

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Denham Springs City Hall

other names/site number Old Denham Springs City Hall

2. Location

street & number 115 Mattie Street N/A not for publication

city or town Denham Springs N/A vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Livingston code 063 zip code 70726

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Gerry Hobdy 3/10/93
Signature of certifying official/Title Gerry Hobdy, Date
LA SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain.) _____

Signature of the Keeper Entered in the National Register

Delores Byrum

Date of Action 4/16/93

Denham Springs City Hall
Name of Property

Livingston Parish, LA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/city hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls concrete

roof concrete

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Denham Springs City Hall, Livingston Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 1

The Old Denham Springs City Hall (1940) is a two story structure built of reinforced concrete. It stands on a corner approximately half a block west of the community's historic main business thoroughfare. Art Deco influence can be seen in the building's exterior and interior detailing. The building has suffered from vandalism and deterioration and still exhibits some alterations made after 1969. However, its historic character, and its National Register eligibility, remain intact.

Somewhat massive and heavy in its proportions, the rectangular building rises from a low water table. The structure is five bays wide and four bays deep. The central three bays of the upper floor are surmounted by a low pediment. In addition, this section projects slightly, giving the impression of a pavilion. Below this projection, a large portico marks the entrance. This portico, and detailing upon the City Hall's parapet, are the austere structure's only exterior decorative elements. The three-bay portico displays two free-standing and two engaged concrete octagonal columns which support an iron grill resembling an architrave. There is also a decorative iron railing on one side. The portico's slightly stepped parapet features two Art Deco style elements. The first is a chevron pattern outlining the cornice. The second is a geometric plaque placed at the parapet's mid-point. This plaque features a stepped top edge and a lozenge pierced by a circle. The building's rooftop parapet features a Greek key band which is broken at the corners of the mock pavilion by lozenge designs.

The interior's only interesting features are decorative cornices and ceiling panels which survive in some areas. The cornices consist of a chevron band, while the ceiling panels incorporate geometric and stylized motifs. The floorplan is quite straightforward. The first floor consists of a central hall flanked by two rooms on each side. The plan of the second floor is similar, except that a large courtroom fills the space on one side of the hall. The original jail cells survive on the second floor inside another room. The building also has a small, two-room basement.

The Old Denham Springs City Hall has undergone several alterations over the years. However, municipal officials are in the process of returning the structure to its original appearance. In addition to the deterioration expected when a building stands vacant, changes not yet removed as of this writing include the following:

- 1) four additional heavy steel jail cells (added after 1969) which completely fill the two first floor rooms on one side of the central hall;

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Denham Springs City Hall, Livingston Parish, LA
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- 2) replaced windows, several of which are totally or partially covered;
- 3) mechanical pipes, conduits and vents located on the exterior rear wall;
- 4) an inappropriate sign on the portico; and
- 5) dropped acoustical ceilings in some rooms.

These changes have not had a serious impact upon the building's external appearance, and its National Register integrity is uncompromised. Clearly, the Old Denham Springs City Hall would easily be recognized by anyone from the historic period, which is the criterion for judging the integrity of a historical nomination. As the symbol of the "coming of age" of the Denham Springs municipal government (see Part 8), the Old Denham Springs City Hall is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

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

N/A

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/government

Period of Significance

1940

Significant Dates

1940

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

E. G. Blakewood

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Denham Springs City Hall
Name of Property

Livingston Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than an acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5	6	9	6	1	3	0	3	3	7	4	1	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

2

Zone	Easting				Northing									

3

Zone	Easting				Northing									

4

Zone	Easting				Northing									

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

See attached plat map.

Boundary Justification Boundaries follow property lines of parcel of land upon which nominated resource is located.
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date January 1993

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana zip code 70804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Denham Springs

street & number P. O. Box 1629 telephone (504) 665-8121

city or town Denham Springs state Louisiana zip code 70727-1629

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet**

Denham Springs City Hall, Livingston Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

The Old Denham Springs City Hall is locally significant in the area of politics/government within the Livingston Parish community of Denham Springs because the building represents the "coming of age" of the community's municipal government.

The site which would become known as Denham Springs received its first settlers during the early years of the nineteenth century. First to be associated with the site was farmer Alexander Hogue (1804), whose daughter married William Denham in 1828. Denham soon acquired control of Hogue's 640 acre tract, which he sold to New Orleans businessman Stamaty (perhaps St. Amant) Covas in 1855. A series of springs believed to be rich in minerals existed on the site, and Covas was apparently the owner of an antebellum health resort which flourished at Amite Springs, as the hamlet was known at that time. In 1882 Covas lost the property, which was purchased by George L. Minton for the cost of delinquent taxes. Minton almost immediately began subdividing the old Hogue/Denham tract and selling the lots, as did the owners of the adjacent landholding. It was at this point that the community, now known as Denham Springs, began to grow. Several factors spurred this growth, including the opening of the Denham Springs Collegiate Institute in 1895; the re-development of the springs as a spa and tourist destination around the turn of the century; and the arrival of the Baton Rouge, Hammond and Eastern Railroad (later the Illinois Central) in 1908. As a result of this growth, Denham Springs was incorporated as a village in 1903 and designated a town in 1929. Later in the twentieth century industrial workers from nearby Baton Rouge contributed to the community's development.

Despite its growth and formal recognition of its status by charters from the state, the Denham Springs municipal government functioned without a formal headquarters until the Works Progress Administration erected the building under consideration in 1940. Until that year, the mayor worked out of his home, and the City Council met in a small, one room structure which was also used as a polling place. Like the mayor, the town marshall also worked out of his home. Although the community did have a small jail built of cross-ties, it was not considered strong enough to hold violent prisoners, who were jailed at the parish seat. If public meetings were needed, they were held in the school auditorium.

All this changed with the completion of the City Hall, which was designed to house all of the activities of the municipal government at that time. The new structure included a large meeting space for the city council and local court, offices for the mayor and city workers, a headquarters for law enforcement officials, and a secure jail. Thus, as the local newspaper proclaimed, the completion of the City Hall was "an accomplishment worthy of much praise." The building brought local government services together under one roof for the first time, marking the "coming of age" of Denham Springs' municipal government.

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Denham Springs City Hall, Livingston Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 2

Note:

Denham Springs was elevated to the status of a city in 1959. Ten years later the local government relocated to a new and larger City Hall and the Police Department (as the city's law enforcement agency was by then called) took over the older building. The old City Hall has stood vacant since the police obtained a new headquarters building in 1984. However, the city is actively seeking options for restoring and using the building.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Denham Springs City Hall, Livingston Parish, LA

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Community Environmental Design Studio, Louisiana State University, "Renovation Feasibility Study and Redesign Proposal," Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1986.

Denham Springs News, March 21, 1940; April 18, 1940; November 21, 1940.

History Book Committee, History of Livingston Parish, Louisiana, n.p.: Edward Livingston Historical Association, 1986.

Interview with Joe Jackson, December 18, 1992. Mr. Jackson is a long-time Denham Springs resident and was a member of the City Council during the 1930s.

Livingston Parish American Revolution Bicentennial Committee, The Free State: A History and Place-Names Study of Livingston Parish, n.p., 1976.

