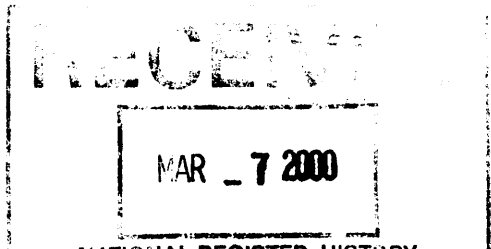


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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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 nominated, mark "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 Washington County Courthouse

other names/site number 201-5670-0004

2. Location

street & number 214 C Street not for publication

city or town Washington vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Washington code 201 zip code 66968

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.)

Richard D. Hankwitz D-SHPO February 16, 2000
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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 official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the 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:) _____

Edson H. Beal Signature of the Keeper 4/6/00 Date of Action

5. 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	
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.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government - Courthouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government - Courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement: Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: Limestone

walls Stone: Limestone

roof Synthetics: Rubber

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 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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1932- 1934

Significant Dates

1932 - 1934

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect - Overend and Boucher, Wichita

Builder - Blaser and Vollmer, Wichita

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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 2.5 Acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 4	6 6 6 8 6 0	4 4 0 9 1 4 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

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 MARTHA HAGEDORN-KRASS, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

organization KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY date FEBRUARY 17, 2000

street & number 6425 S. W. 6th AVENUE telephone 785-272-8681, ex. 213

city or town TOPEKA state Kansas zip code 66615-1099

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- 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 Washington County Commission

street & number 214 C Street telephone 913-325-2974

city or town Washington state Kansas zip code 66968

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 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. 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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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The Washington County Courthouse (c. 1932- 1934) is a two-story, rectangular Art Deco building constructed of Bedford limestone. Two-story, square towers project from each corner of the building. The courthouse maintains a western facade orientation, it measures 102' from north to south and 94' from east to west. An above grade basement provides useable office space in the lower level. A watertable projects from the building, providing further definition for the above grade windows. Standing in the center of the 2.5 acre public square, the courthouse is situated on the site of the previous courthouse.

As an example of the Art Deco style, the Washington County Courthouse is characterized by linear and angular features. Its smooth stone walls are decorated with stylized geometric motifs done both in stone and metal. Simple cubic forms and flat surfaces provide the basis for applied stylistic ornament that is normally in very low relief with a flat front plane.

The building's facade is comprised of five center bays and two secondary bays. The main unit projects from the facade and contains the doorway. Two sets of stairs rise to meet the building in alignment with its second and fourth bays. Tall fluted pilasters with floral capitals demarcate each bay. A wide entablature spans the pilasters, it is comprised of a zig-zag cornice, a flat frieze and a fluted architrave. The building's name "Washington County Court House" is inscribed in the frieze. Two stone carved, bundled scrolls rise above the facade's two outer most pilasters on each side of the building, flanking the building's name as they project from the frieze. The entablature continues above the two outer bays. The building's secondary elevations do not include decorative treatments.

The building's fenestration is comprised of steel casements with operable hoppers below and transoms above. The configuration of these windows is consistent on all elevations except the facade. The fenestration treatment on the facade is slightly more complicated. Sidelights are added to the window configurations on the outer bays. The casement-hopper-transom configuration is grouped in sets of three on the second level of the facade's projecting unit and also on the first level of the second and fifth bays. Fenestration of the windows flanking the front entry to the courthouse is composed of the casement-hopper-transom configuration grouped in pairs. Stone sills underscore all of the windows with the exception of those in the two upper story second and fifth bays.

Steel spandrel panels decorate the space between the first and second windows of the two outer bays of the facade's projecting unit. The spandrels contain three decorative panels, the center panel contains the scale of justice and is flanked by identical panels containing a circular feature. Stone carved eagles done in an angular style perch above the two first level windows that flank the entry. The eagles stand on an inverted fluted column, that rises from an abstracted Ionic capital. The decorative panel is capped with a linear pediment that terminates in rosette corner blocks. Such a decorative spandrel carving also rises above the main entry to the courthouse but it is masked by a black glass canopy that was installed to provide shelter under the entry in 1986.

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An accessibility project that occurred in 1986 dramatically changed the appearance of the courthouse's facade. When it was constructed in 1932- 1933, a wide and graceful stone staircase approached the building. The stairs spanned the width of the three most central facade bays. Stone abutments provided a place for the decorative metal lamps displaying George Washington's bust in a decorative medallion to be displayed. These features remain intact. In 1986, the center third of the stairs were removed and a below grade, handicapped accessible entry to the basement was constructed. A concrete wall spans the porch landing in front of the main entry where the steps were removed. The ramp to the basement was built in the space where the stairs formerly stood.

A set of double metal doors with glass panels lead from the vestibule into the courthouse lobby. The main interior spaces are finished with grey Tennessee marble wainscoting on both levels. Coved plaster ceilings are supported by square pillars on the first level. The first level space is divided between the open lobby to the west, an open office space to the east that is separated from the lobby by a polished wood counter, and corner and side wall offices.

Much of the original polished wood door surrounds and doors remain intact. Original frosted glass and metal light fixtures and chandeliers illuminate the lobbies on both floors and are used in some of the hearing rooms, such as the second floor courtroom and the first floor county commission room. Polished wood paneling is employed for the wainscoting in the county commission room and the courtroom.

A polished marble staircase runs along the western wall of the lobby, leading to the second level. Decorative metal railing accentuates its appearance. A six-sided, marble newel post stands at the foot of the stairs. Linear inscriptions surmounted by a five-sided star decorate each of the newel post's six panels. The cap of the newel post is stepped.

Entry to the courtroom on the second floor is achieved through two wooden paneled doors. Although the space has received acoustic paneling on the walls and ceiling, it retains its decorative features. Fluted plaster pilasters rise from the wooden wainscoting and terminate in a decorative metal cornice. The German nickel cornice is embossed with floral designs. A small dentil course runs above the cornice. Elaborate German nickel lintels embossed with vegetal and geometric motifs span the courtroom windows. The courtroom configuration and original wooden furnishings are maintained.

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The Washington County Courthouse (c. 1932- 1934) is being nominated to the National Register under criterion C for its architectural significance as an example of the Art Deco style. Built during the early years of the Depression, the construction was funded primarily with local tax dollars. The courthouse stands as the fifth in the history of Washington County, the previous courthouse was destroyed by a tornado in 1932.

On July 4, 1932 a devastating tornado ripped through the core of Washington's downtown, severely damaging the nineteenth century courthouse. The commissioners were quick to respond to the loss, voting to hire the Wichita architectural firm of Overend and Boucher to design a new courthouse on July 23, 1932. Construction on the new courthouse began in early November 1932 and was very nearly completed in one year. The local newspaper provided a rationalization of sorts for the loss caused by the tornado, writing: "The engineers tell us that railroad companies estimate the life of brick buildings at fifty years and if that is true our old courthouse had almost reached its full life expectancy before the tornado struck." (WCR, 8/5/32)

The county's decision to replace its red brick Second Empire Style courthouse with a grey limestone Art Deco style building must have been difficult for some in the community to absorb. The stylistic differences between the mansard towers, tall arched windows, richly embellished stringcourses and entablatures of the nineteenth century courthouse to the flat rectangularity and smooth decorative characteristics of the twentieth century courthouse were shockingly dramatic. Two years after the tornado the newspaper observed that, "the new courthouse has drawn hundreds of visitors during the past year and its appearance has been greatly enhanced by the landscaping that has been done in recent months." (WCR, 7/12/34)

The decorative Art Deco and its sibling the streamlined Moderne were styles commonly associated with public architecture in Kansas and nationally from the late 1920s through the Depression. The Washington County Courthouse stands as part of a group of twelve courthouses that were constructed in either the Art Deco or Moderne styles between 1928 and 1942. Seven of these courthouses were done in the earlier period between 1928 and 1934, including the Washington County example. These courthouses all display the marked decorative application of the Art Deco. The later group of five courthouses utilize multi-block massing and employ less decorative application.

Although classical in its basic form and presentation, the decorative detailing on the Washington County Courthouse has been abstracted into the Art Deco style. While the rectangular, solid massing of the courthouse recalls a Neo-Classical treatment, the stylized geometric motifs that are cut into the face of the stone allow the building to step into the Art Deco classification. The two-story building achieves verticality from its monumental fluted pilasters and metal window grouping that mark the facade. Further relief is achieved on the facade through the fenestration setbacks created by the pilasters, the decorative metal spandrels between the windows and the carved, angular eagles above the windows and doorway.

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The Art Deco style is characterized by linear and angular features, where smooth stone walls are often decorated with stylized geometric motifs done both in stone and metal. Simple cubic forms and flat surfaces provide the basis for applied stylistic ornament that is normally in very low relief with a flat front plane. Favored motifs are zigzags, chevrons and geometrics as well as floral and vegetal patterns. The style was popularized by the Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industrielles Modernes of 1925 and was widely used in architecture during the 1930s, including skyscraper designs such as the Chrysler Building in New York.

At the time of the tornado, Washington County was not in debt and had a balance of more than \$25,000 in its treasury. Although the nation was in the midst of an economic depression, the county commissioners felt confident that the citizens would support the construction of a new courthouse. A 1917 law provided that the courthouse could be built without placing the question on a ballot if one-fourth of the county's tax-paying residents signed a petition in support of the construction. With the petition successfully circulated and signed, the county was empowered to place a tax of one mill levy upon taxable property for the year 1932. The commissioners also used \$10,000 of reassigned road and bridge money and a \$20,000 insurance settlement for help pay for the construction of the new courthouse. Additionally, a \$10,000 bond was issued to pay for the courthouse furnishings.

The courthouse cost \$102,000 to build and furnish. The architectural firm of Overend and Boucher received \$3,469.33 for their design services. The Wichita construction firm of Blaser and Vollmer were selected to construct the building and received \$70,078.75 for their services. H. J. Hall of Wichita was paid \$1,358 for wiring; Moore-Robertson Company of Wichita was paid \$8414.79 for plumbing and heating; the cost for lumber and labor was \$1,828.65; furniture, fixtures and floor coverings cost \$14,672.57; Washington Gas and Electric was paid \$2,012.91 for electrical fixtures; and \$165 was paid for the cornerstone.

The new courthouse was built on the site of the 1886- 1887 courthouse in the center of the public square. The cornerstone was laid on March 11, 1933 and the courthouse was dedicated almost one year later on May 11, 1934. In need of a courthouse, building occupancy began as early as November 1933. The courthouse was described as a modest, pleasing and imposing structure, designed and built of Bedford limestone. "The solid substantial appearance of the building is consistent with the architectural conception, practical, in that it combines strength and durability of construction with full and commodious facilities wholly suitable to all purposes for which a courthouse is intended." (Washington County Register, 4/27/34)

Washington County experienced a succession of courthouses during its first quarter century. Washington County's first county commission met in 1860 in a log house that had been erected by the town company. In 1868 the county purchased a two-story log house for its offices. The house had been built in 1860 by E. Woolbert and was used as a post office and hotel. Known as the stockade courthouse, the building burned in 1870 in a blaze that destroyed

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nearly all of the county's records. Washington County rebuilt its courthouse in 1871 but this two-story frame structure was destroyed by fire the following year. A third courthouse was built with material donated by the Methodist Church in 1872, it was razed in 1887. The county's fourth courthouse, an 1886- 1887 Second Empire brick and stone building, was probably intended to be the last courthouse but mother nature had something else in mind.

The Washington County Courthouse has served the community's needs for sixty-six years. In this rural county, the courthouse still represents more than a place for the transaction of legal business. For many of its citizens the Art Deco edifice remains a of point pride, a building whose steps and marble halls afford a resting place for people to visit and discuss the events of the day.

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Washington County Commissioner's Journals. Washington, Kansas. Journal K. July 23, 1932, page 274. September 2, 1932, page 284. September 9, 1932, page 293. October 10, 1932, page 293. November 7, 1932, page 315. December 9, 1932, page 326. January 26, 1933, page 335. February 23, 1933. April 3, 1933, page 349. May 15, 1933, page 363. June 5, 1933, page 369. July 26, 1933, page 377. September 5, 1933, page 387. September 18, 1933, page 388. October 1933, page 395. January 3, 1934, page 415. September 19, 1934.

Washington County Register (WCR), Washington, Kansas. 7/8/32, 7/29/32, 8/5/32, 8/12/32, 8/19/32, 9/9/32, 10/21/32, 11/4/32, 11/10/32, 2/24/33, 3/3/33, 3/10/33, 3/11/33, 3/17/33, 4/27/34, 5/4/34, 5/11/34, 7/12/34.

Whiffen, Marcus and Frederick Koeper. American Architecture, 1607- 1976. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981.

Wortman, Julie and David Johnson. Legacies: Kansas' Older County Courthouses. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1981.

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property stands in the center of the public square in Washington. Washington County, Kansas. The property is situated on a 2.5 acre tract of land in the original town of Washington. The public square is bounded west by C Street, to the north by 2nd Street, to the east by Ballard Street, and to the south by 3rd Street. The tract commences at the SW corner of Block 10, TH S66' FOR POB S330' E349.8' N330' W349.8' TO POB.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property stands on a 2.5 acre square known as the public square and includes all land historically associated with the courthouse.