

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received SEP 25 1979

date entered OCT 18 1979

1. Name

historic Little Rock City Hall

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 500 West Markham St. not for publication

city, town Little Rock vicinity of congressional district Second

state Arkansas code 05 county Pulaski code 119

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Little Rock

street & number 500 West Markham

city, town Little Rock vicinity of state Arkansas 72201

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pulaski County Courthouse

street & number 405 West Markham

city, town Little Rock state Arkansas 72201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Ark. Historic Preservation Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ no

date 1976 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

city, town Little Rock state Arkansas 72201

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent

☒ good

☐ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered

☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Little Rock City Hall was constructed in 1907 according to the design of Little Rock architect Charles Thompson. Thompson's design embraces the Classical Roman elements that formed the basis of the Italian Renaissance style, and it is one of the finest Renaissance Revival buildings in the state. Its heavily rusticated ground floor, high ceilinged "piano nobile" (second floor), stone string courses, prominent Classical cornice, and crowning stone balustrade are all essential characteristics of the High-Renaissance public buildings from which the City Hall is derived.

City Hall is a three-story structure whose rigid, Renaissance-inspired principal facades (the south elevation facing Markham Street and the east elevation facing Broadway) suggest a symmetrical plan. The delineation of the rear of the building is irregular, however, and yields to the functional requirements of conducting city government.

The front (south) elevation of the building consists of three bays of equal size. The central bay is slightly recessed and features a monumental entrance portico. The brickwork of the ground floor wall was executed in a manner that gives the impression of rusticated stone, while the corners of the building are articulated with brick that is suggestive of quoining. Each of the flanking bays held pairs of small, square windows on the ground floor, great Roman arched openings that once held finely articulated Palladian windows on the second floor, and larger, square windows on the third floor. Narrow attic windows appear directly under the cornice.

The architect's use of decorative stone detail is noteworthy. A band of egg-and-dart moulding set between two broad stone bands distinguishes the ground floor from the upper ranges of the building. Stone string courses appear between the second and third floors and between the third floor and the attic. Additional stone bands appear between the spring lines of the arches. Stone sills and mouldings surround the second and third floor windows. Keystones articulate the radiating brick arches, and brackets define the centerpoint of the third-floor window lintels. A heavy, dentiled cornice, surmounted by a simple yet Classically detailed and proportioned balustrade, caps the building.

The entry portico was conceived in an appropriately grand manner. It is elevated several feet above the street grade and the design conveys the imagery of a "temple of government." The two-story portico is supported by fluted columns of the Ionic order. It terminates in a dentiled cornice and Classically detailed balustrade reiterating the design of the elements that define the roofscape. The portico features a fluted architrave, and the otherwise unembellished frieze bears the inscription "City Hall" below a narrow band of egg-and-dart moulding. Additional entrances through less finely articulated porticos of a smaller scale appear on the Broadway side of the building.

The Broadway (east) elevation consists of a wide central bay flanked by two projecting corner bays. The south bay is designed in exactly the same fashion as the corner bays of the Markham Street facade; the north bay has two tall, Roman-arched openings. The second- and third floor elevations of this broad central area are penetrated by seven unembellished windows.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 25 1979

OCT 18 1979

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The principal facades of City Hall are faced with buff-colored pressed brick. The rusticated basement walls are granite. The rear (north) facade of the building is also faced with brick. However, because of its lack of visibility from Markham and Broadway, this elevation is devoid of the careful attention to symmetry, Classical embellishment, and acutely executed detail that render the striking street facades so attractive.

City Hall was once surmounted by a dominant ribbed dome rising from the square base still evident atop the building. The dome was demolished in 1956, but it is important to note that Thompson's first design for the City Hall did not include a dome.

On the interior, the blue, green, and gold designs in the leaded-glass ceiling of the rotunda create an attractive focal feature. Originally the entire public area of the building was floored with mosaic tiles, and wainscoting of Georgia marble rose to a height of five feet along the public corridors, halls and stairs. Interior columns and pilasters are of the same material. Classical detailing executed in plaster, particularly dentiling and the predominant egg-and-dart pattern, prevails in the cornices, mouldings, and column and pilaster capitals of these spaces.

The building's evolution to meet contemporary standards and the city's needs is obvious even upon casual inspection. Remodelling undertaken in 1960 included: installation of central heating and air conditioning; new wiring, light fixtures, and elevators; expansion of office spaces; lowering of ceilings; painting. The most distressing aspect of this "renovation" work was the bricking-in of the windows. While this construction detracts from the esthetic impact and beauty of the building, the change is by no means irreversible. Alternative solutions may be explored and the Renaissance-like grandeur of the City Hall may be restored.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1907 **Builder/Architect** Charles Thompson

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The grand opening of the Little Rock City Hall on April 15, 1908, was eagerly awaited. According to the Arkansas Gazette, it became "one of the greatest events of its kind in the history of Little Rock." An estimated 10,000 people filed through the building well into the night, inspecting its corridors, courtroom offices, and meeting rooms. Designed by Charles Thompson of Little Rock, the City Hall was at the time considered a great showplace and a symbol of refinement. It was a civic center appropriate to a maturing community. The Little Rock City Hall adequately served virtually all of the city's important offices and agencies, including a municipal court and the Police Department, through the World War II era. In the 1950s and early 1960s, after Little Rock had almost tripled its 1908 population, the building became crowded and several departments were removed to new facilities. For a time the old building fell into disfavor with city officials. There was talk of razing the old building and constructing a new city hall. But in the last decade, the building regained much of its stature. It has been adapted to contemporary needs of the city, and remains a useful and significant political and architectural monument. The architect's use of grand Classical elements in a style inspired by the Italian Renaissance, makes it one of Arkansas's finest Renaissance Revival buildings. Reaching out in two directions to articulate one of downtown Little Rock's busiest corners, the City Hall is a pivotal element in the city's historic cluster of governmental buildings.

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Arkansas Gazette, April 15-16, 1908, March 18, 1956, November 6, 1960, and February 17, 1976.

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre.

Quadrangle name Little Rock

Quadrangle scale 1: 24000

UMT References

A 1 5 5 6 6 3 4 0 3 8 4 5 2 6 0
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification East half of Block 121, original city. Bounded by the Central Fire Station on the west, La Harpe Boulevard on the north, Broadway on the east, and West Markham on the south.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ethel Goodstein, Architectural Historian, Robert Besom, Historian

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date September 20, 1979

street & number Suite 500, Continental Building telephone 501-371-2763

city or town Little Rock state Arkansas 72201

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Paul Williams Baldridge

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date September 21, 1979

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Carol Shull
Keeper of the National Register

date 10-18-79

Attest: *Seth Groszema*
-Chief of Registration

date 10/18/79

Property

Little Rock City Hall

State

AR (Pulaski)

Working Number

9-25-79 2237

79000452

TECHNICAL

Photos

Maps

8

1

CONTROL

*Fine Renaissance Revival building; city landmark
Too bad about the windows....*

HISTORIAN

accept

B. Groover

10/18/79

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory

Review

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

accept

B. Groover

10/18/79

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up

Federal Register Entry

11.6.79

Send-back

Re-submit

Entered

OCT 18 1979



Little Rock City Hall
Little Rock, Arkansas,

PULASKI County
SEP 25 1979

Bob Dunn

1979

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
South elevation viewed from the southwest

#1 *18*

Doc
OCT 18 1979



Little Rock City Hall
Little Rock, Arkansas

SEP 25 1979

Bob Dunn, *Pulaski County*
1979

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
South and east elevations viewed from
the southeast

#2 *48*

DOE
OCT 18 1979



Little Rock City Hall
Little Rock, Arkansas
Bob Dunn, *Pulaski County,*
1979

SEP 25 1979

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
East and north elevations viewed from
the northeast

#3 *78*

DOE
OCT 18 1979



Little Rock City Hall
Little Rock, Arkansas

SEP 25 1979

Bob Dunn, *Pulaski County*

1979

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

West elevation viewed from the west

#4 *48*

DOE

OCT 18 1979



Little Rock City Hall

Little Rock, Arkansas

Bob Dunn, *Pulaski County,*
1979

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
North and west elevations viewed from

the northwest

#5 *48*

SEP 25 1979

DOE
OCT 18 1979



Little Rock City Hall

Little Rock, Arkansas

Bob Dunn, *Pulaski County*
1979

SEP 25 1979

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Main stairway viewed from the south on
the first floor

#6 *78*

DEC
OCT 18 1979



Little Rock City Hall

Little Rock, Arkansas

Bob Dunn

1979

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Skylight viewed from the first floor of
the rotunda

#7 *18*

SEP 25 1979

PULASKI County

DOE
OCT 18 1979



Little RockCity Hall

Little Rock , Arkansas

Bob Dunn *Pulaski County*

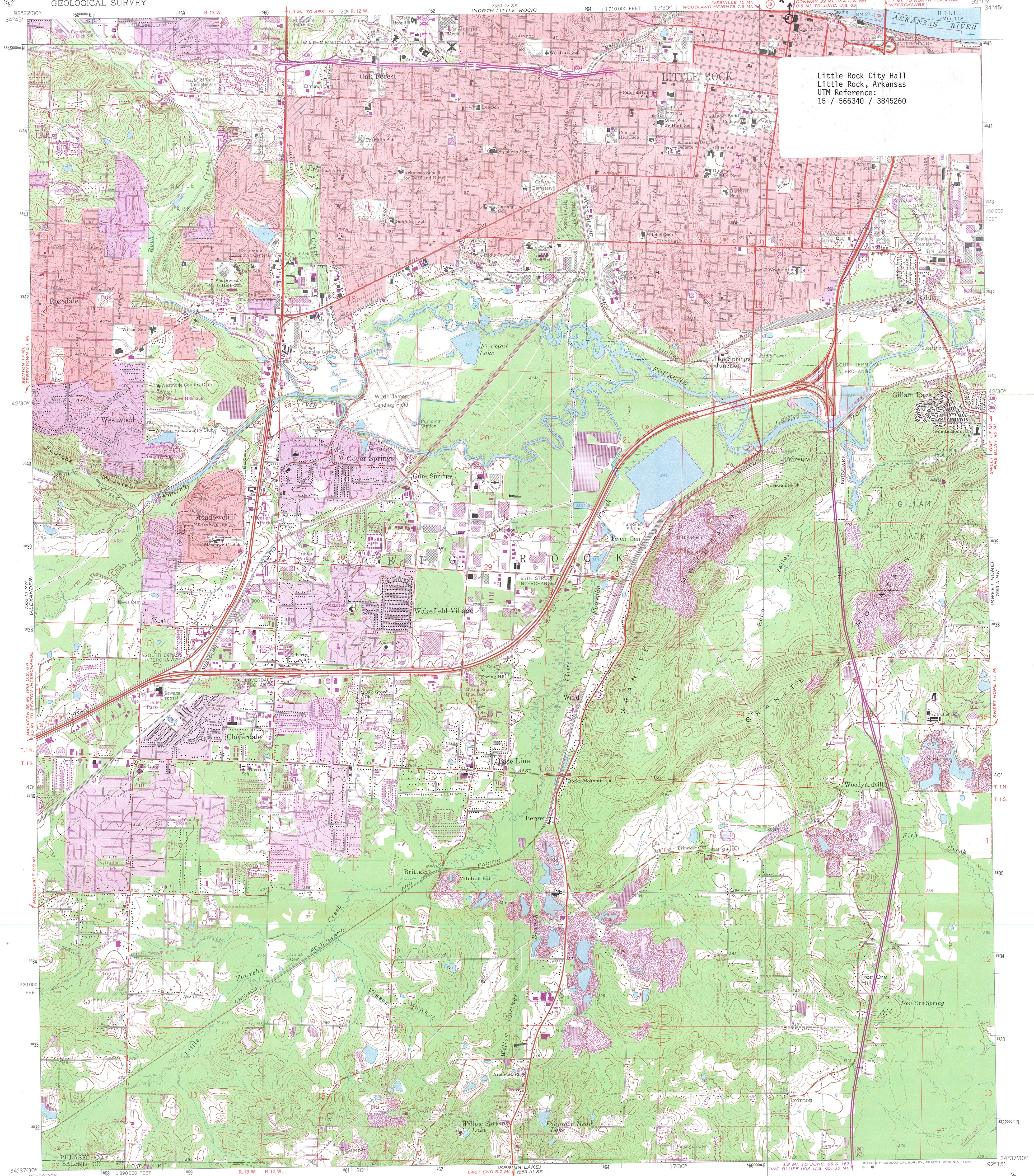
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Rotunda viewed from the second floor

#8 *18*

SEP 25 1979

po
OCT 18 1979



Little Rock City Hall
Little Rock, Arkansas
UTM Reference:
15 / 566340 / 3845260

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

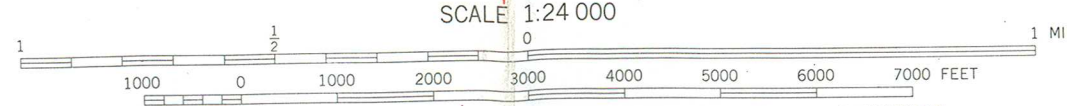
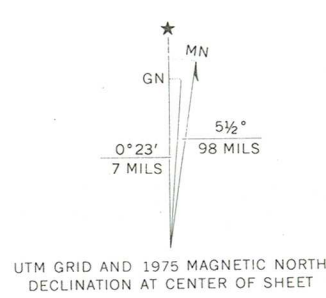
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1960. Field checked 1961

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, south zone 1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown. Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1970 and 1975. This information not field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5 FOOT CONTOURS
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
AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
Interstate Route — U.S. Route — State Route —

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.
N3437.5-W9215.7.5

1961
PHOTOREVISED 1970 AND 1975
AMS 7553 III NE-SERIES 1984

OCT 18 1979





ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Suite 500, Continental Building · Markham and Main · Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Phone: (501) 371-2763

September 10, 1979



Mr. Charles Herrington
Acting Keeper of the National Register
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Pension Building
440 G Street, North West
Washington, D. C. 20243

Dear Mr. Herrington:

I have legal authority to approve the nomination of the following property to the National Register of Historic Places:

City Hall and Old Central Fire Station

(Name of Property)

Markham & Broadway and Markham and Arch Streets

(Location of Property)

Little Rock, Arkansas

I am aware of the consequences of National Register listing and am aware that the provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 apply only to depreciable properties. I approve of the nomination of the above-listed property and hereby waive my right to the 30 day commenting period.

(Signature of Authorizing Official)

RESOLUTION NO. 6,211

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE PLACEMENT OF CITY HALL
AND THE CENTRAL FIRE STATION BUILDINGS ON THE
NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER.

WHEREAS, the City Manager and Board of Directors have jurisdiction over the City Hall and Central Fire Station Buildings, and they are aware of their nomination to the National Historic Register and of the consequences of their placement on the Register.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CITY OF LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. That the City Manager and Board of Directors hereby approve and support the nominations and waive the right to a thirty day comment period.

SECTION 2. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its adoption.

ADOPTED: September 18, 1979

ATTEST:

Jane Cyck
City Clerk

APPROVED:

W. B. G. R. H. M.
Mayor



ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE ARKANSAS

Date Entered OCT 18 1979

Name

Location

Little Rock City Hall

Little Rock
Pulaski County

Little Rock Central Fire Station

Little Rock
Pulaski County

Pulaski County Courthouse

Little Rock
Pulaski County

Also Notified

Honorable Dale Bumpers

Honorable David Pryor
Honorable Ed Bethune

State Historic Preservation Officer
Ms. Joan Baldrige
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
Suite 500, Continental Building
Markham and Main Streets
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

NR Byers/bjr 10/22/79

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.