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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# 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.

RECEIVED 2280  
AUG 14 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Lawrence County Courthouse

Other names/site number: Site #LW0138

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 315 West Main Street

City or town: Walnut Ridge State: Arkansas County: Lawrence

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

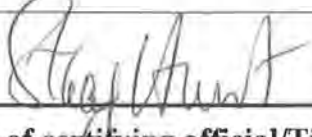
I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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:

   A    B   X   C    D

	<u>7-13-15</u>
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

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

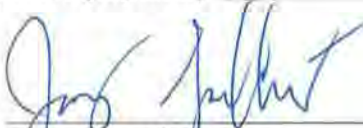
Lawrence County Courthouse  
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Lawrence County, Arkansas  
County and State

**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

9-28-2015  
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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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>4</u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>2</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/New Formalism

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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 Lawrence County Courthouse is located in the heart of downtown Walnut Ridge, occupying an entire block bordered by West Main (U.S. 412 and U.S. 67B), SW 3<sup>rd</sup>, West Walnut, and SW 4<sup>th</sup> streets. The courthouse is a one-story brick building with cast-stone trim that also has a raised lobby space with clerestory windows on the northeast side facing Main Street. The building was built in 1965-1966 by the McDaniel Construction Company and was designed in a modern style with influences of New Formalism by the Arkansas architecture firm of Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch and Blass. In addition, the site has an entrance plaza, a tank, a war memorial and four small storage sheds, and a stone retaining wall.

**Narrative Description**

**Lawrence County Courthouse - Contributing**

The Lawrence County Courthouse is located in the heart of downtown Walnut Ridge, occupying an entire block bordered by West Main (U.S. 412 and U.S. 67B), SW 3<sup>rd</sup>, West Walnut, and SW 4<sup>th</sup> streets. The courthouse is also located two blocks northwest of the railroad line, which marks the center of town. The courthouse is a one-story brick building with cast-stone trim around the windows and at the top of the walls. The building also features a raised area in the center with clerestory windows that delineates the lobby space and the courtroom. The building was built in 1965-1966 by the McDaniel Construction Company and was designed in a modern style with influences of New Formalism by the Arkansas architecture firm of Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch and Blass.

The building is built on a continuous cast-concrete foundation. The walls are covered in dark-brown brick and the window surrounds and the top of the walls are covered in white cast-stone panels. The windows in the wings of the building are tall narrow windows with a stationary



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center pane with hopper and awning windows above and below the center pane. Windows in the central part of the building are stationary. The building is topped by a flat roof.

In addition to the courthouse, the site has an entrance plaza on the northeast side with benches, planters, and a former fountain in the center that now has the flagpole. The northwest corner of the site also has a tank dedicated to all veterans who have served the United States and a war memorial also honoring all veterans just to the northwest of the entrance plaza. The site also contains four small storage sheds to the southwest of the courthouse in the parking lot. Part of the site is also surrounded by a low fieldstone retaining wall.

### **Front/Northeast Façade**

The front façade of the Lawrence County Courthouse is symmetrical in its composition. The center of the façade is dominated by the main entrance into the lobby, which has a raised roof. The area has three entrances, evenly spaced across the section, with single metal-framed, plate-glass doors. The entrances have plate-glass windows above them that go to the roofline. The entrances are flanked on each side by bays with large plate-glass windows at the bottom and top divided by large cast-stone panels. A large projecting, flat-roofed canopy shelters the entrances, and the porch is approached by a set of three concrete steps. Lettering on the front of a beam that spans the space below the canopy's roof says "LAWRENCE COUNTY COURTHOUSE." Cast-concrete benches are located at the northwest and southeast sides of the porch, and the ends of the beam below the canopy's roof are supported by brick columns.

The two wings of the courthouse are identical in their composition, creating the symmetrical appearance of the building's front façade. The northeast façade of each wing is fenestrated by nine evenly-spaced windows. The windows consist of a tall rectangular stationary center pane with a single-pane awning window above and a single-pane hopper window below. All of the windows have metal frames and are surrounded by cast-stone surrounds that go from the foundation to the roof. The design of the cast-stone surrounds has recessed cast-stone panels above and below the windows.

The spaces in between the windows consist of dark-brown brick. The entire top of the wings' façades are spanned by cast-stone panels forming a cornice that projects slightly from the wall below. In addition, the cast-concrete foundation projects slightly from the walls creating a water table.

### **Side/Southeast Façade**

The southeast façade of the southeast wing of the courthouse is also symmetrical in its composition. The center of the façade has a recessed entrance with a pair of metal-framed, plate-glass doors with a metal-framed, plate-glass transom above. Above the transom is a recessed cast-stone panel. The entrance is approached by a set of two concrete steps with metal pipe railings. The recessed entrance is flanked on each side by three evenly-spaced windows. Like the windows on the front façade, the windows consist of a tall rectangular stationary center pane with a single-pane awning window above and a single-pane hopper window below. All of the windows have metal frames and are surrounded by cast-stone surrounds that go from the

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foundation to the roof. The design of the cast-stone surrounds has recessed cast-stone panels above and below the windows.

The spaces in between the windows consist of dark-brown brick. The entire top of the wing's façade is spanned by cast-stone panels forming a cornice that projects slightly from the wall below. In addition, the cast-concrete foundation projects slightly from the walls creating a water table.

The southeast side of the raised central lobby and courtroom space has the ends of eight evenly-spaced beams that support the flat roof of the space. In between the beams, the spaces are fenestrated by stationary plate-glass windows. To the southeast of the raised central portion is a small wing that spans the southeast side of the raised central pavilion. The southeast side of this portion of the building is fenestrated by four windows. The center two windows are closer together. Like the windows on the rest of the façade, the windows consist of a tall rectangular stationary center pane with a single-pane awning window above and a single-pane hopper window below. All of the windows have metal frames and are surrounded by cast-stone surrounds that go from the foundation to the roof. The design of the cast-stone surrounds has recessed cast-stone panels above and below the windows.

The spaces in between the windows consist of dark-brown brick. The entire top of the wing's façade is spanned by cast-stone panels forming a cornice that projects slightly from the wall below. In addition, the cast-concrete foundation projects slightly from the walls creating a water table.

### **Rear/Southwest Façade**

The rear of the southeast wing is devoid of fenestration. However, like the rest of the building, the top of the wall has the cast-stone panels forming a cornice, and the cast-concrete foundation projects slightly also creating a water table across the rear.

The center of the rear façade is centered around the rear of the raised courtroom section of the building. The rear of the courtroom is also devoid of fenestration, and the top of this section of the façade has a large projecting eave. Flanking each side of the raised courtroom portion of the building are recessed entrances. Each entrance has a pair of metal-framed, plate-glass doors with a metal-framed, plate-glass transom above. Above the transom is a recessed cast-stone panel.

The rear façade of the northwest wing is also devoid of fenestration except for a set of double metal doors allowing entrance into the rear of the wing. Each door has a square window in the top half of the door. A large louvered vent is also located above the entrance. This portion of the façade also has the cast-stone cornice across the top.

The left half of the wing projects to the southwest. The right portion of the projection is built out of concrete block and has razor wire across the top. The left half has the dark-brown brick like the rest of the building. However, there is a variation in the cornice. The left and right ends of this section have the cast-stone cornice that matches the rest of the building, while the center portion has seven buff-brick panels for the cornice.

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### **Side/Northwest Façade**

The northwest façade of the courthouse has a recessed entrance slightly left of center. The entrance has a metal door with small rectangular window in the upper right quadrant. Unlike the other entrances to the building, this entrance is surrounded by buff brick rather than cast stone. To the left of the entrance is a metal-framed rectangular plate-glass window. The window and entrance are sheltered by a standing-seam metal *porte cochere* supported by three metal posts. The cornice on this part of the building is cast stone near the right and left corners, but has fifteen buff-brick panels in the middle for the cornice.

The northwest side of the raised central lobby and courtroom space has the ends of eight evenly-spaced beams that support the flat roof of the space. In between the beams, the spaces are fenestrated by stationary plate-glass windows. To the northwest of the raised central portion is a small wing that spans the northwest side of the raised central pavilion. The northwest side of this portion of the building is fenestrated by four windows. The center two windows are closer together. The windows consist of a tall rectangular stationary center pane with a single-pane awning window above and a single-pane hopper window below. All of the windows have metal frames and are surrounded by cast-stone surrounds that go from the foundation to the roof. The design of the cast-stone surrounds has recessed cast-stone panels above and below the windows.

### **Interior**

The interior of the Lawrence County Courthouse consists of the lobby space and courtroom in the center. Branching off the central lobby to the northwest and southeast are hallways with offices on each side. The northwest wing of the building also has the sheriff's department and jail space. The interior of the building still reflects the original layout from the 1960s.

### **Front Plaza - Contributing**

In front of the courthouse's central pavilion is a rectangular plaza paved with concrete. The plaza was part of the original design of the courthouse and was described at the time in the newspaper. The paper reported that "The broad sidewalk which leads to the courthouse's main entrance is surrounded by concrete benches which face a beautiful fountain, illuminated in color at night."<sup>1</sup> The northwest and southeast sides of the plaza have four concrete benches that are arranged in a "U" shape around two planters each. The central fountain has been filled in and is currently the location of the flagpole. Two more rectangular planters flank the steps that lead up from the sidewalk on West Main Street to the plaza, and another flagpole is located just to the southwest of the northwest planter. The rest of the northeast side of the courthouse site is bounded by a low fieldstone retaining wall.

### **Veterans Memorials – Non-Contributing**

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<sup>1</sup> Advertisement for the dedication of the Lawrence County Courthouse. *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 14 April 1966, pp. 4B-5B.

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The courthouse grounds house two memorials to Lawrence County veterans. The first memorial, located at the northwest corner of the courthouse grounds, consists of a tank on a concrete pad surrounded by a white metal-chain enclosure. A marker on the southeast side of the tank indicates that it was dedicated to all veterans who have served the country, and that it was installed in 1995.

The second memorial is located immediately to the northwest of the plaza in front of the courthouse. It consists of five gray granite monuments that list the area's veterans. The monuments are arranged in a "U" shape and are placed on a circular concrete pad. The Lawrence County Veterans Memorial was installed in 1986.

### **Sheds – Non-Contributing**

Behind the courthouse are four storage sheds, all likely put in place within the last twenty years. Three of the four sheds are small metal sheds with low gable roofs and no fenestration and doors on one side. The fourth shed is a wood-frame shed with a low gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. Like the metal sheds, it has no fenestration and doors on one side.

### **Integrity**

The Lawrence County Courthouse retains excellent integrity from the time of its construction in 1965-1966. Changes to the courthouse have been minimal since it was built. On the exterior, the *porte cochere* on the northwest façade does not appear to be original. The interior of the courthouse also has had minimal changes since the time of its construction in the mid 1960s. The largest changes to the courthouse site have been the installation of two war memorials since 1986 and the construction of four storage sheds behind the building. However, the original New Formalism design of Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch, and Blass is still present. In addition, the setting of the courthouse, the commercial center of Walnut Ridge, still reflects the setting of the courthouse at the time of its construction.



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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**

1965-1966  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1965-1966  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch, and Blass, Architects  
McDaniel Brothers Construction Co., Builders  
\_\_\_\_\_

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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.)

The Lawrence County Courthouse, which was designed by the firm of Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch, and Blass and built in 1965, is a significant example of modern architecture in Walnut Ridge. When it was built, the building was a significant departure in design from the previous Lawrence County Courthouse, which was a Romanesque Revival building designed in 1901 by the state's premiere architect, Charles Thompson. The current building, with its long low design and heightened central section delineating the lobby space, strict symmetry in the façade, and slightly raised site, illustrates influences of the New Formalism style of architecture. As a significant example of modern design illustrating characteristics of New Formalism, the Lawrence County Courthouse is being 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**

European settlement began in Lawrence County at least as early as 1812, and initially was centered around the rivers, streams, and creeks in the county. Prominent early families in the county included the McKnights, Taylors, Finleys, Hillhouses, Richardsons, and the Hudsons as well as Jacob Fortenberry, John Spotts, and Samuel Raney. The earliest settlement in the county was focused on the western side and the eastern side of the county was settled later.<sup>2</sup>

Lawrence County was created on January 15, 1815, as part of the Missouri Territory and became part of the Arkansas Territory in 1819. The county was named after Captain James Lawrence, a naval hero during the War of 1812. Although the county was created during the 1810s, the county court of Lawrence County was not established until 1829 under the Territorial laws, and the first session was held in April 1830. Originally, the court consisted of a judge and justices of the peace as the associates. However, after Arkansas became a state in 1836 the court consisted of a judge and two associates.<sup>3</sup>

During the nineteenth century, the economy in Lawrence County was driven by farming and lumbering. By the late 1800s, lumbering "was a great industry, and the supply of timber is sufficiently abundant to last for many years. There are twenty-three saw-mills, two spoke factories and three stave factories in full operation, giving evidence of progress and growth and advancing prosperity. Many hands are employed in these mills, and the lumbering business has become extensive." Farming was also extensive by the late 1800s with 1,250 farms

<sup>2</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 762.

<sup>3</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 765 and 767, and Jacobsen, John G. "Lawrence County" from *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=782>.

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encompassing 46,803 acres reported in the 1880 census. Crops grown in the county included Indian corn, oats, wheat, hay, cotton, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, tobacco, and watermelon.<sup>4</sup>

The first county seat in Lawrence County was at Davidsonville, which was established as the county seat in 1816. However, in 1829, the county seat was moved to Jackson on the Military Road, and after the county seat moved, Davidsonville ceased to exist as a community. Jackson's role as the county seat, however, was short-lived since the county seat moved to Smithville in 1837. Once the community of Powhatan, which had been platted in 1849, experienced tremendous growth after the Civil War, it was declared the county seat in 1869. The first courthouse in Powhatan was built in 1873, but it burned in 1885. Many of the bricks of the first courthouse were reused to construct its replacement in 1888, and Powhatan remained one of the county seats until 1963.<sup>5</sup>

When the Iron Mountain Railroad line was built through Walnut Ridge in the 1870s and the Kansas City, Fort Scott, and Memphis Railroad was built through Hoxie in the 1880s, the population and economic center of Lawrence County shifted to the eastern part of the county away from Powhatan. As a result, by 1870 legislators divided Lawrence County into two districts, with the western county seat remaining at Powhatan and Walnut Ridge being designated the eastern district county seat.<sup>6</sup> In the 1880s, it was reported that "The terms of the circuit court now convene at Powhatan in March and August, and at Walnut Ridge in March and September of each year." Furthermore, it was reported that "The terms of the [county court] are held at Powhatan for the entire county, beginning on the first Monday of January, April, July and October, or each year, and of the probate court for the Western district at Powhatan on the second Mondays of the same months, and for the Eastern district, at Walnut Ridge, on the third Mondays of the same months."<sup>7</sup>

The first settlers in the Walnut Ridge area arrived in the 1860s, settling in an area now called Old Walnut Ridge. However, with the announcement of the construction of the railroad through the area, the residents moved closer to the site of the proposed line. Colonel Willis Miles Ponder, a Civil War veteran from Missouri, founded the current town of Walnut Ridge in 1875 and also served as the town's first mayor. Originally, Ponder called the town Pawpaw due to the number of pawpaw trees in the area. However, when the community applied for a post office, there was another Pawpaw in the state, so the name was changed to Walnut Ridge to reflect the large number of walnut trees in the area.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 764.

<sup>5</sup> Jacobsen, John G. "Lawrence County" from *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=782>.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 765.

<sup>8</sup> McNeill, Danyelle. "Walnut Ridge" from *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=917>.



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By 1880, Walnut Ridge had a population of 301 residents and continued to grow through the rest of the nineteenth century. By the late 1880s, Goodspeed described the town in the *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas* by writing:

Walnut Ridge, on the Iron Mountain Railroad, one and a half miles north of Hoxie, the seat of justice for the Eastern district, contains seven general stores, four groceries, a bakery, meat, market, three hotels, two livery stables, a cotton-gin and grist-mill, two churches, a school-house, the courthouse, a weekly newspaper, and its complement of dwelling houses. In size it is the second town in the county. *The Telephone*, now nearing the completion of its third volume, is a neat and well-edited Democratic newspaper, published there by its proprietor, George Thornburg. It ably supports the interests of the community.<sup>9</sup>

After Walnut Ridge was established and the community grew, the businesses, church, school, and almost all of the houses were on the east side of the railroad tracks. Although it is not known when the first courthouse was built in Walnut Ridge, by 1897 a two-story courthouse with a vault in the northwest corner had been built on the block bordered by Main, Walnut, East 3<sup>rd</sup> and East 4<sup>th</sup> streets. However, this building would only be in use until 1900 when a new courthouse was built on the site of the current building. In addition, the former courthouse had been demolished by 1904. A two-story brick building with a five-story tower, the Romanesque Revival style building was designed by the state's most notable architect, Charles Thompson.<sup>10</sup>

Early views of the Thompson-designed courthouse show that the center of Walnut Ridge was apparently still to the east of the railroad tracks, since little is visible around the courthouse. Only a few scattered residences are visible in a 1908 postcard and a photograph in the book *Centennial Memorial History of Lawrence County*. However, by 1914, which is the date of the first Sanborn map to cover the area surrounding the courthouse, more residences are present in the area. The Sanborn map also indicates that a two-story jail, water tank, and another one-story building had been built on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street side of the building.<sup>11</sup> (By 1929, the water tank and one-story building had been replaced by a coal shed and a band stand had been built to the north of the building.)<sup>12</sup>

By 1963, a movement (one of several that had been mounted over the years) was underway to consolidate the two county seats into one location at Walnut Ridge and to build a new courthouse to replace the Charles Thompson-designed building. The May 30, 1963, edition of *The Times*

<sup>9</sup> *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 771.

<sup>10</sup> Roy, F. Hampton. *Charles L. Thompson and Associates, Arkansas Architects, 1885-1938*. Little Rock: August House, 1982, p. 110, and Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps for Walnut Ridge: 1897 and 1904.

<sup>11</sup> McLeod, Walter E. *Centennial Memorial History of Lawrence County*. Russellville, Arkansas: Russellville Printing Company, 1936. Reprint: Lawrence County Historical Society, 1980, p. 55, and Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps for Walnut Ridge: 1914.

<sup>12</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps for Walnut Ridge: 1929.

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*Dispatch* announced that a public meeting would occur at the courthouse on Friday night. The article stated that:

...This is a public meeting and all persons interested in the proposal to consolidate the eastern and western districts of the county, and to build a new courthouse, are urged to attend.

At this meeting, the Courthouse Steering Committee will announce the results of a survey made by the 25 members in every community in the county.

The committee has tentatively made plans to call for a campaign in support of consolidation to be followed by an application for federal funds for construction of a new courthouse.<sup>13</sup>

The public meeting made it overwhelmingly clear that the public wanted to consolidate the county seats and build a new courthouse in Walnut Ridge. A motion that was made "to take necessary steps to bring to a vote the matter of consolidation of the eastern and western districts and the construction of a new courthouse" passed unanimously at the meeting. At the public meeting, the committee that had made the initial survey was also reactivated in order to look into the legal aspects of holding an election on the matter. All of the actions taken, though, were with the assumption that between 50-66% of the needed funds for the new courthouse would come from federal sources.<sup>14</sup>

The committee did not waste any time getting to work on the issue of the election for the consolidation and the new courthouse. By mid-July 1963, petitions were circulating throughout the county calling on the County Judge to hold an election on the matter, and it was the goal that the election would take place in August 1963. *The Times Dispatch* reported, with respect to holding the election in August, that:

The timing is important. If the election is held in the fall, harvest operations would keep people away from the polls. If not held before November, then the election, by law, would have to await the next general election in November 1964. By that time, federal funds might no longer be available and all agree such funds must be obtained.<sup>15</sup>

The same article provided answers to some of the most anticipated questions, including "Why will we not vote on a site preference?," "Will it increase taxes?," "What will be the total cost?,"

<sup>13</sup> "Public Meeting On Courthouse Friday Night." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 30 May 1963, p. 1A.

<sup>14</sup> "Survey Results Are Announced, To Seek Vote On New Courthouse." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 6 June 1963, p. 1A.

<sup>15</sup> "Courthouse Petitions Are In Circulation; Election In Mid August Still Goal Of Committee." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 11 July 1963, p. 1A.

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Will adequate parking be provided?," "How much federal grant can we expect?," and "What will the interest rate be on an extended bond issue?"<sup>16</sup>

Gathering the required signatures moved swiftly throughout the county. The following week it was reported that:

Circulation of the petitions began only Tuesday of last week but by Tuesday night sufficient signatures had been obtained to call for the election. Arthur Cleveland, co-chairman of the steering Committee, said 740 signatures had been obtained in the western district and 1808 in the eastern district. This is several hundred more than the requirement of 1/3 of the qualified voters in each district. Circulation of the petitions continued Tuesday and Wednesday, Cleveland said. "In some areas he had not had the opportunity to get good coverage so we went after several hundred more signatures to guarantee the sufficiency of the petitions."<sup>17</sup>

The same issue of *The Times Dispatch* featured a rendering of the proposed courthouse on the front page and gave the following description of the proposed building.

Plans for the proposed new courthouse were received here this week. The structure would be erected at the site of the present courthouse in Walnut Ridge and would be almost as wide as the block.

The east wing of the proposed courthouse would contain offices of the Circuit Clerk, County Clerk, County Judge, Treasurer, and two large vaults.

In the west wing would be located the offices of the Assessor, Collector, Sheriff, rest rooms, storage and equipment rooms, interrogation rooms, and a jail to replace the present dilapidated jail.

In the middle of the proposed courthouse would be a large lobby and behind the lobby a courtroom which would seat 128 persons. On the rear sides of the courtroom would be rooms for the judge, jury, and attorneys.

Parking for 107 cars is proposed behind the courthouse.<sup>18</sup>

The building illustrated in the rendering appeared to be of concrete or cast-stone construction, and had a different decorative treatment in the canopy at the main entrance. (Interestingly, the original entrance design mimicked the colonnades at the Pine Bluff Civic Center [NR listed June 1, 2005] by Edward Durell Stone, who is considered one of the founders of New Formalism.)

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> "County Judge To Get Courthouse Petitions Today; Anticipate Election Call Week August 19<sup>th</sup>." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 18 July 1963, p. 1A.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

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However, in most other respects, it was pretty close to the building that was ultimately constructed.<sup>19</sup>

The Lawrence County Courthouse was designed by the notable Arkansas architecture firm of Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch, and Blass. The firm was founded by Francis "Frank" Erhart and Howard Samuel Eichenbaum. Erhart was born in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1889. He attended the University of Pennsylvania and got an education in architecture. Howard Eichenbaum, on the other hand, was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1904 and graduated from Washington University in St. Louis, also with a degree in architecture.<sup>20</sup>

Erhart and Eichenbaum both began their professional careers in 1920 working as draftsmen for the firm of Mann and Stern. When Mann and Stern dissolved their partnership in 1928, Erhart and Eichenbaum continued to work for Stern, and in 1930 they approached Stern about becoming associates. Since Stern was not interested, Erhart and Eichenbaum formed their own firm with Eichenbaum leaving Stern in January 1930 and Erhart leaving in February 1931.<sup>21</sup>

Since Erhart and Eichenbaum started their firm during the Depression, there was no work. As a result, Eichenbaum worked for the Works Progress Administration as the state architect, while Erhart worked at keeping their office doors open. However, work began to pick up for the firm in the late 1930s when the firm was selected, in conjunction with Haralson and Mott to design the \$2 million Arkansas Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Booneville (NR-listed October 5, 2006).<sup>22</sup>

Beginning in 1941 and lasting until 1946, Erhart and Eichenbaum were part of an association of architects and engineers that worked on military installations and wartime housing, due to the fact that almost all non-military work had stopped. However, after World War II, the firm continued to grow and added John A. Rauch as a partner in 1945. During the same period, Noland Blass, Jr., began working as a draftsman at the firm, and he was made a partner in 1956.<sup>23</sup>

After World War II, the firm of Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch, and Blass became one of the largest architectural firms in the state. The firm designed many prominent landmarks in Little Rock, including Little Rock Baptist Hospital Main Campus, St. Vincent Infirmary, Barton Coliseum, buildings at the University of Arkansas Medical Center, and the Boy Scouts of America Headquarters. In addition to the firm's work in Little Rock, Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch, and Blass designed buildings throughout the state, including the Lawrence County Courthouse.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Rendering of the proposed Lawrence County Courthouse. *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 16 July 1963, p. 1A.

<sup>20</sup> Witsell, Charles and Gordon Wittenberg with Marylyn Jackson Parins. *Architects of Little Rock: 1833-1950*. Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2014, p. 95.

<sup>21</sup> Witsell, Charles and Gordon Wittenberg with Marylyn Jackson Parins. *Architects of Little Rock: 1833-1950*. Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2014, p. 97.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*



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The style that Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch, and Blass chose for the Lawrence County Courthouse shows influences of the New Formalism style that was in vogue from the mid-1950s through the mid-1970s. The style was used by three main architects, Minoru Yamasaki, Philip Johnson, and Arkansas-native Edward Durell Stone, and it was Stone's 1954 American Embassy in New Delhi, India, that is often considered to be the first example of the style. The New Formalism style combined decorative elements and design concepts from classical styles with new materials and technologies often incorporated in the International Style.<sup>25</sup>

New Formalism was most often used for cultural, institutional, and civic buildings that were high profile buildings. In Arkansas, it was most often used for banks, even in small towns, where even small branch banks may exhibit characteristics of the style. Characteristics of the style include having an achievement of modern monumentality; the use of traditionally rich materials, or man-made materials that mimic the richness of natural materials like travertine, marble, or granite; buildings set on a podium; smooth wall surfaces; an embracing of classical precedents, such as arches, colonnades, columns, and entablatures; and having a formal landscape that might use pools, fountains, and plazas.<sup>26</sup>

Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch, and Blass employed several New Formalism characteristics in their design for the Lawrence County Courthouse. The building used cast stone, for example, that could have been meant to mimic a more luxurious material, and the building's site is raised above the surrounding sidewalk, at the very least suggesting a podium, which was a characteristic of the style. In front of the courthouse, the design called for a formal plaza with benches and a central fountain (now the location of a flagpole). In addition, the fact that the courthouse took up the block and was designed with a raised center section delineating the main lobby and courtroom also gave it the modern monumentality that was a hallmark of the style. Finally, the Lawrence County Courthouse also exhibits the strict symmetrical façade that was also characteristic of the style.

On July 25, 1963, Judge Brooks Penn signed an order calling for the special election to be held on Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>. With respect to the cost of the building, and paying for the new courthouse, *The Times Dispatch* reported:

If the County builds a new courthouse, the estimated cost will be \$465,000. It is possible to secure a federal grant of about \$310,000. This means the county can get \$465,000 worth of new construction and a new courthouse for about \$155,000.

The county is in a position to finance its share of the proposed program without increasing taxes. Refunding of the outstanding balance of hospital bonds would enable extension of the present two-mill hospital tax. The new courthouse and hospital bond issue would be scheduled to run for about 20 years. But under present ability to pay, the entire issue for both the

<sup>25</sup> Information on New Formalism found at: <http://www.fullertonheritage.org/Resources/archstyles/formalism.htm>.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

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hospital and a new courthouse could be retired in about 14 years.  
These are estimates.<sup>27</sup>

By early August, absentee ballots for the election were available, and the ballots could “be obtained in person at either courthouse or by request in the mails.”<sup>28</sup> The Steering Committee also had plans to increase the turnout of voters for the special election by offering a cash prize to voters. *The Times Dispatch* reported:

As an added incentive, the Steering Committee today disclosed plans for making a \$500 cash award to stimulate a greater vote on election day.

Homer Hastings of Imboden, Ralph Bush of Alicia and Bill Snapp of Walnut Ridge are co-chairmen of the cash award plan. They will have one person near each polling place on election day to obtain the signature on a ticket of each voter as he leaves the polls. After all the votes have been tabulated, all tickets will be placed in a container and one name pulled from the box. The winner does not have to be present to win.

Members of the Steering Committee voted unanimously at a recent meeting to have the cash incentive award. Little Rock bond attorneys have assured the committee that there is nothing illegal about the plan, provided none of the election officials participate in any way.

Arthur Cleveland, a co-chairman of the committee, emphasized that the cash award is simply to help insure a good, representative vote.

“All votes will participate, whether for or against consolidation and a new courthouse”, Cleveland said. “We want to find the true feelings of the people about this most important matter and this can only be accomplished by a big vote,” he added. Persons or firms desiring to donate to the fund should contact Mr. Hastings, Mr. Snapp or Mr. Bush.<sup>29</sup>

Consolidating the two county seats and using only one courthouse made sense from several viewpoints, something that *The Times Dispatch* noted. The August 22, 1963, edition of the paper, which was the last one published prior to the election, gave extensive coverage to the upcoming vote. One article reported:

One of the largest special election turnouts in history is expected next Tuesday, when Lawrence County voters go to the

<sup>27</sup> “Courthouse Vote Set For Aug. 27.” *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge), 1 August 1963, p. 1A.

<sup>28</sup> “Absentee Ballots Ready Friday For Courthouse Election Aug. 27.” *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge), 8 August 1963, p. 1A.

<sup>29</sup> “Interest In Courthouse Election Increases; Committee To Give \$500 Cash To Boost Turnout.” *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge), 15 August 1963, p. 1A.

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polls to consider consolidation of the eastern and western judicial districts of the county and construction of a new courthouse in Walnut Ridge.

...

At least three attempts have been made to eliminate the county seat at Powhatan, the last time in the 1930's. Tuesday could be a historic day for the county, since more support for the move is evidenced than at any other time.

...

Plans for the proposed courthouse would place the jail in the northwest wing of the building. This would eliminate the dilapidated county jail now in use, plus the two old courthouses. Maintenance and administration costs would be greatly reduced by the use of one building instead of three.

...

The courthouse in Powhatan was built in 1888 and the Walnut Ridge courthouse in 1900. These two structures – 75 and 63 years old – are in a sad condition and probably should be condemned.<sup>30</sup>

*The Times Dispatch* also included an editorial on the consolidation and courthouse issue in the same issue of the paper. In part, it read:

Next Tuesday, August 27, could be a history-making day for Lawrence County. This is the fourth, perhaps the fifth, effort made to establish one seat of county government.

This one should not fail. It will not fail if our people take a realistic view of the proposition.

The time has come for action.

...

The obstacles are great. A simple majority at the election will not suffice. Over 50% of the ELIGIBLE voters must approve the plan. This means that 3,177 voters must vote "for."

We call on you to cast prejudice aside. Vote for real progress. Vote for a united county.<sup>31</sup>

The hard work of the Steering Committee and the extensive coverage in *The Times Dispatch* leading up to the special election paid off. The headline in the August 29, 1963, edition of *The Times Dispatch* proclaimed "Consolidation, New Courthouse Okayed By 11 To 1 Vote Tuesday." The article further reported:

<sup>30</sup> "Biggest Special Election Vote In History Expected Tuesday On Consolidation, New Courthouse." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 22 August 1963, p. 1A.

<sup>31</sup> "An Editorial: The Courthouse Proposition." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 22 August 1963, p. 1A.

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Since Tuesday night, Lawrence County no longer has two judicial districts. It is just plain Lawrence County. Black River, which for years was a deep and wide division between the eastern and western districts, was symbolically eliminated Tuesday by the people of Lawrence County.

They gave overwhelming endorsement to consolidation of the county, for location of one new courthouse at Walnut Ridge to serve the county, and also voted for a building tax.

...

Of 34 voting precincts, the proposal carried in every box except Black River (Powhatan), where voters naturally hated to see the elimination of their town as a county seat. Even at Powhatan, the vote was 15 for and only 34 against.<sup>32</sup>

In fact, when all the votes were counted, over 4,100 voters had voted in favor of the consolidation, for Walnut Ridge as the county seat, and for the construction of a new courthouse. Only a little over 3,800 people voted for the building tax, which was still way above the threshold of affirmative votes needed.<sup>33</sup>

Once the voters gave approval for the consolidation of the county seats and the construction of the new courthouse, the job of securing the funding and moving forward with the development of the design for the building could proceed in earnest. On July 2, 1964, *The Times Dispatch* reported that "Congressman Wilbur D. Mills announced Friday approval of a \$225,000.00 Accelerated Public Works grant toward construction of a new Lawrence County courthouse costing \$450,000.00 in Walnut Ridge." The article reported further that

Judge Penn said it would be approximately 60 days before the county is ready to advertise for construction bids. "We will confer with the architects and obtain their advice on the procedure for tearing down the present courthouse," Judge Penn stated.

He said the county has 120 days in which to begin construction.

Judge Penn said construction of the courthouse would provide a substantial payroll while the building is being erected.

Penn said all county offices will likely be moved to the Powhatan courthouse during the period of construction. "Most of the people I have talked to have suggested this," he added. Judge Penn also said he favored turning the Powhatan courthouse over to the Lawrence County Historical Society for use as a museum, "if the public is willing."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> "Consolidation, New Courthouse Okayed By 11 To 1 Vote Tuesday." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 29 August 1963, p. 1A.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> "\$225,000 Courthouse Grant Is Approved; Start In 120 Days." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 2 July 1964, p. 1A.



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A few months later the process of obtaining bids for the new courthouse was begun. On October 1, 1964, it was announced that bids for the new building would be opened on October 15<sup>th</sup>. The newspaper indicated that "The work included under a single bid will include demolition of the present building, site work, all general construction work, plumbing, heating, air-conditioning, and electrical work." County Judge Brooks Penn also said that the demolition of the current courthouse could begin as soon as the proper agencies had given their approval to the accepted bid.<sup>35</sup> The newspaper also reported that "County Judge Brooks Penn said the architects have prepared several alternate sets of plans and specifications, which should permit awarding of contracts immediately providing bids are not extremely high."<sup>36</sup>

On October 22, 1964, *The Times Dispatch* reported on the outcome of the bid opening the week before.

Bids were opened last Thursday afternoon for the new Lawrence County courthouse. The low bid of \$335,200 was offered by McDaniel Bros. Construction Company of Jonesboro.

The bid was accepted by County Judge Brooks Penn and the Courthouse Building Committee, and awaits only formal approval from federal officials.

Demolition of the present courthouse in Walnut Ridge is expected to start on Wednesday, Nov. 4. Judge Penn asked the contractor to delay the tearing down of the building until after the general election.

The bids were much lower than was anticipated. The successful bidder was \$41,192 below the available money. This means that the county and the federal government – who share the expenses on a 50-50 basis – will each save about \$20,000. The overall project cost therefore is reduced from \$450,000 to \$410,000. The sum of \$19,400 will be held in reserve for unexpected needs.

Because of the low bid, Judge Penn immediately made plans to use concrete instead of asphalt in the large parking area to be constructed at the rear of the courthouse.

\*\*\*

County officials have already begun the process of moving records and equipment to the courthouse at Powhatan, where county offices will be located during the construction period. By election day about the only office still operating at the Walnut Ridge courthouse will be the Deputy County Clerk's office, where

<sup>35</sup> "Bids On New Courthouse To Be Opened Here On October 15." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 1 October 1964, p. 1A.

<sup>36</sup> "To Open Courthouse Bids Today!" *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 15 October 1964, p. 1A.

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absentee votes are cast, and where election returns will be received.

Judge Penn said the gallows, where one man was hung in the early days of the courthouse, will be taken down and kept for possible restoration in the future as a relic.<sup>37</sup>

Demolition of the old courthouse began in November 1964 as planned, and by November 19, 1964, most of the building had been demolished. The cornerstone of the building was removed on November 16, 1964.<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, with as big a news story as the preparation for the new courthouse was, *The Times Dispatch* did not provide any coverage for the groundbreaking for the new courthouse. Given the demolition of the old courthouse in November 1964, the groundbreaking likely occurred late in 1964 or early in 1965.

Once the new courthouse was under construction, reporting on the project was a lot less than leading up to the vote for the initiative to consolidate the county seats and build the new courthouse. By August 1965, the committee was already buying furnishings for the new building. It was reported in *The Times Dispatch* that

The Lawrence County Courthouse Building Committee was in Little Rock last Friday to complete negotiations for purchase of furniture, fixtures and equipment from the Gene Lewis Company.

The committee completed an agreement for purchase of \$24,400 in desks, chairs, cabinets, safes, counters, and other equipment from the Gene Lewis Company.

Members of the committee include County Judge Brooks Penn, W. E. Spies, Jim Bland Jr., Jack Cato, Ben Mays and Rudy Baker.

...<sup>39</sup>

Although the committee was buying furniture for the new courthouse, the construction of the building was being delayed due to weather and problems in getting materials for the construction. By mid-October *The Times Dispatch* reported:

Poor weather for construction and slow delivery of materials continue to hamper construction of the new Lawrence County courthouse.

When demolition of the old courthouse began 11 months ago, it was anticipated that the new building would be ready for occupancy by late September.

<sup>37</sup> "Jonesboro Firm Submits Low Bid On Courthouse Of \$335,200; Demolition Work Starts Nov. 4." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 22 October 1964, p. 1A.

<sup>38</sup> "Walnut Ridge Court House About Gone." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 19 November 1964, p. 1A.

<sup>39</sup> "Furnishing Are Bought For The New Courthouse." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 12 August 1965, p. 1A.

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Unusually heavy rains throughout the year have caused some delay, and construction has been held up for several weeks by slow delivery of cast stone. This stone is being used around windows and as the top layer of the masonry walls, designed to fit the roof.

McDaniel Bro. Construction Company ordered the cast stone months ago from a usually reliable supplier. According to Judge Brooks Penn, the supplier "kept promising the stone, and kept promising, and then finally said he could not make shipment." At this development, McDaniel Bros. ordered the stone from another firm and shipments are being received steadily now.

According to Judge Penn, the roof of the courthouse cannot be erected until the cast stone is in place.

Penn said officials had hoped to complete the building before the first of the year, "but it now appears it might be February."<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately, Judge Penn's prediction of a February completion date for the building was optimistic. By the end of March 1966 it was reported that

Workmen have been placing new office furniture and equipment in the building this week. Opening of the new building has been briefly held up by a delay in shipment of courtroom furnishings, but County Judge Brooks Penn said this equipment is to arrive this week.

Final inspection of the new building was made last week, and the building accepted by the county subject to a few minor changes and repairs.

The courthouse will not be open for business until after the dedication [on April 17]. ...<sup>41</sup>

Planning for the building's dedication was well underway in early 1966, including lining up the keynote speakers, securing the musical entertainment, and sending out invitations to local officials in the area. In early April 1966, *The Times Dispatch* reported:

Congressman Wilbur D. Mills and E. C. (Took) Gathings have accepted invitations to attend the dedication of the new Lawrence County courthouse here on Sunday, April 17.

Mr. Mills will be the principal speaker at a brief program, beginning at 1:30 in the afternoon.

<sup>40</sup> "Courthouse Construction Delayed By Slow Delivery Of Materials." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 14 October 1965, p. 1A.

<sup>41</sup> "New Courthouse Dedication, Open House Planned Sunday, April 17." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 24 March 1966, p. 1A.

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Governor Orval Faubus has tentatively accepted an invitation to attend, and said he will be here if at all possible.

County Judge Brooks Penn and the Courthouse Building Commission have completed plans for the dedication.

The Walnut Ridge High School Band, directed by Arlin Jones, will give a concert for 20 to 30 minutes preceding the formal program at 1:30. A stand is to be erected on the concrete parking area at the rear of the courthouse, where there will be more room for the anticipated large crowd.

Invitations are being sent to county officials of all neighboring counties to attend.

After the program, the courthouse will be open for public inspection and county officials will be stationed at their respective offices. The following day, the courthouse will be open for business and officials will begin the job of moving equipment from the Powhatan courthouse.

42

...

It was expected that several thousand people would attend the dedication and tour the new building.<sup>43</sup> A large ad in *The Times Dispatch* on April 14, 1966, had photographs of the main entrance and the lobby of the new building, as well as a schedule for the dedication events on the 17<sup>th</sup>. The advertisement also included a word of thanks and invitation from the Courthouse Building Commission, which said:

TO THE PEOPLE OF LAWRENCE COUNTY

This is YOUR building and we hope all Lawrence countians, as well as former residents, will visit the courthouse this Sunday afternoon.

The completion of this building, we feel, marks a bright page in the history of the "mother" county of Arkansas.

It could not have been erected without the sponsorship of the County Development Council, which originated the drive for consolidation of the county and erection of a new courthouse, and without the support of the people, who approved the project by such an overwhelming majority.

Courthouse Building Commission.

Judge Brooks Penn

W. E. Spikes

Jim Bland Jr.

Rudy Baker

<sup>42</sup> "Mills, Gathings Here April 17 For Dedication." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 7 April 1966, p. 1A.

<sup>43</sup> "Congressmen Mills, Gathings To Speak At Courthouse Dedication." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 14 April 1966, p. 1A.



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Ben Mays  
C. Jack Cato<sup>44</sup>

The dedication of the new Lawrence County Courthouse on April 17, 1966, represented the end of an almost three-year-long process. The newspaper indicated that "between 1,500 and 2,000 persons were on hand...for the dedication...[and that] an estimated 5,000 persons went through the beautiful new building during the day." *The Times Dispatch* further reported that

...  
Rep. Wilbur Mills of Kensett, who represented Lawrence County when the contracts for the new building were let and played a major role in getting federal aid for the project was the main speaker.

"This courthouse is a symbol of the united effort of all the citizens of this great county," Mills said, "and it is a symbol of the resourcefulness of a people who without hesitation took the steps which made this courthouse possible."

He added that construction of the courthouse is an outstanding example of cooperation between agencies of the federal government and of local government.

Rep. E. C. (Took) Gathings of West Memphis, who now represents Lawrence County, also spoke briefly, praising the people of Lawrence County for their vision in constructing the courthouse.

County Judge Brooks Penn said Sunday was a day "long looked forward to," and he noted that many obstacles were overcome in construction of the courthouse.

<sup>45</sup>  
...

Since its dedication in 1966, the Lawrence County Courthouse has been an important part of the county's government. As the main court and office building for the county, the Lawrence County Courthouse represents the center of county government for the area. The Lawrence County Courthouse also represents a good example of a building illustrating the influences of the New Formalism style of architecture. Since its dedication in 1966 the Lawrence County Courthouse has remained an important part of the county's architectural heritage.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY**

After World War II, especially during the 1950s, the International style was often the choice for civic and commercial buildings. However, when Arkansas native Edward Durell Stone designed the American embassy in New Delhi, India, in 1954, he did not feel that the International style was appropriate for the building. Rather, he executed a twist of classical elements that used the

<sup>44</sup> Advertisement for the dedication of the Lawrence County Courthouse. *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 14 April 1966, pp. 4B-5B.

<sup>45</sup> "Courthouse Dedicated Sunday; Thousands Tour New Building." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 21 April 1966, p. 1A.

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modern materials and technologies that had been employed in the International style, and New Formalism was born. As Virginia McAlester writes in the second edition of *A Field Guide to American Houses*:

...New Formalism concentrated on updating, rather than re-creating, Classical forms, providing a visible and theoretic distinction from the Neoclassical style. An overall massiveness is achieved through a concrete-clock-like structure set on an elevation and typically crowned with a flat slab roof. Wall surfaces, commonly made of stone, brick, and marble, are normally smooth and unadorned; columns generally take on a slender and attenuated form.<sup>46</sup>

When the Lawrence County Courthouse was built, it represented a new direction in the architecture of downtown Walnut Ridge. Most of the other buildings in downtown Walnut Ridge were late nineteenth or early twentieth century commercial buildings exhibiting vernacular commercial styles of the era. Even today, New Formalism architecture in Walnut Ridge is rare, with the First National Bank of Lawrence County at 206 West Main Street being the only other example in the downtown area, and the Lawrence County Courthouse is the only civic example of the style.

The Lawrence County Courthouse designed by Erhart, Eichenbaum, Rauch, and Blass employed several New Formalism characteristics in its design. The building used cast stone, for example, that could have been meant to mimic a more luxurious material, and the cast stone also enhances the look of the building's flat-slab roof. The courthouse's site is raised above the surrounding sidewalk, and a stone retaining wall (which may survive from the previous building) gives the appearance that the building rests on a low podium, which was a characteristic of the style. In front of the courthouse, the formal plaza with benches, planters, and a central fountain (now the location of a flagpole) is also a characteristic of the style and its formal composition. The Lawrence County Courthouse also reflects New Formalism's hallmark characteristic monumentality through its raised center section delineating the main lobby and courtroom. Finally, the Lawrence County Courthouse also exhibits the strict symmetrical façade that was also characteristic of New Formalism. Due to the fact that it represents a significant example of modern design illustrating characteristics of New Formalism, the Lawrence County Courthouse is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C**.

<sup>46</sup> McAlester, Virginia Savage. *A Field Guide to American Houses, Second Edition*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013, p. 664.

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“Courthouse Dedicated Sunday; Thousands Tour New Building.” *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 21 April 1966, p. 1A.

“Courthouse Petitions Are In Circulation; Election In Mid August Still Goal Of Committee.” *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 11 July 1963, p. 1A.

Lawrence County Courthouse

Lawrence County, Arkansas  
County and State

Name of Property

"Courthouse Vote Set For Aug. 27." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 1 August 1963, p. 1A.

"Federal Grant For Courthouse Accepted By County." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 9 July 1964, p. 1A.

"Furnishing Are Bought For The New Courthouse." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 12 August 1965, p. 1A.

Information on New Formalism found at:

<http://www.fullertonheritage.org/Resources/archstyles/formalism.htm>.

"Interest In Courthouse Election Increases; Committee To Give \$500 Cash To Boost Turnout." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 15 August 1963, p. 1A.

Jacobsen, John G. "Lawrence County" from *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=782>.

"Jonesboro Firm Submits Low Bid On Courthouse Of \$335,200; Demolition Work Starts Nov. 4." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 22 October 1964, p. 1A.

"Lawrence County's New Courthouse To Be Unveiled Here Sunday." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 14 April 1966, p. 4C.

McLeod, Walter E. *Centennial Memorial History of Lawrence County*. Russellville, Arkansas: Russellville Printing Company, 1936. Reprint: Lawrence County Historical Society, 1980.

McNeill, Danyelle. "Walnut Ridge" from *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=917>.

"Mills, Gathings Here April 17 For Dedication." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 7 April 1966, p. 1A.

"New Courthouse Dedication, Open House Planned Sunday, April 17." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 24 March 1966, p. 1A.

"Public Meeting On Courthouse Friday Night." *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 30 May 1963, p. 1A.

Rendering of the proposed Lawrence County Courthouse. *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 16 July 1963, p. 1A.



Lawrence County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas  
County and State

Roy, F. Hampton. *Charles L. Thompson and Associates, Arkansas Architects, 1885-1938*. Little Rock: August House, 1982.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps for Walnut Ridge: 1897, 1904, 1908, 1914, 1919, 1929, and 1940.

“Survey Results Are Announced, To Seek Vote On New Courthouse.” *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 6 June 1963, p. 1A.

“To Open Courthouse Bids Today!” *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 15 October 1964, p. 1A.

“Walnut Ridge Court House About Gone.” *The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 19 November 1964, p. 1A.

Witsell, Charles and Gordon Wittenberg with Marylyn Jackson Parins. *Architects of Little Rock: 1833-1950*. Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2014.

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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):** LW0138

Lawrence County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Approximately 2.25 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: 36.069898 | Longitude: -90.958467 |
| 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: 683849 | Northing: 3993631 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

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

Block 4, Original Town of Walnut Ridge.

#### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes the land historically associated with the resource.

Lawrence County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas  
County and State

---

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator  
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
street & number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500  
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201  
e-mail: ralph@arkansasheritage.org  
telephone: (501) 324-9787  
date: March 27, 2015

---

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

Lawrence County Courthouse

Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas

County and State

### 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: Lawrence County Courthouse

City or Vicinity: Walnut Ridge

County: Lawrence

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Ralph S. Wilcox

Date Photographed: March 17, 2015

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

1 of 19. Northeast and southeast façades of the courthouse, looking west.

2 of 19. Northeast façade of the courthouse, looking southwest.

3 of 19. Plaza area, looking west.

4 of 19. Plaza area, looking south.

5 of 19. Lawrence County Veterans Memorial, looking northwest.

6 of 19. Main entrance of the courthouse, looking southwest.

7 of 19. Tank at the northwestern veterans memorial, looking northwest.

8 of 19. Stone retaining wall in front of the courthouse, looking southeast.

9 of 19. Northwest façade of the courthouse, looking southeast.

10 of 19. Southwest façade of the courthouse, looking northeast.

11 of 19. Southwest façade of the courthouse, looking north.



Lawrence County Courthouse  
Name of Property

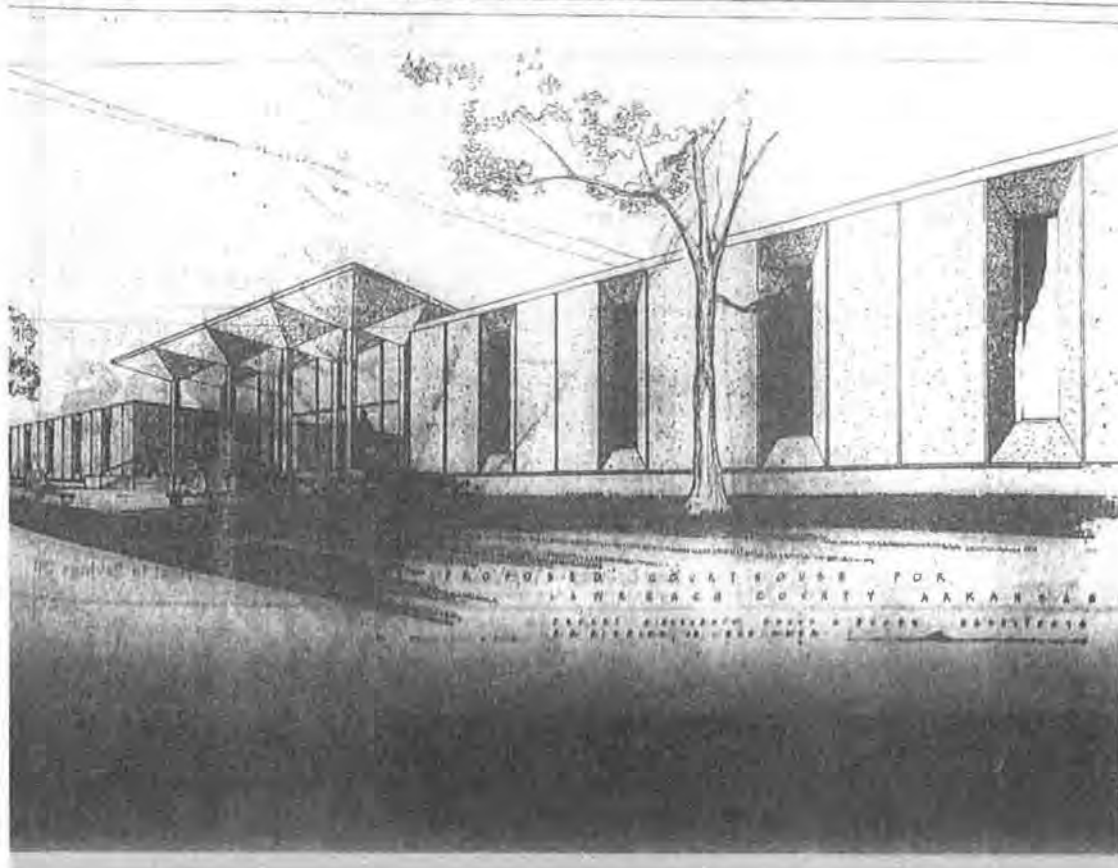
Lawrence County, Arkansas  
County and State

- 12 of 19. Southeast façade of the courthouse, looking northwest.
- 13 of 19. Northwest commemorative plaque in the lobby, looking southwest.
- 14 of 19. Southeast commemorative plaque in the lobby, looking southwest.
- 15 of 19. Lobby of the courthouse, looking north.
- 16 of 19. Lobby of the courthouse, and hallway of the southeast wing, looking southeast.
- 17 of 19. Courtroom, looking northeast.
- 18 of 19. Courtroom, looking southwest.
- 19 of 19. Window detail, looking north.

Lawrence County Courthouse  
 Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas  
 County and State

<p>Bill Wade of Nashville, Council chairman, has asked committees to report on work and accomplishments of each committee. Replacements will be elected to the council to replace nine members whose terms will have expired. Officers will be elected to serve during the next year.</p> <p>Other officers who have served during the past year are: Carl Phillips, vice-chairman; and Jim Sloop, secretary.</p>	<p>and its subsidiaries, Lawrence H. Austin, Vulcan President and Robert C. Rhodes, President of Woodard &amp; Wright in a joint statement made the announcement. The Woodard &amp; Wright business will be operated as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Vulcan Corporation, with no changes in policy or personnel contemplated and Rhodes remaining as President of the Woodard &amp; Wright subsidiary.</p>	<p>Burrow first entered business here as a teenager in the late 1920's with his brother, Everett Burrow. The brothers started out in the grocery business and later expanded to other fields of retail trade.</p> <p>R. D. Burrow currently has extensive holdings in real estate and a number of businesses in Walnut Ridge and several large enterprises in the St. Petersburg, Fla., area.</p>	<p><b>Fish Fry Is July 25</b></p> <p>Once again it is time for the Pender Farm Bureau Fish Fry, which will be held at Reynolds Park in Paragould next Thursday, July 25. Supper to be served at 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Bread and cold sodas will be furnished.</p> <p>Remember to pack a full basket, bring your family and come have a good time.</p>	<p>and her niece Riley of Fortia, received injuries about 8:18 morning in a wreck on 91, near Roberts Store.</p> <p>Mrs. Milligan was driving pickup truck and lost control of the vehicle, which over a roadside ditch. She was in Jonesboro at the time accident.</p> <p>The injured were taken to Bernard's Hospital in Jonesboro, and her niece Riley of Fortia, received injuries about 8:18 morning in a wreck on 91, near Roberts Store.</p>
---	--	---	--	---



Rendering of the proposed Lawrence County Courthouse.  
*The Times Dispatch* (Walnut Ridge). 16 July 1963, p. 1A.

**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.



Lawrence County Courthouse

Walnut Ridge, Lawrence County, Arkansas

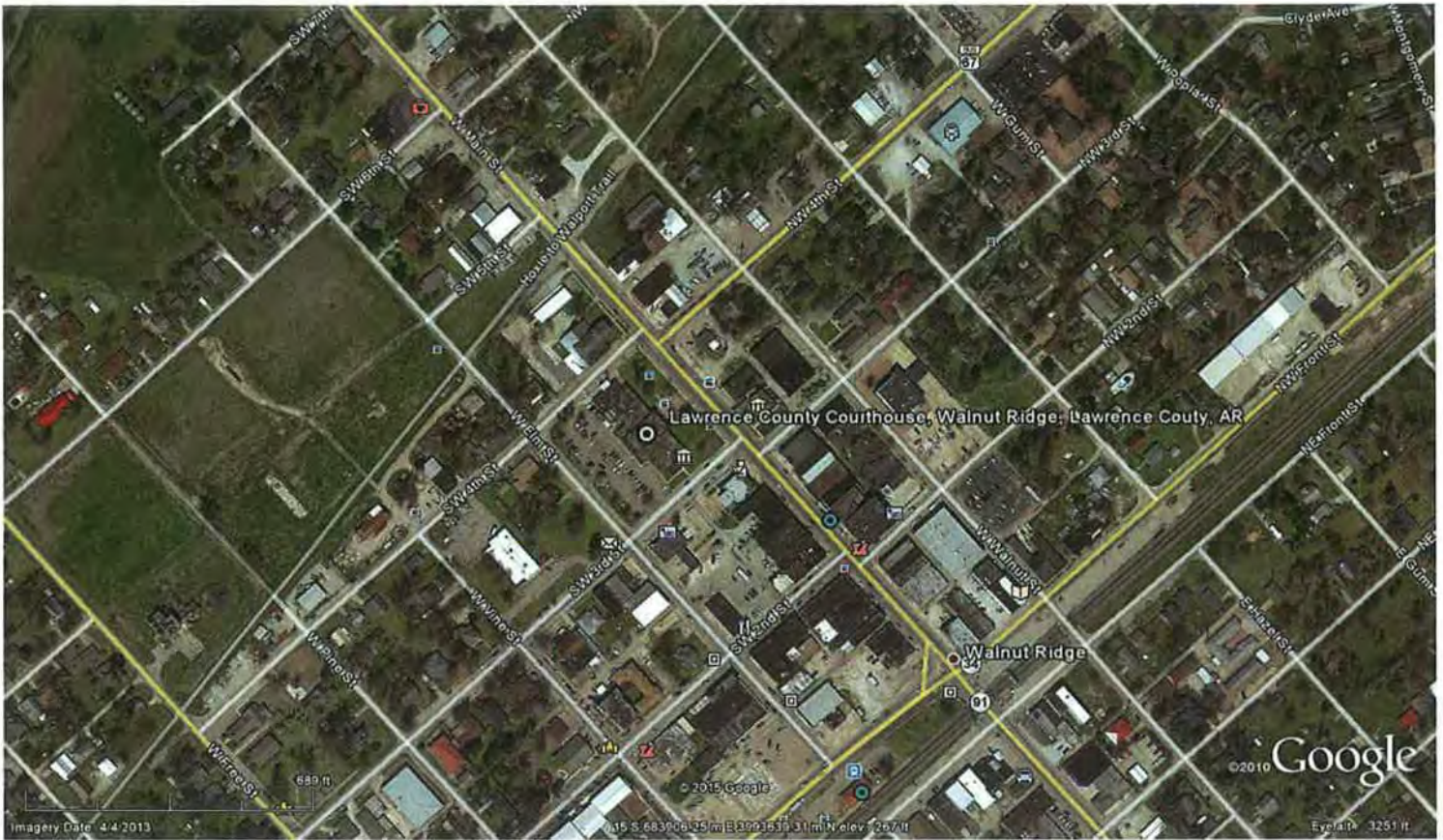
|-----172'-----|

↑

North

UTM: 15/683849/3993631





Lawrence County Courthouse

Walnut Ridge, Lawrence County, Arkansas

|-----689'-----|

↑

North

UTM: 15/683849/3993631













LAWRENCE COUNTY COURTHOUSE





LAWRENCE COUNTY COURTHOUSE



LAWRENCE COUNTY VETERANS MEMORIAL  
WORLD WAR II

KOREAN CONFLICT

VIETNAM WAR  
ARMY

MARINES

LAWRENCE COUNTY WILL NEVER FORGET

WE, THE RESIDENTS  
OF LAWRENCE CO.  
ERECT THIS MEMORIAL  
TO EXPRESS OUR LOVE  
AND MOST SINCERE  
APPRECIATION FOR THE  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE  
DISPLAYED BY OUR  
TROOPS IN PROTECTING  
AND PRESERVING OUR  
FREEDOMS DURING  
THE OPERATION  
DESERT SHIELD/  
DESERT STORM,  
AND PREVIOUS  
WAR VETERANS.

[Empty stone marker]





LAWRENCE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

WARNING  
Surveillance  
cameras  
in use

WARNING  
Surveillance  
cameras  
in use







KEEP OUT

FOR SALE  
COMMERCIAL  
RE/MAX Steve C...  
870 316

NORTH  
67B









NO VISITORS WITHOUT PERSONNEL ONLY!

NO VISITORS WITHOUT PERSONNEL ONLY!

776 FNV















LAWRENCE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

ERECTED 1965

BROOKS PENN  
COUNTY JUDGE

COMMISSIONERS

C. JACK CATO

BEN MAYS

RUDY BAKER

JAMES L. BLAND JR.

W. E. SPIKES

ERHART EICHENBAUM RAUCH AND BLASS  
ARCHITECTS

E. K. RIDDICK JR.

ENGINEER

McDANIEL BROS. CONSTRUCTION CO.  
CONTRACTOR



COUNTY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE

THEIR PLANNING AND UNCEASING EFFORT BROUGHT SUCCESS  
TO THE MOVEMENT FOR CONSOLIDATION OF DISTRICTS

WM. H. WADE  
TOM SLOAN  
HOMER HASTINGS  
ARTHUR CLEVELAND  
RUDY JONES  
ROLPH BUSH  
W. B. RUDY  
JAY H. MYERS  
ROBERT A. BRUCE  
WILGUS DEBOW  
LAWRENCE BRAGG  
MURIEL M. ALLISON  
ELMER MILLIGAN  
MRS. RELTON FOREHAND

HARRY L. PONDER  
LOWELL PENN  
JEWEL BRANNON  
TOM A. ROREX  
HAROLD LADY  
HENRY M. RAINWATER  
CARL E. PHILLIPS  
HOMER BELL  
MAX M. HOLLANDER  
MITCHELL DAVIS  
WM. J. SWINK  
JESSE HOGGARD  
GROVER DAVIS  
MRS. MILES PONDER

**JOBS AVAILABLE  
NOW!**

**GREAT PAY! GREAT BENEFITS!**

Stock Clerks	► Maintenance
Sales Reps	► Clerical
Bank Teller	► Paramedic
Inventory Associates	► Surgical Nurse
Forklift Operator	► P-APN
CDL Drivers	► Registered Nurse
Certified Social Worker	► LPN
Cabinet Finisher	► Pharmacy Tech
Diesel Mechanics	► Farm Jobs
Accountant/Bookkeeper	► Office Manager

• • • And Many More Openings! • • •

More Jobs Coming Soon:  
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Arkansas Workforce Center  
116 W. Elm Street  
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Workforce Center Hours: 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.  
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**GET SKILLED.  
CERTIFIED.  
A JOB.**

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EXIT

EXIT

EXIT

EXIT

WOMEN





EXIT

EXIT

7 CIRCULAT CLERK

Use Middle Door Only!

HEALTH ABSTRACTS & INSURANCE





NOT AN EXIT  
USE OTHER DOOR  
→

EXIT

Assembly (2)  
Food or Drink  
in Court Room

Assembly (2)  
Food or Drink  
in Court Room

White tissue box on a table in the foreground.







EXIT

NO CELL PHONES  
ALLOWED IN  
COURTROOM

NO CELL PHONES  
ALLOWED IN  
COURTROOM





C  
Of  
Pa  
O



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Lawrence County Courthouse

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Lawrence

DATE RECEIVED: 8/14/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/09/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/24/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/29/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000627

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 9-28-2015 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Could also have claimed "A" for Politics/Gov't  
for Association with Consolidation of  
Gov't offices in county*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept C

REVIEWER J. Gilbert DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/ see attached SLR Y/

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS  
**HERITAGE**

Asa Hutchinson  
*Governor*

Stacy Hurst  
*Director*

---

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural Heritage  
Commission

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars  
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

---



Arkansas Historic  
Preservation Program



323 Center Street, Suite 1500  
Little Rock, AR 72201

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

e-mail:

[info@arkansaspreservation.org](mailto:info@arkansaspreservation.org)

website:

[www.arkansaspreservation.com](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com)

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AUG 14 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

August 5, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.  
Washington D.C. 20005

RE: Lawrence County Courthouse – Walnut Ridge, Lawrence  
County, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. 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