

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

1210

historic name Douglas County Courthouse
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 6754 West Broad Street (U.S. Highway 78)
city, town Douglasville () vicinity of
county Douglas code GA
state Georgia code 097 zip code 30133

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- () private
- (x) public-local
- () public-state
- () public-federal

Category of Property:

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

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	1	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	1
objects	0	0
total	1	1

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Richard Cloer
Signature of certifying official

9.4.02
Date

for W. Ray Luce
Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. 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:
- () see continuation sheet

Daniel J. Vivian 10/24/2002

for _____
Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Government: courthouse

Current Functions:

Vacant//Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Modern Movement: International Style

Materials:

foundation	Concrete
walls	Brick
roof	Asphalt
other	Metal, Glass

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Douglas County Courthouse is located in Douglasville in the west Georgia county of Douglas. The 1958 courthouse is located on the courthouse square at the west end of downtown Douglasville and is bounded by West Broad, West Church, Pray, and Bowden streets. The courthouse is set behind mature oak trees and a grass lawn and the square slopes down to the rear of the property toward West Church Street. The courthouse square is included as a noncontributing property in the Douglasville Commercial Historic District, which was listed in the National Register on July 24, 1989.

The Douglas County Courthouse is an International Style building that, according to a newspaper description from 1956, "follows the modernistic trend in construction, using new types of materials and construction techniques." Designed in 1956 by Harry E. Roos, Jr., of the Southern Engineering Company and completed in 1958, the courthouse is a long, low, one-story slab penetrated by a taller rectangular form that contains the courtroom (photos 1-4). The entire structure, which is cantilevered above the basement level, appears to float above the ground. Parts of the exterior are clad in white glazed brick but most walls are glass curtain walls in which steel framing supports the roof and the walls are filled with glass (photos 1-2 and 8-9). The gallery across the main façade comprises floor-to-ceiling plate-glass windows recessed behind a *brise-soleil* in which the overhanging roof is supported by cast-aluminum piers (photos 1-2 and 15).

The east and west walls are treated similarly with floor-to-ceiling plate glass recessed about four feet behind the wall plane and sheltered from the sun with closely spaced vertical fins (photos 5-6 and 16-17). After the building's completion, the glass curtain wall on the east side was moved forward four feet to the outer wall plane (photos 16-17).

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

The exterior of the courtroom is faced with black granite and flanked by translucent glass to give the courtroom the appearance of openness (photos 2 and 4). "Douglas County Courthouse" is written across the granite front in aluminum block letters. The main entrance is signified by a curved, reinforced-concrete porch cantilevered above the front steps (photos 2-3). The courthouse features no references to past historical styles or ornament of any kind. The plain clock face set on white glazed brick at the west of the main façade is the only overt reference to Georgia's tradition of courthouse architecture (photo 1).

The interior plan features the courtroom and court functions at the east end and county offices at the west end. Offices are located mostly along the building's perimeter with vaults and other offices in the center. The lobby features a terrazzo floor, walls faced with white Georgia marble, a marble-and-aluminum planter built into a screen above the stairwell, and indirect lighting (photos 11-12). The 200-seat courtroom features a black marble panel behind the judge's bench and indirect lighting (photos 13-14). (The county auctioned most of the furnishings in 1998.) A smaller 50-seat courtroom is located across the rear of the building. Offices throughout are plain with suspended ceilings and Venetian blinds that are original to the courthouse (photo 19). In addition, the phone booths and bathrooms on the main floor are in their original condition (photos 18 and 20). Some of the original signage survives, including the block letters that identify the courtroom and clerks office (photos 11 and 15).

The lower level was used for offices and storage and was not entirely finished when the building was put into service (photo 21). Bathrooms originally designated for African Americans are located on the lower level and are in their original condition. These facilities are smaller than those built for whites on the main level, and were intended to be shared by both African-American men and women.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Architecture
Politics/Government
Social History and Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance:

1958

Significant Dates:

1958 – Douglas County Courthouse completed.

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Roos, Harry E., Jr. (architect)
McKown Construction Company (builder)

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Douglas County Courthouse is significant in the area of architecture because it is an excellent example of International Style architecture in rural Georgia at the middle of the 20th century. The International Style, as it was named by Phillip Johnson and Henry Russell-Hitchcock, was developed by architects in Europe in the first half of the 20th century who believed that people's needs were the same everywhere and that their needs could be served by a single architecture. The basis of the International Style was its universality—its lack of spatial and temporal references. Because the style draws nothing from the vernacular landscape, buildings in Brazil, for example, may appear like those in Boston. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, among the principal architects of the International Style, wrote "I am, in fact, opposed to the idea that a specific building should have an individual character."

In the years before World War II, German modernists emigrated to the United States. Walter Gropius arrived in Massachusetts in 1937 to become Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Mies arrived in 1937 and was appointed director of the Architecture Department at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. These architects brought with them their mature philosophies and in turn gave prestige to the International Style in America. Through the 1950s and 1960s, the International Style came to represent the confidence, enthusiasm, and optimism of the post-war building boom. Modernism, with its emphasis on steel and glass, was right for the times because modern buildings could be built fast and inexpensively compared to traditional masonry buildings and the futuristic appearance of the International Style seemed to allude to greater prosperity and a higher standard of living in coming decades.

International Style buildings appeared like nothing that had built before them. The style's emphasis on new materials and building techniques resulted in gleaming steel structures with broad expanses of glass and white concrete. Symmetry, which had been a fundamental principle of design since antiquity, was forsaken in favor of balanced asymmetrical buildings. International Style buildings do not include references to past architectural styles or ornament of any kind. Instead, they celebrate the universal qualities of architecture, such as form, massing, and materials. The popularity of the International Style waned in the 1970s, but many of the economical construction techniques developed as part of the style remain in use today.

In the United States, the International Style was largely a post-World War II phenomenon. This is especially true for Southern states, such as Georgia, which remained devoted to classicism well into the 1950s. Rich's Store for Men in Atlanta, designed by the Atlanta firm Stevens and Wilkinson in 1951, is considered the first major International Style building in Georgia. Its Broad Street façade, a five-story glass curtain wall, is characteristic of the International Style and influenced other architects in Georgia. The Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta at the middle of the 20th century was training a generation of modern architects, such as Harold Bush Brown, who reshaped the Tech campus in the International Style and later designed modern buildings throughout the South.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

The Fulton National Bank Building in Atlanta, designed by Wyatt C. Hendrick (Dallas) with Wilner & Millkey Architects in 1954, is among the state's first modern tall office buildings. The 20-story brick bank building featured balanced asymmetry, bands of ribbon windows and the name of the bank in a super graphic reminiscent of the PSFS Building in Philadelphia, the nation's first modern tall office building. The Drayton Arms Apartments in Savannah, designed in 1951, is another early International Style building. The 12-story apartment block is distinguished by horizontal bands of alternating stucco and ribbon windows of blue-green-tinted solex glass that tempered sun and glare. The steel frame permitted unsupported corners and, typical of International Style buildings, it utilizes a simple geometric form without references to past historical styles.

By the late 1950s, International Style buildings had become more common in Georgia, both in major urban centers and in small towns in rural counties. Many builders embraced the style for its economical use modern materials, simple massing, and lack of ornament but neglected important lessons advocated by the masters of the Modern Movement, such as craftsmanship, proportion, purity of form, and context. This is especially true for developers of small-scale buildings built in the state's rural areas. In many Georgia communities, the first modern building was often a public building, such as a post office, school, or county annex building. The International Style, however, was seldom used for county courthouses in Georgia and during the 1950s only five were built in the modern style. The vast majority of Georgia's county courthouses were designed in historical styles that referenced classicism. They are community landmarks in the social sense but also in the physical sense, with columned porticos and high domes that can be seen from great distances. These courthouses use classicism because it is the language of respect and dignity, which is required of a courthouse, and because it establishes continuity with the past.

The Douglas County Courthouse, designed by Harry E. Roos, Jr., of the Southern Engineering Company and completed in 1958, contrasts sharply with Georgia's tradition of classically inspired courthouse designs. Its modern high-style design is long and low making it an untraditional community landmark building. The courthouse is composed of bold geometric forms and asymmetrical massing. Rather than embellish the building with traditional architectural ornament, the architect emphasized modern building materials and construction techniques, including steel-frame and reinforced-concrete construction, the dramatic cantilevered entrance porch, structural and decorative cast aluminum, terrazzo floors, and expanses of floor-to-ceiling glass. Because of its exceptional design, craftsmanship, and modern materials, the Douglas County Courthouse is among the state's most important International Style buildings and among the very few county courthouses that represent modernism in Georgia in the 1950s.

The Douglas County Courthouse is significant in the area of politics and government because the courthouse represents the center of governmental activity in Douglas County. The Douglas County

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Courthouse was the fourth courthouse built on the courthouse square in downtown Douglasville. It served as the county courthouse from 1958 to 1998, when the courthouse functions were moved to a new governmental center constructed south of downtown. The 1958 courthouse, therefore, is the last building to serve as the courthouse on the historic courthouse square in downtown Douglasville.

The Douglas County Courthouse is significant in the area of social history and black ethnic heritage because it retains some of the spaces designated for use by African Americans during the period of segregation in the South from the end of the 19th century until the 1960s. The so-called "Jim Crow" laws dictated that in public places blacks and whites used separate facilities. These included everything from separate entrances and seating areas, restrooms and water fountains, and seating on buses. Facilities for African Americans were nearly always inferior to the accommodations made for whites. Segregation affected nearly every aspect of the public life in cities, small towns, and rural counties throughout the South.

After segregation ended with successes won by blacks during the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, barriers separating whites from blacks were removed or converted to other purposes. Within a few decades, evidence of segregation in public places had mostly disappeared. "Whites Only" and "Colored" signage is especially rare. Public buildings, such as courthouses, often represent the last physical vestiges of segregation because their restrooms were dedicated for use by African Americans. The Douglas County Courthouse is an excellent example of Georgia's segregated past because its restroom in the lower level of the building that was dedicated to African Americans survives intact. Typical of segregated facilities, it is smaller than the upstairs bathrooms for whites and was intended to be shared by both African-American men and women.

National Register Criteria

A—The Douglas County Courthouse is significant in the area of politics and government because it was the center of governmental activity in Douglas County. The courthouse is also significant in the area of social history and black ethnic heritage because the building was designed to accommodate racial segregation.

C—The Douglas County Courthouse is significant in area of architecture because it is an excellent example of International Style architecture in rural Georgia.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The period of significance for the Douglas County Courthouse is 1958, the year the building was completed. The courthouse meets Criterion Consideration G because it achieved its significance in a period less than fifty years before the nomination. The courthouse is exceptionally significant because it is among the state's most important International Style buildings and among the very few county courthouses that represent modernism in Georgia in the 1950s.

Period of significance (justification)

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

The period of significance is the year 1958, the year the courthouse was completed. During this period, the courthouse achieved its architectural and historical significance.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The Douglas County Courthouse is the only a contributing resource associated with the National Register nomination. The foundation of the Confederate Monument is counted as a noncontributing object because it is only a small portion of the historic monument and does not retain its historic integrity (photo 4). The Confederate Monument was moved to the new Douglas County governmental center in 1998.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The Douglas County Courthouse, built in 1958, is the fourth courthouse constructed on the courthouse square in Douglasville, Douglas County, Georgia. The first three courthouses built in 1874, 1880, and 1896 were destroyed by fire. The fourth courthouse was built in 1958 and was designed by Harry E. Roos, Jr., of the Southern Engineering Company. The Atlanta-based Southern Engineering Company was formed in 1945 as a consultant to Electric Membership Cooperatives. Later, the company added an architecture department that produced designs for schools, public freezer lockers, and EMC headquarters buildings. Roos, who was born in St. Louis, Missouri, worked for Southern Engineering until his death in the 1960s.

On April 27, 1956, a rendering of the new courthouse was published in the *Douglas County Sentinel*. "The design of the proposed building," according to the newspaper, "follows the modernistic trend of construction, using new types of materials and construction techniques. . . . and will be a vast contrast to the traditional type of courthouse structure." The completion of the courthouse was delayed nearly two years because the county had difficulty identifying a general contractor who could construct the building within the budget of \$435,000. The budget for furnishings was \$30,000. The McKown Construction Company of Douglasville received the contract with a low bid of \$438,118. The building was opened for public inspection on March 15, 1958 and the first term of court was held on March 17. The completed building appears almost exactly as it was depicted in the 1956 rendering.

The fourth Douglas County Courthouse served as the county courthouse for the Tallapoosa Judicial Circuit from 1958 to 1998. Initially, the courthouse contained nearly all of the county offices, including tax commissioner, Board of Education, Extension Service, Welfare Department, Water Department, library, sheriff's office, and court functions. Increased demands for space resulted in the relocation of court and county offices in 1998. The new governmental center is located on Hospital Drive, south of downtown Douglasville. The Douglas County Commission gave control of the 1958 courthouse to the Douglas County Tourism and History Commission, which is rehabilitating the courthouse for use as a museum and community center. Few alterations have been made to the courthouse although most of the furnishings were auctioned in 1998.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Pope, Virginia. "Georgia County Courthouses Thematic Nomination." On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued**
date issued:
- 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, Specify Repository:**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.29 Acres

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 708400 Northing 3736500

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached map, which is drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The National Register boundary comprises the courthouse square that was historically associated with the Douglas County Courthouse.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Steven Moffson, Architectural Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 156 Trinity Avenue, S.W., Suite 101
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** August 20, 2002
e-mail steven_moffson@dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)(x) not applicable

name/title
organization
mailing address
city or town **state** **zip code**
telephone
e-mail

- property owner**
- consultant**
- regional development center preservation planner**
- other:**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Virginia Pope
organization (if applicable) Douglas County Tourism and History Commission
mailing address 8700 Hospital Drive
city or town Douglasville **zip code** 30134
e-mail (optional) N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Douglas County Courthouse
City or Vicinity: Douglasville
County: Douglas
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: April 2002

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 21

1. Main façade and west side, photographer facing southeast.
2. Main entrance detail, photographer facing south.
3. Main entrance, detail of cantilevered porch, photographer facing east.
4. Main façade, photographer facing southwest.
5. East side, detail, photographer facing west.
6. Rear façade and east side, photographer facing northwest.
7. Rear façade, detail, photographer facing northwest.
8. Rear façade, detail, photographer facing north.
9. Rear façade, detail, photographer facing north.
10. Rear façade and west side, photographer facing northeast.
11. Interior, lobby, photographer facing southeast.
12. Interior, main stair, photographer facing south.
13. Interior, courtroom, photographer facing south.
14. Interior, courtroom, west wall, photographer facing west.
15. Interior, main corridor, photographer facing west.

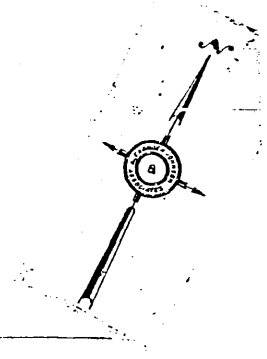
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs

16. Interior, offices along west end, photographer facing northwest.
17. Interior, offices along west end, detail of louvers, photographer facing west.
18. Interior, women's restroom along south side, photographer facing east.
19. Interior, office along south side, photographer facing southwest.
20. Interior, corridor with phone booths, photographer facing north.
21. Interior, ground-floor corridor, photographer facing west.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)

Douglas County Courthouse Douglasville, Douglas County, Georgia



WEST

STRICKLAND

STREET

SOUTHERN

RAILROAD

WEST

(U.S. HIGHWAY 78)

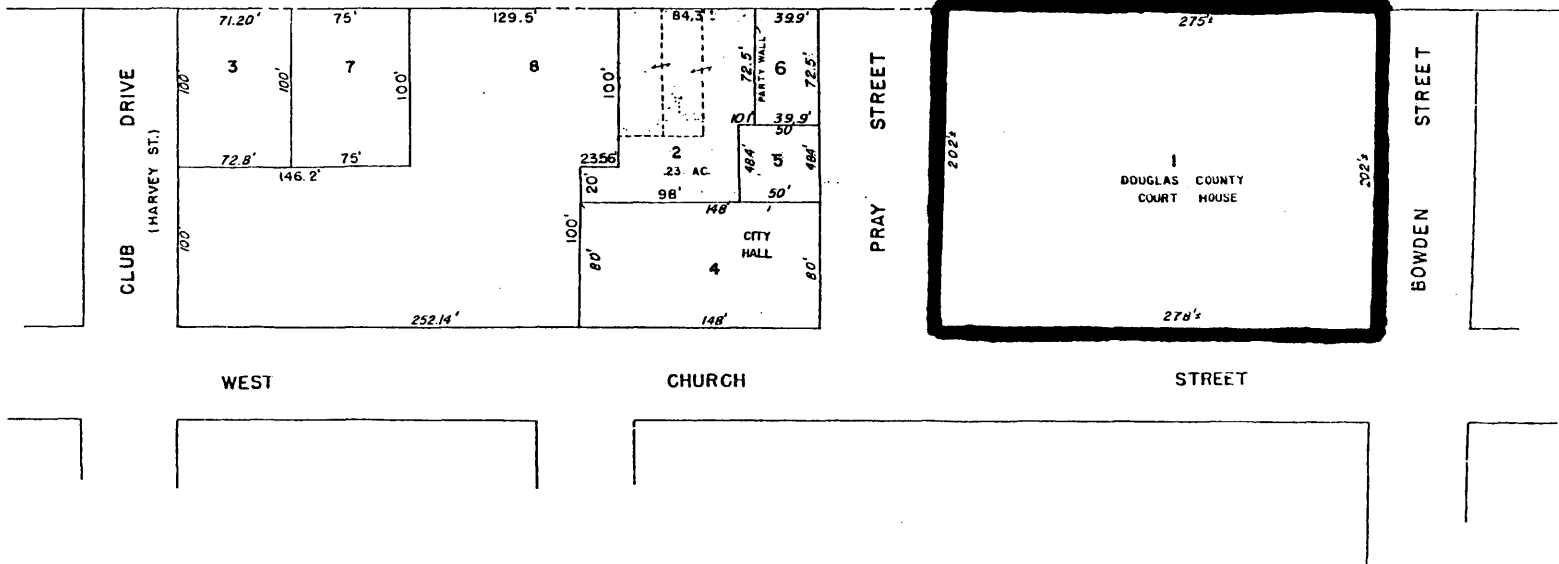
BROAD

(BANKHEAD HIGHWAY)

STREET

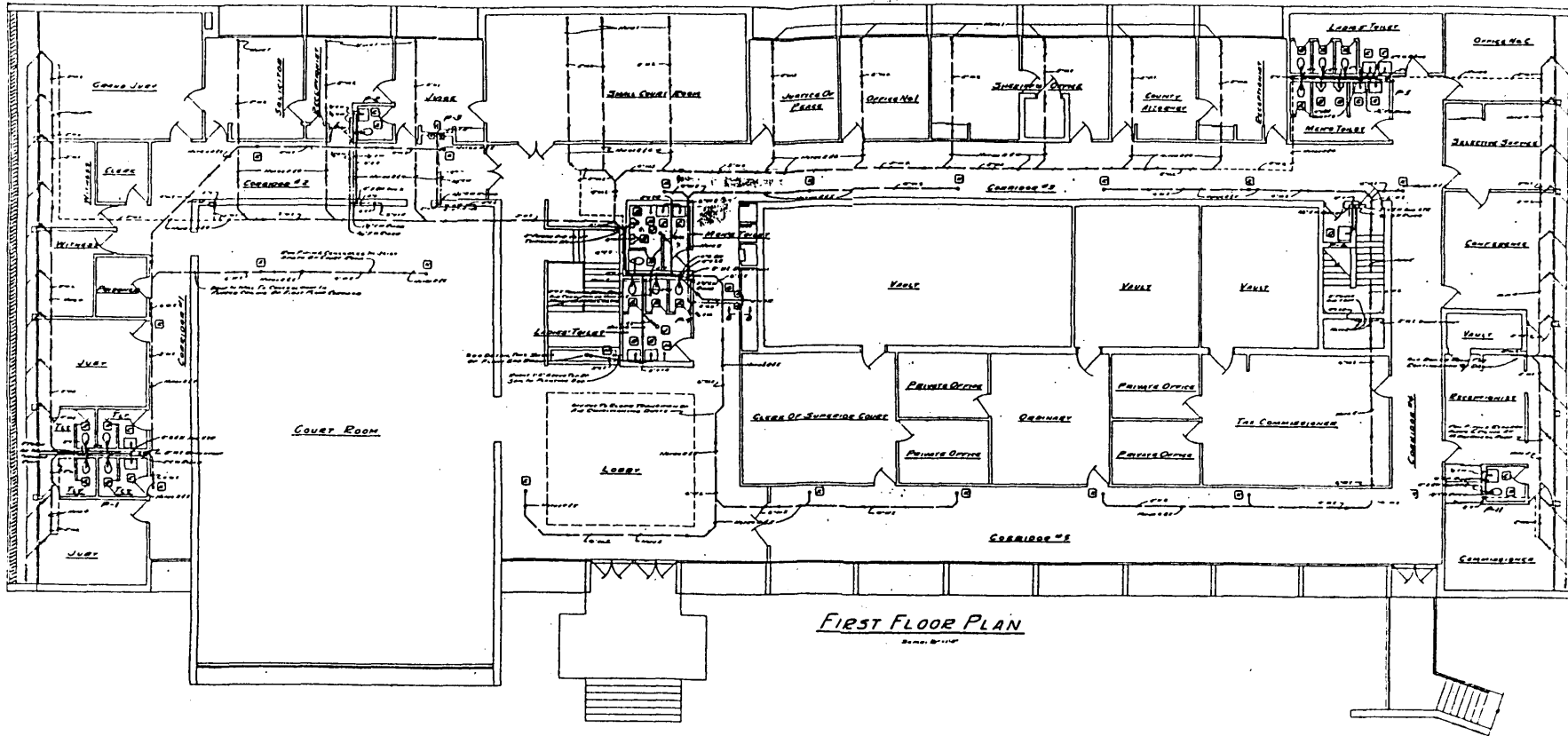
16-1-5-A

16-1-5-C



National Register Boundary **—————**

Approximate Scale: 1" = 125'



Douglas County Courthouse Douglasville, Douglas County, Georgia

Main Floor Plan

No Scale

