

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

562454

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Nevada County Courthouse

Other names/site number: Site #NE0035

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

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

2. Location

Street & number: 215 East 2nd Street

City or town: Prescott State: AR County: Nevada

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

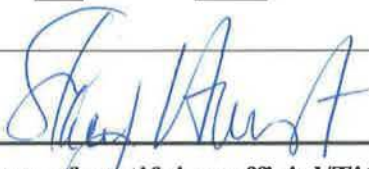
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D

| | |
|---|----------------|
|  | <u>3-16-18</u> |
| Signature of certifying official/Title: | Date |
| <u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u> | |
| State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government | |

| | |
|---|---|
| In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. | |
| Signature of commenting official: | Date |
| Title : | State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government |

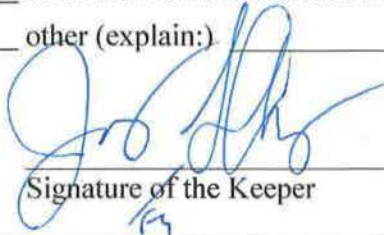
Nevada County Courthouse
Name of Property

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

5-24-2018

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

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement/New Formalism

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; CAST STONE

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The Nevada County Courthouse is situated in the center of downtown Prescott, Arkansas. The block is bound by E. 2nd Street to the northwest, E. Elm St. to the northeast, E. 3rd St. to the southeast, and E. Vine St. to the southwest. It is a 12,851 square-foot, one-story building finished with red brick and cast-stone accents. The front of the building faces northwest with a small staircase leading to the glass front doors. The doors are bound by transom and sidelight windows, all of which almost reach the ceiling stopping just below metal block letters reading "COURTHOUSE". The brick and cast-stone face, set on a cast-concrete foundation, runs continuously around the building beset with double-hung, vertically sliding windows. This courthouse was built in 1964 on the site of the former county courthouse. It was designed by architects at the Weaver and Hiegel firm of Little Rock, AR and built by E.W. Johnson of Johnson Construction Company from Texarkana, AR. It was meant to be a modern replacement for the former courthouse—built in 1885—with strong New Formalism features. The site also hosts a fallen soldier memorial, a military branch monument, a clock tower, a storage/maintenance shed, and several round concrete planters.

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Narrative Description

Nevada County Courthouse – Contributing

The Nevada County Courthouse is situated in the center of downtown Prescott, Arkansas. The block is bound by E. 2nd Street to the northwest, E. Elm St. to the northeast, E. 3rd St. to the southeast, and E. Vine St. to the southwest. It is a 12,851 square-foot, one-story building built on a cast-concrete foundation, capped by a flat-top roof, and finished with red brick and cast-stone accents. This courthouse was built in 1964 on the site of the former county courthouse. It was designed by architects at the Weaver and Hiegel firm of Little Rock, AR and built by E.W. Johnson of Johnson Construction Company from Texarkana, AR. It was meant to be a modern replacement for the former courthouse—built in 1911—with strong New Formalism features.

The courthouse is centered within a lawn that is ornamented with trees of varying size and multiple large, round concrete planters. There are also flowering bushes and shrubs lining every façade of the building. A sidewalk traces the edges of the lawn with extending walks to the front (northwest), side (northeast), and rear (southeast) entrances to the building. Two more walkways extend from the southwest sidewalk, leading to the front and rear entrances. The walkway leading to the front entrance provides wheelchair access to the building. Two lampposts stand to either side of the front (northwest) walkway. In the front lawn near the southwest edge of the building, there is a small Nevada County military service monument, complete with a granite observing bench. At the north-facing corner of the lawn, there are three prominent fixtures—a triangular paver-stone planter, a fallen soldier memorial (both cordoned off by an arcing section of sidewalk), and clock tower. The flagpole for the grounds stands directly behind the memorial. Courthouse parking spaces surround the lawn on the northwest, southwest, and southeast sides.

Front/Northwest Façade

The front façade of the Nevada County Courthouse is symmetrically designed, with a centered, recessed entrance leading directly into the lobby and courthouse. The entrance is part of a raised portion of the building, which extends back to encompass the courtroom. There are five concrete steps and four cast-stone columns—two at either side of the steps—leading up to the porch. The columns support a jutting flat-roof canopy made of cast stone. There are two single metal-framed, plate glass doors. The doors are separated by two small sidelight windows. Above the doorway are two large transom windows. Two more cast-stone columns frame the doorway. To either side of these columns are two narrow sidelights reaching from the porch floor almost to the ceiling. These windows and columns all stop just below an extended cast-stone beam, which houses metal block letters reading “COURTHOUSE”. The rest of the porch face is finished in red brick with two double-hung windows on either side of the entrance.

The two wing walls of the front façade are identical in form, each with two retreating faces finished in red brick and cast-stone trim. The walls directly adjacent to the center wall are small, squared-off sections. Each has a double-hung window on either side of the square. The outermost walls each have two, front-facing windows. Outside of the front-center façade, every window around the building is vinyl-framed, double-hung, vertically-sliding, and set within a

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recessed cast-stone surround reaching from the foundation to the roof. They are also each framed by cast-stone beams, which are broken into three sections. All these double-hung, vinyl windows that are set around the entire building are recent replacements for original metal-framed windows, each of which had two stationary panes at the top and bottom with two awnings in between.

Side/Northeast Façade

The northeast side of the building houses its own entrance at the center. The entrance has a very small porch with a cast-stone ceiling. From the sidewalk, eight concrete steps lead up to the doorway, with a single metal handrail on the left side. The foundation extends to encase both sides of the staircase. Two metal lampposts are set atop the extended foundation sections on either side of the staircase. There is one plate-glass, metal-framed door in the center, which is surrounded by three small transom windows and two long sidelights.

To the left and right of the centered entrance, the features are symmetrical with four windows on each side (eight total), red-brick facing, and cast-stone trim spanning the entire top of the façade. Each window is consistent with those on the front façade; each is double-hung, vinyl-framed, and encased by cast-stone surrounds and segmented cast-stone beams reaching from the foundation to the roof.

Rear/Southeast Façade

Fitting with the rest of the building, the entire rear façade is faced with red brick with a cast-concrete foundation and cast-stone trim. The largest portion of the rear façade is recessed between two extended outer wings. This center wall sits lower than the raised roof section of the building extending from the front to the rear of the courthouse. This segment has three windows, which are double-hung, vinyl, and encased in cast-stone surround with segmented cast-stone beams reaching from foundation to roof. On the south-facing corner of the center wall, just inside the southern outer wing, there is a rear entrance door. From the sidewalk, nine concrete steps lead up to the doorway with a single metal handrail on the right side of the steps. The small porch is covered by a cast-stone ceiling. The door itself is a single metal-framed, plate-glass door with one transom window. On the east-facing corner of the center wall, just inside the eastern outer wing, there is another doorway. Nine concrete steps lead up to the doorway porch, which is also covered by a cast-stone ceiling. There is a steel double door with louvered vents above leading into a maintenance/storage area.

The two south and east-facing wings are identical in form. Each is beset with two rear-facing, double-hung, vinyl windows with cast-stone surround and segmented cast-stone beams reaching from the foundation to the roof. These two wing sections extend from the flanks of the centered courtroom.

Side/Southwest Façade

The southwest side of the courthouse is faced with red brick with a cast-concrete foundation and cast-stone trim. It has an asymmetrical composition with five windows bunched right of center near the south-facing corner and two windows bunched far left of center near the west-facing

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corner. Each window is vinyl, double-hung, and set within a cast-stone surround with segmented cast-stone beams reaching from the foundation to the roof.

Interior

Just inside the front entrance doors, the lobby of the Nevada County Courthouse is flanked by red brick walls. The entrance to the courtroom lies directly ahead. The outside wall of the courtroom entrance is faced with tan buff-brick and a wood double door leads into the courtroom. Above the door is a matching wood panel extending from the top of the doors to the ceiling. The courtroom itself is centered in the building with a raised ceiling sixteen feet in height. The walls feature large wood veneer panels set against black background, which creates an attractive contrast.

Branching off from the front lobby and surrounding the courtroom are two hallways on the northeast and southwest sides of the building, where various county offices are located. The lobby and hallways are floored with tan vinyl tile. The walls consist of white painted-concrete blocking with pink ceramic-tile wainscoting on the bottom portion.

Clock Tower – Contributing

A brick clock tower stands on the northwest lawn facing the northern corner where East 2nd Street and East Elm Street meet. It stands on a brick-and-concrete foundation and consists of two brick columns that flank a decorative brick wall. The clock piece itself is supported by the brick columns. A metal frame surrounds two panes—the clock face on the bottom and an outline map of Nevada County on the top (with Prescott starred). Each has a white face with black numbers and details. The clock and map piece was donated by the old Bank of Prescott, located one block northeast on East 2nd Street. The brick foundation and tower were built the same year as the courthouse, and the clock was set in place one week after the dedication of the courthouse building after having been delayed due to inclement weather.

Veterans Memorials – Non-contributing

Two separate memorials dedicated to Nevada County veterans and fallen soldiers are located on the lawns of the courthouse. In the north-facing corner, the larger memorial stands in front of the grounds flagpole. The memorial is white limestone and sits on a concrete footing. It consists of a large pentagonal center tablet designed with an etched wreath at the top and, just below, a memorial inscription for fallen soldiers from Nevada County. The center piece also reveals that the memorial was “Erected by the American Legion and citizens of Nevada County” and “Dedicated on November 5, 1950”, pre-dating the courthouse building itself. The memorial also has two wing sections branching from the base of the center tablet, bookended by two small columns. The left-most column is etched with an eagle-and-shield emblem with an inscription reading “World War I”. Next to it, the left wing tablet lists names of fallen Nevada County soldiers from World War I. On the right-most column, the same eagle-and-shield emblem is etched with the inscription “World War II”. Next to it, the right wing tablet lists names of fallen Nevada County soldiers from World War II. These are all features of the original monument. Later, on the center tablet, the names of fallen Nevada County soldiers from the Korean and Vietnam Wars were added.

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The second memorial is much smaller and located on the front lawn near the west-facing corner of the building. It is a rectangular dark granite tablet standing on two granite pylons atop a small concrete foundation. Two concrete urn planters flank the memorial. The single tablet is inscribed with a statement honoring all past and present veterans from Nevada County. Just below the statement is etched the insignia of the four major branches of the military. Sitting in front of the memorial tablet is a small, grey granite observing bench set on a small concrete foundation.

Shed – Non-contributing

On the rear lawn of the courthouse just near the building, a single wooden storage shed stands elevated on concrete blocks. It is painted light brown with white trim. The low-gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles. It has a double-door end entrance and one double-paned, metal-framed window on the side.

Integrity

The Nevada County Courthouse has been well-maintained since it was built in 1964. The only change that appears to have been made to the building itself is the recent replacement of all the metal awning windows to vinyl, double-hung windows. The small veteran memorial on the front lawn and the shed on the rear lawn have both been put in place since the construction of the building. The original design of the courthouse is completely intact and serves as an example of popular municipal design from the time it was built. Historically, the courthouse stands where the old courthouse once stood and remains a prominent fixture in the center of the town of the Prescott, continuing to reflect the economic progress of the mid-1960s and lasting communal traditions of the town.

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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.)

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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1964

Significant Dates

1964

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Weaver and Hiegel Associates, Architects
Johnson Construction Company, Contractor
Blaylock, Cook, Deitz, & Associates, Engineers

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

Built in 1964, the Nevada County Courthouse is positioned in the center of Prescott, Arkansas, on the site where the two prior courthouses also stood. Intended as a modern replacement for the previous building (which stood for over fifty years), the courthouse was designed by Weaver and Hiegel Associates, who primarily used elements of New Formalism—a popular style for modern civic buildings of the time. The courthouse was built during a period of economic and communal growth for the town of Prescott and for Nevada County. Many new civic, social, and commercial buildings were erected or renovated throughout the 1960s as the county overcame a prior period of commercial and demographic deceleration. The building stands as a representation of this period both in design and in communal significance for Prescott. The design includes symmetrical façades, a dominant front entrance and lobby with columns and receding wing walls, a low roof with a raised center courtroom section, and a raised cast-concrete foundation that features prominently in the aesthetic design. These elements reveal a strong New Formalist influence and qualify the building to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

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

History of the Property

After its inclusion in the Louisiana Purchase, the area that became Nevada County was first surveyed around 1819, when Arkansas Territory was being organized. The land was originally claimed by the Caddo Nation, but the U.S. government would eventually end their claim to the land by the mid-1830s.¹ The land was at the time part of Hempstead County and Clark County—two of five large counties making up the Arkansas Territory at the time.² Nevada County itself was not formally organized until March 20, 1871, when the Arkansas General Assembly approved the act of incorporation.³ The Little Missouri River delineated its northern boundary. The land of the county consisted of extensive prairie land in the north and timber forests throughout. Although cotton was the primary product of interest in the county throughout the nineteenth century, timber became very important around the turn of the twentieth century. It is even represented in the design of the current courtroom as the large wooden panels are made of oak, reflecting the hardwood forests surrounding the area.⁴

¹ Carter, Cecile Elkins. "Caddo Nation" from *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Accessed October 5, 2017.

<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=549>.

² "Articles". Nevada County Depot and Museum. Accessed October 5, 2017. www.depotmuseum.org/articles.php/refarticles/58

³ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, pg. 550.

⁴ Gill, John Purifoy and Marjem Jackson Gill. *On the Courthouse Square in Arkansas*. Library of Congress. 1980.

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After the Cairo and Fulton Company built a railroad line from Little Rock to Texarkana in 1873, the town of Prescott bloomed and blossomed.⁵ Within that year alone, a railroad depot, two storefronts, a restaurant, and a post office were all established. Prescott was officially founded in 1874, and major additions soon followed. By 1875, the first church was established by Cumberland Presbyterians, and the first newspaper began printing. The town held its first elections in 1876, in which the first mayor was appointed. The first public school district was started in 1877. The longest running newspaper in the area, *The Nevada County Picayune*, began publishing in 1878. By the time the first bank was established in 1880, Prescott had clearly become the primary center of commerce and community in Nevada County.⁶

The first court term for the new Nevada County was held in the temporary seat of Mount Moriah beginning in May of 1871, until the seat was officially moved to the town of Rosston in October of that year, where it stayed until 1877.⁷ The first building in Prescott to be used as a courthouse by the county was an unfinished Methodist church. Joseph R. White, the county sheriff, built a two-story wooden building in 1878, which he rented to the county to use as a courthouse.⁸ This building was soon outmoded and, in 1884-85, a new one was built on the site of the present courthouse for \$12,300. It was a two-story brick building with county offices on the first floor and a courtroom on the second.⁹ This building was torn down beginning in August of 1911 after the county's board of building commissioners made plans to build a new courthouse.¹⁰ One of Arkansas's emerging architects at the time, Theo Sanders, designed the building a short time after opening his own firm in Little Rock in 1910.¹¹ The contract was initially awarded to L.R. Wright and Company, based in Dallas, Texas. However, by the time construction began, the contract had been given to Falls City Construction Company of Louisville, Kentucky, which requested the date of completion to be extended from April of 1912 to May of 1912.¹² The county invested around \$60,000 in the building and considered the "handsome and imposing structure" a point of pride.¹³ This court building remained on the site until January of 1964, when the county demolished it and began construction on the current courthouse. For courthouse workers and county officials during the time, this was a necessary and overdue action, despite the communal significance of the previous building.

⁵ Steven Teske. "Prescott (Nevada County)" from *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Accessed October 5, 2017.

<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=944>

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889. Pg. 550.

⁸ "Randolph Hamby Gives History of Courthouses". *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 10, 1964. Pg. 4.

⁹ *Ibid*; *Memoirs of Southern Arkansas*. 550.

¹⁰ "Local News". *The Nevada News*. August 17, 1911. Pg. 2.

¹¹ Charles Witsell and Gordon Wittenberg. *Architects of Little Rock, 1833-1950*. Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 2014. Pg. 68; "Nevada's New Court House Completed". *The Nevada News*. May 16, 1912. Pg. 6.

¹² "Contract Let for New Courthouse". *The Nevada County Picayune*. May 5, 1911. Pg. 1; "Local News". *The Nevada News*. July 20, 1911. Pg. 2.

¹³ "Nevada's New Court House Completed". *The Nevada News*. May 16, 1912. Pg. 6.

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The Sanders-designed courthouse had become a hazard by at least the mid-1950s. In August of 1961, the county held a public meeting in order to discuss “the courthouse problem” that had been known for some time. Three separate grand juries called in 1956, 1958, and 1960 all concluded that the building was “unrepairable and in a dangerous condition.” Adding force to that conclusion was a Health Department report in 1960 ensuring that the building was “a hazard to health, safety, and public welfare.”¹⁴ This meeting was in response to a court order made by County Judge Phles Orren on May 19, 1961, stating:

That the County Courthouse being used by Nevada County is inadequate to meet the needs of the citizens of the County and that there is an immediate necessity for the construction of a new county courthouse in order that the county officials of Nevada County might properly discharge their duties to the citizens of the County and in order that adequate facilities might be made available for the courts which utilize the Nevada County Courthouse.

It is, therefore, considered, ordered and adjudged by this Court that there exists the necessity for the construction of a Courthouse for Nevada County, Arkansas, and the Court orders that plans, specifications and estimates of cost of the contemplated construction as may be proper for a reasonable understanding of the nature, extent and approximate cost thereof shall be prepared and filed...¹⁵

In the August meeting, a date was set for the issue to come before the voters of the county—September 12, 1961.¹⁶ On August 31, ahead of the vote, *The Nevada News* used almost its entire front page to present arguments to the public for constructing the new courthouse, including a list of all its improvements.¹⁷ Randolph Hamby, whose father helped oversee the construction of the 1911 courthouse, wrote in favor of the need for a new courthouse despite his sentimental connection, saying, “I am more concerned about the future of Prescott and our county than I am the cost and style of a new building.” He added that it would be more expensive to continue trying to repair the existing building than to build a new one.¹⁸ Still, the public was concerned with whether a new building was necessary, whether it was too expensive, and the extent to which it would raise individual taxes.¹⁹ In September, residents of Nevada County voted on the bond issue to construct a new courthouse and on a 2.75-mill tax increase to pay for the construction. Despite the efforts of county officials and public figures to convince the public of the county’s need, both measures were voted down by fairly narrow margins—the construction

¹⁴ “Public Meeting Held Tuesday Night to Discuss Courthouse”. *The Nevada News*. August 17, 1961. Pg. 1.

¹⁵ Order Declaring the Necessity for the Construction of a County Courthouse in the County Court of Nevada County, Arkansas by County Judge Phles Orren. May 19, 1961.

¹⁶ “Public Meeting Held Tuesday Night to Discuss Courthouse”. *The Nevada News*. August 17, 1961. Pg. 1; “Court House Election Set for September 12th”. *The Nevada News*. August 17, 1961. Pg. 1.

¹⁷ “Many Improvements Included in Proposed Court House Building”. *The Nevada News*. August 31, 1961. Pg. 1.

¹⁸ Hamby, R.P. “Court House Repairs”. *The Nevada News*. August 31, 1961. Pg. 1.

¹⁹ “What Are the Objections to a New Courthouse?” *The Nevada News*. August 31, 1961. Pg. 1.

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bond vote being 1041 "for", 1187 "against"; and the tax increase vote being 1021 "for", 1204 "against".²⁰

The people of Nevada County were certainly apprehensive about raising taxes for new state projects. Only two months prior, they voted down a measure put forth by Governor Orval Faubus to provide \$60 million for improvements at various state institutions.²¹ Prior to the 1960s, Nevada County had lost much of its industry and workforce. Charles Honey, a congressional secretary from Prescott, spoke in 1964 about the state of progress in Nevada County leading up to the 1960s, noting that the population had fallen from 30,000 in 1940 to around 10,000 in 1960. He also mentioned the stagnating industry. The General Box Company closed; there were fewer small farmers; and several saw mills ceased operations, creating a sense of unease among people in the county.²² However, 1963 was a crucial year for new growth within the county. *Nevada County Picayune* columnist Larry Wahlquist enumerated the many commercial and communal improvements in Prescott during that year:

1963 saw new business houses being built and some of our vacant buildings in the Prescott business section become occupied. 1963 saw a large new industrial building go up for Prescott Manufacturing Corporation and this large new building will mean that 1964 will see added employment in the manufacturing industry of the county.

1963 was the year of industrial talk in Nevada County as a large new floor tile plant makes plans to locate in the City of Prescott...

1963 saw plans formulated for a large new county hospital with construction to begin in 1964.

1963 saw plans being made for a 50 unit housing project in Prescott and a smaller one at Emmett.

1963 saw the people of Nevada County begin to awaken to the fact that tourists were driving through their county in droves and for the first time concrete steps are being built by the Chamber to stop these tourists in the area...

1963 saw a large new supermarket open in Prescott, and new office buildings go up for Prescott Insurance Agency and Nashville Production Credit Association...

1963 was a good year for the government of our county. For the first time Nevada County taxpayers were privileged to see where their tax money was being spent according to law... The city council of Prescott has made it a point in 1963 to inform radio and newspapers of all special called sessions so that the people of the city might be well informed as to the actions of the council...

²⁰ "Voters Reject Court House Construction". *The Nevada News*. September 14, 1961; "Abstract of votes cast at the Special Election held in Nevada County, Arkansas, September 12, 1961, on the questions of a court house and the levying of a tax to pay for same." Nevada County Court Report by C.C. Henry and R.P. Hamby. September 15, 1961.

²¹ "Special Election on Bond Issue Set for Tuesday, June 27". *The Nevada News*. June 15, 1961. Pg. 1; "Nevada County Votes Against Bond Issue 2-1". *The Nevada News*. June 29, 1961. Pg. 1.

²² "Charles Honey Speaks of Progress Being Made in County". *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 10, 1964. Pg. 3.

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Yes, 1963 may well be remembered as the year when the people of Nevada County began to have faith in their county, its future and its prosperity.²³

After its defeat in 1961, the issue of courthouse construction was not revisited until August of 1963, when County Judge Mack Hillery issued an order identical to the one made by Judge Orren in 1961 emphasizing the necessity for action.²⁴ In accordance, an election for a new bond issue for construction and a tax increase was set for September 20, 1963. Although there was already much more economic confidence among the people of the county, and despite the degraded state of the existing courthouse, the success of this issue was still very much in doubt. On September 19, one day before the election, circuit judge Lyle Brown broke his long-standing public silence to plead for the passage of the issue. In a *Nevada News* editorial, he described the worsening state of the building and its sharp contrast to the progress being made in the county:

I have had plaster to slide from the wall of the courtroom during court proceedings. I have seen buckets and other containers spread about over the courtroom to catch rainwater...

In the past several months I have gained the impression that Nevada County is "on the march" so to speak. It is not necessary to enumerate the improvements of which you are aware. To replace the courthouse would seem to be in harmony with the many other improvements now in process.²⁵

He emphasized the importance of improving public facilities for the continued growth of the county and the town of Prescott. Reflecting the fears of many public officials at the time, Brown noted a conversation he had with a "leading industrialist" interested in possibly locating his operation in the surrounding area. After having tried to sell the man by focusing on the local resources, he implied that it was not desirable without communal development:

When we had finished our sales talks in these respects he made this request: "I want to see your schools, churches, hospitals, recreational facilities and your courthouse and other public buildings." This was conclusive proof to me that industry is interested in something more than utilities and manpower—they want to see those institutions and facilities which gauge the community pride.²⁶

Adding to the case for construction was the approval of a federal grant to aid in funding the new courthouse, which would help significantly decrease the tax burden on residents of the county. Charles Honey mentioned it as yet another high point for the county in 1963, saying, "In August 1963, after a lot of hard work on the part of a lot of people here in Nevada County and after a little effort on the part of your elected officials in Washington, the White House announced

²³ Wahlquist, Larry. "1963... A Good Year for Nevada County". *The Nevada County Picayune*. January 2, 1964. Pg. 5. These and other improvements were also described in more detail in a *Nevada News* article on the same date; Pg. 1.

²⁴ Order Declaring the Necessity for the Construction of a County Courthouse in the County Court of Nevada County, Arkansas by County Judge Mack Hillery. August 21, 1963.

²⁵ "Circuit Judge Lyle Brown Endorses Construction of New Court House Here". *The Nevada News*. September 19, 1963. Pg. 1.

²⁶ *Ibid*.

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approval of a grant of Community Facilities matching funds for the purpose of building a courthouse in Nevada County.”²⁷ As a result of the continued insistence of prominent public figures, the improved economic confidence among county voters due to industrial growth, and a promised grant to help with the financial burden of construction, on September 20th, the people of Nevada County voted four-to-one in favor of both the bond for construction and the 1 ½-mill tax increase to pay the bond. 1,262 people voted for construction while 301 voted against it, and 1,238 people voted for the tax increase while 308 voted against it. The Community Facilities Act grant would ultimately provide \$159,500 for the project. On September 27, 1963, the county court issued a public notice that the \$175,000 construction bond was open for bidding. On October 23rd, Stephens Inc. of Little Rock purchased the bond at 4.25% annual interest. On November 29th, the court ordered that the new courthouse be built and equipped pursuant to the terms of the bond agreement.²⁸ Once the site of the previous courthouses was officially chosen, the final matter was to choose a general contractor. E.W. Johnson of the Johnson Construction Company (based in Texarkana) put forth the lowest contracting bid, and the county accepted it on December 14, 1963.²⁹ The construction was to begin in January of 1964. After almost a decade of efforts to approve the construction of a sound building, the people could celebrate the imminent courthouse as a symbol of the county’s progress. The sentiment was summed up in a statement in *The Nevada News*, “A modern court house can be built that will be a credit to our town and county.”³⁰

Weaver and Hiegel architectural firm of Little Rock had plans and estimated costs for a new building on file with the county since 1961 before the first vote took place.³¹ By the time of the 1963 vote, the county still chose to use the plans put forth by the firm.³² Weaver and Hiegel Associates was a prominent firm in Little Rock mostly known for their designs of church buildings. Leo Hiegel, a Little Rock native, designed a number of churches and school buildings in Arkansas during his time as an architect, including the high school and elementary school buildings in Prescott in 1957.³³ Although David Weaver lived in Little Rock for a time, he had a

²⁷ “Charles Honey Speaks of Progress Being Made in County”. *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 10, 1964. Pg. 3.

²⁸ Order directing publication of notice of sale of bonds by County Judge Mack Hillery. September 27, 1963; Order authorizing issuance, execution and delivery of bonds and matters relating thereto by County Judge Mack Hillery. November 29, 1963.

²⁹ Order of County Judge Mack Hillery in the matter of the construction of a county courthouse. December 2, 1963; Order of County Judge Mack Hillery in the matter of the construction of a county courthouse. December 14, 1963.

³⁰ “Voters Approve New Courthouse Plan 4-1”. *The Nevada News*. September 26, 1963. Pg. 1.

³¹ Order approving plans, specifications and estimates of cost and directing that the questions of the construction of a county courthouse and the levying of a building tax be submitted to the qualified electors of the county at a special election by County Judge Phles Orren. July 28, 1961.

³² Order approving plans, specifications and estimates of cost and directing that the questions of the construction of a county courthouse and the levying of a building tax be submitted to the qualified electors of the county at a special election by County Judge Mack Hillery. August 21, 1963.

³³ Bio of Leo J. Hiegel. AIA 55. Arkansas Chapter. Arkansas Architects Directory. American Institute of Architects. R.R. Bowker Company: New York.

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lifelong connection to Nevada County, having lived the majority of his early life in Emmett and Hope, Arkansas.³⁴ He was present to answer questions about his design at the dedication of the courthouse upon its completion.³⁵

The plans for the building largely employed elements of an architectural style that was becoming more popular for civic buildings by the 1960s—New Formalism. At the time, this style was meant to reflect classical forms with modern overtones and materials, often highlighting the symbolic and communal importance of the buildings. The two previous courthouses had occupied the entire block on which the new courthouse was to be built and both were historically impressive spectacles for people in Prescott. In fact, Charles Honey regarded the 1911 courthouse as an integral part of his connection to the county, saying, “I have seen some of the finest structures ever constructed by the hand of man, from the state Capitol in Little Rock to State Capitol in Washington, but I don’t ever think I have been quite so impressed by a building as I was by that old courthouse in my childhood.”³⁶ By employing New Formalism features, Weaver and Hiegel ensured that the building would continue the tradition of providing an impressive presence while still giving the courthouse a modern style. The building was designed to sit atop a stark cast-concrete foundation to give it prominence. The main entrance was to be raised with four “white marble columns” supporting an extended roof—all jutting forward from receding wing walls. The landscape surrounding the building was to be adorned with trees and bushes planted inside “white concrete tree wells” to add formality to the grounds.³⁷ Altogether, the building was designed to be a lasting formal fixture in Prescott and for the county as a whole.

County officials vacated their offices in the old courthouse by the first days of January of 1964 and took up offices in vacant buildings around town. Carl White was selected to conduct the demolition of the old courthouse.³⁸ The demolition only took about one month, and foundation pliers were already being drilled and driven by February 24th. A *Nevada County Picayune* photo on March 5th showed that all the walls and supports for the building were being put in place. By the beginning of April, work was begun on the masonry, gutters, sidewalks, and curbs.³⁹ In

1962. Pg. 311.

http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/American%20Architects%20Directories/1962%20American%20Architects%20Directory/Bowker_1962_H.pdf. Accessed December 4, 2017.

³⁴ Census information on David F. Weaver from Ancestry.com. Accessed December 4, 2017.

³⁵ Photo of Dave Weaver from *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 10, 1964. Pg. 3.

³⁶ “Charles Honey Speaks of Progress Being Made in County”. *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 10, 1964. Pg. 3.

³⁷ “New \$300,000 Courthouse Now Under Construction”. *The Nevada News*. March 12, 1964. Pg. 1.

³⁸ “Courthouse offices Move to Temporary Locations”. *The Nevada County Picayune*. January 2, 1964. Pg. 1; “Dome Leaves Courthouse”. *The Nevada County Picayune*. January 16, 1964. Pg. 1.

³⁹ “New \$300,000 Courthouse Now Under Construction”. *The Nevada News*. March 12, 1964. Pg. 1; “New County Courthouse Shown Here Now Under Construction”. *The Nevada County Picayune*. March 5, 1964. Pg. 1

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August, the Bank of Prescott donated their familiar town clock, which had been in place since 1914, to be placed on the courthouse grounds after construction was complete.⁴⁰

As construction continued on the courthouse throughout the year, employment and construction within Prescott and Nevada County at-large also continued. The courthouse site itself employed a number of local laborers and subcontractors, including Stewart Electric, R.C. McBrayer for painting, Paul Harris for plumbing, and Carl White for demolition. A 29,000 square-foot county hospital was also in development, to be completed the following year. Two housing projects were completed. The Robbins Flooring Plant began construction in 1964, and was expected to provide a number of new manufacturing jobs with a \$500,000 total payroll. During the summer of 1964, the Post Office in Prescott underwent a nearly \$40,000 remodeling job in order to keep up with the modernization of the area.⁴¹ The new courthouse was certainly developed in a time of intense growth within Nevada County.

The construction of the courthouse was officially complete on October 31, 1964. By the first week of November, the courthouse offices had been furnished, and officials were moved in shortly after.⁴² Before the dedication of the new building, the *Nevada County Picayune* noted some of the final aesthetic features added to the grounds, including its St. Augustine sod lawn and new flag pole. However, the clock that was donated by the Bank of Prescott could not be hung in time for the dedication due to winter weather.⁴³ County Judge Mack Hillery served as the master of ceremonies for the courthouse dedication on December 4th.⁴⁴ A week after the ceremony, on the north corner of the lawn, the town clock (along with an outline map of Nevada County with Prescott starred) was finally hung on a brick tower.⁴⁵ In his speech at the ceremony, Charles Honey captured the atmosphere in which the courthouse was conceived, constructed, and completed:

And now we are met to dedicate this beautiful new modern courthouse and I think it is one of the finest that I have ever seen anywhere. Of course, there is still a place for the old courthouse. That place is in our hearts as a symbol of pride in the past. This

⁴⁰ "Town Clock to be Installed at Court House After 50 Years on Bank Building". *The Nevada News*. August 6, 1964. Pg. 1.

⁴¹ "New \$300,000 Courthouse Now Under Construction". *The Nevada News*. March 12, 1964. Pg. 1; "\$200,000 Hospital to be Built in Nevada County Soon". *The Nevada News*. February 20, 1964. Pg. 1; "Charles Honey Speaks of Progress Being Made in County". *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 10, 1964. Pg. 3; "\$3,400,000 Industry Coming to Prescott". *The Nevada News*. October 3, 1963. Pg. 1; "Courthouse offices Move to Temporary Locations". *The Nevada County Picayune*. January 2, 1964. Pg. 1; "Remodeling Job on Post Office Bldg. Nears Completion". *The Nevada News*. July 16, 1964. Pg. 1.

⁴² "Officials to Hold Open House Friday". *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 3, 1964. Pg. 1; "Here 'N There". *The Nevada County Picayune*. November 5, 1964. Pg. 1; "County Officials Occupy New Offices". *The Nevada County Picayune*. November 19, 1964. Pg. 1.

⁴³ "Officials to Hold Open House Friday". *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 3, 1964. Pg. 1.

⁴⁴ "Nevada County Courthouse Dedicated". *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 10, 1964. Pg. 1.

⁴⁵ *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 17, 1964. Pg. 1.

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new building represents so much more. It represents our hope in the future and the beginning of a new era. It will stand for many years as a monument to the sweat, toil and tears of the people in Nevada County.⁴⁶

1964 had been an extremely progressive year in the history of Prescott and Nevada County, and the new courthouse was seen as a lasting symbol of their pursuit of modernity. After having completed fifty-five public and commercial projects in 1964, Prescott city officials entered the town into an Arkansas community development contest in the population category of 1,501-4,000 people. Prescott won the contest, beating out Mountain Home, DeQueen, Eureka Springs, and Star City.⁴⁷ Reports from the *Nevada County Picayune* reveal a sense of togetherness, progress, and pride within the city and the county. The construction of commercial and communal buildings like the courthouse represented the county's embrace of a modern future, and it helped them win these accolades for community development. Ultimately, the courthouse has provided a lasting base of county governance. It is also a clear example of progressive architecture in the middle of the twentieth century—specifically of the New Formalism style. It is a very public reminder of this period of modernization and growth in Nevada County and in the field of architectural design itself.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

When the Nevada County Courthouse was approved to be built in 1963, the county had been in dire need of a new government building for some time. The previous courthouse was in such disrepair, county officials were afraid it would hinder growth within Prescott and Nevada County as well as put the public in physical danger. The area itself was also in a state of degradation. Populations dwindled in the county, and economic growth, which depended on timbering and milling in the early twentieth century, had stalled by 1960. When new industry and manufacturing came to Prescott in the early 1960s, a turn toward modernity came with it.

The Nevada County Courthouse was thus designed to be a modern fixture in Prescott. The architectural style it exhibits—New Formalism—gave the building an air of prestige befitting its governmental purpose while adding a touch of mid-century modern style. It is a rather unique building in downtown Prescott, as most of the surrounding buildings represent Neo-Classical, Craftsman, and Post-Modern architecture, reserving the courthouse as a time capsule for New Formalism and for a time of modern development in Nevada County. Weaver and Hiegel Associates was a prominent firm most well-known for their church designs in Central Arkansas, but the county had chosen the firm to design its courthouse by at least 1961, perhaps due to David Weaver's local connection. Regardless, the architects presented Nevada County with a fitting symbol of the county and the town's progress during the time. They also gave it a local flavor by adding a natural landscape with concrete tree wells and an interior wall design in the courtroom that reflected the county's historic hardwood forests. The building also fits within a

⁴⁶ "Charles Honey Speaks of Progress Being Made in County". *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 10, 1964. Pg. 3.

⁴⁷ "Prescott Judged ... One of Five Best Cities". *The Nevada County Picayune*. February 11, 1965. Pg. 1; "Prescott Wins First in Development Contest". *The Nevada County Picayune*. March 11, 1965. Pg. 1; "Community Achievements Win Contest". *The Nevada County Picayune*. March 18, 1965. Pg. 1.

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larger architectural context in Arkansas as it was designed in a time when many architects were using the New Formalism style for civic buildings in order to present a modern, yet classical, aesthetic. As a building born in a time of community development in Nevada County and as an example of modern mid-century design with respect to the style of New Formalism, the Nevada County Courthouse is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

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Order approving plans, specifications and estimates of cost and directing that the questions of the construction of a county courthouse and the levying of a building tax be submitted to the qualified electors of the county at a special election by County Judge Mack Hillery. August 21, 1963.

Order authorizing issuance, execution and delivery of bonds and matters relating thereto by County Judge Mack Hillery. November 29, 1963.

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Order Declaring the Necessity for the Construction of a County Courthouse in the County Court of Nevada County, Arkansas by County Judge Mack Hillery. August 21, 1963.

Order directing publication of notice of sale of bonds by County Judge Mack Hillery. September 27, 1963.

Order of County Judge Mack Hillery in the matter of the construction of a county courthouse. December 2, 1963.

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Photo of Dave Weaver from *The Nevada County Picayune*. December 10, 1964.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NE0035

Nevada County Courthouse
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 2.5 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 33.800000 | Longitude: -93.380630 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 464761 | Northing: 3740051 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

Block 38 of the original railroad survey of Prescott, Arkansas; extends to the end of the sidewalk on the northeast side of the property and to the end of the parking spaces on the southeast, southwest, and northwest sides of the property.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Besides including the historic plot of previous courthouses, this boundary encases all the resources of the current courthouse.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: David Collins, Graduate Assistant
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 1100 North Street
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail david.collins@arkansas.gov
telephone: _____
date: _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

Nevada County Courthouse
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- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

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

Photo Log

Name of Property: Nevada County Courthouse

City or Vicinity: Prescott

County: Nevada

State: Arkansas

Photographer: David Collins

Date Photographed: September 6, 2017

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

1 of 14 . Northwest façade of the courthouse, looking southeast.

2 of 14 . Detail of the main entrance of the courthouse, looking southeast.

3 of 14 . Northwest and southwest façades of the courthouse, looking east.

Nevada County Courthouse

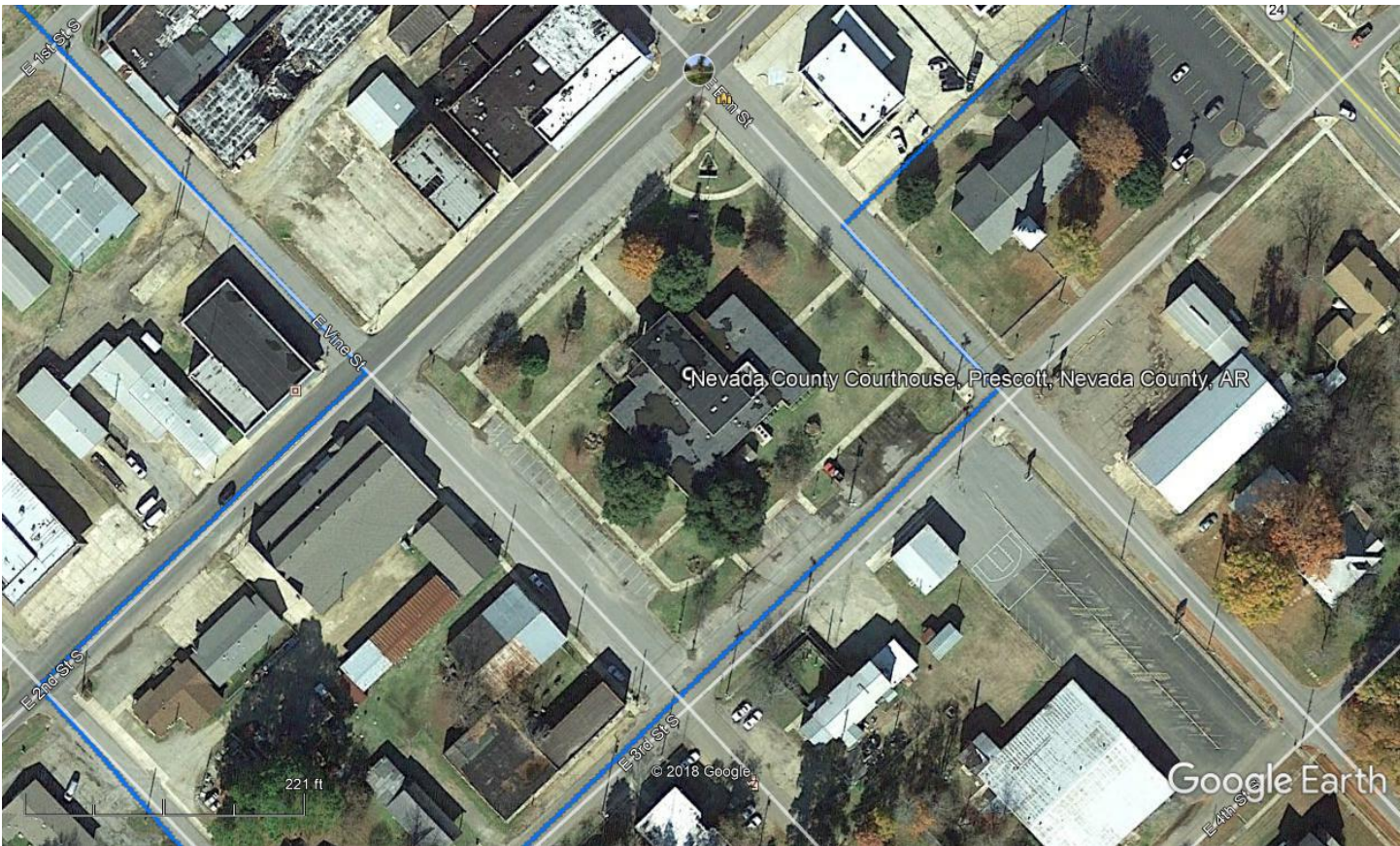
Nevada County, Arkansas
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- 4 of 14 . Southwest façade of the courthouse, looking north.
- 5 of 14 . Southeast façade of the courthouse, looking north.
- 6 of 14 . Southeast façade of the courthouse, looking northwest.
- 7 of 14 . Northeast façade of the courthouse, looking northwest.
- 8 of 14 . Northeast façade of the courthouse, looking southwest.
- 9 of 14 . Northwest façade of the courthouse, looking south.
- 10 of 14 . Plaque in the lobby of the courthouse, looking southeast.
- 11 of 14 . Courtroom in the courthouse, looking southeast.
- 12 of 14 . Concrete tree ring, looking southeast.
- 13 of 14 . Veteran's Memorial and Clock Tower, looking southwest.
- 14 of 14 . Clock Tower, looking southwest.

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



|-----221 feet-----|

Nevada County Courthouse
Prescott, Nevada County, Arkansas

15 464761E 3740051N



North



|-----910 feet-----|

Nevada County Courthouse
Prescott, Nevada County, Arkansas

15 464761E 3740051N



North



COURTHOUSE

COURTHOUSE
BUSINESS
ONLY



COURTHOUSE







EMPLOYEE
ENTRANCE
ONLY
NO OTHER
VEHICLES
ALLOWED

DEPUTY CLERK

DEPUTY
DEPUTY CLERK



ALTIMA

25S

198 TYE











NEVADA COUNTY COURT HOUSE

ERECTED 1964 A.D.

HONORABLE MACK HILLERY, COUNTY JUDGE

BUILDING COMMITTEE

OLEN HENDRIX, CHAIRMAN

H. H. MCKENZIE

BASIL MUNN

DUDLEY ROUSE

KATHERINE BUCHANAN

C. C. HENRY

JEWEL WHITE
COMMISSIONER

J. H. DILLARD

JAMES HAMILTON

TROSIE FORMBY

AUSTIN CAUDLE

MACK WARMACK

DENMAN AND DENMAN, ATTORNEYS

WEAVER AND HIEGEL, ARCHITECTS

BLAYLOCK, COOK, DEITZ, & ASSOCIATES, ENGINEERS

E. W. JOHNSON,

CONTRACTOR









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 4/10/2018 Date of Pending List: 5/24/2018 1:50:04 PM Date of 16th Day: 5/18/2018 Date of 45th Day: 5/25/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 5/24/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Stacy Hurst
Director



April 4, 2018

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street., NW
Mail Stop 7228
Washington D.C. 20240

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural
Heritage Commission

Arkansas State Archives

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

RE: Nevada County Courthouse – Prescott, Nevada County,
Arkansas

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Nevada County Court House to the National Register of Historic Places. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Ralph S. Wilcox of my staff at (501) 324-9787. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hurst
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:rsw

Enclosure



ARKANSAS HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PROGRAM



1100 North Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

(501) 324-9880
fax: (501) 324-9184
tdd: 711

e-mail:

info@arkansaspreservation.org

website:

www.arkansaspreservation.com