



1349

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 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 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. 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 SUWANNEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 200 South Ohio Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Live Oak N/A vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Suwannee code 121 zip code 32060

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.)

[Signature] 10/6/98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
State or 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 See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

11/12/98
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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	total

Name of related multiple property listings
(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: courthouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Renaissance Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other CAST STONE

Narrative Description

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

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.
- 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 36) 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

GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1904-1948

Significant Dates

1904

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smith, Benjamin B./Hugger Brothers

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 1

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	309075	3353000	3353005	3091000
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 John Lawson/Robert O. Jones, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date September 1998

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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 Board of County Commissioners, Suwannee County

street & number 200 South Ohio Ave. telephone 904-364-3498

city or town Live Oak state FL zip code 32060

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 amend 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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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **SUWANNEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE,
LIVE OAK, SUWANNEE CO., FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The Suwannee County Courthouse is located at 200 South Ohio Avenue, Live Oak, Suwannee County, Florida. The Renaissance Revival style building, begun in 1899, fronts east onto South Ohio Avenue. The main block of the building has two stories with a basement, an irregular footprint, and complex hip and gable roof. The continuous foundation is concrete stucco at the half basement level, and the exterior is of brick and cast-stone. Most windows are 1/1, double hung wooden sash. The main facade is dominated by a triple-arched, one-story portico, and a centrally located, four story, domed clock tower with a clock face on each elevation. A one-story, brick and concrete addition was attached to the rear of the building in 1965. Wings on the addition flank the historic building on the north and south. The architectural integrity and character of the historic building have been retained to a very high degree.

SETTING

The Courthouse is located in the center of a city block on the west side of Ohio Avenue in downtown Live Oak. It is centrally located to the downtown commercial business district, less than four-hundred feet from the town's main intersection of US 90 (Howard Street) and US 129 (Ohio Avenue). It is the focal building in an entire one-block complex of government buildings, which includes two county jails, county offices, and the former regional library building.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The building has a symmetrical, irregular footprint, constructed on a continuous foundation with a half basement of coursed concrete veneer to look like ashlar stone with ventilators (Photos #1&5). The exterior is of yellow brick with white cast-stone ornamentation, quoins, and cornices. A wide belt course between the two stories wraps around the building. Windows are 1/1 double-hung sashes, rectangular on the first story, and arched on the second story. The complex roof, surfaced with asphalt shingles, has a dominant hip over the building's main block, with cross-gables around its periphery. A tower has a copper dome.

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The main (east) facade fronts onto South Ohio Avenue, and is dominated by a four story, engaged, square, central tower with a clock face at the fourth story (Photo #2). Broken arch pediments, relief ornamentation, and urns are at the fourth story. At the tower's third story is a broad entablature with dental molding and prominent cornice with modillions. Pairs of louvered openings beneath the entablature indicate the belfry.

At the first story of the main block is a one-story arcaded portico accessed by 6 concrete steps. The portico is crowned with a balustrade which incorporates a panel with "Suwannee County" in relief. Three arches rest on large, square, brick columns with egg and dart ornamentation (Photos #3&4). The main, double, glass/metal doors are centered on this portico, and are flanked by two semi-cylindrical bays with coursed ashlar surfaces. These bays rise only at the first story. At the south and north corners of the facade are gabled extensions with quoins at both corners, and keystones above the arched windows. At the second story, flanking the tower, are two arched windows framed with engaged columns, and capped with broken pediments filled with relief ornament. The window to the north contains iron bars indicative of where prisoners used to be detained.

The north and south elevations of the building are identical. A gable extension is at the center of the main block. A secondary block is recessed to the west side of the elevation (Photo #5). At the second story of the extension are two rectangular windows with broken arch pediments and relief ornamentation, supported by scrolling brackets. Immediately above these pediments are two windows with segmental arches which intrude into the broad entablature.

The west (rear) elevation has an entrance at the first story. The 1965 annex was built flush with the entrance (Photo #6). The roof line of the annex reaches the bottom of the entablature between the first and second story of the historic building. The pedimented gable extension that defined the rear entrance has two rectangular windows at the second story (Photo #7). Pairs of arched windows flank this extension. These features are visible over the roof of the annex when viewed from the west side of the block.

The main block of the annex and its north and south wings form a "U" around the building (Photos #1,8&9). The style of the annex is Modern and is composed of concrete, orange brick, and glass. Large windows of fixed

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glass face the historic building and light the halls which adjoin the glass. Offices open off of this hall.

Interior

Both interior floors have symmetrical floor plans. The wooden floors in most areas are covered with linoleum tiles and carpeting. Walls are plaster, and ceilings are tongue and groove boards frequently covered with acoustic tiles. Within the main doors is a foyer and a central hall which bisects the interior. To the north and south of the hall are 10 offices with wooden wainscoting and acoustic drop ceilings, and 2 records storage rooms. To the south from the foyer is a stairwell with vertical wainscoting which accesses the second floor (Photos #10&11). Judges' offices are at the west end of the hall and contain fireplaces (Photo #12).

A small stairwell provides the judges access to the courtroom directly above on the second floor. At the top of the public stairs is a hall which runs north/south off of which are a bathroom and two conference rooms. Double doors open to the courtroom which occupies most of the second floor (Photo #13). The ceiling has acoustic tiles. To the western end of the room is the judge's bench facing the litigant's area and the spectators' seating area. The wooden railing dividing spectators from the litigants area and the tables in that area are historic. Jury boxes flank the bench at both the north and south side walls. There are two large mezzanines (north and south) which are reached by twin staircases at the rear of the spectator section. They were originally reserved for black citizens attending trials, but have been used for storage in recent years (Photo #14). At the west end of the courtroom is a large backdrop to the judge's bench which incorporates four large fluted columns with composite order capitals supporting an entablature surmounted by a broken arched pediment with elaborate relief ornamented shield with "1904," the year the building was completed (Photo #15). A carved garland over a circular arch door is behind the judge's bench which leads to the rear staircase from the ground floor hall below.

To the west end are two conference rooms and the jury's deliberation room. On either side of the room, under the mezzanines, are conference rooms, witness rooms, and offices.

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**SUWANNEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE,
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ALTERATIONS

During the non-historic period, vinyl tile flooring and carpeting were added. Acoustic tiles were installed to cover the wooden ceiling within downstairs offices and courtroom. Glass and metal doors replaced the original doors at the main entrance. In 1965 the county built a one-story, "U" shaped annex which fronted onto the north, west, and south sides of the historic building connecting at its west entrance. The space between the north and south annex wings and the historic building is broad enough to accommodate grass, shrubs, and a sidewalk. The annex does not alter the architectural character of the historic courthouse.

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Section number 8 Page 1 **SUWANNEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE,
LIVE OAK, SUWANNEE CO., FLORIDA**

SUMMARY

The Suwannee County Courthouse is significant at the local level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Politic & Government and Architecture. Since the courthouse's completion in 1904, it has served all of the county government's legal, tax, regulatory and enforcement functions. The courthouse is an excellent example of the Renaissance Revival style and is the most elaborate formal construction in the city and county. Despite a 1965 addition to the rear of the building, the degree of architectural integrity is very high.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Following the Second Seminole War, settlers began moving into north central Florida and the Suwannee County region. Suwannee County was formed by an act of the Florida Legislature in 1858. During the Civil War the state needed an inland transportation route to south Georgia, and in 1861 a hub off of the east/west Florida and Atlantic, and Gulf Central line, from Tallahassee to Jacksonville, was begun in the area. A community developed around the railroad depot located there, and a post office was established in 1868. The name Live Oak was derived from a large oak tree located near the railroad junction.

In 1868 the legislature moved the county seat from the small town of Houston to Live Oak. The site of the present courthouse was selected by the County Commissioners as a result of a gift of land in 1869 from the widow of John Parshley, a local pioneer who moved here with his family from Ohio. County government was conducted in a wooden commercial building owned by Parshley starting in the early 1870s.

When the courthouse was completed in 1904, the town had a population of 7200; the county had 18,000 and continued to grow. The local economy was influenced by the existence of several railroads that had made Live Oak the area's trading and transportation hub after the Civil War. Three major railroads crossed the town in all four directions less than one-half mile from the courthouse. Many new businesses were in the fields of timber, lumber and millwork, naval stores, and cotton (at that time, the area produced one-tenth of all the Sea Island long staple cotton grown in America). Banking and local businesses were prospering, and commerce was

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centered in the blocks adjacent to the courthouse. Residential areas in the south side of the town also reflected the new prosperity.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

From 1904, when construction was completed on the courthouse, through the historic period and into the 1960s, the courthouse was the place where all Suwannee County government was conducted. Today, the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office, and all judicial cases are still conducted in the courtroom. County Commission meetings were held in the courthouse. Offices for the sheriff's department, elections office, tax collector, property assessors, and county records were there.

When cotton, the basis of the local economy, was devastated by a blight, the county constructed a model flue-curing tobacco barn on the courthouse grounds in 1925, to encourage this diversification of agriculture. The tobacco growing industry eventually brought millions of dollars of annual income in the local economy and the construction of many local market and warehouse facilities.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Renaissance Revival Style architecture for public buildings was popular from the 1890s into the 1930s. Relying on historic precedent and rich Classical and Renaissance ornamentation, it was seen as the appropriate expression of civic pride. The style usually had a symmetrical form, central entrance, and main hip roof with projecting gables. Masonry exteriors are universal. Common elements are classical door surrounds, pedimented and arched windows, quoins, molded cornices, and belt courses.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The architect of the courthouse, Benjamin B. Smith of Montgomery, Alabama, was influenced by the work of Boston architect, Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886). Smith produced similar works in Montgomery and in surrounding Alabama communities. Smith, like Richardson, designed a series of railroad stations and other public buildings. Although most of Smith's courthouses and public buildings have been lost, the old Union Station of 1898 in Montgomery remains. Smith was employed early in his career by the

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L & N railroad and designed many railroad facilities throughout Alabama, Georgia and Florida. He also built the Sabel Mansion which remains in Montgomery. It was built in a hybrid Romanesque/Chateausque style in 1905. He designed many other private homes in various styles in Montgomery.

The courthouse in Live Oak embodies many of the architectural features and forms of the Renaissance Revival Style. Wide rounded arches over windows and porch supports, masonry walls with squared ashlar stonework, belt courses, pedimented projecting gables and windows, and prominent cornices with ornamentation. The clock tower with a conical roof, and yellow brick exterior give it a unique and eclectic character. The grand and ornamental character of the building make it a distinctive landmark in the turn-of-the-century small rural city. The 1904 courthouse set the precedent for Live Oak City Hall (NR 1986), two blocks north, built in 1907. It also is symmetrical with a prominent square tower centered on the main facade, and arched windows.

The courthouse retains its architectural integrity on both the interior and exterior to a high degree. The one-story 1965 addition complements the historic building in materials, but is distinctive in style. The addition's scale and separation from the courthouse retains the visual impact of the historic courthouse's distinctive architectural style.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

AIA, A Guide to Florida's Historic Architecture. Gainesville:
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Board of County Commissioners, "Suwannee County Centennial:
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"Focus on Live Oak Centennial: Commemorative Edition,"
Published by Suwannee Democrat - 1978.

Suwannee County, Deed Records, 1869, (Nancy Parshley to Suwannee
County).

Suwannee County, Tax Appraisers Records, Book 06406-080001.

INTERVIEWS

10/28/97 Ed Allen, Suwannee County Coordinator
Construction histories of County buildings

10/29/97 Robert Gamble: Alabama Historical Commission,
Montgomery. Details on the career work of Benj. B. Smith

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**SUWANNEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE,
LIVE OAK, SUWANNEE CO., FLORIDA**

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Entire Block H - less north 60 feet

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encompasses the property historically associated with the Suwannee County Courthouse. The northern portion of the block was excluded because it is covered with non-historic government buildings which altered the historic character of the setting.

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Section number Photos Page 1 **SUWANNEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE,
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PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST

1. Suwannee County Courthouse, 200 S. Ohio Ave., Live Oak
2. Suwannee County, Florida
3. John Lawson
4. October, 1997
5. Lawson, 641 Pine Ave., Live Oak, Fl 32060
6. Main facade, looking west
7. Photo #1 of 15

Items #1-5 are the same for the following photographs.

6. Detail of main facade, looking west
7. Photo #2 of 15

6. Detail of main porch, looking west
7. Photo #3 of 15

6. Detail of main porch column and cornice, looking northwest
7. Photo #4 of 15

6. North elevation, looking south
7. Photo #5 of 15

6. Connection of annex to historic courthouse, looking south
7. Photo #6 of 15

6. West elevation second story, looking southeast
7. Photo #7 of 15

6. North wing of annex, looking south/west
7. Photo #8 of 15

6. South wing of annex, looking west
7. Photo #9 of 15

6. Public staircase, looking east
7. Photo #10 of 15

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**SUWANNEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE,
LIVE OAK, SUWANNEE CO., FLORIDA**

6. Public staircase, looking east

7. Photo #11 of 15

6. Mantel in judges office, looking east

7. Photo #12 of 15

6. Courtroom, looking northwest

7. Photo #13 of 15

6. Staircase to south mezzanine, looking east

7. Photo #14 of 15

6. Judge's bench, looking west

7. Photo #15 of 15

FRUGGETT AVE US
PALM ST A.B6

THE WOOD CIR D1
WELLER AVE D4



SUWANNEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

LIVE OAK

SUWANNEE CO., FLORIDA

*Additional Document
Page 2*

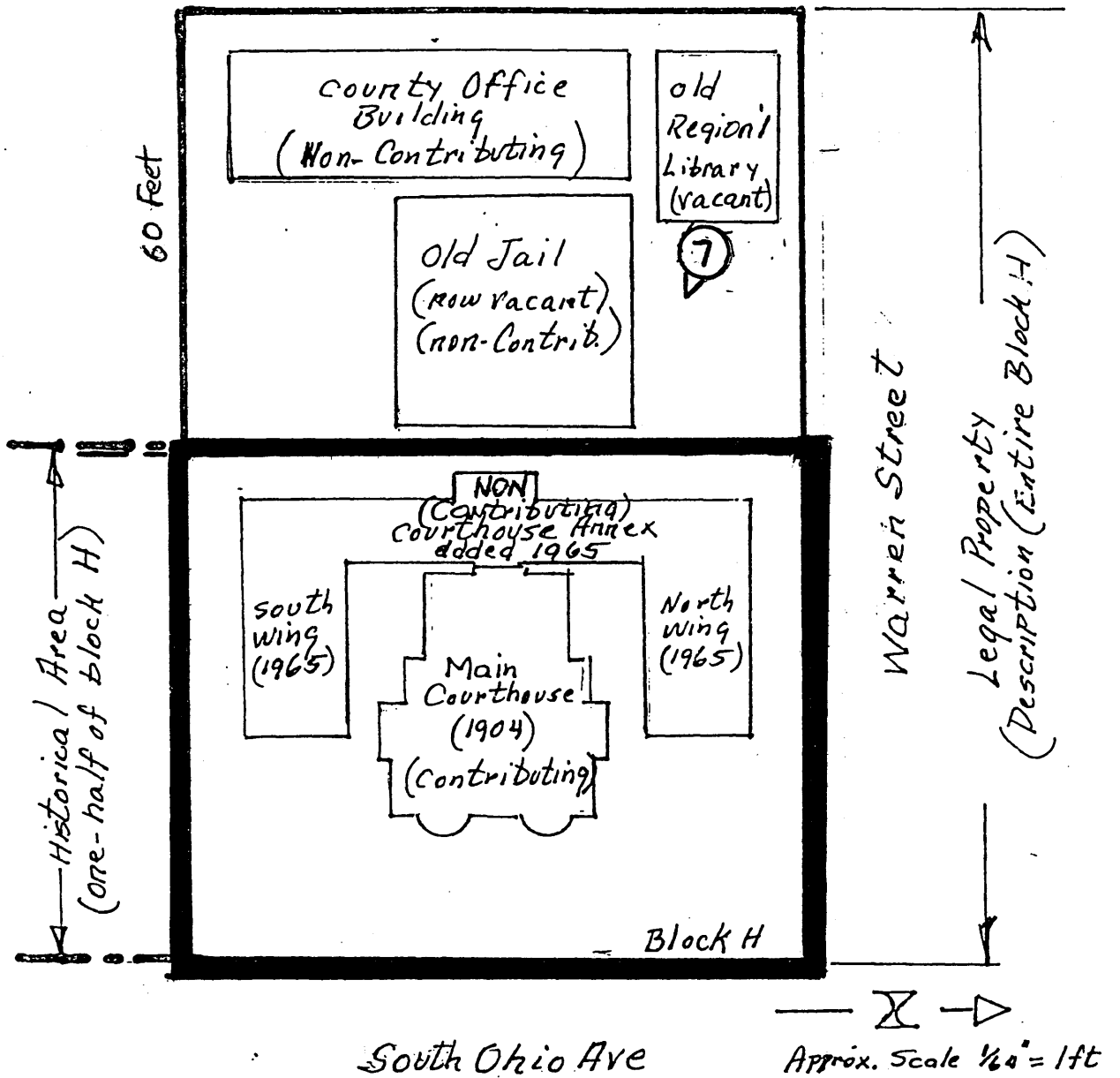
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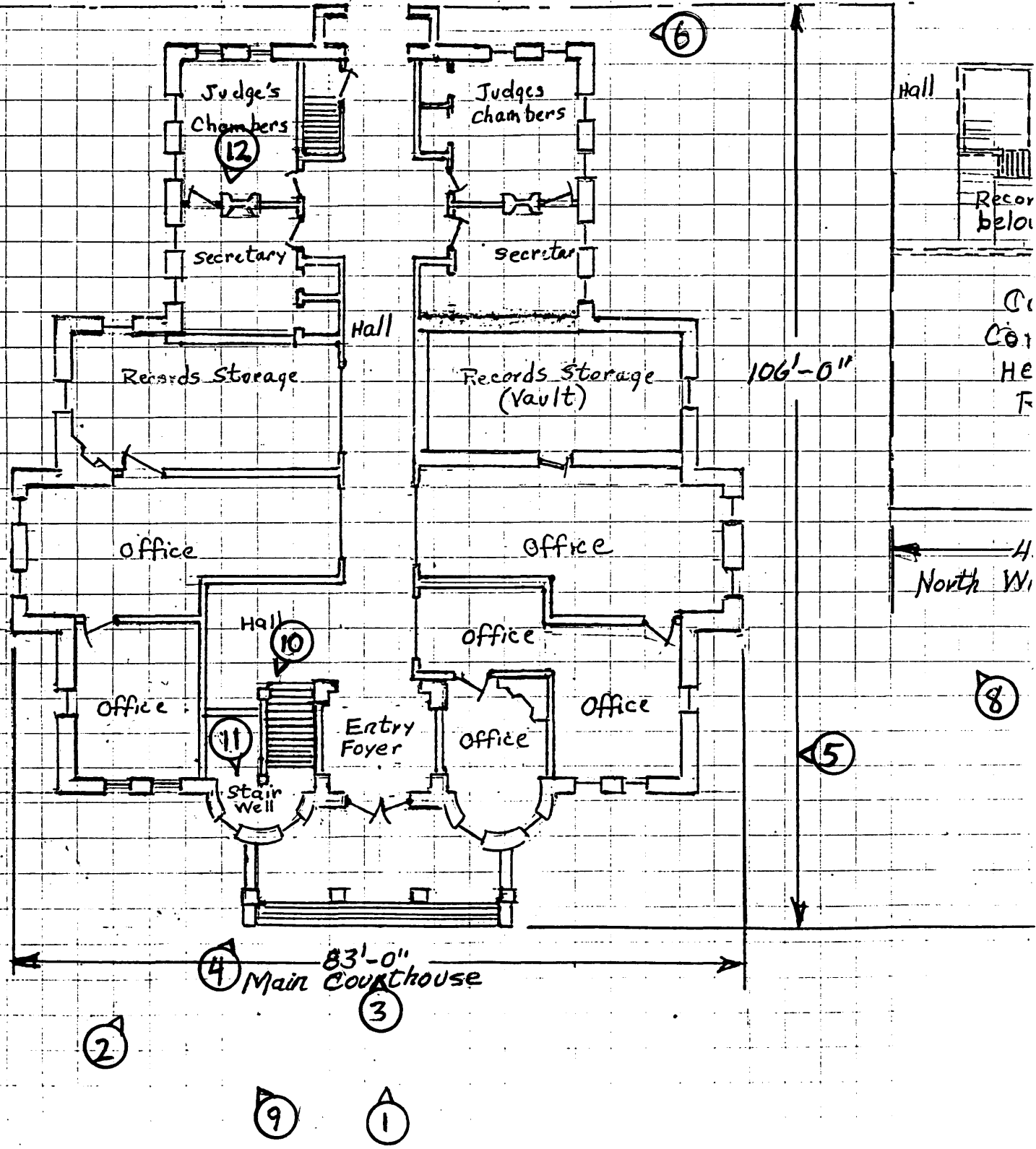
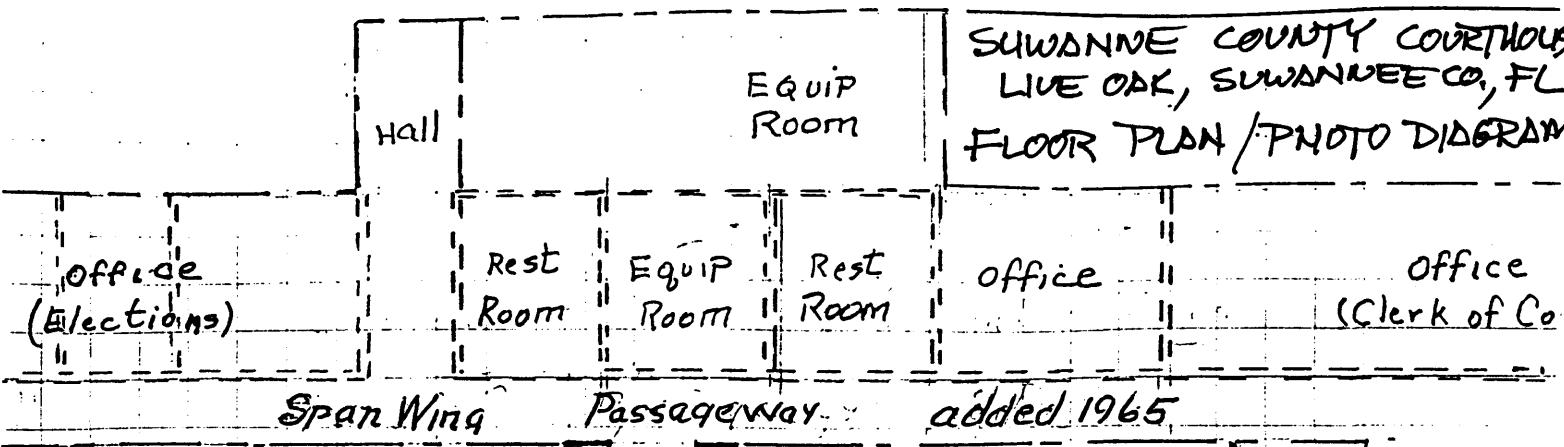
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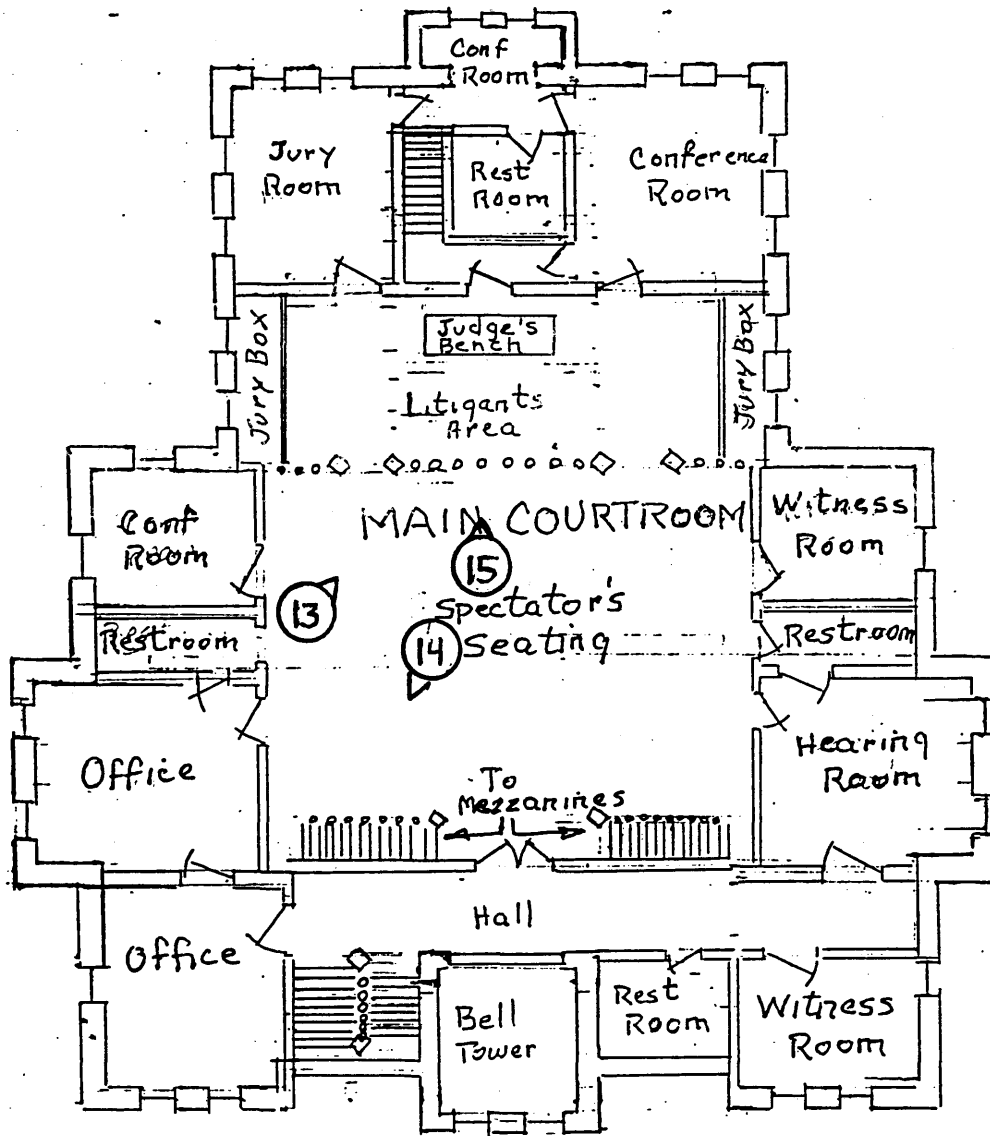


SITE PLAN-SUWANNEE COUNTY
COURTHOUSE & OTHER GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

§ PHOTO DIAGRAM

SUWANNE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
 LIVE OAK, SUWANNEE CO., FL
 FLOOR PLAN / PHOTO DIAGRAM





SUWANNEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

& PHOTO DIAGRAM