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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.~~ 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 Holmes County Courthouse Complex

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Court Square N/A not for publication

city or town Lexington N/A vicinity

state Mississippi code MS county Holmes code 51 zip code 39095

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.)

Kenneth H. P. Pool October 4, 1994
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
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 commenting 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 Edson H. Beall Date of Action 11.10.94

Holmes County Courthouse Complex
Name of Property

Holmes County, Mississippi
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	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
1		objects
3	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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/courthouse
Government/government office
Recreation and Culture/monument/marker

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/courthouse
Government/government office
Recreation and Culture/monument/marker

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne
Romanesque
Art Deco

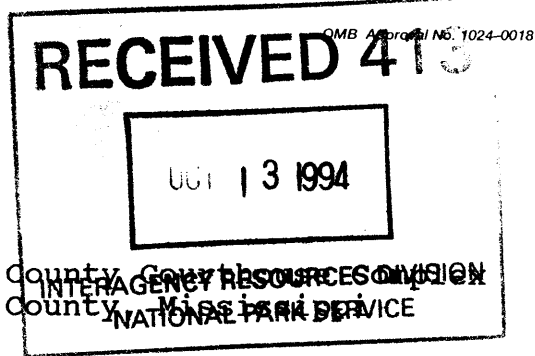
Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Brick
roof Asphalt
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

Holmes County, MISSISSIPPI
HOLMES COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Section number 7 Page 1

The Complex

The Holmes County Courthouse Complex occupies the entire block of the centrally located courthouse square in Lexington, the county seat, which is located approximately in the geographical center of Holmes County. The Complex contains three contributing elements: the Courthouse, the County Records Building, and the Confederate Monument. The placement is such that the courthouse is aligned on axis with four streets (Spring Street to the west, Depot Street to the east, Carrollton Street to the north, and Yazoo Street to the south). The square is physically the center of Lexington and Holmes County, and symbolically the center of political life for the county.

A. The Holmes County Courthouse

Built in 1894, the Courthouse combines features of two popular late nineteenth century architectural styles, the Romanesque and Queen Anne. The building is a rectangular, two-story red brick structure with tan brick and stone trim. It is bilaterally symmetrical, with entrances on all four sides, each side facing one of the points of the compass. At each corner is a square, pyramidal-roofed tower that projects out slightly from each wall plane. Each tower has a pediment on its two outer sides containing a bas-relief sunburst pattern. Below the cornice and above the upper windows on each tower is a decorative brick treatment consisting of alternating recessed and projected brick courses. Just above the second floor tower windows is a decorative rectangular brick panel. A simple cornice encircles the entire building. Just below the cornice and also encircling the entire building is a soldier course with the bricks being turned at a forty-five degree angle to the wall plane forming a sawtooth pattern. The building has a watertable and beltcourse as well as an additional course encircling the building at the level of the transoms of the first floor windows. The building has a steep hipped roof surmounted by a tall clock tower with a polygonal dome capped by a lantern and weathervane.

Each facade of the building is centered on a tetrastyle portico, the columns of which are cast iron, with variant composite capitals and banded reeding on the lower third of the shaft. The columns on the north and south elevations are paired at either side of the portico while the columns on the east and west

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Holmes County, MississippiSection number 7 Page 2

elevations are more evenly spaced. The north and south facades are identical as are the east and west facades. The north and south facades are five bays wide with the east and west facades being nine bays wide. The entrance bays on all four facades project out from the wall plane. The projecting entrance bay of the east and west facades contains a round archway with a recessed secondary archway in which a double-leaf, half-glass door is located. This door is flanked by sidelights and surmounted by a transom made to fit into the archway. The center section of the bay at second floor level is recessed to be even with the main wall of the building and contains a triple window with each unit composed of a two-over-one, double-hung sash. The bay continues above the roofline where the projecting outer elements appear as pseudo-towers. These towers are topped by stepped pyramidal roofs crowned by ball finials. The projecting outer elements have square recessed panels while the center section has a rectangular brick panel. The projecting entrance bays on the north and south facades are much simpler. The entrance is located in a single semicircular arch and is composed of a double-leaf, half-glass door with transom and sidelights. The second floor contains two two-over-one windows surmounted by semicircular arches infilled with a bas-relief sunburst pattern. The part of the bay above the roofline is simply detailed with end pilasters and a denticulated cornice and is flanked by two chimney stacks.

First floor windows on all sides have two-over-one, double-hung wooden sash with single-light transoms, all topped by exaggerated tan brick flat arches. The second floor windows on all elevations are two-over-one, double-hung sash surmounted by tan brick semicircular arches. The windows in the towers all have two-over-one, double-hung wooden sash, have no transoms and are crowned with simple tan brick flat arches. The arched window tops on the north and south facades as well as those of the outer windows of the east and west facades are infilled with a bas-relief sunburst pattern, apparently constructed of pressed metal, while the east and west elevations have clear glass fanlights above the sash. All windows have stone sills.

The Courthouse interior enjoys a relatively high degree of integrity. The first floor of the courthouse is arranged along a central north-south corridor. Originally this corridor was bisected by a east-west corridor to form a cruciform plan. The east-west corridor was eliminated in 1976 when the two ends were

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partitioned off and offices created in the space. The new walls were recessed back from the existing walls so that the location of the original corridor is evident. The new doors built here are designed so as to blend with the original woodwork. The door and window trim throughout the courthouse, including the new woodwork consists of simple, unmolded trim and unmolded corner blocks. Several of the offices contain original mantelpieces. The first floor corridor has a wide unmolded baseboard, a simple chair rail and a simple cornice molding. The floor is marble laid in a diamond pattern. A new elevator is located in the western side of the southern entrance vestibule. The wooden staircase, which consists of a simple molded handrail, decorative balustrade and simple square newel with a tapered top, is located in a secondary hallway located near the southwest corner of the building. The stair hall is separated from the main corridor by an arched opening.

Located in the middle of the second floor, the courtroom is the building's main space. This room was altered in 1976 by the addition of jury rooms and other court-related spaces along the east and west sides of the room. As a result, the courtroom at present has no windows and is approximately half its original size. The original pressed metal ceiling remains as well as the original decorative wooden spindlework screen located above the judge's bench. The original pilasters with composite capitals, decorative plaster floral swags on the walls between the pilasters and a beaded board wainscot with molded chair rail were either moved or recreated during the remodeling and now grace the walls of the reduced courtroom. The original balcony was also enclosed during these alterations. Three apparently original doors and surrounds surmounted by decorative plaster shells are located to the left, right and rear of the judge's bench. Many of the furnishings, including the judge's bench, attorneys' tables and theater-style seating, all appear to be original. Several of the original rooms on the second floor contain original simple mantelpieces.

B. County Records Building

Located to the north east of the courthouse is a contributing one-story, yellow brick Art Deco building with a low-pitched hipped roof constructed as a county record room in 1930. In the 1940s or 50s a large addition was made to the southeast corner of this building. This one-story, tan brick addition, while lacking

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Holmes County Courthouse Complex
Holmes County, Mississippi

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the elaborate detail of the original building, is sympathetic to the original in scale and does not detract from it. Centered on the main, or west, facade of the records building is a recessed double-leaf, paneled wooden door with a multi-light transom. Flanking this doorway are two small windows covered with decorative iron grills. Above the windows are circular plaques containing interlocking diamond shapes. Above the entrance is a decoration consisting of griffins flanking a rectangular stone panel. A cornice composed of geometrical shapes encircles the original building. The interior consists of two large records rooms and several smaller offices and is simply detailed.

C. Confederate Monument

On the lawn to the west of the courthouse is a Confederate Monument which is considered a contributing element. This monument consists of a marble statue of a Confederate soldier, facing west, standing "at rest" atop a marble obelisk which in turn rests on a stepped base. The monument was erected by the B.G. Humphreys Chapter No. 463 of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and was dedicated on December 2, 1908.

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.)

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.
(Confederate Monument)
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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):

- 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture
- Social History
- Politics/Government
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1894-1944

Significant Dates

1894
1908
1930

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect: W. Chamberlain and Company

Builder: R. Jesty and Company

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Holmes County Courthouse Complex
Name of Property

Holmes County, Mississippi
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.5

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 15 | 775035 | 3667450 |
Zone Easting Northing
2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
Zone Easting Northing
4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Todd Sanders, Architectural Historian

organization Mississippi Department of Archives and History date August 22, 1994

street & number P.O. Box 571 telephone (601) 359-6940

city or town Jackson state MS zip code 39206

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 Holmes County Board of Supervisors

street & number P.O. Box 239 telephone (601) 834-2508

city or town Lexington state MS zip code 39095

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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Holmes County Courthouse Complex
Holmes County, Mississippi

Section number 8 Page 1

The Holmes County Courthouse Complex is significant for its long association with the politics and government of Holmes County (criterion A), beginning with the founding of Lexington as the county seat of the newly created Holmes County in 1833-34. The period of significance for the complex begins with the construction of the present courthouse in 1894 and ends in 1944, which is fifty years previous to the preparation of this nomination and recognizes the changes that began to occur in small towns in Mississippi during World War II. The courthouse and records building are also significant for their architecture (criterion C). Additionally, the Confederate Monument is significant in the area of social history (criterion A).

In 1833 the State Legislature of Mississippi passed an act forming Holmes County from Yazoo County. This act stated that the County Board of Police were to "designate a seat of Justice of Holmes County, not exceeding three miles from the geographical center thereof." (Lexington, Mississippi, 1833-1876. P.7). This board located a site on a hill near the center of the new county and established a community which they named Lexington. The town was laid out around a centrally located square which was to be the location for the county courthouse. The first courthouse built was a simple log structure. This structure was replaced about 1850 with a large brick building designed by state architect William Nichols. (Ibid, p.9) This building burned in 1893 and was replaced with the present structure the following year. Construction began on February 7, 1894 and was completed on September 3, 1894. The total cost of the building was less than \$25,000. (Ibid, p.10-11) Due to its location on a hill and its style of architecture with its high clock tower, the present courthouse clearly dominates the town and surrounding countryside. The court square has been the physical and political center of the county for over one hundred and sixty years and also serves as the symbolic center of the county.

A. The Courthouse

The Holmes County Courthouse, built in 1894, is a locally important work of late nineteenth century civic architecture exhibiting elements of both the Queen Anne and Romanesque styles and is a well-executed and well-maintained example of this now relatively rare architectural type as built in Mississippi. The Courthouse is the only notable example of late nineteenth century

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Holmes County Courthouse Complex
Holmes County, Mississippi

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civic architecture in Lexington and Holmes County and is the area's principal architectural landmark.

The Courthouse was designed by the architectural firm W. Chamberlain and Company of Knoxville, Tennessee. This firm also designed the Pulaski County, Virginia, Courthouse which was constructed circa 1896. That building is very similar to the Holmes County Courthouse except that it is constructed of native stone rather than brick.

The Holmes County Courthouse is an excellent example of the now relatively rare civic and institutional buildings built in Mississippi in the late 19th century in the Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival styles. Of all the courthouses built in Mississippi between 1865 and 1900 only thirteen are known to survive, among them the Holmes County Courthouse. And of these thirteen, the Holmes County Courthouse is the only one built in this combination of Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival styles to retain a high degree of integrity. The Yalobusha County Courthouse at Water Valley originally was quite similar to the Holmes County Courthouse, but due to a fire in the 1920's and subsequent repairs the building lost most of its integrity. Other public buildings built in Mississippi during the late 19th century that employ this combination of styles are rare, the best example being the Old Post Office (now City Hall) in Oxford, which was built in 1887.

B. The Records Building

The County Records building, constructed in 1930 in the Art Deco style, is the only other building located on court square. This building is an excellent example of the earliest form of Art Deco in Mississippi. This style became popular in Mississippi in the 1920s for "skyscrapers" in Mississippi's largest communities such as Jackson and Meridian, but was rarely used in small communities the size of Lexington. After the establishment of the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s Art Deco became more prominent in Mississippi and was used for courthouses, schools and other public buildings. The Records Building is a rare example of a pre-W.P.A. Art Deco government building.

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Holmes County Courthouse Complex
Holmes County, Mississippi

Section number 8 Page 3

C. The Confederate Monument

The Confederate Monument, located on the lawn to the west of the courthouse, has been a prominent part of the civic landscape associated with the courthouse since it was erected in 1908. The monument is locally significant for its association with the Confederate Memorial movement, which was an important social movement throughout the South from the 1870's until the first World War and was a major factor in the development of the dominant regional mythos and sense of regional identity in the South during that period. The most widespread physical manifestations of this movement were the monuments that were erected on courthouse grounds, in public parks, and in cemeteries throughout the Southern states. Some of these monuments were important works of art in their own right, but most are fairly conventional or stock sculptural pieces that are more important for their historical associations than for their artistic merit. The monument at the Holmes County Courthouse is one of the more conventional types.

Though widespread, these monuments are not as ubiquitous as is sometimes thought. Many of Mississippi's Confederate monuments, and most of the oldest ones (from about 1870 to 1900) are located in cemeteries. Other public monuments to the soldiers of the Confederacy, mostly dating from about 1900 to 1917, stand on the grounds of about 27 out of 92 active county courthouses in Mississippi (some of which were moved there from other locations), and at 3 former courthouses or courthouse sites. About 12 other county seats have Confederate monuments prominently placed in public squares, street medians, intersections, or parks, as do several other communities that are not county seats. Monuments also stand on the grounds of the Old State Capitol in Jackson and the University of Mississippi at Oxford. Only about 43 county seats in Mississippi, less than half of the total, have prominent public Confederate Monuments apart from those in cemeteries.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Holmes County Courthouse Complex
Holmes County, Mississippi

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9 - BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Historic Resources Inventory Files. Historic Preservation Division, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.

Lexington, Mississippi - Holmes County 1833-1976. Compiled by Members of the Magnolia Garden Club. Published by the Messenger Press, Florence, Mississippi. 1976.

Site visit, July 19, 1994, by Todd Sanders, Architectural Historian, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Lexington, Holmes county for 1925.

Save Outdoor Sculpture Survey Questionnaire for the Holmes County Confederate Monument, Lexington, Mississippi. Form completed by Tom Lord, February 18, 1994.

10 - GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

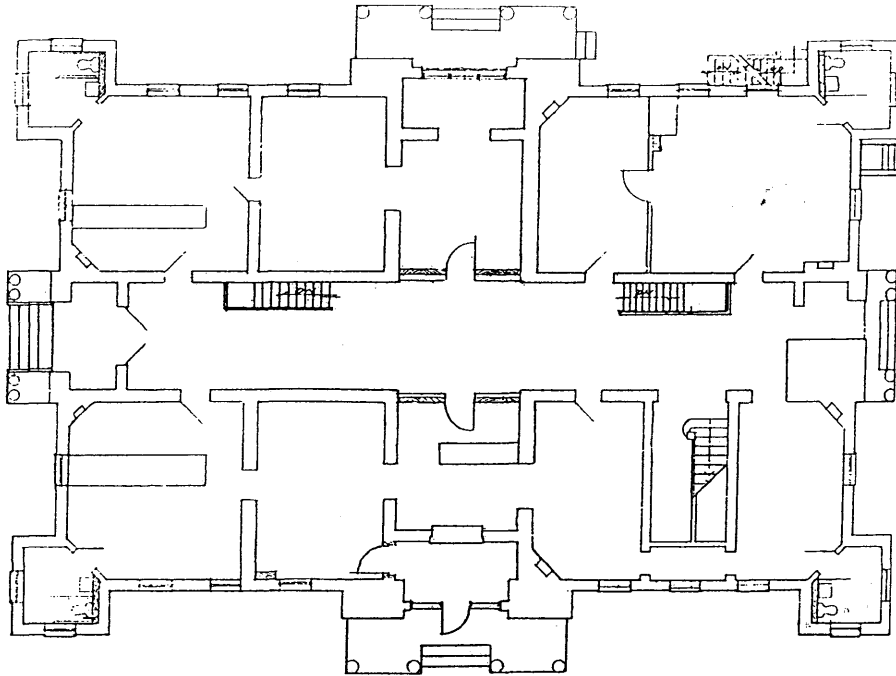
Verbal Boundary Description

That property commonly known as the Holmes County Courthouse, located on Court Square, Lexington, Holmes County, Mississippi, and more particularly described as: Part of Sectional Lot 13 of Sec. 35, T15N, R2E; also part of Sectional Lot 16 of Sec. 36, T15N, R2E in the Records of the Tax Appraiser, Holmes County, Mississippi.

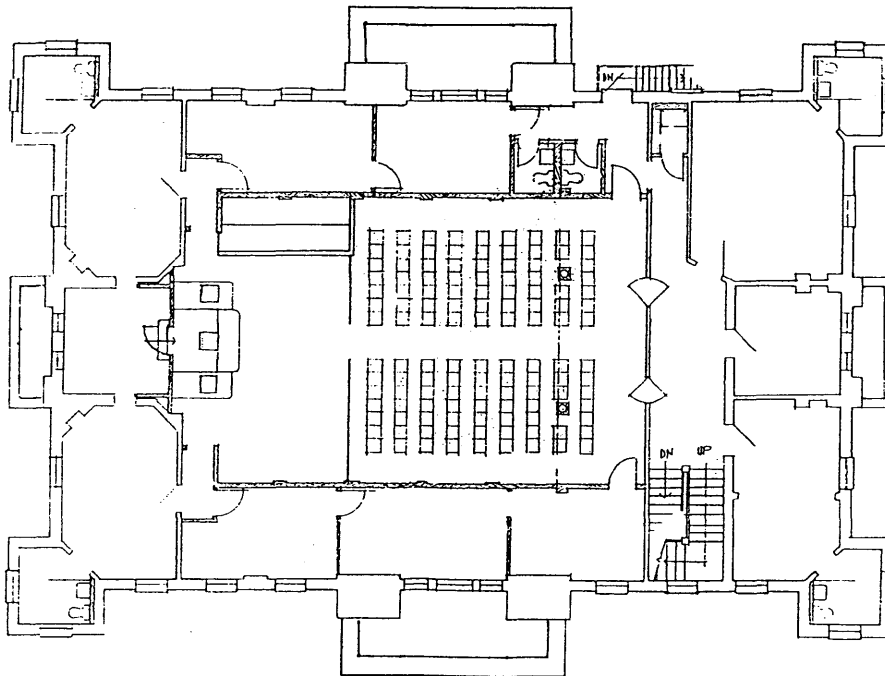
Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Holmes County Courthouse Complex.

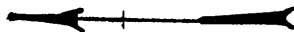
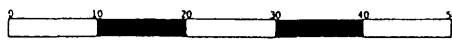
Holmes County Courthouse
Lexington, Holmes County, Mississippi

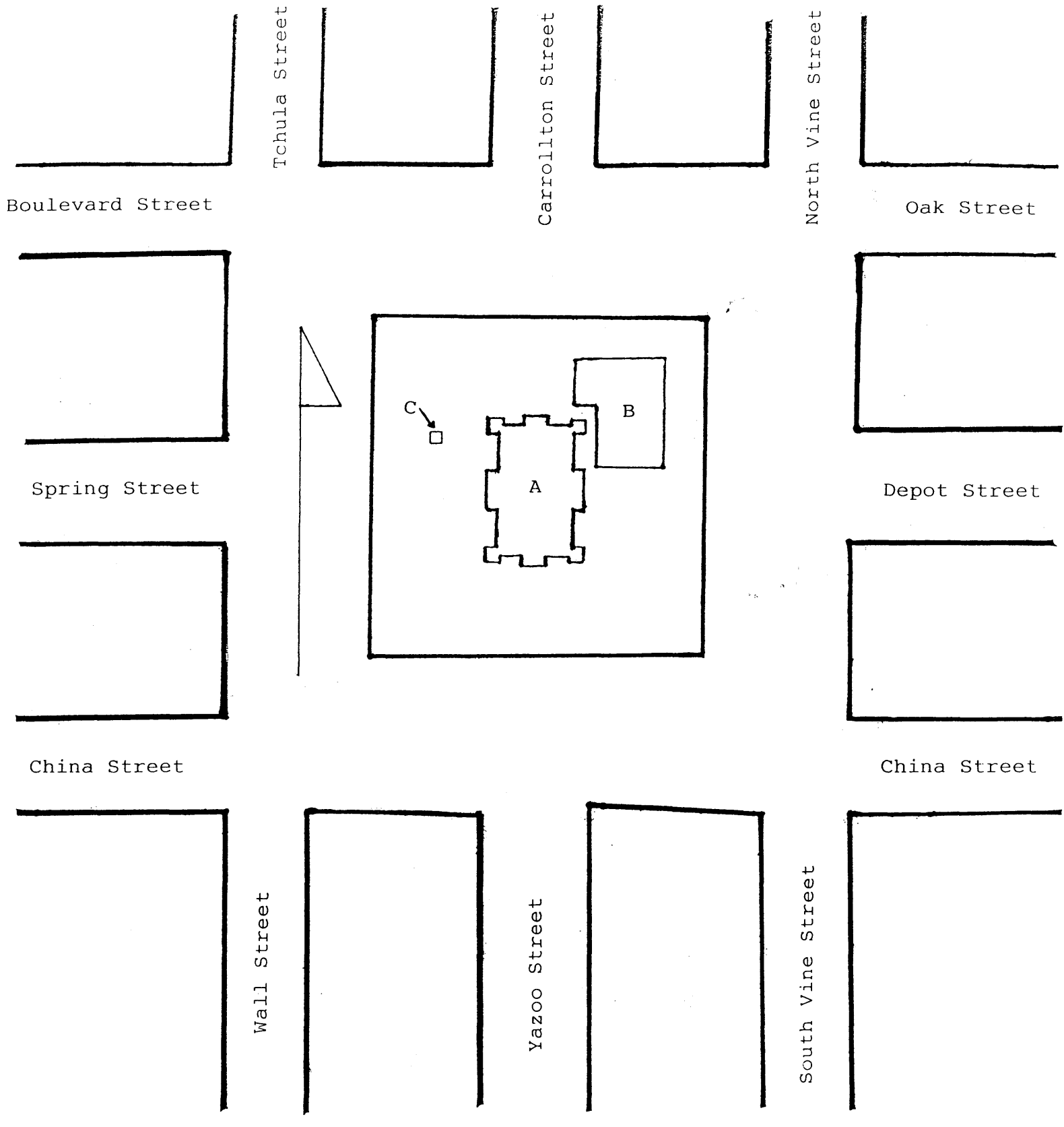


First Floor



Second Floor





Holmes County Courthouse Complex
Lexington, Holmes County, Mississippi

- A. Holmes County Courthouse
- B. County Records Building
- C. Confederate Monument

