

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Davidson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Old Davidson County Courthouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Main Street at Center Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Lexington (Fifth Congressional District)

STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37 COUNTY: Davidson CODE: 057

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work In progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Davidson County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
West Center Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lexington STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Davidson County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
West Center Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lexington STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: North Carolina

COUNTY: Davidson

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The old Davidson County Courthouse, built of stuccoed stone, is a superb temple-form building with a prostyle hexastyle portico. The slightly attenuated fluted Roman Corinthian columns support a well-executed entablature. Especially notable is the cartouche in the tympanum molded in high relief. Above the portico is an octagonal clock tower which rests on a low square plinth. The sides of the tower are marked by louvered round-headed arches, those parallel to the edges of the plinth being wider than those at the angles. At the top of the tower is a semispherical roof resting on a bold modillion cornice.

The only openings on the front wall of the building are the large central pedimented portal and a triple window with round arched heads above it. The great expanse of unbroken wall beneath the portico is a brilliant subtlety of design which increases the visual effect of the fine detail of the order.

The sides of the building are seven bays long with a round-headed window above a trabeated one in each bay. At either end the terminal bays are flanked by single fluted pilasters.

The rear elevation features a fully developed pediment which rests on a pilaster at each end. There is no ornament in the tympanum. On the first level is a wide central entrance with double doors, transom, and paneled soffit. This is flanked by long rectangular windows on either side. In the second story there are four windows with round arched heads.

All first floor windows have four-over-four sash while the second floor windows have six-over-four. The building rests on a high foundation of roughly dressed ashlar.

On the interior most of the original first floor arrangement has been changed, but many of the heavy door and window cases have survived. Across the front of the building runs a stair hall with broad flights of steps ascending at each end. These feature enormous newels and heavy turned balustrades. Each stair gives access on the floor above to a similar hall which runs along the rear of the courtroom. Above this hall is a gallery. From the hall two sets of double doors open into the rectangular courtroom in the center of the building. It has a sloping floor, five windows on each side divided by fluted pilasters, and a heavy entablature which carries around the room. Most of the interior fittings of the courtroom seem to date from at least two periods of remodeling.

Behind the rear wall of the courtroom are three small rooms. The two outer ones have fireplaces with simple Classic Revival mantels. In one of them is a most interesting security device in the form of a metal cage used no doubt to control the most belligerent offenders.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Davidson County, named for General William Lee Davidson, who was killed in the revolutionary war, was created from a part of Rowan County on December 9, 1822. It was first decided to locate the county seat on the lands of Martin Owens. John Moore, chairman of the new county court, purchased 108 acres of land upon which the proposed county seat, Marion, was to be built. Many lots had already been sold at public auction when the people of nearby Lexington were able to have the selection of Marion as the county seat re-evaluated and to persuade the legislature to change the county seat to Lexington. On March 23, 1824, Alexander Caldwell, Benjamin D. Roosaville, and Jesse Hargrave deeded to John Moore, for the benefit of the county, twenty-five acres in Lexington for fifty cents an acre. Profit from the sale of this land was to be used to build a courthouse and jail. People who had purchased lots at Marion were given their money back, and the lots were reconveyed to the original owners. By 1825 a courthouse was built in Lexington which served the county for over thirty years.

At the February term of court in 1856 it was ordered that a new courthouse for Lexington be built, and the court appointed five commissioners to superintend the location and building of the new courthouse. The building was constructed in the northwest corner of the public square. The square was divided into four parts by the four streets which originally ran north, south, east, and west from the former courthouse which stood in the center of the square. A monument to the Confederacy now stands near the site of the original courthouse. In 1918 the building was remodeled extensively. A new courthouse was constructed in 1959 on Center Street. The ground floor of the old courthouse is now used by a few government offices. The second story has been leased by the Davidson County Historical Society for use as a museum.

Though much of the original interior has been removed, the exterior of the old Davidson County Courthouse is one of the finest and most architectonic in the state. The many subtleties of its design, especially the great scale, splendid proportions, and detail of its heroic portico, make it one of the more important buildings of the Classic Revival in the South. There are many similar county courthouses but few that can equal it.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Davidson County Records, Davidson County Courthouse, Lexington, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills)

Davidson County Records, Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES							
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			LATITUDE			LONGITUDE	
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	.	"	0	.	"	35°	49'	30"	80°	15'	13"
NE	0	.	"	0	.	"						
SE	0	.	"	0	.	"						
SW	0	.	"	0	.	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: $\frac{1}{2}$ Acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Survey and Planning Unit, John Wells, Supervisor

ORGANIZATION

State Department of Archives and History

DATE

April 16, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:

109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name

Dr. H. G. Jones

Title

Director, State Department of Archives and History

Date

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

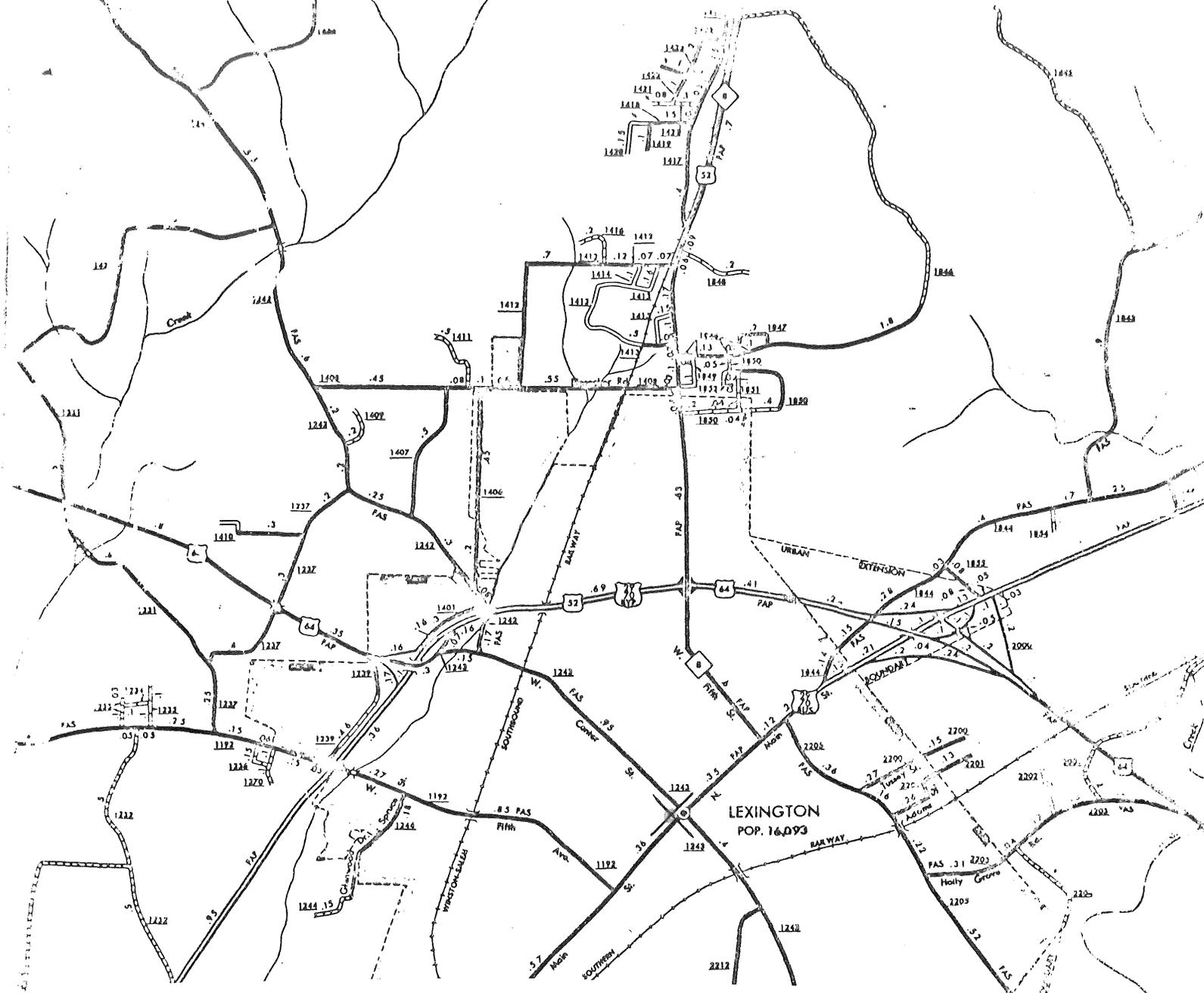
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date



Old Davidson County Courthouse
 Main Street at Center Street
 Lexington, North Carolina

North Carolina State Highway Commission
 Scale: 2"/1 mile
 January 1, 1961

<u>Latitude</u>			<u>Longitude</u>		
degrees	minutes	seconds	degrees	minutes	seconds
35°	49'	30"	80°	15'	13"

