NPS Form 10-900
OMB No. 1024-0018
(Rev. 10/90)

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: Grant County Courthouse District

Other name/site number: _____

## 2. Location

108 South Glenn Street — not for publication

Ulysses — vicinity

state Kansas — code KS — county Grant — code 067 — zip code 67880

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally X statewide ___ locally.
(___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D. Pankratz — 3/5/02
Signature of certifying official — Date

Kansas State Historical Society
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 Keeper — Date of Action

## 5. Classification

| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | No. of Resources within Property contributing | noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ___ private | ___ building(s) | | | |
| X public-local | X district | 1 | 2 | buildings |
| ___ public-State | ___ site | 1 | ___ | sites |
| ___ public-Federal | ___ structure | ___ | ___ | structures |
| | ___ object | ___ | ___ | objects |
| | | 2 | 2 | Total |

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

Historic County Courthouses of Kansas

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:

0

## 6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: County Courthouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: County Courthouse

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation STONE: Limestone

Walls BRICK

STONE: Limestone

Roof OTHER: Composite Material

Other

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.)

X 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.

X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

____ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

____ C a birthplace or a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

| Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.) | Period of Significance | Significant Dates |
|---|---|---|
| ARCHITECTURE | 1929/1930-1950 | N/A |
| POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | | |

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Smith & English, Architects

J. M. Fuller, Contractor

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

Property Name Grant County Courthouse District

County and State Grant County, Kansas



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

___ previously listed in the National Register

___ previously determined eligible by the National Register

___ designated a National Historic Landmark

___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

X State Historic Preservation Office

___ Other State agency

___ Federal agency

___ Local government

___ University

X Other

Specify repository:

Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society; Topeka, Kansas

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property <1

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1/4 | 2/9/1/9/9/0 | 4/1/6/1/6/3/0 | 3 | / | / / / / / | / / / / / / |
| 2 | / | / / / / / | / / / / / / | 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 Dana Cloud and Sally F. Schwenk

organization Historic Preservation Services, LLC date April 30, 2000

street & number 818 Grand Boulevard, Suite 1150 telephone (816) 221-5133

city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64106

## 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Grant County

street & number 108 South Glenn Street telephone (785) 356-1335

city or town Ulysses state KS zip code 67880

## DESCRIPTION

The Grant County Courthouse is an Modern Movement Art Deco style, four-story masonry structure that occupies the central portion of a full square block east of the Ulysses, Kansas historic central business district [*Figure 1: City Map of Ulysses, Kansas*]. The courthouse shares the block with two one-story annexes that run perpendicular from the east façade of the courthouse. A recent addition to the south façade joined the courthouse and south annex, resulting in a footprint with an "L"-shaped configuration. With the primary façade facing west onto Glenn Street, the original courthouse is rectangular in plan and 120 feet wide by 70 feet deep by 50 feet high. The south addition added approximately 30 feet to the overall width of the building [*Figure 2: Existing Site Plan*]. The courthouse is buff colored brick with dressed limestone and terra-cotta detailing. The parapet wall, highlighted with terra-cotta ornamentation and decorative brickwork, defines the flat roof [*Photographs #1 and #2*]. Although the recent renovation altered the fenestration and interior materials of the courthouse, it has good architectural integrity and retains the majority of its exterior materials. Erected in 1929–1930 as a county courthouse, the structure continues to serve as a county courthouse.

Including the new addition, the courthouse has eleven bays on the west façade, nine bays on the east façade, and three bays on the north façade. The south façade, which screens the elevator shaft and new staircase, is blank. The exterior of the courthouse and south addition is smooth, buff colored brick laid in common bond with dressed limestone and terra-cotta detailing. The overall appearance of the courthouse is characterized by linear, vertical projections capped with limestone, which separate the structural bays of each façade. Dressed limestone highlights the sill course of the first-floor windows and limestone sills at the second- and third-floor windows. Brick soldier coursing and terra-cotta medallions at each corner accent the window heads. Stylized terra-cotta ornamentation and decorative brickwork highlight the cornice. Metal-clad casement window units replace the majority of the original multi-paned, metal sash windows. The only remaining original windows are the top half of the arched courtroom windows on the east façade. The window openings, which also define the rhythm of the façade, are unaltered [*Figure 3: c.1970 Photograph Showing Original Windows, Photograph #6*].

There are two entrances to the courthouse, a primary entrance on the west façade and a secondary entrance on the north façade. Stylized terra-cotta ornamentation and the inscription "Grant County" accentuate the primary entrance that features a flight of canted stairs flanked by torcheres. Just inside the entrance, a second flight of stairs leads to the first floor. A flight of stairs also leads directly to the first floor recessed secondary entrance. New, metal, storefront doors with sidelights and mirrored glass replace the original wood doors [*Figure 4: c.1970 Photograph Showing Original Door, Photographs #4 and #5*].

The recent rehabilitation significantly altered the interior of the courthouse. Alterations included the installation of dropped ceilings, new light fixtures, doors and encasements, and the reconfiguration of the courtroom. A few of the remaining original design features and materials include the terrazzo flooring, the iron staircase with its terrazzo treads, plasterwork, and light fixtures at the stair landings [*Photographs #7 and #8*]. The configuration of the floor plan also remains intact with the north-south running corridor and the offices located on both sides.

Although large in scale at four stories in height, the recent addition to the south façade is sensitive to the original design of the courthouse. It added approximately 40 feet to the overall width of the building and is setback slightly from the main façade. Housed in the new addition are a fire-resistant staircase, handicapped accessible

elevator, and additional offices. The exterior brickwork and terra-cotta detailing of the new addition is exceptionally compatible with that of the original courthouse [*Photograph #3*]. The addition joined the courthouse and south annex, which was constructed between 1959 and 1977 to house the sheriff's office and jail. The south annex is red brick with a flat roof. The north annex, constructed prior to 1959, is buff colored brick with a flat roof.[1] The courthouse and the north and south annexes form a "U"-shaped configuration, within which is shared parking.

The Grant County Courthouse has good architectural integrity despite the alterations and addition mentioned above. The south addition, which connected the courthouse and south annex, increased the size of the original courthouse; however, its design, materials, detailing, and mass are exceptionally compatible with the original structure. The south annex that houses a modern jail and sheriff's office is a common modern addition to the courthouse setting. Now joined by the south addition, it is sited to the rear of the courthouse lot and is subservient in size, scale and massing to the original courthouse. New metal frame casement windows replaced the original multi-paned windows and metal doors replaced the original wood doors; however, the overall exterior appearance is not compromised, as the remaining exterior features such as the fenestration, brickwork, stylized terra-cotta ornamentation and massing are intact. The recent rehabilitation also altered the interior features of the courthouse by installing acoustical ceilings, replacing original wood doors, enframements and light fixtures, and reconfiguring the courtroom. Despite these alterations, the overall configuration of the courthouse with its main staircase and north-south running corridor remain intact. Overall, the Grant County Courthouse not only has good architectural integrity, but it is also in excellent condition as a result of the recent rehabilitation.

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1 The Ulysses, Kansas Geological Survey Map, prepared in 1959 and revised in 1978 according to 1977 aerial photographs, determined the dates of construction for the north and south annexes.

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**PHOTO LOG**

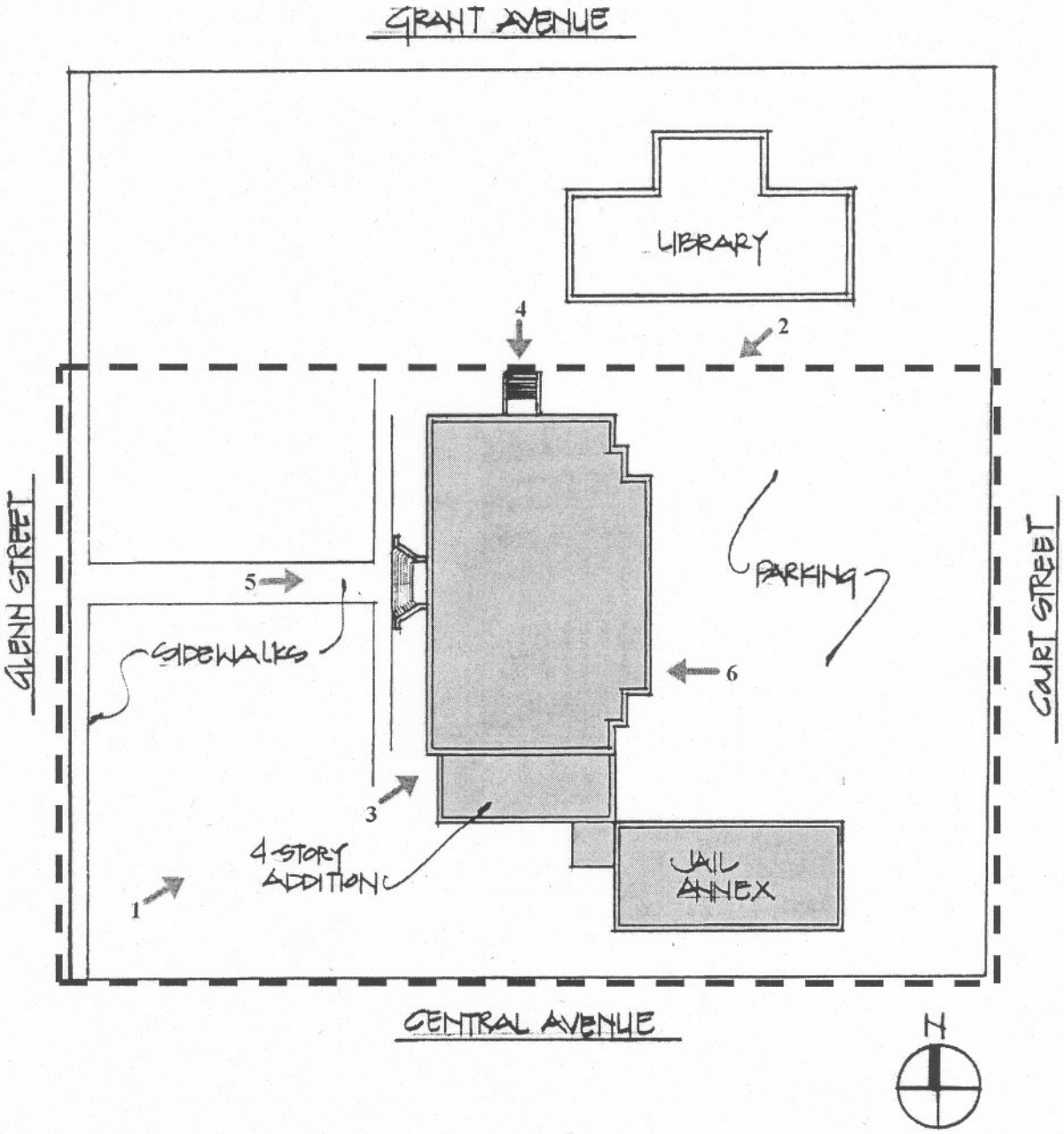
**Photographer:** **Dana Cloud**
**Date of Photographs:** **December 9, 1999**
**Location of Negatives:** **Kansas State Historical Society**
**Cultural Resources Division**
**6425 S.W. 6th Avenue**
**Topeka, Kansas 66615-1099**

| Photo # | Subject | Camera Direction |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Exterior of Courthouse | Northeast |
| 2. | Exterior of Courthouse | Southwest |
| 3. | Recent South Addition | Northeast |
| 4. | Detail of West (Main) Entrance | East |
| 5. | Detail of North Entrance | South |
| 6. | Detail of East Façade | West |
| 7. | Main Staircase from First to Second Floor | Southwest |
| 8. | Light Fixture at Stair Landing | North |

**Figure 1: City Map of Ulysses, Kansas**

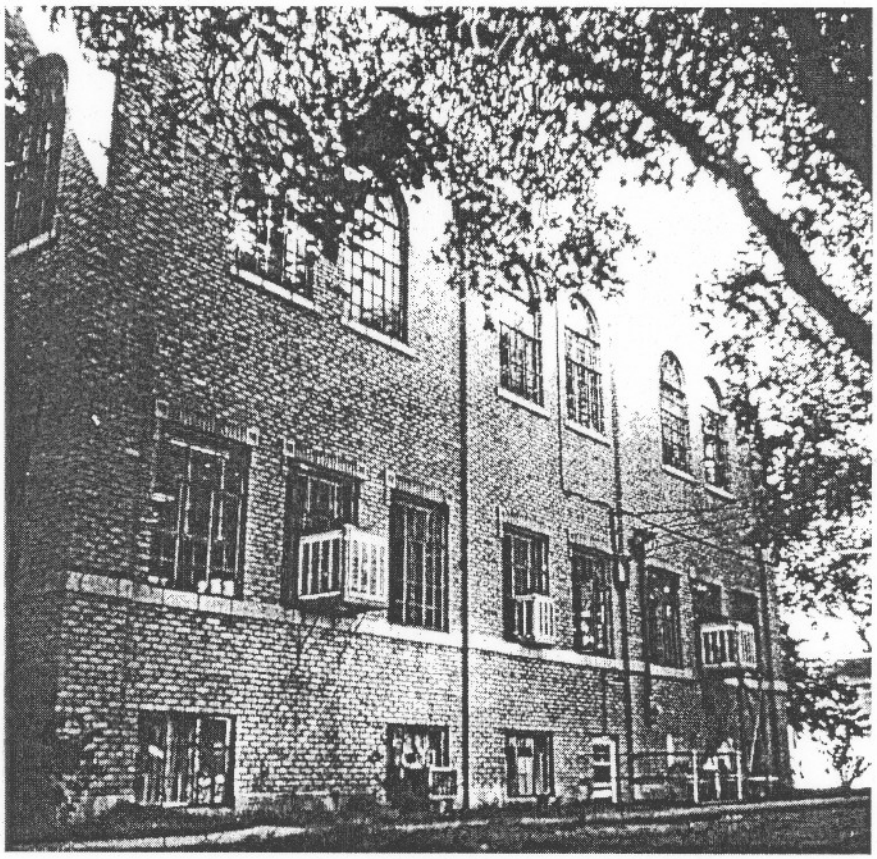
North

**Figure 2: Existing Site Plan**

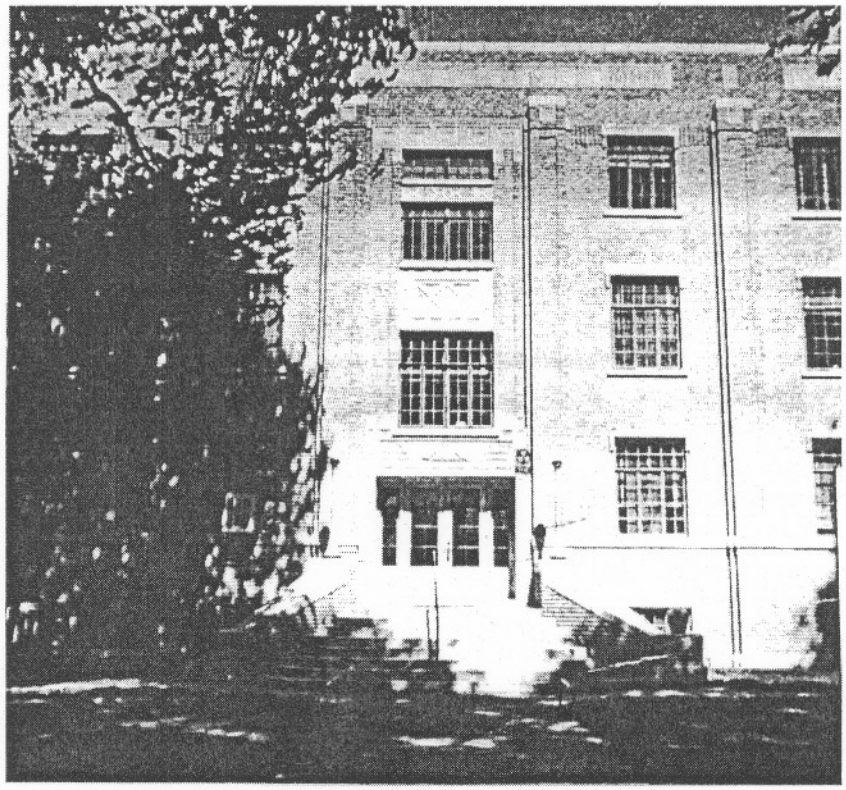



**Approximate Scale: 1"=60'-0"**
**Boundary Line**

## Figure 3: c.1970 Photograph Showing Original Windows



## Figure 4: c.1970 Photograph Showing Original Doors



## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Grant County Courthouse, erected in 1929–1930, is historically significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of **POLITICS/GOVERNMENT** and under Criterion C in the area of **ARCHITECTURE** for its associations with the development of county courthouses in Kansas and as one of the few Kansas courthouses executed in the Art Deco style. The historic significance of the Grant County Courthouse is based on its associations with the history and development of Kansas county courthouses that are documented in the Multiple Property Form, **"Historic County Courthouses of Kansas."** In particular, the property has direct associations to the historic contexts established in the Multiple Property Form—"The Role of the County Courthouse in Kansas Communities 1856–1950," "Twentieth Century Kansas County Courthouses and Their Changing Use: 1900–1950," and the "Architecture of Kansas Courthouses 1861–1950." The property's association with the evolution of Kansas county courthouses and their design dates to its construction in 1929–1930 and continues to 2000, the arbitrary 50-year cutoff date for determining eligibility of National Register properties. The property reflects the transition in the design of the state's courthouses from classically inspired designs to modern styles between the end of World War I and the onset of the Great Depression. In addition to retention of association and location, this property has a high degree of architectural integrity and is a representative example of its property type. The property type and larger historic contexts relating to the significance of the Grant County Courthouse are fully documented in the Multiple Property Form. The following commentary expands upon these larger contextual themes as they specifically relate to the Grant County Courthouse and documents the property's significance.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Grant County is located in southwest Kansas, approximately 30 miles from the Colorado and Oklahoma borders. Grant County has two small towns: Ulysses, the county seat; and Hickok. Highway 160 runs east and west through the county and State Road 25 runs north and south.

Similar to many settlers of the West, pioneers traveled to the Grant County prairie with dreams of establishing their own homestead. As the county grew, so did the need for an organized form of government. As with many Kansas county seat decisions, two towns waged a bitter fight to acquire the economic rewards inherent in the designation. In Grant County's 1888 election, the towns of (Old) Ulysses and Appomattox (later Cincinnati) vied for the county seat.[1] At that time, Grant County had six small towns including the town of Ulysses, with a population of 1,500; and Appomattox, with a population just over 1,000.[2] Ulysses won by 236 votes. Appomattox residents, in turn, accused Ulysses of buying votes. One account in the Hutchinson paper read: "Many people, not even residents of the county, were hired to come in and vote. I saw with my own eyes a [bloc] of 25 votes auctioned off at Golden, where the vote buyer from Ulysses stood in an outhouse and paid them off as soon as they cast their ballots." In 1890, the Kansas Supreme Court declared the 1888 election a fraud and

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1 Mrs. Roy Bessire, "Glimpses of Grant County," *Ulysses News* (1973): 28–29.

2 Author Unknown, "Grant County will Officially Open New Court House to the Public Next Saturday," Grant *County Republican* (September 25, 1930).

ordered the county officials to move their offices to Appomattox. The ruling came too late for Appomattox—by that time Appomattox was a ghost town—and Ulysses remained the county seat.[3]

In 1888, two (Old) Ulysses' residents erected a wood, frame structure that became Grant County's first courthouse. Storerooms and an opera house first occupied the wood, frame structure that housed such activities as civic meetings, church dances, political conventions, and weddings. In 1893, county commissioners adapted the structure into the county courthouse, and in 1909, they moved it to present day Ulysses where it served as the county courthouse until the dedication of the current courthouse in October 1930.[4] The architectural firm of Smith and English of Hutchinson, Kansas designed the courthouse and J.M. Fuller received the $115,000 construction contract.[5]

### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The 1930s Courthouse is significant under Criterion A as an example of the second and third generation courthouses erected in a wave of new courthouse construction that occurred in the early twentieth century in Kansas. These buildings replaced aged and obsolete courthouse buildings erected in the state's earlier settlement period. The building's size and condition reflects a prosperous county with lucrative oil, gas, and livestock industries. Its architectural integrity and setting convey feelings and associations with its time of construction and the function of the courthouse during this period.

### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Grant County Courthouse is one of three extant Kansas courthouses designed by the architectural firm of Smith and English of Hutchinson, Kansas. The design of the building is attributed to Harold Thomas English who was born in Hutchinson, Kansas in 1891. In 1914, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture from Kansas State College of Applied Science. For several years after graduation, English worked as a draftsman for the Hutchinson architectural firm of W. E. Hulse & Co. English opened a private practice in 1919 and the following year he formed the firm of Smith and English. During this period, he was manager of the architectural and building division of the McNaghten Investment Co. For the next 20 years, the firm designed commercial, institutional, civic and residential buildings. An active member of the state Republican Party, he received a number of important commissions. After serving in World War II, English returned to Hutchinson and formed the firm of English, Miller and Hockett. He was one of the original members of the Kansas Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and served as secretary of the Kansas Board of Architectural Examinations at the time of his death in 1956.[6] Among his important commissions in Kansas are high school buildings in Jennings, Wilson, Lenora, Rexford and Macksville, and the Lincoln, Grandview and Ward schools in Hutchinson. Other

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3 Bessire, 28–29.

4 "Grant County Will Officially Open."

5 Vertical File, Kansas State Historical Society, Handwritten Notes.

6 Sara Mullin Baldwin and Robert Morton Baldwin, ed. *Illustriana Biographical Sketches of Kansas Men and Women of Achievement Who Have Been Awarded Life Membership in Kansas Illustriana Society* (Hebron, Nebraska: Illustriana Incorporated, 1933), 369; Kansas Construction Magazine September, 1946, p. 24; and Kansas Construction Magazine, September 1956, p.36; The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography. Volume XLIX. (New York: James T. White & company, 1966), p. 26–27. Vertical File, Kansas State Historical Society,

projects in Hutchinson include the public library building, the First Presbyterian Church, the Park Place Christian Church, the First Baptist Church, and the First Federal Savings and Loan building.

Smith and English's three Kansas courthouse designs vary in style from Classical Revival to Art Deco. Earlier courthouses designed by Smith and English, such as the Stanton County Courthouse (1925–1926) and the Haskell County Courthouse (1922), are Classical Revival in style. The Stanton County Courthouse features red brick walls, a pedimented portico supported by columns, and a flat roof with a simple parapet [*Figure 5: Representative Example of Kansas Courthouse Designed by Smith and English*]. The Grant County Courthouse (1929–1930) reflects a distinct shift in style from the earlier Classical Revival style courthouses designed by Smith and English to an Modern Movement style courthouse that features linear projections that separate the structural bays of each façade, buff colored brick, terra-cotta ornamentation, and decorative brickwork.

While the streamlined style of the Grant County Courthouse references in its symmetrical fenestration and use of full-height pilasters earlier Classical Revival motifs, yet use of blocks with a vertical emphasis created by the full height pilasters and geometric shaped terracotta ornamentation reflect elements of the Modern Movement executed in a restrained version of the Art Deco style. Its retention of its original integrity enables it to convey information about the restrained Art Deco courthouse designs found in Kansas before the onset of the Great Depression and the Works Projects Administration courthouses built in the 1930s that often displayed more articulated versions of the style. In particular, it reflects the hybrid style that married Art Deco styling with classical symmetrical architectural forms.

The Grant County Courthouse is also architecturally significant for its retention of its original floor plan configuration and hierarchy of space that is typical of many early twentieth century Kansas courthouses. Kansas courthouses of this period are generally defined by three or four floors, which have a hierarchy of functions that are accessed by two or more staircases and are located off a main corridor. The ground floor was either at grade level or slightly sunken and housed the auxiliary functions such as the boiler room, facility manager's offices, toilets and storage. The finishes of this floor were often not as elaborate as the upper, more public floors. The first floor, which is the most highly utilized floor, was generally elevated from grade level and approached via an exterior grand staircase. The first floor houses offices frequently utilized by the public such as the county clerk, register of deeds, county treasurer, engineer, appraiser and county commissioners' offices. The second floor housed the courtroom, judge's office, jury room, and the sheriff and court clerk's offices. The courtroom is nearly always on the opposite side of the primary entrance, just opposite of the central grand staircase, and was 1½ or two stories in height. The third floor was typically not as obvious from the exterior and was occasionally part of the roofline. The third floor historically housed the jail, although many new sheriff and jail annexes replace those functions leaving space to expand in the original courthouse. The Grant County Courthouse retains this hierarchy of space and floor configurations on the ground through third floors.

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**Figure 5: Representative Example of Kansas Courthouse Designed by Smith and English**

Stanton County 1925–1926

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Author Unknown. "Grant County will Officially Open New Court House to the Public Next Saturday." *Grant County Republican.* (September 25, 1930). Vertical File. Kansas State Historical Society.

Arthur Unknown. Handwritten Notes. Vertical File, Kansas State Historical Society.

Baldwin, Sara Mullin and Robert Morton Baldwin, ed. *Illustriana Biographical Sketches of Kansas Men and Women of Achievement Who Have Been Awarded Life Membership in Kansas Illustriana Society.* Hebron, Nebraska: Illustriana Incorporated, 1933). Kansas State Historical Society.

Bessire, Mrs. Roy. "Glimpses of Grant County." *Ulysses News* (1973). Vertical File, Kansas State Historical Society.

*Kansas Construction Magazine.* (September, 1946). Vertical File, Kansas State Historical Society.

*Kansas Construction Magazine*, (September 1956.) Vertical File, Kansas State Historical Society.

*The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography.* Volume XLIX. New York: James T. White & Company, 1966. Vertical File, Kansas State Historical Society.

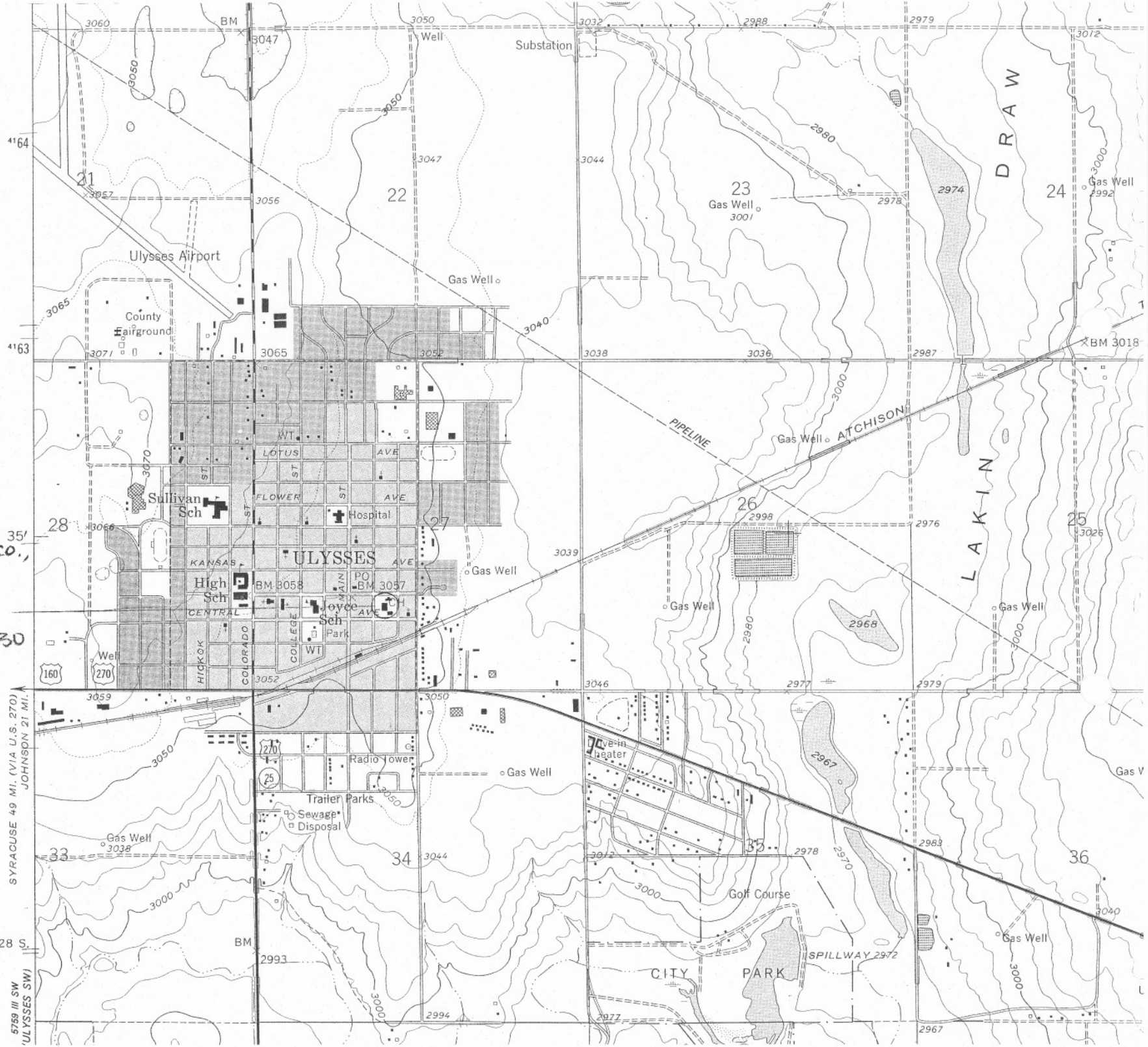
## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the nominated property is the portion of Block 23 in the City of Ulysses, Grant County, Kansas that includes the following: on the south, the northern boundary of Central Avenue running between Glenn Street and Court Street; on the west, the eastern boundary of Glenn Street running between Central Avenue and the northern boundary; on the north, a line beginning at and horizontal to the foot of the north exterior stair running between Glenn Street and Court Street; and on the east, the western boundary of Court Street running between Central Avenue and the northern boundary.

## VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the nominated property is based on the area of Block 23 that has a traditional courthouse function. Natural boundaries are provided by Central Avenue, Glenn Street and Court Street and an arbitrary line on the north that runs east and west and is parallel to the foot of the north exterior stair of the courthouse. The remainder of Block 23 traditionally has non-county functions.

GRANT COUNTY
COURTHOUSE

ULYSSEES, GRANT CO.,
KANSAS

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