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: Rice County Courthouse

Other name/site number: _____

2. Location

101 West Commercial Street — not for publication

Lyons — vicinity — state

Kansas — code KS — county Rice — code 159 — zip code 67554

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	X building(s)	1	___ buildings
X public-local	___ district	___	___ sites
___ public-State	___ site	___	___ structures
___ public-Federal	___ structure	___	___ objects
	___ object	1	0 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.)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)
GOVERNMENT: County Courthouse	GOVERNMENT: County Courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Richardsonian Romanesque

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation STONE: Limestone

Walls BRICK

STONE: Limestone

Roof ASPHALT SHINGLES

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	1910/11-50	N/A
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT		

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

J.C. Holland & Son, Architects

Cuthbert & Son, Contractor

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

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	5/6/9/6/0/0	4/2/4/4/4/3/0	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 Rice County

street & number 101 West Commercial Street telephone (316) 257-2232 city or town Lyons state KS zip code 67554

DESCRIPTION

The Rice County Courthouse is a four-story, Richardsonian Romanesque style structure that occupies the center of a full square block that is surrounded by the Lyons, Kansas historic central business district [*Figure 1: City Map of Lyons, Kansas*]. Street parking surrounds the block, which is bounded by Main Street to the north, East Avenue South to the east, Commercial Street to the south, and West Avenue South to the west. The courthouse is rectangular in plan and measures approximately 90 feet wide by 100 feet deep [*Figure 2: Existing Site Plan*]. It is red brick with dressed limestone detailing, has a hip roof with dormers, and central clock tower. Arches that spring from pairs of low, wide arches define the entrances on each façade [*Photographs #1, #2, #3 and #4*]. Except for the replacement of the original exterior doors and minor interior renovations, the courthouse has excellent architectural integrity and retains the majority of its original exterior and interior features. Erected in 1910–1911 as a county courthouse, the structure continues to serve as the county courthouse.

The courthouse has eight bays on each façade. The two central bays of the ground and first floors project to define the entrances, which feature brick arches. The bays flanking the entrance on the north and south façades also project and rise to form gable front wall dormers. The exterior of the courthouse is polychrome in appearance as a result of the limestone detailing, which provides a sharp contrast to the red brick. Dressed limestone highlights the foundation as well as the sill and thick lintel courses of each floor. Dressed limestone also defines the flattened Corinthian capitals, the bases of the squat arches, and the detailing of the gabled wall dormers and clock tower. The detailing of the capitals includes fruits as references to abundance.

The building's fenestration consists of the original, wood frame, one-over-one light, double-hung sashes with exterior storm windows, and a few miscellaneous windows featuring two-over-two light, double-hung sashes. The gabled wall dormers display pairs of wood frame, one-over-one light, double-hung sash windows. The arched fenestration of the frontispieces consists of paired, one-over-one light, double-hung sash windows with sidelights and opaque transom panels. Overall, the windows are in excellent condition as a result of the maintenance provided by a succession of county commissioners.

The Rice County Courthouse is unique in that it does not feature a primary façade; its four, ground-floor entrances are equally delineated. Brick arches that spring from paired, low, wide columns define each of the entrances [*Photograph #5*]. The south façade entrance incorporates a handicapped accessible ramp and railing. Metal frame storefront doors with metal side panels replaced the original doors [*Photograph #1*].

Asphalt shingles clad the hip roof that features three, front gable, wall dormers of the same size on the east and west façades, and a large dormer flanked by two, smaller, parapeted, gabled, wall dormers on the north and south façades [*Photographs #2 and #7*]. A clock tower that has a hip roof; front gable, wall dormers; tripartite arched windows; and an arched clock surround, rises from the center of the roof [*Photograph #6*].

The floor plan and space uses of the courthouse are typical of many early twentieth century Kansas courthouses. Access to the building is by four, ground-floor entrances. Once inside, a grand staircase on the west side of the building provides access to each floor, which has a north-south running corridor. An elevator, installed in 1982,[1]

[1] Author Unknown, "Old Courthouse Ghost Lingers; Was it Paint, Was it Stucco," *Lyons Daily News* (24 March 1982). Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division, Vertical Files.

also provides access to each floor. The ground floor houses the county commissioners' and appraiser's offices; the first floor houses the county clerk, county treasurer, and registrar of deeds [*Photograph #8*]; and the second floor houses the courtroom, judge's chamber, and probation office. The third floor, which typically housed the jail, is attic space. A series of rehabilitation and renovation projects between 1972 and 1975 reconfigured the offices of the judge and nurse.

The interior finishes are also typical of those found in other Kansas courthouses built in the early twentieth century. The main staircase has an oak balustrade [*Photograph #9*] and the corridors feature mosaic floor tiles[2] and painted chair rails. Other interior finishes include wood doors with transoms, and plaster walls and ceilings [*Photograph #8*]. A series of rehabilitation and renovation projects between 1972 and 1975 installed paneling and carpet in the offices; as well as dropped, acoustical, ceiling tiles in the courtroom.[3]

Between 1972 and 1982, county commissioners conducted a substantial rehabilitation and renovation of the courthouse. Contractors sandblasted and repointed the masonry; replaced the roof, original sidewalks, and landscaping; installed a new mechanical system; concealed the original finishes of the first- and second-floor offices with carpet and paneling; dropped an acoustical tile ceiling in the courtroom; cleaned and polished the original light fixtures and mosaic floor tiles; and reconfigured the judge's and county nurse's offices.[4] In 1982, the city also installed an appropriately placed handicapped accessible elevator.[5]

Despite these changes, the Rice County Courthouse retains a high degree of architectural integrity. The building retains its original location, materials, fenestration, plan, and stylistic elements including the roofline, dormers, ogee-arched frontispieces and clock tower, as well as stylistic details. Alterations are limited to metal frame doors that replaced the original exterior doors, and the addition of a handicapped accessible ramp. On the interior, acoustical ceiling tiles conceal the original plaster ceiling of the courtroom, and carpet and paneling conceal the original finishes of the offices. Nevertheless, the original oak staircase, mosaic floor tiles, wood doors, chair rails, and floor plan configuration are intact. Overall, the Rice County Courthouse not only has excellent architectural integrity; it is also in excellent condition as a result of the care and attention given to the maintenance of the structure by a succession of county commissioners.

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2 According to the County Clerk, a recent rehabilitation replaced the original mosaic floor tiles on the ground floor with historically correct mosaic floor tiles.

3 Susan Bridges, "Lyons is Bitten by Revamp Bug," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon* (29 June 1975). Kansas State Historical Society, Cultural Resources Division, Vertical Files.

4 Susan Bridges, "Lyons is Bitten by Revamp Bug," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon* (28 June 1975).

5 "Old Courthouse's Ghost Lingers"

PHOTO LOG

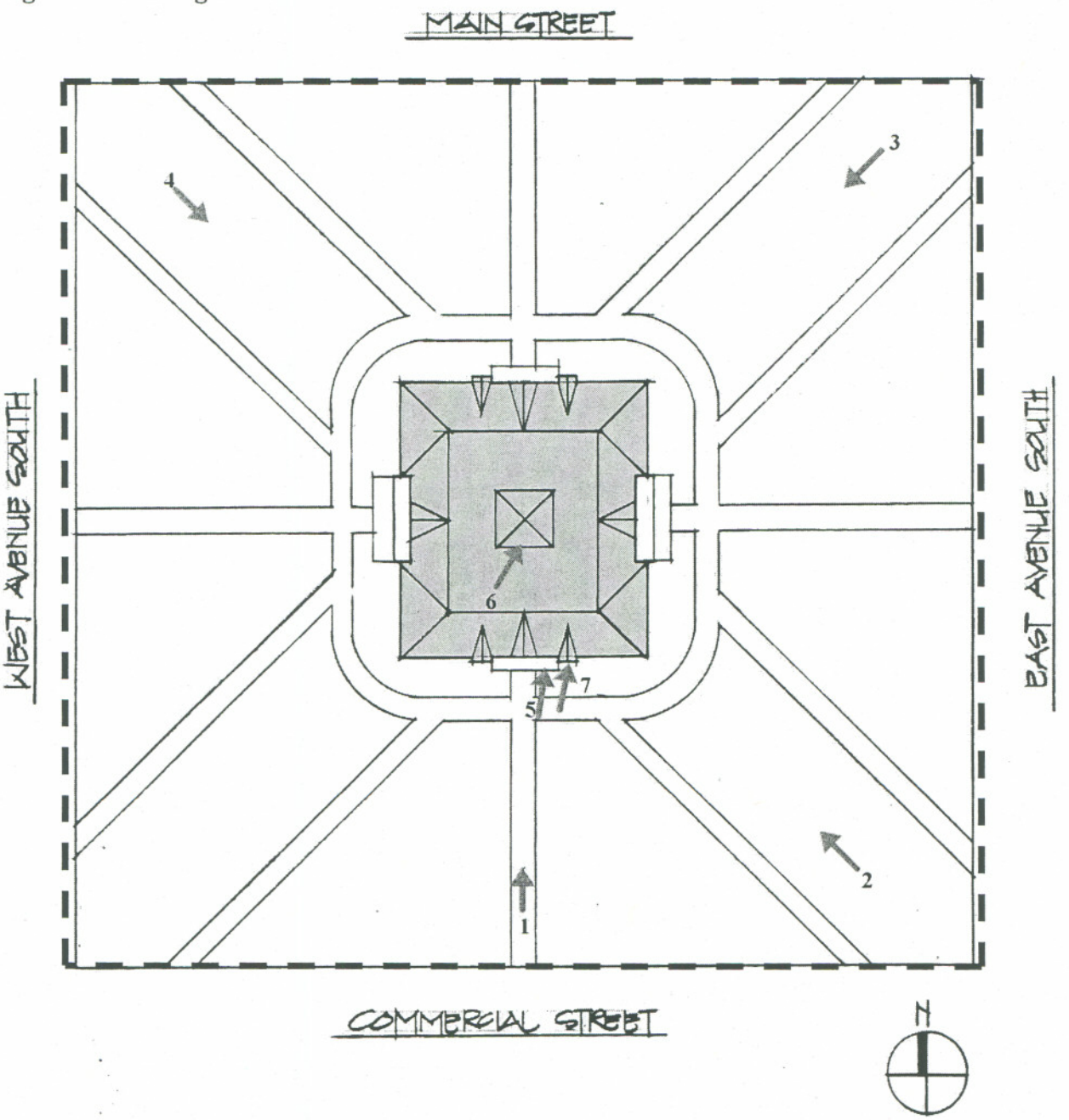
Photographer: **Dana Cloud**
Date of Photographs: **December 12, 1999**
Location of Negatives: **Kansas State Historical Society**
Cultural Resources Division
6425 S.W. 6th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66615-1099

Photo #	Subject	Camera Direction
1.	Exterior of Courthouse, South Facade	North
2.	Exterior of Courthouse	Northwest
3.	Exterior of Courthouse	Southwest
4.	Exterior of Courthouse	Southeast
5.	Detail of Truncated Pilaster at South Facade	North
6.	Detail of Clock Tower at South Facade	North
7.	Detail of South Façade Roofline	North
8.	Corridor on First Floor	North
9.	Detail of Stair Balustrade of Main Staircase	North

Figure 1: City Plan of Lyons, Kansas

North

Figure 2: Existing Site Plan



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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Rice County Courthouse erected in 1910–1911 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 with J.C. Holland, an influential Kansas architect who designed and supervised the construction of a significant number of Kansas county courthouses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The historic significance of the Rice 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 1910–1911 and continues to 2000, the arbitrary 50-year cutoff date for determining eligibility of National Register properties. The property reflects typical courthouse plans, siting, and Richardsonian Romanesque designs found in Kansas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to the property's retention of its association and location, it has a high degree of architectural integrity and is a representative example of its property type. It exemplifies the work of a master courthouse architect noted for his Kansas courthouse designs. The property type and larger historic contexts relating to the significance of the Rice 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 Rice County Courthouse and documents the property's significance.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Rice County is located in central Kansas along the Santa Fe Trail, which played a significant role in the early development of the county. The county has 13 small towns including Lyons, the county seat; and the larger communities of Sterling, Bushton, Crawford, Mitchell, and Chase. Highway 56 runs east and west through the middle of the county. State Road 14 runs north and south through the middle of the county. Both roads run through the county seat of Lyons.

The history of Rice County begins with its creation in 1867. The county's original town site of Atlanta, the county's first settlement, located approximately one mile south of present day Lyons served as the first county seat. On August 18, 1871, county commissioners Dan M. Bell, T.A. Davis, and Evan C. Jones officially formed Rice County. As part of the county commissioners' responsibility in organizing the county, they ordered an election to determine the location of the county seat. On September 26, 1871, the election determined Atlanta as the county seat; the town of Atlanta received 64 votes and the "Ohio Colony," located three miles southeast of Atlanta, received 48 votes. A wooden frame hotel, owned by Levi Jay, served as the county's first courthouse.[1]

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[1] Author Unknown, "Men of Atlanta Guided Formation of County Carved From Prairies," *Lyon Daily News* (12 April 1961).

Many of the structures of the original town site of Atlanta were on land owned by the Santa Fe Railroad. On July 30, 1873, the Atlanta Town Company purchased the land from the Santa Fe Railroad for $1,360. A sketch prepared in 1946, based on accounts of early inhabitants of Atlanta, depicts several wood structures standing at the intersection of two dirt roads. These early structures included a grocery store, saloon, hotel, post office, hardware store, blacksmith shop, school, and several residences. In 1873, Atlanta boasted 100 residents. In 1876, an election determined that the county seat should be located in the exact center of the county and the commissioners established the city of Lyons at that location. The townspeople of Atlanta abandoned their original town site and moved several structures, including the courthouse, to the new county seat named for the owner of the property upon which the new town was built. The county commissioners reconstructed the courthouse on a lot to the south of the present Courthouse Square. In June 1880, the branch of the Santa Fe Trail connecting Emporia and Ellinwood reached Lyons and, as a result, the town's prosperity and role of county seat became assured.

A brick courthouse, which replaced the first wood, frame courthouse, served the county prior to the construction of the current Richardsonian Romanesque style courthouse.[2] According to the *Lyons Daily News*, historic photographs, taken shortly after the construction of the second courthouse in the early 1880s, revealed a light, solid appearing wall treatment. The author of the article believed this to be stucco applied to protect the porous, soft brick that county officials later exposed to the elements. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the county offices had outgrown the courthouse, and many offices were located in rented quarters in the commercial section of the town. In 1910–1911, county commissions erected the present Richardsonian Romanesque structure on the site of the earlier brick courthouse.[3] The architectural firm of J.C. Holland & Son designed the courthouse and the construction firm of Cuthbert & Son received the construction contract.[4]

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Romanesque style 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. As such, it reflects the evolution of courthouse uses and political development in Kansas counties. Its level of physical and architectural integrity and the retention of its physical associations with the original site enable it to convey its appearance and functions during the period of its construction.

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2 Author Unknown, "Yes, They Even 'Stole' Courthouse Back in Those Wild Early Days," *Lyons Daily News* (12 April 1961).

3 Author Unknown, "Old Courthouse's Ghost Lingers; Was it Paint, Was it Stucco," *Lyons Daily News* (24 March 1982).

4 Julie A. Wortman, *LEGACIES: Kansas' Older County Courthouses*, Kansas State Historical Society: Topeka, Kansas, 1981.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Rice County Courthouse is architecturally significant under Criterion C as an example of the Kansas county courthouses designed by noted courthouse architect James C. Holland. As discussed in the Multiple Property Form, James C. Holland is one of the state's foremost designers of courthouses in the period between 1899 and 1917. The body of his work reflects the shift in Kansas in courthouse design before World War I from the Richardson Romanesque style to the Classical Revival style. The Rice County Courthouse is one of nine extant courthouses in Kansas designed by Holland, eight of which are executed in the Richardson Romanesque style.

J.C. Holland designed five Kansas courthouses between 1900 and 1918: Geary County (1899–1900), Clay County (1900–1901), Mitchell County (1901–1902), Rice County (1910–1911) and Ness County (1917–1918) [*Figure 3: Representative Examples of Kansas Courthouses Designed by J.C. Holland & Son*]. Between 1905 and 1907, J.C. Holland joined architect Frank C. Squires to design four additional Kansas courthouses: Marion County (1905–1907), Riley County (1905–1906), Thomas County (1906–1907), and Rice County (1907–1908) [*Figure 4: Representative Examples of Kansas Courthouses Designed by J.C. Holland & Frank C. Squires*]. With the exception of the Ness County Courthouse (1917–1918), which is a Neo-Classical style building, J.C. Holland's courthouses are similar in their design. The courthouses are four-story, Richardsonian Romanesque style structures with entrances defined by arches that spring from squat columns. These courthouses also feature hip roofs that feature parapeted, gabled, wall dormers and a clock tower. The Ness County Courthouse (1917–1918) reflects a shift from the Richardsonian Romanesque style to the Classical Revival stylistic idiom; which is the latest and only Kansas county courthouse Holland designed in that style. As a courthouse that retains nearly all its Richardsonian Romanesque features, the Rice County Courthouse is an excellent example of the Romanesque style courthouses designed by J.C. Holland and conveys information about the stylistic variations employed in Holland's designs.

The Rice County Courthouse is also architecturally significant for its retention of its original floor plan configuration and the 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 located off a main corridor and accessed by one or more staircases. The ground floor is either at grade level or slightly sunken and houses the auxiliary functions such as the boiler room, facility manager's offices, toilets, and storage. The appraiser's and commissioners' offices are also located on the ground floor of the Rice County Courthouse. The first floor, which is the most highly utilized floor, is generally elevated from grade level. The first floor houses offices frequently utilized by the public such as the county clerk, register of deeds, and the county treasurer's offices. The second floor houses the courtroom, judge's office, jury room, and quarters for the probation officer. The third floor is typically not as obvious from the exterior and is occasionally part of the roofline. Although this floor historically housed the jail in the majority of Kansas' county courthouses, this was not the case in Rice County. The jail is located in a separate structure on the northeast corner of Main and Grand streets.