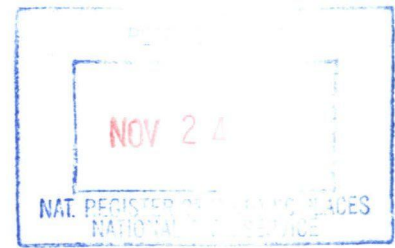


(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

1582



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Area bounded by Pecan, Austin, Walnut, and Cedar streets NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A  
CITY OR TOWN: Denton VICINITY: N/A  
STATE: Texas CODE: TX COUNTY: Denton CODE: 121 ZIP CODE: 76201

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 of certifying official

11-15-00

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this 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

Date of Action

12/28/00

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**5. CLASSIFICATION**

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**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** Private, Public-local

**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** District

<b>NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTING</b>	<b>NONCONTRIBUTING</b>
	27	19 <b>BUILDINGS</b>
	1	<b>SITES</b>
	1	<b>STRUCTURES</b>
	1	1 <b>OBJECTS</b>
	30	20 <b>TOTAL</b>

**NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER:** 1

**NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:** Historic and Architectural Resources of Denton, Texas, 1882-1949

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

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**HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:** COMMERCE/business, specialty store, department store, financial institution, restaurant; GOVERNMENT/courthouse; RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater, monument; LANDSCAPE/plaza; SOCIAL/ meeting hall;

**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:** COMMERCE/business, specialty store, department store, financial institution, restaurant; GOVERNMENT/courthouse; RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater, monument; LANDSCAPE/plaza

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

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**ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** OTHER: 1-part commercial block; OTHER: 2-part commercial block; LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque; LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Chicago; MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

**MATERIALS:** FOUNDATION CONCRETE, STONE  
WALLS BRICK, STONE, WOOD, STUCCO  
ROOF ASPHALT, SLATE  
OTHER GLASS, CONCRETE, CERAMIC TILE

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION** (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-16).

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
Denton, Denton County, Texas

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## *Summary*

The Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District contains a high concentration of properties that represent significant aspects of the economic, physical, and governmental development of the city. With a spectacular courthouse dominating the center of the square, the surrounding streets are lined with commercial buildings representing several phases in the economic development of the city. These commercial properties are typical of those found throughout the state and illustrate the development of commercial buildings from the late nineteenth century through the World War II period. The majority of the properties are one-part or two-part commercial buildings constructed of brick. There are, however, examples of other types of buildings including a theater and a “temple front” bank. Although the earliest buildings date to 1882, many of the properties reflect typical alterations made to commercial properties during the 1920s and 1930s. As the majority of the properties serve a commercial function, they have received alterations over the years to reflect the changing nature of retail businesses. These changes illustrate the physical evolution of buildings within the business district and reflect the changing nature of commerce throughout the twentieth century. Contributing properties, however, still retain sufficient character defining elements to convey a visual sense of the historic environment. The district is composed of 50 properties of which 30 are contributing and 20 are noncontributing including 46 buildings, 2 objects, 1 site, and 1 structure. The Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District retains sufficient integrity for listing under Criterion A in the areas of politics /government, commerce, and community and regional development at the local level of significance.

## Setting

The Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District (map 1, page 24) is located within the center of the original town plan. The 1896 Romanesque Revival Courthouse (NR 1977) dominates the square both by its architectural form and its setting within the central block (figure 1). Selected as the county seat in 1856, the plan for the city’s core utilized the Shelbyville Square plan, the most common layout for county seats in Texas during this period (figure 2). The courthouse square, situated on a small promontory, is bounded by Elm Street on the west, Oak Street on the north, Locust Street on the east and Hickory Street on the south. At each of the intersections surrounding the courthouse square are smaller, one-quarter blocks. Hickory Street slopes down steeply to the east of the square as does Locust and Elm streets to the north. As is so common for county seats, the courthouse square became the hub of the transportation network through town as the major highways in Denton intersected on the courthouse square. The Texas and Pacific railroad tracks are located just east of the downtown area.

Commercial buildings surround the courthouse on all four sides of the square. Both one-part and two-part commercial blocks are well-represented within the district. The commercial buildings define the outer

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# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

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Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
Denton, Denton County, Texas

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perimeter of the courthouse square and uniformly line the sidewalks. The only break in this wall of buildings is one narrow, empty lot along North Elm Street, the result of a recent building loss through fire. The consistent use of the two-part and one-part commercial block typology presents a similarity in massing and fenestration pattern throughout the district. These commercial buildings form a backdrop to the courthouse square and define the open green space surrounding the courthouse. As a result, the Denton County Courthouse Square still maintains the appearance, feeling and setting of a typical courthouse square in Texas.

The earliest surviving residential district in the city lies to the west of the downtown area along merchants and businessmen constructed large homes along these streets, many of which still survive today (designated a local historic district). Further to the west is located the campus of the University of North Texas; the campus of Texas Woman's University is situated to the north of the downtown area. The earliest industrial section of town is located to the east and to the south of the courthouse square historic district along the railroad tracks, including the old Morrison Milling Company.

### Denton County Courthouse and Grounds

Designed by W. C. Dodson, construction of the courthouse began in 1895 and was completed by 1897 (figure 1). The importance of this courthouse was recognized by its designation as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark in 1970 and its listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. The courthouse was also designated at the local level in 1982. Representing the apogee of Dodson's career, this three story Romanesque Revival courthouse is constructed of cream-colored limestone and gray sandstone accented by polychrome red sandstone and pink granite columns. Essentially square in plan, the courthouse features three monumental entrances (on the south, west and east) marked by projecting pavilions with paired columns on each floor terminating in a massive pediment. At each of the corners, canted entrances are located within a turret-like structure opened up with balconies on each floor and capped with an enclosed attic story and a mansard dome. A massive, central tower crowned with a dome is encircled with an open balcony supporting four smaller mansard domes, echoing those at the building's corners. The rich vocabulary of the building creates a picturesque skyline and marks the center of the town.

The courthouse received only minor alterations over the years, including the installation of an elevator in 1949 within the center of the rotunda, the enclosure of the district court's mezzanine gallery for additional office space in 1955 and the closure of the south entrance in 1965. During a restoration completed in 1987, all of these alterations were reversed. In 1978 many county offices including the courts moved to a new building two blocks west of the square in the Joseph A. Carroll Courts Building. A new county courthouse annex, constructed in 1998, houses many of the administrative offices of the county and is located several miles from the square on East McKinney. The old county courthouse continues to be used for offices and commissioners court meetings, as well as the location for the Denton County Courthouse on the Square Museum.

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Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
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The grounds of the courthouse contains two commemorative war monuments. Located on the southern edge of the courthouse square near the outer sidewalk on Hickory Street, the Katie Daffan Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a memorial (figure 3) to the Confederate dead in June of 1918 (item A on map 1). Spanning the sidewalk leading up to the courthouse, the monument is constructed of rusticated pink granite forming a Romanesque arch crowned with a pediment and surmounted by a full-size sculpture of a soldier in Confederate uniform. Each side of the base of the arch contains a small water fountain below which are inscribed the dates of "1861" on the left and "1865" on the right. Memorial inscriptions further describe the purpose of the monument. This object is contributing to the district.

A much later war memorial commemorating the fallen from all wars (All-War Memorial) is located nearer the courthouse on the southwest lawn (item C on map 1). Constructed of rusticated granite, a concave wall with a bronze relief in the center is flanked at either end by a polished granite column with Corinthian capitals. The bronze relief on the southwest elevation contains images of a candle, bowl, open book with quotes from the Bible and images of plows, pruning hooks, swords and a train. The back of the monument includes an engraved stone indicating the purpose of the monument and its dedication date of May 25, 1996. As this monument is not yet fifty years of age, it is noncontributing to the district.

The southeast grounds of the courthouse lawn contains the gravesite of Colonel John Denton, for whom the county and the city are named (item B on map 1). A concrete slab inscribed "JNO B. DENTON" sets atop the grave which is surrounded by a wrought iron fence which is a contributing site to the district. At the head of the grave is a 1936 Texas Centennial marker commemorating Denton and his role in Texas history. The remains of Denton were re-interred by the Old Settlers Association in November of 1901.

Surrounding the courthouse at the edge of the street and leading up to the courthouse on all four sides are concrete sidewalks constructed with funds from the Works Progress Administration between 1935 and 1936. The source of funding is inscribed within the outer sidewalk at regular intervals. These sidewalks are a contributing structure within the district as they represent an important feature of the courthouse grounds and are representative of the type of federal projects utilized during the Depression in Denton. The courthouse grounds also include various markers not generally eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. These include a polished granite stone near the south entrance inscribed with the dates of the restoration of the courthouse (1985-1987) and the individuals involved in the project; Texas Historical Commission subject marker for the City of Denton located near the grave of John Denton; and a bronze tablet mounted on a concrete pedestal at the northwest corner of the grounds commemorating the creation of Denton County and the City of Denton. A Texas Recorded Texas Historical Marker and medallion (1970) and a National Register plaque (1977) are mounted on the wall of the courthouse near the cornerstone on the north elevation.

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Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
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## Physical Characteristics of the District

The late nineteenth century Denton County Courthouse dominates the district in its central location on the square. Designed by W.C. Dodson in 1895, the three-story Romanesque courthouse looms over the rest of the buildings around the square. As the site of county government, the location of the courthouse gave impetus to the commercial development around the courthouse square. As was typical for developing towns, the original buildings around the square were log buildings soon supplanted by one and two story frame buildings. The district witnessed intense development during the 1880s, but a series of fires in the late nineteenth century, affecting each of the blocks, destroyed most of these buildings. As a result, the district contains a limited number of resources from this period. Many of these, however, were modernized during the early twentieth century. As a result, only seven buildings retain their original facades from this period: the Denton County Courthouse (1895-1896; figure 1); 122 N. Locust (Paschall Building, c. 1875; photo 6); 200 N. Locust (Wright Opera House, 1899; photo 4), 123 N. Elm (Scripture Building, 1882; photo 5), 120-124 W. Oak (c.1890), 118 W. Oak (c.1890), and 207 N. Elm (1878). All of these buildings, except the Paschall Building, are contributing to the district. The Paschall Building and the Scripture Building still retain the cast-iron pilasters.

Most of the buildings within the district date between 1882 and 1930. Neither one-part nor two-part commercial buildings predominate although the vast majority of one-part commercial buildings are located on the south and east sides of the square whereas the two-part commercial building type dominates the west and north sides of the square. Brick is the predominant construction material. Although a few brick buildings are painted, most received this treatment during the period of significance (the City over-hauled its tax records in 1946 at which time a photograph was taken of each individual building). The most common alterations to buildings are a modernization of the storefront, most commonly the use of aluminum frame plate glass windows, the application of a modern material to the ground floor surrounding the base of the storefront, or the covering of transoms. Many of the buildings within the district received such changes to their storefronts just prior to or following World War II. As these modifications are more than fifty years old and yield important information on the historical evolution of commerce in Denton, such alterations to the facades are considered contributing to the district.

Although seven contemporary buildings are located within the district, they do not significantly detract from the historical character of the area. Historically plagued by fires, the courthouse square lost three of its resources in 1994 at the corner of Elm and Hickory streets. Two of these lots are now occupied by a new building sympathetic in scale and use of materials. The least sympathetic addition to the downtown is an 8-story bank on the southeast corner of the district. Its placement at the southeasternmost edge of the district does not adversely impact the overall scale and rhythm of the courthouse square. The other five contemporary

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Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
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buildings are interspersed amidst the district and continue the scale, if not the use of materials, as the other buildings within the district.

The buildings along W. Oak Street along the northern edge of the district (photo 1) are all two-part commercial buildings dating primarily from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (figure 5). This side of the square was the least affected by fire with the west end destroyed in 1881 and the east end burned in 1887. All of the buildings, however, have received some type of minor alteration to the storefronts. Several of the buildings now contain modern window frames on the second floor, but the configuration and fenestration patterning of the original openings remains. Unfortunately, two of the buildings on this block (110 and 112 W. Oak) are slip-cased with a concrete veneer and are noncontributing although the buildings behind them date from the period of significance. Despite the alterations, the block retains its overall massing, rhythm, design, and second floor architectural features which contribute to sufficient integrity of feeling, association and setting of the period of significance.

The east side of the square along N. Locust Street is composed primarily of one-part commercial buildings flanked at either end by two-story buildings. One of the oldest surviving buildings on the square, known as the Paschall Building (C.1882; photo 6), is located at the northern end of the block. This two-part commercial building retains its original cast-iron pilasters and architectural detailing, although it has received extensive alterations to the ground floor storefront and the application of stucco to the second floor. A fire in 1890 destroyed all of the buildings on this side of the square with the exception of the Paschall Building. Most of the block was rebuilt between 1890 and 1910 as one-part commercial buildings. Many of the storefronts, however, received modifications to modernize their storefronts with the most common alteration being the introduction of aluminum frame plate glass display windows and aluminum frame glass doors. The introduction of plate glass windows occurred during the period of significance. The building at 118-120 N. Locust (1913; photo 7) is an excellent example of this type which has received very few alterations. It retains all of its exterior features including transoms, awning, unpainted parapet, storefront footprint, and the wooden front doors. The aluminum frame plate glass windows were installed at a later date, but within the period of significance. This occurred when the McCrory's Variety Store purchased the building in 1941. Four of the buildings on this block received unsympathetic alterations to the entire facade. The southern edge of the block is anchored by the Denton County National Bank Building (1913; photo 9), an outstanding example of a temple front building type. Restored in 1996, energy-efficient windows were installed, but they carefully retained the original fenestration pattern and configuration. A steep grade along Oak and Hickory streets to the east results in all of these building containing a basement to the backs of the buildings (thus, the rear of these buildings contain one additional story not visible from their fronts).

The south side of the district (Hickory Street) contains the fewest number of contributing properties than any other side of the square (photo 2). Although all but two of the buildings date from the period of

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significance, many buildings received extensive alterations and modifications including the use of new materials over the historic building facade and the installation of inappropriate storefronts. All of the buildings except two are one-part commercial block buildings. This block does, however, contain the Evers Building which has retained more of its original features than any other single commercial building in the district.

The Evers Building is an outstanding example of commercial architecture from the early twentieth century with Chicago School influences evident in the windows of the second floor and the retention of its original storefront with a recessed entry. Noncontributing buildings along Hickory Street do convey the same scale, setback, massing and function as the other buildings in the district. Although they do not contribute to the district, they do not detract from the overall feel and character of the district.

Conflagrations most severely impacted the west side of the square along N. Elm Street (photo 3). The earliest documented fire swept through the entire block in 1860 and fires continued to the plague this side of the square in 1860, 1877, 1881, 1887, 1895 and, most recently, in 1994. Most of the buildings, however, still date from the period of significance and the block retains sufficient integrity to convey the sense of feeling, setting and association with the economic development of the courthouse square. The block contains a variety of contributing buildings dating from the 1880s through the 1930s. The building on the south end of the block is the most recent building within the district, dating from only 1996. Built in a contemporary style reminiscent of the period, it is obviously not a historical building as indicated by the date of the building emblazoned across the front. A two-part commercial building, it features a turret at the corner and maintains the scale of other buildings around the square. A small, empty lot separates this building from the rest of the block and is landscaped as an urban park. Except for the buildings at 109-111 Elm, the buildings along this block are two-part commercial buildings and include a theater from the 1930s. One of the oldest buildings on the block, the Scripture Building (photo 5), is located at the north end of the street.

At the intersections of the courthouse square are smaller, quarter blocks which mark the transition away from the downtown district into the surrounding areas. Such corner lots were often favored locations for city halls, banks and opera houses as their smaller size sets them apart from the rest of the buildings around the square and emphasize the importance of buildings located at these intersections. The design of the courthouse addressed these corner blocks by the inclusion of secondary doors in each of the corners covered by porches. One of the most important buildings, the Wright Opera House (photo 4), is located on the northeast corner block. Although it has received alterations over the years, including the painting of its brick and the installation of a new storefront, most of these alterations were made during the period of significance.



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Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
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## **Methodology for the Evaluation of Individual Buildings within the District**

This district as a whole was evaluated using the following considerations: the area contained a high concentration properties that retain a high degree of integrity, giving the district a sense of continuity; there exists little contemporary in-fill to intrude upon the proposed district with modern construction located at the edges of the district; and the proposed district reflects significant aspects of the historical development of Denton. According to the National Register guidelines, for a district to retain integrity as a whole, the majority of the components that make up the district's historic character must possess integrity even if they are individually undistinguished. In addition, the relationships among the district's components must be substantially unchanged since the period of significance.

The evaluation of a commercial district is made difficult by the economic necessity to modernize storefronts so an area can maintain its economic viability. In order to provide clarification on how a building was determined contributing or noncontributing, a chart was prepared containing the essential characteristics of small-scale commercial buildings based on a model first used by Hardy Heck Moore of Austin Texas in the Henderson Commercial Historic District. As it is not necessary for a district nominated under Criterion A to retain all seven aspects of integrity, it was determined which aspects of integrity were the most important in conveying the district's significance. Integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association were determined to be absolutely essential in determining integrity of the individual resources. All of the buildings within the district maintain their integrity of location so this aspect was not included within the chart. If a building lacked setting, feeling or association, it was automatically considered noncontributing.

Furthermore, the individual components of design, materials, and workmanship were broken down within the chart and a building's facade was considered as consisting of two parts - the lower section containing the storefront and the upper section featuring either a full second floor or the upper part of a one-part commercial block. These sub-categories include fenestration pattern of the ground floor; materials within the storefront (ground floor), fenestration pattern of upper floors; materials used within the upper floors or upper part of the facade, parapet, architectural ornament or detailing, and overall massing, form and plan (i.e., design). This criteria was vigorously applied to each of the buildings within the district. Buildings which lacked a majority of the elements of design, materials, and workmanship were considered noncontributing, even if they retained a sense of association, setting and feeling. Non-historic buildings are not included in the chart as they are noncontributing by virtue of their being less than 50 years of age.

Many alterations which one might assume would adversely affect a property's integrity were actually applied during the period of significance. The Denton City Tax Records contain photographs of all buildings taken in 1946 during a massive re-assessment of property values following World War II. These photographs and the accompanying descriptions of buildings were invaluable in determining whether an alteration was

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made during the period of significance. Any alterations securely documented as occurring before 1949 were considered to be historic changes to the building and do not adversely affect the building's integrity. The illustrations accompanying the representative property type descriptions below include examples of these 1946 photographs in conjunction with a current photograph of the property.

Common alterations to buildings resulting in their noncontributing status include extensive post-1949 alterations to both the storefront and the upper section of the facade and the application of entirely new materials to a facade that destroy the original fenestration pattern and storefront rhythm (104 N. Locust); the extensive use of stucco or other new materials in addition to major alterations to the storefront (105 W. Hickory and 122 N. Locust); and the replacement of character-defining architectural elements in conjunction with alterations to the storefront (110 W. Oak). The application of a new covering over the entire facade, such as the concrete panels which encase the historic facades of 104-106 West Oak and 112 West Oak, presents a drastic alteration of the building that dramatically affects its integrity.





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Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
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Inventory of Properties in the  
Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District

Address	Date	Alterations	Building Type	C/NC Status
<b>Courthouse Square</b>				
County Courthouse	1895-1897	1987	Romanesque Revival	listed NR 1977
Confederate Monument	1918		object (A on map)	contributing
J. Denton gravesite	1901		site (B on map)	contributing
All War Memorial	1996		object (C on map)	<i>noncontributing</i>
WPA sidewalks	1935-1936		structure (D on map)	contributing
<b>Commercial Buildings</b>				
105 N. Elm	1996		non-historic (two-part)	<i>noncontributing</i>
109 N. Elm	1955		non-historic (one-part)	<i>noncontributing</i>
111 N. Elm	1955		non-historic (one-part)	<i>noncontributing</i>
115 N. Elm	1890	1925;1960s	two-part commercial	contributing
117 N. Elm	1890	1946;1952	two-part commercial	contributing
119 N. Elm	1895	1921;1952	two-part commercial	contributing
123 N. Elm	1882	c.1940;1976	two-part commercial	contributing
204-206 N. Elm	1912		one-part commercial	contributing
205 N. Elm	1921	1931;1980s	one-part commercial	contributing
207 N. Elm	1898		two-part commercial	contributing
101 W. Hickory	c.1975		non-historic (one-part)	<i>noncontributing</i>
105 W. Hickory	1885	1933;1970s	two-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
107 W. Hickory	1885	1925;1947;1970s	one-part commercial	contributing
109 W. Hickory	1913		two-part commercial	contributing
111-113 W. Hickory	c.1975		non-historic (one-part)	<i>noncontributing</i>
115-117 W. Hickory	c.1885	1920;1947;1960s	one-part commercial	contributing
119 W. Hickory	1886	c.1980	one-part commercial	contributing
121 W. Hickory	1920	1992	one-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
207 W. Hickory	1915	1980s	two-part commercial	contributing
209 W. Hickory	1946		two-part commercial	contributing

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Address	Date	Alterations	Building Type	C/NC Status
100 N. Locust	1913	1937;1996	temple front	contributing
102 N. Locust	c.1900	1918;1949;1970s	one-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
104 N. Locust	1898	1929;1949;1980s	one-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
106 N. Locust	1946	1960s	one-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
108 N. Locust	1900	1947;1960s	one-part commercial	contributing
110-112 N. Locust	1890	1940;1960s	one-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
114 N. Locust	1892	1942;1949	one-part commercial	contributing
116 N. Locust	1900	1945	one-part commercial	contributing
118-120 N. Locust	1901	1913	one-part commercial	contributing
122 N. Locust	1882	1975	two-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
200 N. Locust	1899	1938;1960s	two-part commercial	contributing
101 S. Locust	1980		non-historic (high-rise)	<i>noncontributing</i>
107 E. Oak	c.1975		non-historic (one-part)	<i>noncontributing</i>
108 E. Oak	1945		two-part commercial	contributing
100-102 W. Oak	1927-1928	1957;1995	two-part commercial	contributing
104-106 W. Oak	1886-1891	1907;1948	one-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
108 W. Oak	1890	c. 1923;c.1960	two-part commercial	contributing
110 W. Oak	1885	1980s	two-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
112 W. Oak	1882	1970s	two-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
116 W. Oak	c.1885	1947;c.1960	one-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
118 W. Oak	c.1885	1947;c.1960	two-part commercial	contributing
120-124 W. Oak	c.1890	c.1960	two-part commercial	contributing
200-204 W. Oak	1885	1931;1980s	one-part commercial	contributing
207-09 W. Oak	1891	1996	one-part commercial	<i>noncontributing</i>
208 W. Oak	1890	1919;1946	two-part commercial	contributing

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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**APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA**

- 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 VALUE, 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

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:** COMMERCE, COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

**PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:** 1882-1949

**SIGNIFICANT DATES:** 1882, 1887, 1890, 1895, 1895-1897, 1901, 1902

**SIGNIFICANT PERSON:** N/A

**CULTURAL AFFILIATION:** N/A

**ARCHITECT/BUILDER:**

**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE** (see continuation sheets 8-17 through 8-41).

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES**

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY** (see continuation sheets 9-42 through 9-45).

**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 (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government -- *Denton County Deed Records; Denton County Courthouse on the Square Museum*
- University -- *University of North Texas; Texas Woman's University*
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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### SECTION 8

#### *Summary*

The city of Denton's role as the center of government for Denton County encouraged the early growth of commerce in an area based largely on an agricultural economy. The arrival of the railroad ensured the economic survival of the city as Denton became the transportation center for the agricultural economy of the outlying areas, and merchants and industries established businesses to serve the surrounding farm communities. As the city's own image began to emerge, the location of several institutions of higher education further enhanced the economic development of the courthouse square as businesses catering to a new segment of the population began to transform the downtown area. Transportation continued to be of great significance to the development of the downtown area as new roads and an interurban linked Denton to the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The economy of Denton slowly evolved from one based on agriculture to that of a modern, suburban city. The appearance of the courthouse square underwent numerous transformations, fueled by frequent conflagrations as well as changes in fashion, although elements of many of the main periods are today represented in the downtown area. The Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District is nominated under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the areas of government, commerce, and community planning and development.

Selected as the county seat in 1856, a 100 acre tract donated by Hiram Cisco, William Loving, and William Woodruff slowly evolved into the governmental center of the county. William Woodruff, Charles Christian Lacy and Otis Welch platted the townsite with street names given after the names of trees in the county. The county auctioned lots in 1857 with most lots selling for \$25 to \$35. The original townsite consisted of 33 blocks, with a public square in the center, roughly bounded by McKinney Street on the north, Cedar Street on the west, Highland on the south and the current railroad tracks on the east. The surveyors utilized the Shelbyville square model (figure 2) for the new county seat, with narrow blocks facing the square on all four sides. The first courthouse, however, was sited on the north side of the square rather than the center of the square. The initial plat created smaller, one-quarter size blocks in each of the angles of the square. Located at the intersections of the square, these blocks became highly valuable for their exposure to traffic and were popular sites for hotels and banks. All but the northeast block fully developed by the early 1870s.

A community gradually emerged around the new county seat based on agriculture and stock raising. The city incorporated in September of 1866, but by 1870 the population was only 361. Wooden buildings began springing up around the courthouse square to provide space for law offices, dry goods stores, saloons, liverys, and hotels. These types of businesses underscore the importance of Denton as the county seat,



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providing the necessary services to a rural population who traveled to the small town primarily for trading, the filing of deeds, and to vote. A photograph from 1874 depicts simple frame buildings with gabled roofs hidden behind raised parapets (figure 4). In these early years of development, it was not uncommon to find livery stables and residences located directly on the square. The east side of the square developed last and remained vacant until after 1870 when a new sandstone jail was constructed. The center of the courthouse square, however, remained empty and uncleared of brush. The Civil War hindered any additional commercial development in Denton. Although there were very few slaves in Denton County, the fear of slave insurrections ignited by numerous fires throughout North Texas fueled a vote in favor of secession. A fire in July of 1860 was at first attributed to abolitionists, but was later found to be accidental. This was but the first of numerous conflagrations which would plague the city throughout its developments.

The first courthouse (1857) in Denton, a two-story frame building located in middle of the north block of the square, was destroyed in a fire in 1875 resulting in the loss of most of the county's records.<sup>1</sup> County commissioners constructed a new two story, brick courthouse in center of the public square at a cost of \$40,000.<sup>2</sup> Completed in 1876, the new Italianate courthouse with a central clock tower featured a district courtroom on the second floor. J.H. Britton, a master builder who later worked on such courthouses as the El Paso County Courthouse (designed by Alfred Giles), built the new courthouse.<sup>3</sup> The brick construction proved a wise choice by the commissioners as fire consumed the entire south side of the square in January of 1877.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the construction of a new courthouse resulted in the establishment of the Bushey Brick Plant, thus making brick available for the construction of new buildings and residences elsewhere in the city.<sup>5</sup> Two fires in 1877 consumed all of the south side of the square and most of the buildings along the west side. The demand for brick necessitated additional brick plants and the Fastorff Brothers established one to meet the city's needs for a more substantial building material.

By 1880, the population of Denton tripled to 1,194 as the anticipation of the impending arrival of the railroad spurred commercial development. The arrival of the railroad in 1881 quickly transformed the agricultural economy of the county from one of subsistence to cash crops. With adequate transportation now available, cotton and wheat became important cash crops for the area, encouraging such local industries as the Davenport Mill, established in 1878. As the farmers in the area flourished, so did the merchants who established numerous dry good stores and groceries in Denton. By the end of the 1880s, the town boasted 2 dry goods stores, at least 3 groceries, 3 hardware store, a furniture store, numerous saloons, a furniture store,

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<sup>1</sup> Welch, *The Texas Courthouse*, 285.

<sup>2</sup> Welch, *The Texas Courthouse*, 285.

<sup>3</sup> Willard Robinson, *Gone From Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1982), 229.

<sup>4</sup> Lowry (comp.), *Preservation Plan*, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Lowry (comp.), *Preservation Plan*, 8.

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and even an opera house. The tracks of the MK&T were located a few blocks to the east of the courthouse square. The downtown area began expanding towards the north during the 1880s with the establishment of a small cluster of buildings including the new jail, the First Christian Church and the Lacy Blacksmith shop. A small row of houses, extending along McKinney Street four to five blocks, defined the northern edge of town. The area south of the downtown area along S. Elm (called Sand Street at that time) became the fashionable address for merchants and lawyers.

The north side of the square (figure 5) witnessed a re-building after a fire in 1881 destroyed the west end of the block. In the middle of the block, four two-story brick buildings were constructed containing law offices on the upper floors and various stores and the First National Bank on the ground floors. By the 1880s, all of the lots on the west side of the square were filled (figure 6). Only two buildings on this block survive from this period due to later fires including the Scripture Building at the north end of the block and the shell of an older Opera House. Although damaged by fire in the 1890s (1893 and 1895), the Fine Arts Theater contains the remnants of an earlier building still visible from the alley. The re-building of the south side of the square (figure 7) occurred after a fire consumed most of it in 1881, although none of these buildings survive today. The Piner Building at the east end of the block survived this fire but was demolished in the 1970s, and the Evers Building was rebuilt in 1913 following yet another fire. The McCrary Building, occupied by Greenlee Dry Goods store, was one of the first brick buildings constructed on the square. The east side of the square was also entirely destroyed by a series of fires in the 1880s except for the Paschall Building, constructed in 1882 at the northern end of the block.

These early buildings were two-part commercial block buildings and many utilized cast-iron architectural features in the cornices and columns. Many building owners added cast-iron details, such as cornices, to update and modernize their simple, brick buildings. The arrival of the railroad made possible the importation of these manufactured building components from urban centers such as St. Louis and Chicago. Thought to be fire-proof, iron appealed to the merchants of Denton who had witnessed at least seven major fires between 1860 and 1882. In 1881 alone, the western portion of the north block and the middle half of the south block burned, representing almost one-quarter of all of the buildings in the downtown area.

The construction of a new courthouse in 1895 stimulated additional building on the courthouse square. Designed by W.C. Dodson, this monumental courthouse with its central clock tower and corner pavilions with mansard roofs, dominated the architecture of the town (figure 1). James Riely Gordon of San Antonio was originally selected to design the new courthouse, but was replaced by W.C. Dodson.<sup>6</sup> Despite the termination of Gordon, the Denton County Commissioners Court still insisted on the use of the Romanesque Revival style expressed in the heavy rustication, rounded arches, and turrets of the new courthouse. But Dodson also

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<sup>6</sup> James Riely Gordon's original drawings for the Denton County Courthouse are located at The Architectural Drawings Collection, The Architecture and Planning Library, The University of Texas at Austin.

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utilized elements of the 2nd Empire style with the mansard roofs of the corner pavilions. The plan for the new courthouse deviated from the traditional plan which placed the district courtroom in the center of the second floor. In the new courthouse, which utilized the cross-axial planning ideas of James Riely Gordon, the district courtroom was placed to the side to allow for the necessary support for the large centralized masonry tower. The new courthouse exceeded the budget, finally costing the county \$147,000.<sup>7</sup>

The new courthouse became the center of a prosperous community, hosting a variety of public events such as market days and local commemorative celebrations. As the seat of district and county courts, it provided the setting in which people resolved their differences and filed their most precious documents, including titles to their land, probate documents and marriage certificates. It also served as the focus of the county's political arena and the theater of commissioners court provided a measure of entertainment for citizens as well as direct participation in the issues of the day. As the polling place, the courthouse hosted many political events through the years, including watershed moments such as the vote for secession and the 1919 election on the prohibition amendment. It also became the center for such ceremonial events as marches, meetings of Confederate Veterans, and the re-interment of Colonel John B. Denton's remains on November 28, 1901.<sup>8</sup> For the surrounding buildings, the courthouse served as the impetus for the economic growth of the courthouse square. It not only increased the economic value of the surrounding property, it served as a magnet to attract consumers to the increasing number of businesses located around the square.

The population of Denton increased from 2,558 in 1890 to 4,187 by 1900. By the late 1890s, the buildings around the square continued to be primarily two-part commercial blocks constructed of brick. As several building on the west side burned in a fire in 1895, the continuing threat of fire resulted in the installation of cisterns behind each of the blocks to provide water for fire fighting and by 1892 a city waterworks was in place. The commercial development of the downtown area began to spill out along the streets leading to the square. By the turn of the century, grocery, dry goods, drug stores and attorney offices dominated the courthouse square with blacksmith shops, wagon yards and livery stables located on the perimeter. The construction of churches just a few blocks off the square during the late 1890, indicated the importance of the square as the center of activities in Denton.

The 1890s witnessed the beginnings of a change in the economic character of the town with the establishment of a private college, the North Texas Normal College and Teacher Training Institute. The first classes were held on the courthouse square within the second floor of a hardware store located on the northwest corner block of the square (figure 8). In an effort to ensure the future economic prosperity of the

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<sup>7</sup> Welch, *The Texas Courthouse*, 285.

<sup>8</sup> Originally from Tennessee, Denton worked as an itinerant Methodist minister in Arkansas and Missouri before moving to Clarksville, Texas and becoming an attorney in the 1830s. Serving as one of Colonel Edward Tarrant's Ranger captains, he was killed at the Battle of Village Creek east of Fort Worth in 1841.

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town, local businessmen sought to establish Denton as an educational center in North Texas. By 1901, the town secured a site for a new state normal school. The establishment of North Texas Normal College was quickly followed by the selection of Denton as the site for the Girls Industrial Institute and College of Texas in 1902 to the north of the courthouse square. The downtown area flourished with new businesses aimed at the new consumers made easily accessible to the students through the establishment of an electric streetcar line to North Texas in 1907 and extended to Texas Woman's University in 1911. The population continued to increase to 4,732 in 1910.

The downtown streetscape of the 1900s exhibited an unbroken front of brick buildings with some form of sidewalk in front. More importantly, there were no major fires in the downtown area for the first decade since the town's establishment. The decade witnessed a profound change, however, which began to be subtly reflected in the appearance of the square. The decade began with a courthouse surrounded with dirt roads, board sidewalks, and a hitching post around the courthouse for farmers to tie their teams for "Horse Monday," the monthly trading day centered on the courthouse square. By the end of the decade, a streetscape featured brick or cement sidewalks and gravel-lined streets, with a new trade yard east of the square on Hickory Street. The automobile had arrived in Denton. The first is reported to have arrived in 1903 and by 1910 the county registered 60 cars. This number increased exponentially with each passing year.

The impact of a twentieth century emphasis on modernity transformed the appearance of the courthouse square in the ensuing decades. In 1913, Evers Hardware replaced their older building along the south side of the square with a new building influenced by modern trends developed in Chicago. While it retains the traditional two-part commercial block form on a narrow lot developed in the 19th century, the incorporation of a large expanse of windows on the second floor signals a change in the character of the square. Denton also witnessed the erection of its first steel frame building in 1915 with the construction of the McClurkan Building on the southwest block (figure 9). Utilizing classical elements in its cast stone pilasters and robustly dentiled cornice, the McClurkan Building nonetheless displays a new sense of modernity in that it is one of the first buildings to break away from the 19th century character of earlier buildings. Whereas the trend had been to re-use existing buildings for new functions, the construction of an entirely new, free-standing building offered a new opportunity to its builder.

Entertainment facilities, such as theaters and soda fountains, proliferated in the downtown area. Theaters in particular became a particularly important element of the courthouse square. In 1899, William C. Wright constructed the Wright Opera House on the northeast corner of the square, a prominent position, utilizing bricks from the 1875 courthouse which he had purchased and stored. People no longer came to town just to trade, but an increased economic prosperity offered new opportunities for entertainment and a new student population would continue to impact the character of downtown businesses. In 1908 the first open-air Airdrome was located along Hickory Street (outside of the district). By 1909, the Amazu Theater at 109 W.

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Oak was established in a pre-existing building. The Wright Opera House succumbed to the competition of a new entertainment form in the early 1910s, the advent of moving pictures. The Amazu Theater changed its name to the Majestic Theater and by 1913, it moved to 120 W. Oak and was known as the Princess Theater (Lowry). The west side of the square became known as "theater row" with the Dreamland Theater (119 N. Elm; later remodeled into the Fine Arts Theater) and the Palace Theater (109 N. Elm - demolished). The old Paschall Building also once housed a movie theater, the Plaza Theater, later known as the Student Arts Theater. With the opening of the Campus Theater (just off the square) in 1949, seven theaters were operating in the downtown area.

By 1920, the population of Denton almost doubled to 7,626 making it the 38th largest city in Texas. Although agricultural production, particularly cotton, peaked during the 1920s, the city no longer depended merely on its location as the county seat with a cash crop economy. Denton evolved into a thriving city with an economy based on its institutions of higher education and blossoming subdivisions serving the larger cities of Dallas and Fort Worth. The appearance of the courthouse square changed as a result of the enormous impact of the automobile with the number of cars registered exploding from 2,700 in 1920 to more than 5,400 only five years later (figure 10). It became necessary to provide marked parking places around the square and install stop signs at each corner to regulate the choking traffic. By the late 1920s, the streets surrounding the courthouse were finally paved.

Chain stores flourished in the downtown area, replacing stores formerly operated by independent entrepreneurs. The new variety stores flourished as large retailers such as F. W. Woolworth (1924), J.C. Penny (1926) and Perry Brothers (1927) moved into buildings on the square. These new retailers modernized storefronts of older buildings, pushing the previously recessed facades out towards the street and attracting the attention of customers driving by in their automobiles through the use of large expanses of display windows. Grocery stores began to move away from the square as the large chains, such as Piggly Wiggly (1922), A&P (1924) and the Helpy-Selfy (1929) moved a few blocks off the square away from the congestion of the traffic and into larger buildings that provided customers room to select their own groceries.

The advent of the Depression arrested the development of new businesses in the downtown area, but as early as 1935 the city appeared to be recovering. Nonetheless, the early 1930s was a period in which the infrastructure of the city improved through projects funded by the Works Progress Administration including the installation of new water and sewer lines, flood control projects of the creeks, and the construction of sidewalks around the courthouse. Of particular importance were the completion of several highway projects including the linkage of Denton with Sherman along Highway 10 and with Decatur along Highway 24. While building permits declined in 1930, they began to rise in 1935 and continued to increase until the beginning of World War II in 1941. The older buildings around the square continued to be rejuvenated by new businesses. The old Wright Opera House received a total make-over in 1935 as the brick building received a smooth coat

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of plaster to cover the elaborate brickwork of an earlier age and the storefront on the ground level was transformed into a fashionable boutique, the Boston Store (figure 11). Many of the ornate metal cornices from the era of the railroad were discarded from buildings, giving them a modern, simpler design. The Paschall Building was remodeled considerably in 1937. On the eve of World War II in 1939, Denton could boast 18 manufacturing industries within the town and the downtown commercial area once again was a thriving and bustling area.

World War II halted development temporarily as building materials were in short supply. But the development of a war-time industry in the defense plants of Dallas and Fort Worth continued to stimulate even the Denton economy. Following the war, enrollment at the universities ballooned with returning veterans seeking an education under the provisions of the GI Bill. Building permits jumped from \$447,000 in 1941 to \$883,000 in 1945, and the post-World War II development and modernization that had begun in the 1930s continued at a fast pace. In 1946, the city began a re-appraisal of all property in the city, resulting in an enormous jump in property values, particularly in the downtown area. These tax records reveal that many of the older buildings continued to receive alterations to their storefronts, particularly in the last years of the decade.

The 1950s, however, signaled a radical change for the downtown area. Despite the numerous attempts to modernize the older buildings in the area, the advent of a new retail form - the shopping mall - pulled businesses away from the center of town towards the new developing suburbs. The construction of Interstate 35, begun in the 1950s and completed in 1963, dealt a final blow to the vitality of the courthouse square. Businesses tried to compete by slip-casing their older buildings behind new aluminum and concrete facades. It was not until the late 1980s that a resurgence of interest in downtown re-vitalized the area with the support of a Main Street program and an active preservation program within the city. Since that time, numerous buildings have been restored to their former condition, including the Denton County Courthouse in 1987, which has once again created a vital and bustling atmosphere to the Courthouse Square.

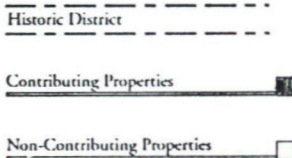
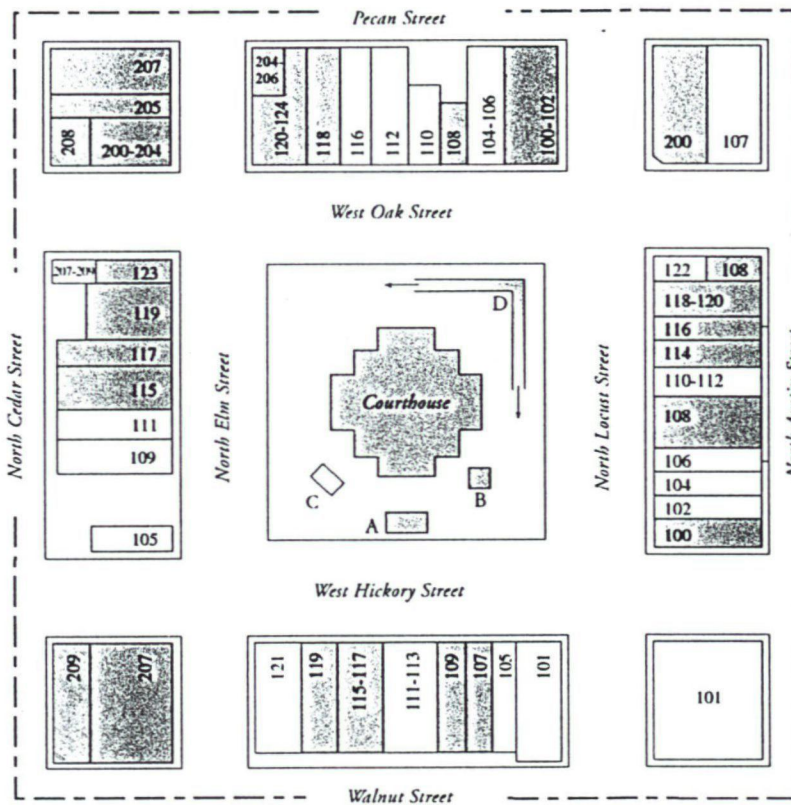
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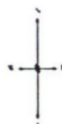
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Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District – Denton, Texas



- A** Confederate Monument
- B** Grave of John B. Denton (1901 re-interment)
- C** Denton County All-War Memorial
- D** WPA Sidewalks



*Knight & Associates, Inc.*

Map 1: Contributing/Non-Contributing Map of Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
Source: Knight & Associates, Inc.

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Figure 1: Denton County Courthouse  
Source: *The Historical Markers of Denton County* by Bullitt Lowry (Denton, 1980)



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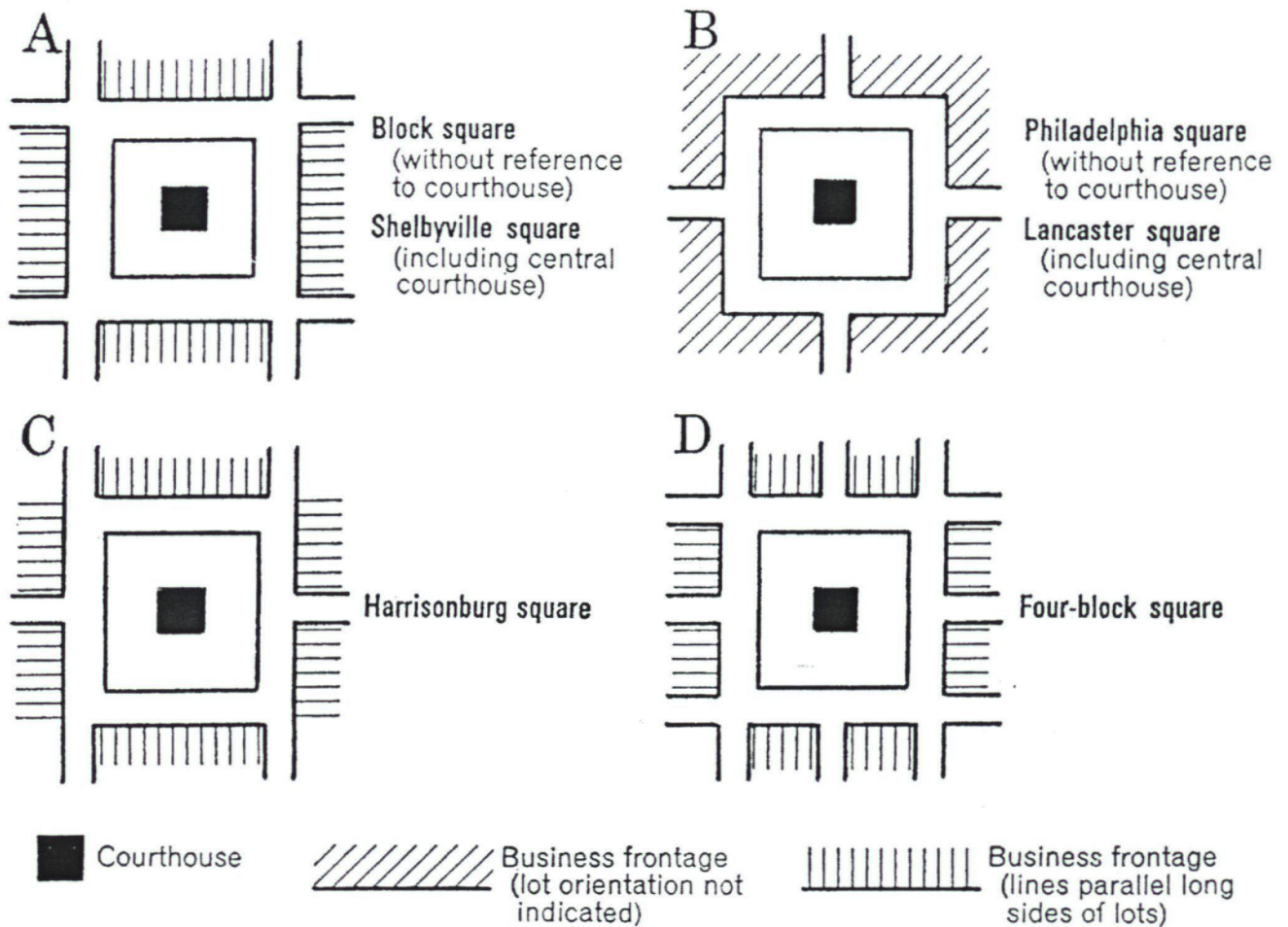


Figure 2: Courthouse Square typology  
Source: Edward T. Price, "The Central Courthouse Square in the American County Seat",  
The Geographical Review, January 1968

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Figure 3: Confederate Memorial, 1918  
Source: *The Historical Markers of Denton County*

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Figure 4: Square in 1870s

Source: *History and Reminiscences of Denton County* by Ed F. Bates (Denton, 1918, 1989 reprint)

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Figure 5: North side of Square, 1883  
Source: Denton County Courthouse on the Square Museum

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Figure 6: West side of Square, 1883

Source: *History of Denton, Texas* by C.A. Bridges (Waco, 1978)

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Figure 7: South Side of Square, 1883  
Source: Denton County Courthouse on the Square Museum

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Figure 8: First site of Texas Normal College, 200-204 West Oak  
Source: *The Historical Markers of Denton County* by Bullitt Lowry (Denton, 1980)

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Figure 9: McClurkan Building, 1930  
Source: *The Yucca* (1930), North Texas state University Yearbook



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Figure 10: Courthouse Square, 1930  
Source: Denton County Courthouse on the Square Museum

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Figure 11: Wright Opera Building  
Source: 1938 photograph from the collections the of Denton County Courthouse on the Square Museum

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123 N. Elm (1882)

Scripture Building

Contributing



Figure 12: Scripture Building (123 North Elm)  
Source: Knight and Associates

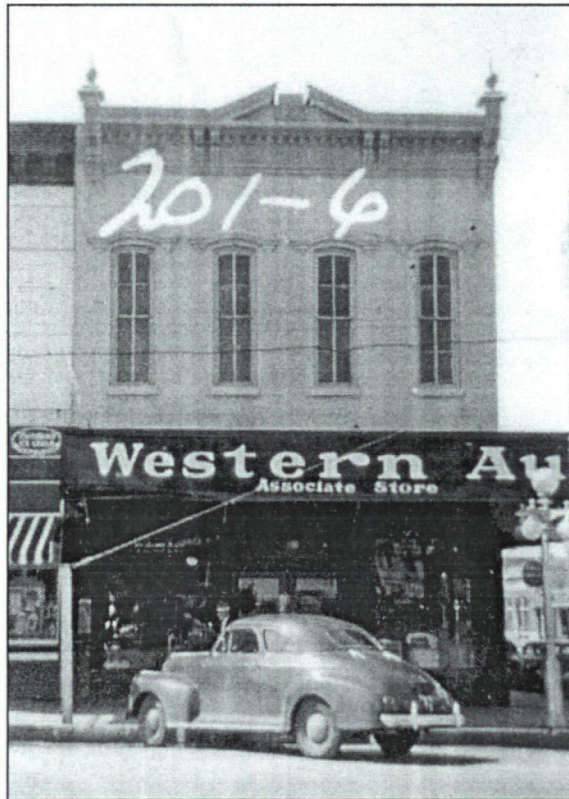


Figure 13: Scripture Building  
Source: 1946 city tax records, Denton County Courthouse

The Scripture Building (photo 5) first housed a dry goods store operated by Robert C. Scripture. During the 1890s, the Scripture family business encountered difficulties and ownership of the building transferred through the hands of several family members before it was ultimately bought back in 1904 by Mrs. Robert Scripture. The building later housed several stores, including J.F. Bell's Grocery, Sullivan Brothers market and the Olympia Confectionery (1918-1927). The second floor housed, at various times, offices of the Grand Orient Lodge, a domino parlor later (during the Depression), and the Carpenter's Union. In 1936, the building housed Edwards Auto Parts and by the 1940s, became the Western Auto Store. The building burned in 1976 but was restored in 1978-79 by Randall and Nancy Boyd who purchased the building in 1977. The first floor now houses offices with 3 apartments located on the second floor.

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This two-part commercial block is representative of buildings constructed in Denton during the late nineteenth century and represents the changes in architecture caused by the arrival of the railroad which allowed for the importation of pre-fabricated, cast metal building components. The painted brick facade is composed of three bays on the ground floor separated by thin, elongated cast-iron pilasters. A central, 3-part wooden doorway is flanked by wooden frame display windows above wood kick plates. Each bay retains its original 3-part transom. The 4-bay second floor retains its original window openings, although the original 4/4 windows have been replaced by aluminum frame windows. Each window features a brick sill and hood. The facade is crowned with a pressed metal (probably tin) cornice with a date and name plate ("1882 R.C. Scripture") contained within a broken pediment supported by paired brackets. Other features of the cornice include exaggerated dentils and terminal finials.

The side elevation along Oak Street is composed of 8 bays on the second floor with windows identical to those of the front. The bottom floor is an expanse of brick wall punctuated by one bay of plate glass (repeated from the front facade) at the corner, two doorways leading to the second floor and one 3-part window (installed during the late 1970s). The side elevation is capped by a simple corbelled brick cornice.

According to photographic documentation within the city's tax records, the brick was painted by 1946. Although the building has received alterations, it retains integrity in its overall design, materials and workmanship. The installation of aluminum windows retains the same size and rhythm of the original fenestration. The storefront was replaced as a result of the fire in 1976, but the same window configuration, including the size of the kick plate, was retained. The original storefront was not recessed, but it did feature double glass doors, now replaced with a solid wooden one. The only alteration to the side of the building is the insertion of a new window bay (3-part plate glass) and the installation of aluminum windows on the upper floor. The building retains integrity of location, setting, feeling and association. Despite some alterations, its overall design, materials and workmanship of its major features remains as it was originally.

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122 N. Locust (1882)

Paschall Building

Noncontributing

Constructed in 1882 by B.F. Paschall, the building was the lone survivor of the 1890 fire which destroyed all of the other buildings on the east side of the square (photo 6). By 1934, the building housed the Ritz Theater and later, the Plaza Theatre. Each floor of the building is divided into four bays. The bays of the ground floor brick facade are divided by cast-iron columns but have been in-filled with modern oak walls (one containing glass) and the transoms are no longer visible. The off-center entrance is through an aluminum glass door. Recent red brick veneer piers terminate the ground floor facade and a green canvas awning shades the storefront. The upper floor openings retain the original size of the 2/1 windows, but they have been replaced with aluminum frame windows. The original brick facade, painted by 1946, has received a stucco covering in recent years that obscures the original brick paneling above the second floor windows. The building once had an elaborate cast metal cornice with a broken pediment rising above the cornice line. The pediment had been removed by 1946, but the remainder of the cornice was in place. No remnants of the original cornice remain today. The side elevation along Oak Street consists of 8 bays with aluminum frame windows inserted within the original openings. A small, one-story shed-roof addition of unknown date is attached to the ground floor. The stucco covering extends along this entire elevation as well.

The building has received extensive alterations since the last known historic photograph of 1946 and holds no resemblance to its original appearance. Dating from the same year as the Scripture Building, the building lacks integrity of association, feeling, design, workmanship, and materials. This building no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance and is noncontributing to the district.



Figure 14: Paschall Building  
Source: 1946 city tax records, Denton County

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 39

Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
Denton, Denton County, Texas

118-120 N. Locust (1913)

McCrory's Variety

Contributing



Figure 15: McCrory's  
Source: 1946 city tax records, Denton County Courthouse

The C.A. Williams Dry Goods Store, built in 1884, was destroyed by fire in the 1890s. In 1901, a new building was constructed (photo 7) and occupied first by Hamilton laundering and tailors, and subsequently by W. W. Batton Groceries in 1919. Later this building housed such businesses as White Front Cafe (1936), Shipps Barber Shop (1936), Hopper Auto Supply and Ralph's Radio Service (1939) and Grants Vogue (1939-1940). W.C. Kimbrough purchased it in 1936 as an investment property. The longest occupation of the building, however, was by McCrory's Variety Store from 1941 through 1961. A building permit was issued in 1941 for alterations to the building costing approximately \$10,000. Much of the current storefront was added at this time including the fluted chrome separating the display windows. The building retains its interior hardwood floors as well as a wire message system. An extensive basement, extending three-quarters of the length of the building, was in existence by 1946 according to historic photographs and tax records. The building later received a blue plastic sheathing, but this was removed in the late 1980s. The building was locally designated a landmark in 1988.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 40

Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
Denton, Denton County, Texas

100 N. Locust (1913)

Denton County National Bank

Contributing



Figure 16: Denton County National Bank  
Source: 1946 city tax records, Denton County Courthouse

Built in 1913 as the second location for the Denton County National Bank, this was the last of the three banks to be chartered in Denton (1892) and was the only one to remain open after the Depression (photo 8). Typical of bank buildings for the period, it utilizes a marble veneer, monumental columns and a Classical vocabulary to exhibit a feeling of strength and trust in its assets. An outstanding example of the “temple front” type of commercial building as defined by Richard Longstreth, the building retains a high degree of integrity. The back part of this building is a three story, brick building originally constructed in 1892 to house a dry goods store and offices. Soon after 1913, it was acquired by the bank and remodeled as an annex to the bank building fronting on Locusts Street. Entry into the rear building is through the bank building.

The building received interior modifications in 1937 after it was sold for use as an office building. The Stewart Title Company occupied the building for many years. It was restored in 1996 with slight modifications made to its exterior. The replacement of glass with anodized frames received approval from the Texas Historical Commission as the original fenestration pattern and window configuration was carefully retained. In 1998, the City of Denton leased part of the building for their Main Street Program.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 41

Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
Denton, Denton County, Texas

109 W. Hickory (1913)

Evers Hardware Building

Contributing



Figure 17: Evers Building  
Source: Knight and Associates



Figure 18: Evers Building  
Source: 1946 city tax records, Denton Co. Courthouse

Constructed in 1913, the Evers Hardware Store has occupied this spot on the square since 1884. The first building, constructed in 1884, perished in a fire. First established by brothers R.H. and Dolph Evers, the family continued to operate the hardware store until 1997. The building is currently leased to a gift shop.

The building is a two-part commercial block and retains its original storefront with large plate glass display windows with two recessed entries and transoms. A large awning, also original to the building shields the building. The upper floors feature a large expanse of glass with 2/2 wood sash windows flanking a display window that extends across the facade. The only alteration to the building is the mullions of the upper row of windows which are now expressed as solid panes of glass. Crowned with a brick pediment, the building's signage is prominently displayed below a cornice with deeply recessed dentils. The interior of the building also retains many of its original features, including a wood floor, original shelving extending the length of the building, and an old freight elevator at the rear. The building is influenced by Chicago style design tenets and is remarkable for its pristine condition.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 42

Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
Denton, Denton County, Texas

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
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**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

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Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
Denton, Denton County, Texas

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University of North Texas, Willis Library, University Archives

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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**ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** approx. 20 acres

<b>UTM REFERENCES</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
1.	14	673780	3677600	3.	14	674140 3677360
2.	14	674140	3677600	4.	14	673780 3677360

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION** (see continuation sheet 10-46)

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION** (see continuation sheet 10-46)

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

---

**NAME/TITLE:** Lila Knight

**ORGANIZATION:** for the City of Denton Certified Local Government Program      **DATE:** June 1999

**STREET & NUMBER:** 138 Park South Drive

**TELEPHONE:** (512) 312-0326

**CITY OR TOWN:** Kyle

**STATE:** TX

**ZIP CODE:** 78640

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**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

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**CONTINUATION SHEETS**

**MAPS** (see continuation sheet 8-24)

**PHOTOGRAPHS** (see continuation sheet Photo-47)

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

---

**PROPERTY OWNER**

---

**NAME:** On file with the Texas Historical Commission

**STREET & NUMBER:**

**TELEPHONE:**

**CITY OR TOWN:**

**STATE:**

**ZIP CODE:**

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 46

Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
Denton, Denton County, Texas

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### **Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at the center of the intersection of Pecan and North Austin Street, proceed south along the middle of the right of way of Austin Street until reaching the center of the intersection at Austin and Walnut Streets. Continue west along Walnut Street to the intersection with S. Cedar Street. Hence proceed north along Cedar Street to the intersection with Pecan Street. Then proceed east along Pecan Street until reaching the point of beginning.

The Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District comprises all lots in Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the Original Town Plat including the courthouse square which is unnumbered (These blocks were later re-numbered to Blocks 201, 302, 301, 427, 401, 102, 101 and 224 respectively including the courthouse square which is unnumbered).

### **Boundary Justification**

The district includes a concentration of contributing properties that give the district a sense of continuity and which reflect significant aspects of the historical development of Denton. These buildings share a common scale, design, materials, and massing which strongly define the area's historic role as the city's commercial and governmental center. These physical attributes and the historical associations linking these properties together present a cohesive grouping which can be perceived as a single unit.

The properties to the immediate north of the district lack sufficient integrity and historical linkage to the courthouse square. These are comprised primarily of service stations and contemporary buildings. The Denton City Hall and the old Post Office are located to the north along Elm and Locust respectively, but to include these properties would have required a gerrymandering of the boundaries. Properties to the east of the district include commercial buildings but they lack sufficient integrity for inclusion in the district, many were built at a later date than the majority of the buildings on the square, and the sense of continuity is destroyed by numerous parking lots and vacant lots. These properties change in character as they approach the railroad tracks, reflecting their function as warehouses and industrial properties located near the tracks. Property to the south of the district includes commercial buildings of a different type and scale including warehouses and a large church. In addition, these blocks lack sufficient integrity and contain numerous contemporary buildings such as parking garages, drive-in banks, parking lots, and restaurants. The property one block west of the square was constructed within the period of significance, but lacks sufficient integrity and a sense of historical continuity to be included within the district. Further west of the district, large-scale office buildings and parking lots predominate before the entrance to the residential area of West Oak and West Hickory.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section PHOTO Page 47

Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
Denton, Denton County, Texas

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

All photographs were taken by Lila Knight in February of 1999, and the negatives are on deposit at the Denton Courthouse on the Square Museum and Archives, Denton, Texas.

View of West Oak Street  
Denton, Denton County, Texas  
Camera facing east  
Photo 1 of 9

View of West Hickory Street  
Denton, Denton County, Texas  
Camera facing southeast  
Photo 2 of 9

View of North Elm Street  
Denton, Denton County, Texas  
Camera facing northwest  
Photo 3 of 9

Wright Opera House  
200 West Oak Street  
Denton, Denton County, Texas  
Southwest façade; camera facing northeast  
Photo 4 of 9

Scripture Building  
123 North Elm Street  
Denton, Denton County, Texas  
East façade; camera facing west  
Photo 5 of 9

Paschall Building  
122 North Locust Street  
Denton, Denton County, Texas  
West façade; camera facing east  
Photo 6 of 9

McCrary's Store Building  
118-120 North Locust Street  
Denton, Denton County, Texas  
West façade; camera facing east  
Photo 7 of 9

Denton County National Bank  
100 North Locust Street  
Denton, Denton County, Texas  
West façade; camera facing east  
Photo 8 of 9

Fine Arts Theater  
119 North Elm  
Denton, Denton County, Texas  
East façade; camera facing west  
Photo 9 of 9

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Denton County Courthouse Square Historic District  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Denton, Texas MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Denton

DATE RECEIVED: 11/24/00 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/06/00  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/22/00 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/08/01  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 00001582

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: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 12/28/00 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the  
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

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

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N





Dulsen's  
GIFTS & GOURMET

Mr. Gatti's

OPEN  
Pizza

McBRIDE MUSIC & PAWN

Conk's



DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H. D.

DENTON , DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 9



S ELM ST  
ONE WAY →

LAKESIDE PROFESSIONAL BUILDING

WORTH COUNTY HAMBURGER

LEGACY

2 HOUR PARKING  
8:00 AM  
TO 4:00 PM  
MON-FRI

121  
West Texas  
Legal Services



DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D

DENTON, DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 2 of 9

Fine

A  
R  
T  
S

THIS WEEK:

SUNDAY MORNING 1/4 SQUARE  
HOW TO FORGIVE

9.15 AM  
10.45 AM

First Peoples Jewellers  
GOLDEN BRIDGE WATCH AND JEWELRY REPAIR



DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

DENTON, DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 3 of 9



WRIGHT OPERA HOUSE

DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

DENTON, DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 4 of 9



1332

R.C.SCRIPTURE.



2 HR  
PARKING  
9:00 AM  
TO 5:00 PM  
MON-FRI

123

LAW OFFICES OF  
RANDALL S. BOYD



SCRIPTURE BUILDING

DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

DENTON, DENTON CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 5 of 9

# GOLDEN TEMPS

EST. 1996

A PERMANENT & TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

ANDYS

Results Team  
Ron Hebert  
Lance Yuzbick  
940-898-8815  
BUILDING FOR SALE

AUSTIN STREET GALLERY

RESERVED PARKING

PASCHALL BUILDING

DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

DENTON, DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 6 of 9

# DOWNTOWN MINI MALL II



2  
HR  
PARKING  
8:00 AM  
TO 5:00 PM  
MON-FRI



MCCRORY'S STORE BUILDING  
DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.  
DENTON, DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 7 of 9



DENTON COMMERCIAL BANK

GENE GAMBLE  
INSURANCE AGENCY

THE BANK BUILDING  
THE BANK BUILDING

AVAILABLE  
FOR OFFICE SPACE  
&  
APARTMENTS  
SEEK-PIRELL

S Locust  
ONE WAY

DENTON COUNTY NATIONAL BANK  
DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.  
DENTON, DENTON CO., TEXAS  
PHOTOGRAPH 8 of 9



*Fine*  
**ARTS**

**THIS WEEK: SUNDAY MORNING <sup>IN THE SQUARE</sup> A WOMAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART 9.15 AM 10.45 AM**



**SUNDAY MORNING**  
8.15 Worship Service  
10.15 Ladies Devotional  
383.0033

2 HOUR PARKING  
8:00 AM TO 5:00 PM  
MON-FRI



**SUNDAY MORNING**  
8.15 Worship Service  
10.15 Ladies Devotional  
383.0033



4 HOUR PARKING  
8:00 AM TO 5:00 PM  
MON-FRI



FINE ARTS THEATER

DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.P.

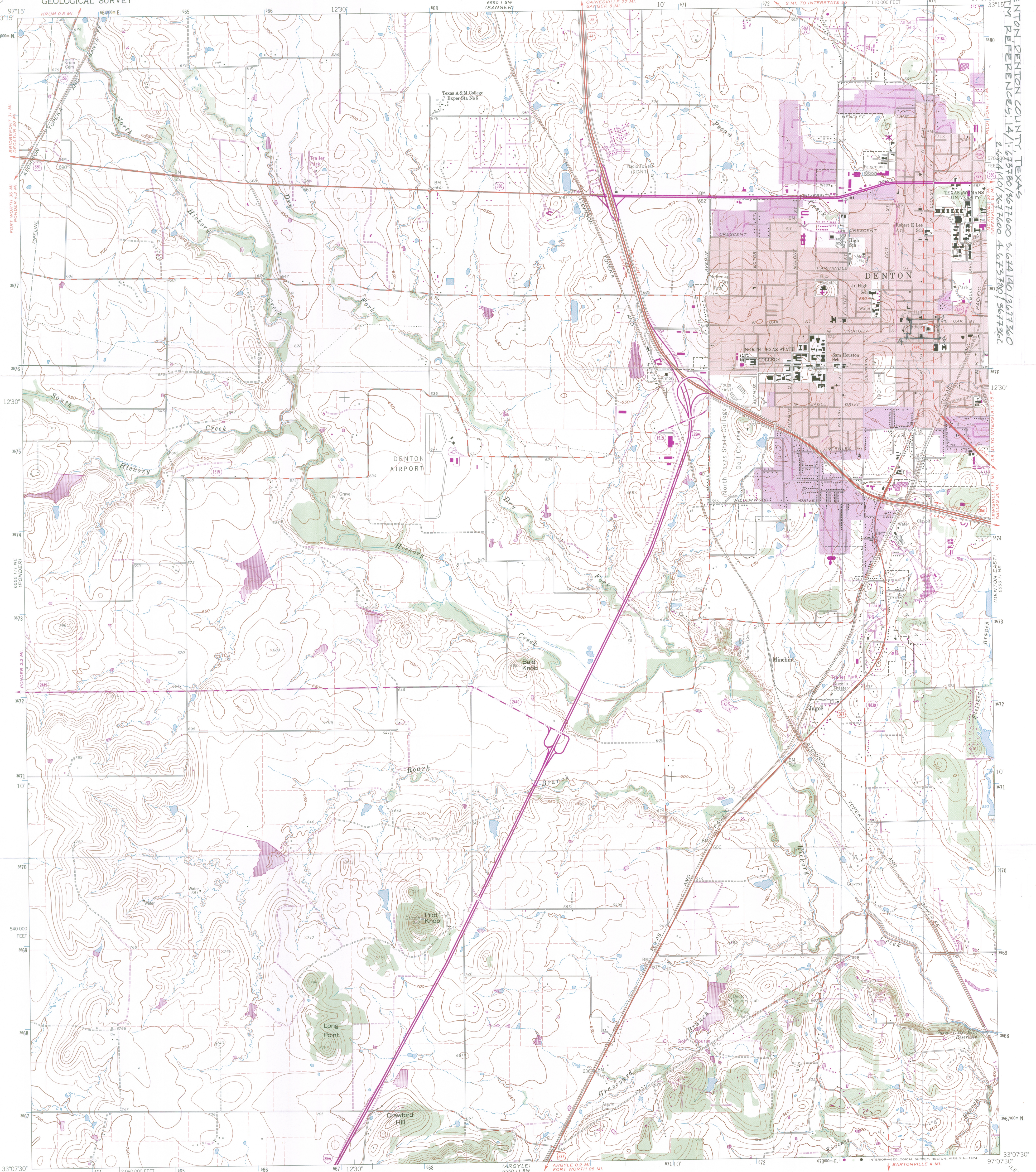
DENTON, DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 7 of 9

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

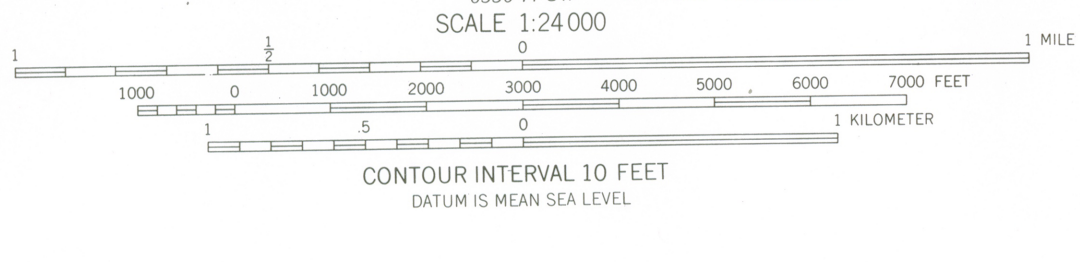
DENTON WEST QUADRANGLE  
TEXAS-DENTON CO.  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

DENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT  
DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS  
UTM REFERENCES: 1411: 673180/3671600 3: 674140/3671360  
2: 674100/3671600 4: 673180/3671360



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods  
Aerial photographs taken 1957. Field check 1960  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,  
north central zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 14, shown in blue  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines  
where generally visible on aerial photographs  
This information is un-checked  
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Area covered by dashed light blue pattern is  
subject to controlled inundation to 532 feet

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs  
taken 1968 and 1973. This information not field checked  
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
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