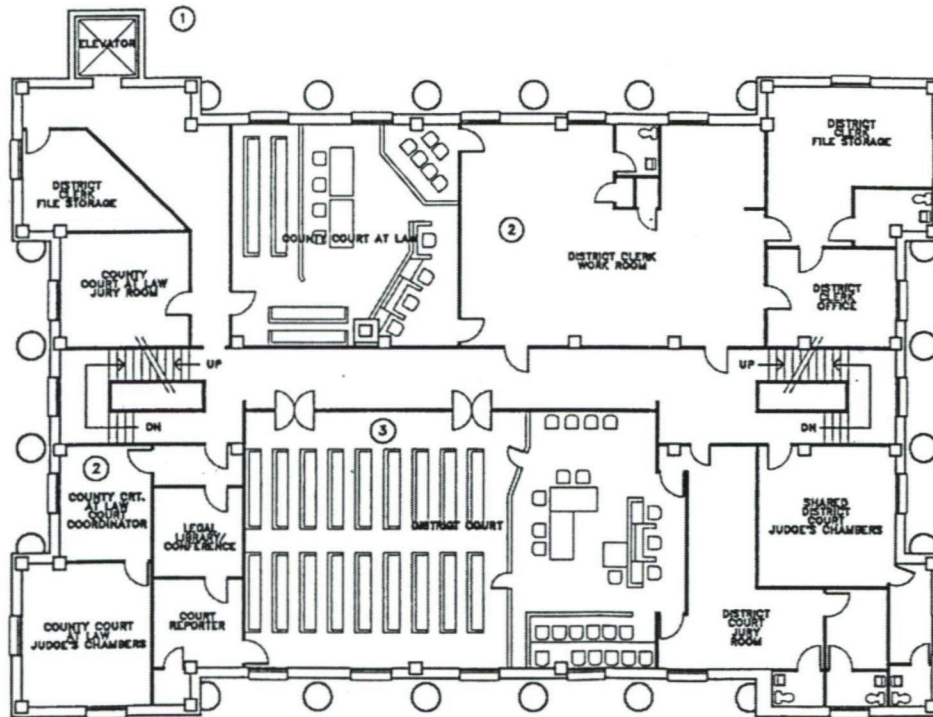
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PLAN Page 21

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Second floor, current plan



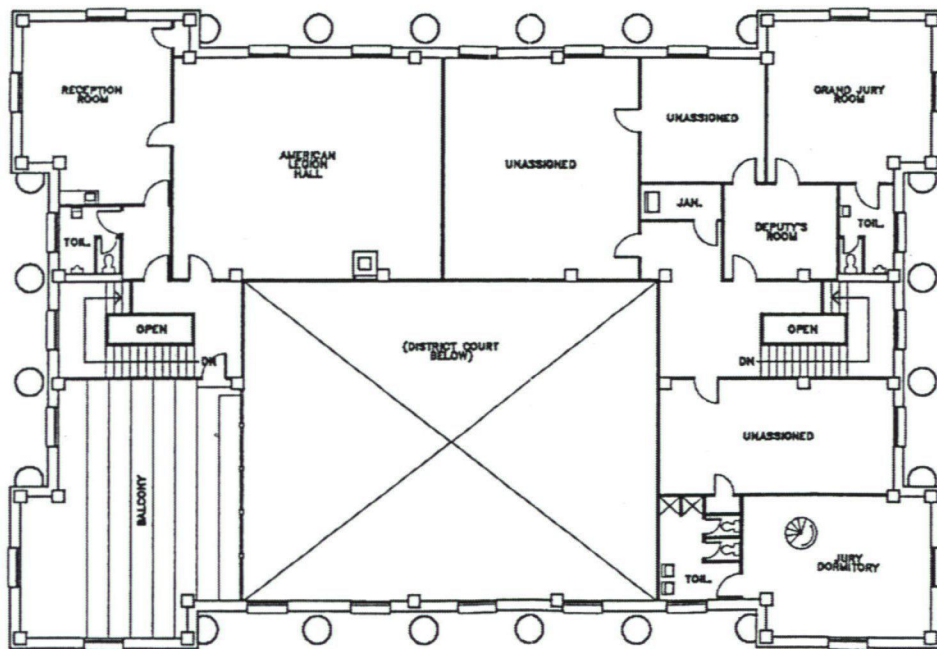
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PLAN Page 22

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Third floor, original plan



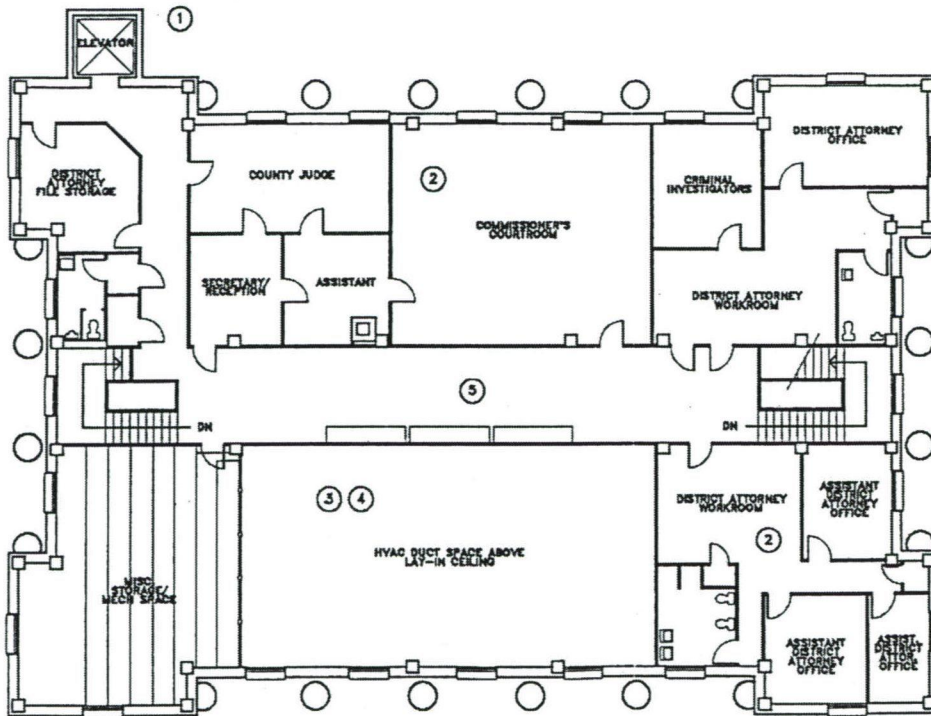
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Section PLAN Page 23

Third floor, current plan



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 24

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

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- Polk County Commissioners Court Records, March 21, 1923; Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center.
- Polk County Commissioners Court Records, November 23, 1846. Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center.
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- Schaat, Robert L. and Venus Booker, Archivists. Compiled information from Polk County Commissioners Court Records. Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: 1.43 acre

UTM REFERENCES	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
1)	15	314820	3398980
2)	15	314920	3398980
3)	15	314920	3398880
4)	15	314820	3398880

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The Courthouse and Courthouse Annex are situated on the Courthouse Square. The boundaries of the Square are Washington Avenue (U.S. HWY 59 Business) to the east, Church Street (U.S. HWY 190) to the north, Jackson Street to the west, and Mill Street to the south, in Livingston, Texas.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION The nomination includes all property historically associated with the buildings

11. FORM PREPARED BY (with assistance from Gregory Smith, THC Historian)

NAME/TITLE: Karen Jackson, Wanda Bobbinger, Molly Anderson

ORGANIZATION: Polk County Heritage Society

DATE: September 26, 2000

STREET & NUMBER: 514 W. Mill St.

TELEPHONE: (936) 327-6813

CITY OR TOWN: Livingston

STATE: TX

ZIP CODE: 77351

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-25)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS (see continuation sheets Plan-17 through Plan-23)

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Polk County, Texas (John P. Thompson, County Judge)

STREET & NUMBER: Polk County Courthouse

TELEPHONE: (936) 327-6813

CITY OR TOWN: Livingston

STATE: TX

ZIP CODE: 77351

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 25

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex
Livingston, Polk County, Texas

Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Annex
Washington at Church streets
Livingston, Polk County, Texas
Photos by Brooks/Coronado Associates
June 2000
Negatives on file with THC

Polk County Courthouse
North elevation
Photo 1 of 8

Polk County Courthouse
West elevation
Photo 2 of 8

Polk County Courthouse
East elevation
Photo 3 of 8

Polk County Courthouse
South elevation
Photo 4 of 8

1905 Annex
East elevation
Photo 5 of 8

1905 Annex
South elevation
Photo 6 of 8

1905 Annex
West elevation
Photo 7 of 8

1905 Annex
North elevation
Photo 8 of 8

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Polk County Courthouse and 1905 Courthouse Annex

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Polk

DATE RECEIVED: 1/05/01 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/17/01
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/02/01 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/20/01
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 01000060

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 3/2/01 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in the
National Register**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



POLK COUNTY COURT HOUSE

POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE & 1905 ANNEX

LIVINGSTON, POLK COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 8

POLK COUNTY COURT HOUSE



POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE & 1905 ANNEX

LIVINGSTON, POLK COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 2 of 8

POLK COUNTY COURT HOUSE



POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE & 1905 ANNEX

LIVINGSTON, POLK COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 3 of 8



POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE & 1905 ANNEX

LIVINGSTON, POLK COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 4 of 8



POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE & 1905 ANNEX

LIVINGSTON, POLK COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 5 of 8



POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE & 1905 ANNEX

LIVINGSTON, POLK COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 6 of 8



POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE & 1905 ANNEX

LIVINGSTON, POLK COUNTY, TEXAS

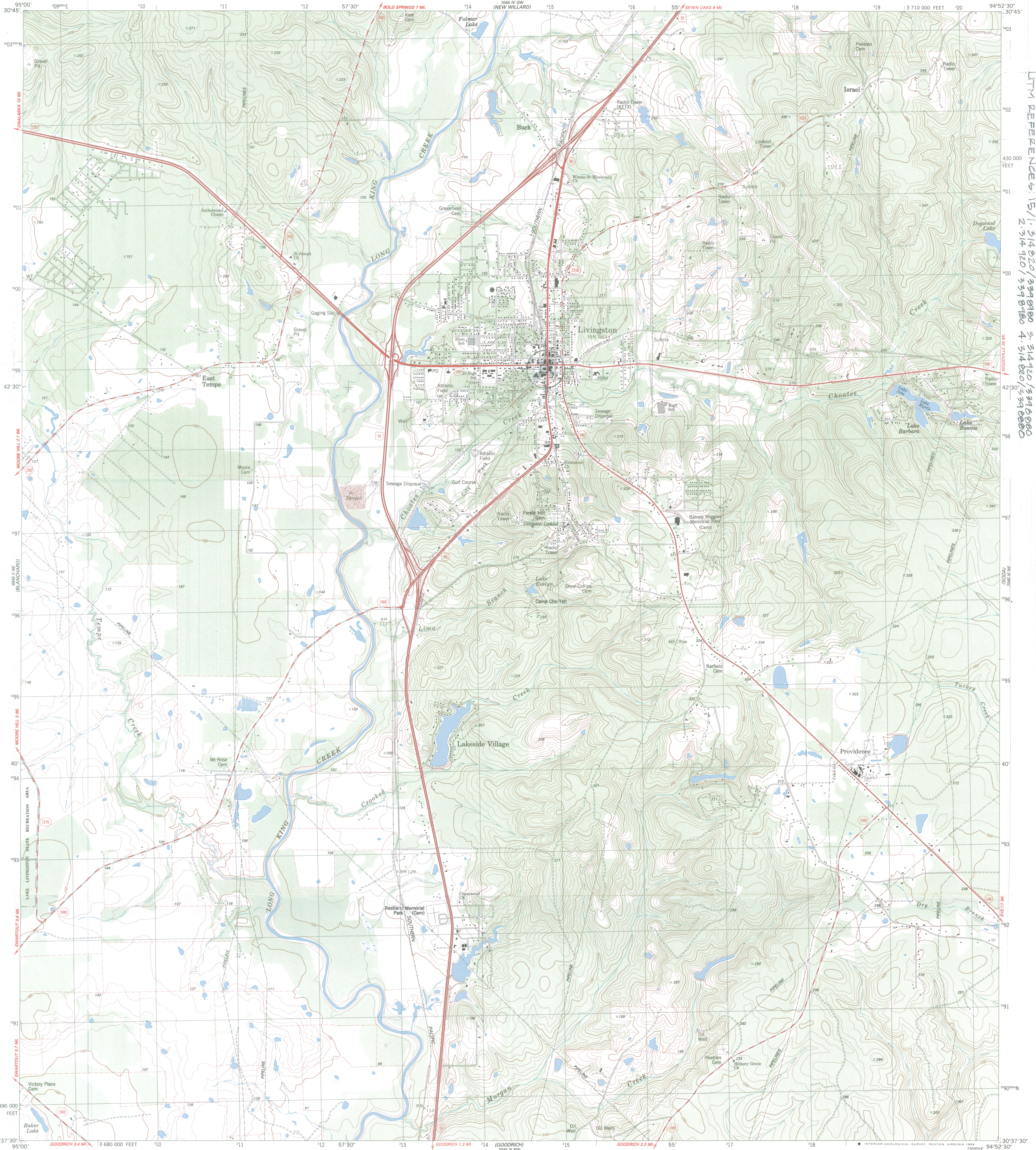
PHOTOGRAPH 7 of 8



POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE & 1905 ANNEX

LIVINGSTON, POLK COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 8 of 8



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

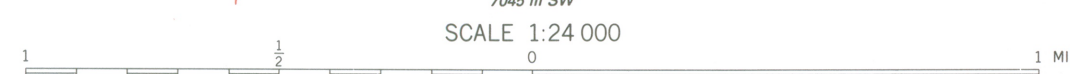
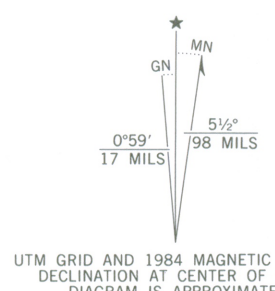
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1976. Field checked 1977. Map edited 1984

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Texas
coordinate system, central zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 17 meters south and
21 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



3094-323

ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

LIVINGSTON, TEX.
NW/4 LIVINGSTON 15' QUADRANGLE
30094-F8-TF-024

1984
DMA 7045 III NW-SERIES V882

WASHINGTON AT CHURCH STREET
LIVINGSTON, POLK CO., TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 15/11 314 820 / 339 8800 3. 314 920 / 339 8800
2. 314 920 / 339 8780 4. 314 920 / 339 8800

(CAMILLA)
886 (12)

(SODAI)
706 (11)

(CAMILLA)
886 (12)