

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 an 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 West Memphis City Hall

other names/site number O. I. Bollinger Building/CT0113

2. Location

street & number 100 Court Street  not for publication

city or town West Memphis  vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Crittenden code 035 zip code 72301

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 for 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.)  
Carolee Shatches 5/24/10  
Signature of certifying official Title Date  
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional  
comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____	_____

West Memphis City Hall

Name of Property

Crittenden County, Arkansas

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/city hall

GOVERNMENT/correctional facility

GOVERNMENT/fire station

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/government office

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

CONCRETE

roof TAR BUILT-UP

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.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
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.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1938-1961

Significant Dates

1938-1939: Construction of City Hall

1954-1955: Courtroom Addition

1960-1961: Jail Annex

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

R. D. Eberdt, Architect and Builder

Public Works Administration

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 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
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository:

West Memphis City Hall  
Name of Property

Crittenden County, Arkansas  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** Approximately 2 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 756318 3892820  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Rachel Silva, Preservation Outreach Coordinator  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date May 24, 2010  
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9788  
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of West Memphis  
street & number 205 S. Redding telephone (870) 732-7500  
city or town West Memphis state AR zip code 72301

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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### SUMMARY

The West Memphis City Hall, located at 100 Court Street in West Memphis, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** for its association with the development of municipal services in West Memphis and for its association with the Public Works Administration (PWA). Prior to the completion of the city hall on June 13, 1939, the city council met at various local businesses. In addition to serving as the new city hall, this building housed a fire station and city jail. The West Memphis City Hall was constructed just southwest of the Broadway/U.S. Highway 70 and Missouri Street (Old U.S. Highway 61) intersection. West Memphis streets were initially laid out in a grid pattern to the east of this intersection, but by the early 1930s development spread to the west along Broadway/U.S. Highway 70, the city's major thoroughfare. The city hall was constructed on Court Street, a small, semi-circular drive on the south side of West Broadway Avenue. In order to address the growing needs of the city, a courtroom addition was built in 1954-1955 to the west of the original city hall. In 1960-1961 a jail annex was constructed just to the south of the courtroom addition and is not visible from the building's front façade. The current West Memphis city offices are located at 205 S. Redding Street about one block southwest of the historic building. Today the West Memphis City Hall houses municipal court and a back-up dispatch station for the police department.<sup>3</sup>

### ELABORATION

The West Memphis City Hall, located at 100 Court Street in West Memphis, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** for its association with the development of municipal services in West Memphis and for its association with the Public Works Administration (PWA). Prior to the completion of the city hall on June 13, 1939, the city council met at various local businesses. In addition to serving as the new city hall, this building housed a fire station and city jail. The West Memphis City Hall was constructed just southwest of the Broadway/U.S. Highway 70 and Missouri Street (Old U.S. Highway 61) intersection. West Memphis streets were initially laid out in a grid pattern to the east of this intersection, but by the early 1930s development spread to the west along Broadway/U.S. Highway 70, the city's major thoroughfare. The city hall was constructed on Court Street, a small, semi-circular drive on the south side of West Broadway Avenue. In order to address the growing needs of the city, a courtroom addition was built in 1954-1955 to the west of the original city hall. In 1960-1961 a jail annex was constructed just to the south of the courtroom addition and is not visible from the building's front façade. The current West Memphis city offices are located at 205 S. Redding Street about

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<sup>3</sup>Based on Sanborn maps, the semi-circular drive was always called Court Street. The original plans for the city hall called for a large room for "court" and also mentioned a "Mayor's Court" being held in the building. Now that the building is primarily used as a municipal court, the street name is especially fitting. Information submitted by Deborah Griggs, Executive Director, Main Street West Memphis, in the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (2005); Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, "West Memphis, Arkansas" maps (1930, 1938, 1949).

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one block southwest of the historic building. Today the West Memphis City Hall houses municipal court and a back-up dispatch station for the police department.<sup>4</sup>

### *Original West Memphis City Hall (1938-1939)*

The original city hall, constructed in 1938-1939, is a two-story brick building resting on a continuous cast-concrete foundation. The building's irregular plan consists of two two-story sections, one in front of the other. These sections are connected in the center by a slightly recessed one-story corridor. This layout was necessary in order to divide the building according to function—city offices were housed in the front section, while the fire department and city jail were located in the rear section. The building has a flat, built-up tar roof with a low parapet. The building exhibits elements of the Classical Revival style in its symmetrical layout and prominent arched, multi-pane windows. However, the building's central graduated parapet and fluted cast-concrete panels provide a vertical focus, characteristic of the Art Deco style. The original plans called for a buff brick exterior, but red brick was used instead. The combination of red brick and cast-concrete detailing was quite striking; however, the brick has since been painted a neutral cream color, diminishing the appearance of architectural details.

### *North (Front) Façade*

The north (front) façade of the West Memphis City Hall is symmetrical and divided into three bays. The central entrance bay is crowned by a graduated parapet and slightly protrudes from the adjacent bays. A large, "T-shaped," cast-concrete panel is recessed in the middle of this bay. A 48-pane, metal-framed window with a central casement sash and 20-pane arched transom is centered in the top of the panel. The window rests on a cast-concrete sill, which sits atop a fluted cast-concrete panel. The lower portion of the "T-shaped" panel continues to the ground level, resembling fluted pilasters on either side of the double-leaf entrance with single-light transom. Although the original doors have been replaced with single-light, metal-framed doors, historic photographs show that the original front doors were similar in appearance. A flat metal awning is suspended over the doors.

The east and west bays on this façade are identical, each featuring two 16-pane, metal-framed casement windows topped by 14-pane arched transoms on the second story. These second story windows have cast-concrete lintels and sills. Fluted cast-concrete panels connect the sills of the second story windows to the lintels of the first story windows, which are 16-pane, metal-framed casements with 8-pane transoms and cast-concrete sills.

<sup>4</sup> Information submitted by Deborah Griggs, Executive Director, Main Street West Memphis; in the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (2005); Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, "West Memphis, Arkansas" maps (1930, 1938, 1949).

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Because the West Memphis City Hall was named in honor of 33-year city council member, O. I. Bollinger, the words "O. I. Bollinger Building" appear at the top of the central bay on this façade.

### *East (Side) Façade*

The east (side) façade of the West Memphis City Hall reveals the building's slightly recessed one-story corridor and two-story rear wing. The absence of arched transom windows and fluted cast-concrete panels on the rear wing reveals the common practice of concentrating exterior ornamentation on a building's primary elevations. The east façade can be divided into three parts—the east elevation of the front wing, the east elevation of the one-story corridor, and the east elevation of the rear wing.

The east (side) elevation of the front wing is fenestrated on its second story by three 16-pane, metal-framed casement windows with 14-pane arched transoms and cast-concrete lintels and sills. Fluted cast-concrete panels connect the sills of the upper story windows to the lintels of the first story windows, which are 16-pane, metal-framed casement windows with 8-pane transoms.

The one-story corridor is slightly recessed between the two larger two-story wings. The corridor is fenestrated by one 24-pane, metal-framed window with central casement sash and 12-pane transom (currently holds an A/C unit) and one 16-pane, metal-framed casement window with 8-pane transom. A vinyl-sided addition on the central portion of the corridor roof, allowing people to walk from the front wing to the rear wing on the second floor, is visible from this elevation.

The east elevation of the rear wing lacks the ornamentation used on the building's front wing. The upper story was originally fenestrated by four 16-pane, metal-framed casement windows with cast-concrete lintels and sills; however, the two northernmost windows have been bricked-in, and the two southernmost windows have been replaced with 2-over-2, double-hung, metal-framed windows. The first story features one 12-pane, metal-framed casement window and one 16-pane, metal-framed casement window with an A/C unit. Both first floor windows have cast-concrete lintels and sills.

### *South (Rear) Façade*

The south (rear) façade of the West Memphis City Hall reveals the rear wing's different uses. The eastern half of the rear wing was used as a fire station, while the western half was used as the city jail. The upper story of the south façade is fenestrated by five evenly-spaced windows. The two easternmost windows (originally 16-pane, metal-framed casements) are 2-over-2, double-hung, metal-framed windows with cast-concrete lintels and sills. A 16-pane, metal-framed casement window with 8-pane transom is located in the center of the upper story and probably lights a central upstairs hallway. The two westernmost windows on the upper story are barred with 42 small openings, indicating the jail.

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The first story is fenestrated by one 16-pane, metal-framed casement window with a cast-concrete lintel and sill. A brick chimney is located near the southeast corner of the building and rises slightly above the parapet. A small, shed-roof addition spans the remainder of the first story on this façade, obscuring any elements of the original building. The addition is covered in vinyl siding with a composition shingle roof and is fenestrated by a single metal door.

### *West (Side) Façade*

Because the 1954-1955 courtroom addition and 1960-1961 jail annex were constructed on the west elevation of the original city hall, the entire first floor is blocked from view. The second story is divided into three sections—the west façade of the front wing, the west side of the connecting corridor (only the added second story walkway is visible), and the west façade of the rear wing.

Originally, the west (side) elevation of the front wing was fenestrated on its second story by three 16-pane, metal-framed casement windows with 14-pane arched transoms and cast-concrete lintels and sills. Fluted cast-concrete panels connected the sills of the upper story windows to the lintels of the first story windows, which were 16-pane, metal-framed casement windows with 8-pane transoms. Unfortunately, the courtroom addition obscures the first floor windows (if any are remaining). The northernmost window on the upper story is the only one that is not completely boarded. Only the top 6 panes of the arched transom are boarded on this window; however, an A/C unit covers the bottom 8 panes (leaving a total of 16 panes visible). The other two windows are completely boarded with A/C units. Despite these alterations, the cast-concrete window surrounds and fluted panels are still intact on all three windows.

The only visible part of the connecting corridor from the west elevation is the vinyl-sided addition above the corridor, allowing people to pass from the front to rear wings on the second floor.

The west façade of the rear wing features four evenly-spaced, barred windows with 42 small openings. These windows have cast-concrete lintels and sills. This was another exterior wall of the city jail.

### *Courtroom Addition (1954-1955)*

The courtroom addition, which opened on December 31, 1955, was constructed to the west of the original city hall's front wing. The one-story brick addition has a flat roof with a parapet and is connected to the city hall by a shorter, slightly recessed brick corridor. The corridor also has a flat roof and is fenestrated by two 4-pane, metal-framed stationary windows with cast-concrete sills. The addition itself is relatively devoid of ornamentation, with the exception of a graduated parapet centered on the front (north) façade. This parapet echoes the design used on the original city hall and provides a slight Art Deco influence. This addition was



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likely done in red brick to match the original city hall, but it has since been painted the same neutral cream color.

### *North (Front) Façade*

The north (front) façade of the courtroom addition features a central graduated parapet. Two brick walls with a flat roof protrude from the building's entrance to serve as a small portico. A metal, mansard-type awning was added above this portico at an unknown date. Although there were probably three windows on either side of the front entrance, only one window remains today. It is a 6-pane, metal-framed stationary window with a cast-concrete sill. The other window openings have been bricked-in. The words "Municipal Court" appear on the upper wall of the courtroom's front façade.

### *East (Side) Façade*

The east elevation of the courtroom is joined to the front wing of the original city hall by a corridor

### *South (Rear) Façade*

The south (rear) façade is a brick wall devoid of ornamentation.

### *West (Side) Façade*

The west (side) façade is fenestrated by four 4-pane, metal-framed stationary windows with cast-concrete sills. Each of these windows is covered by metal grating.

### *Jail Annex (1960-1961)*

A one-story brick jail annex was constructed in 1960-1961 just to the south of the courtroom addition. It is not visible from the building's front façade. The jail annex connects to the original city hall's one-story corridor and rear wing and faces south. Because of its use and its location behind the courtroom addition, the jail annex is devoid of ornamentation. It is constructed mostly of brick, but former porches have been enclosed with vinyl siding and concrete block. The annex has a flat roof with a wide eave on the south (front) façade. A small fenced area to the west of the jail annex provided an area for inmate exercise.

### *South (Front) Façade*

Unlike the rest of the city hall complex, the jail annex faces south because it was built behind the courtroom addition. The south façade (originally fenestrated by four 2-over-2, double-hung, metal-framed windows) is

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fenestrated by four boarded windows with cast-concrete sills. This façade also features two enclosed porches—one with vinyl siding and one with concrete block.

### *East (Side) Façade*

The east elevation of the jail annex is joined to the original city hall.

### *North (Rear) Façade*

The north façade of the annex is separated from the courtroom addition by about ten feet. It is devoid of ornamentation.

### *West (Side) Façade*

The west façade is punctuated by a single metal door, allowing access to the jail yard.

## INTEGRITY

The West Memphis City Hall retains excellent integrity of location and setting as it remains situated along a semi-circular drive and lawn directly south of West Broadway Avenue/U.S. Highway 70, the city's major thoroughfare. Because the building is used by the city as a municipal court and police dispatch station, it is still associated with the workings of municipal government in West Memphis. The 1938-1939 city hall retains many of its original architectural elements, including the majority of its original multi-pane arched windows, barred jail windows, and decorative cast-concrete detailing. The 1954-1955 courtroom addition features a graduated parapet, which was patterned after the original city hall entrance. The 1960-1961 jail annex is hidden behind the courtroom addition and is not visible from Court Street. Despite its alterations, the West Memphis City Hall is easily recognizable as the city's first municipal building, constructed in 1938-1939 to house city offices, the fire department, and the city jail.

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### SUMMARY

West Memphis, the largest city in Crittenden County, is located on the western bank of the Mississippi River in east-central Arkansas. West Memphis is directly across the river from Memphis, Tennessee. Although West Memphis officially incorporated in 1923, flooding on the Mississippi and St. Francis rivers slowed the town's expansion. West Memphis experienced dramatic growth during the 1930s due to increased automobile traffic, industrial development, and the presence of river and railroad transportation. In June 1938 Mayor William H. Hundhausen appointed a committee to determine necessary city improvements. The committee immediately suggested the construction of a city administration building, which would house the city hall, a fire station, and a city jail. Prior to 1938, the city council met in various local businesses and fire protection was sub-par. The mayor's committee enlisted the support of the Public Works Administration (PWA) in order to fund construction of the city administration building. The West Memphis City Hall, located at 100 Court Street, opened its doors on July 18, 1939, after about one year of planning and construction. A courtroom addition was completed in 1955, and a jail annex was constructed in 1960-1961. The West Memphis City Hall is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** for its association with the development of municipal services in West Memphis and for its association with the PWA.

### ELABORATION

In the summer of 1541, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto crossed the Mississippi River into what is now Crittenden County with an army of over 300 conquistadors and almost as many captured Native-American slaves. The Spanish found the land to be the most densely populated that they had seen since starting their journey on the Florida coast two years earlier. The Spanish expedition departed Arkansas two years later leaving behind numerous old world diseases. It was 130 years before Europeans visited this region again. The French expedition of Marquette and Jolliet in 1673 found none of the towns or people that the Spanish had documented. All that remained were the many mounds that still dot the landscape along the rivers and creeks. Like later settlers, the original Native American inhabitants were drawn to this region because of its fertile river-bottom soil, abundant game, and thick forests.<sup>5</sup>

Benjamin Fooy (or Foy), one of the earliest recorded settlers in the area near present-day West Memphis, was a native of Holland sent by the Spanish governor of the large area claimed by Spain to establish a settlement on the Mississippi River. Fooy settled in Memphis, TN, in 1792, and moved in 1795 to the west side of the Mississippi River. In 1797 the hamlet, designated "Fooy's Point," took the name Camp de la Esperanza or as

<sup>5</sup> Sandra Taylor Smith, "West Memphis Commercial Historic District, West Memphis, Arkansas," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (2008), Section 8.

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translated, Field of Hope.<sup>6</sup> After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the settlement became part of the United States and was known as "Hopefield." Benjamin Fooy was named as the region's United States Magistrate. Fooy, noted for his honest character and extensive knowledge of the country, ran a clean and lawful town with a bright future until his death in 1823. However, after Fooy's death, Hopefield became a haven for gamblers and thieves banned from Memphis.<sup>7</sup>

Crittenden County, located in east-central Arkansas with the Mississippi River as its eastern boundary, was established in 1825, eleven years before Arkansas became a state. Named after Robert Crittenden, the first secretary of Arkansas Territory, the county had a population of 1,272 in 1830. In 1857 Hopefield became the eastern terminus for the Memphis and Little Rock Railroad, despite its rowdy reputation. The Civil War temporarily halted track construction just east of the St. Francis River in 1861.<sup>8</sup>

During the summer of 1862 Memphis fell into the hands of the Union forces. Most Confederate soldiers were ferried across the river to Hopefield, Arkansas, and surrounding farms. Many of these soldiers were moved to other locations, but some remained to harass the Union forces at Memphis and disrupt river traffic. This became such a problem that on February 19, 1863, four companies of Federal forces burned Hopefield to the ground. The town of Hopefield was rebuilt after the war but never regained the prominence it once held in Crittenden County. In 1871 the Memphis and Little Rock Railroad was completed, aiding Hopefield's economic recovery. However, after the first railroad bridge over the Mississippi River opened in 1892, the railroad tracks were diverted away from Hopefield and toward the bridge, greatly diminishing the town's importance. Hopefield was eventually destroyed by floodwaters in 1912 when the Mississippi River changed course.<sup>9</sup>

Crittenden County needed a new center for government and business after the Civil War. In 1884 Robert Vance's sons, Robert, Jr., and William, both second-generation Crittenden County residents, platted the town of West Memphis south of the Hopefield site. Robert and Hope Vance and their sons were among the first settlers of the region in the 1830s. By 1885 the town had over 200 residents and Robert Vance was appointed

<sup>6</sup> This name came from the Spanish Fort Esperanza, which was built in 1795 on the west side of the Mississippi River. Grif Stockley, "Crittenden County," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Internet, accessed 16 February 2010; available from <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=762>.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, "West Memphis Commercial Historic District," Section 8; Charlotte C. Wicks, "West Memphis," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, Internet, accessed 16 February 2010; available from <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=871>.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, "West Memphis Commercial Historic District," Section 8.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, "West Memphis Commercial Historic District," Section 8; Wicks, "West Memphis," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*; David O. Demuth, "The Burning of Hopefield," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (Summer 1977): 123-129.

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the first postmaster. By 1888 West Memphis boasted three stores—Winchester Brothers, Richard Brothers, and C. B. Givin.<sup>10</sup>

Because the new town of West Memphis was surrounded by vast forests of old growth trees, the lumber industry became the fuel for its progress into the twentieth century. In 1904, Zack Bragg moved to West Memphis and opened the Bragg Sawmill. With the construction of the Frisco Bridge over the Mississippi River in 1892, the rail line that had once passed through Hopefield moved to Hulbert, a small farm town owned by a Memphis attorney on the southwestern edge of West Memphis. Bragg was able to ship his milled lumber and logs by rail and by river. In 1914 P.T. Bolz of St. Louis opened the Bolz Slack Barrel Cooperage Plant in West Memphis.<sup>11</sup>

Because West Memphis and the surrounding areas in Crittenden County have been subject to some of the country's most disastrous floods due the Mississippi River backing into the St. Francis River, the growth of the city was delayed. It was not until the importance of the automobile and its rapid rise as the major mode of transportation that the growth of West Memphis began in earnest. The first automobile bridge across the Mississippi River at Memphis was constructed in 1917. This heralded the growth of the small industrial town of West Memphis as its main street, Broadway Avenue, became a U.S. Highway and an influx of traffic began streaming through the town.<sup>12</sup>

West Memphis was officially incorporated in 1923 and continued to grow to become the largest city in Crittenden County. The availability of river and rail transportation transformed West Memphis into the manufacturing and distribution hub of the county. Although the disastrous 1927 Mississippi River Flood and the Great Depression negatively impacted West Memphis, the city grew and developed at a record pace between 1930 and 1940 due to its location at the intersection of several major rail lines as well as its industrial base. The population of West Memphis almost quadrupled during the 1930s, increasing from 895 in 1930 to 3,369 in 1940. By 1938 West Memphis was home to four lumber companies, four cotton seed oil companies, three cotton gins, a cotton compress (one of the state's largest), a feed mill, a distillery, and an ice plant. And perhaps the town's most notable export from that era was its original Blues music. At one time

<sup>10</sup> West Memphis Chamber of Commerce, "History of West Memphis," Internet, accessed 16 February 2010; available from [http://www.wmcoc.com/westmemphis\\_information/history\\_of\\_westmemphis.htm](http://www.wmcoc.com/westmemphis_information/history_of_westmemphis.htm).

<sup>11</sup> West Memphis, formally known as Garvey and Bragg's Spur, received its current name when General George Nettleton, an official of the Kansas City and Fort Scott Railroad, named the town "West Memphis" in order to bring a higher price for lumber. The town of Hulbert was annexed by West Memphis in 1955. Smith, "West Memphis Commercial Historic District," Section 8; Stockley, "Crittenden County," Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture; Wicks, "West Memphis," Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture; West Memphis Chamber of Commerce, "History of West Memphis," Internet; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, "West Memphis, Arkansas," maps (1930, 1938); Kara Mills, "Memphis and Arkansas Bridge, West Memphis, Arkansas," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (2001): Section 8.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, "West Memphis Commercial Historic District," Section 8.

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Sonny Boy Williamson, Howlin' Wolf, Mr. Lockwood, and B. B. King all called West Memphis home. Broadway Avenue/U.S. Highway 70 became the city's major commercial thoroughfare. Tourist courts, hotels, restaurants, and other amenities geared toward the traveler quickly sprang up along this traffic corridor.<sup>13</sup>

The city's rapid population increase in the 1930s created a demand for better municipal services and necessitated the construction of a city administration building. In June 1938 Mayor William H. Hundhausen appointed a committee to identify needed city improvements. Committee members were Judge J. C. Johnson, Jack W. Rich, and George T. Kendal. The committee immediately recommended the construction of a city administration building, which would house the city hall, a fire station, and a city jail. Prior to 1938, the city council meetings were held at various local businesses, and fire protection was weak at best. In 1930 West Memphis still relied on Memphis for its fire protection, and by 1938 there was one fire truck in West Memphis with a part-time crew. The mayor's committee secured funding from the Public Works Administration (PWA) for the city hall project.<sup>14</sup>

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt took office in 1933, the country was deep in the throes of the Great Depression. The average national income was less than half of what it had been four years before, 13 million Americans were unemployed (about 25 percent of the population), and banks were failing at an alarming rate.<sup>15</sup> In his 1933 inaugural address, President Roosevelt emphasized the pressing need for government intervention when he said, "Our greatest primary task is to put people to work...it [the country's economic crisis] can never be helped merely by talking about it. We must act and act quickly."<sup>16</sup> Roosevelt immediately called for legislation establishing emergency relief programs designed to remedy the tenuous economic and social situation through direct relief payments and public works projects. The President's ensuing "alphabet soup" programs constituted a mass distribution of federal aid called the New Deal. The June 1933 National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) aimed to ease the effects of business closures and increasing unemployment which resulted from a decline in industrial prices. The NIRA was designed to

<sup>13</sup> Smith, "West Memphis Commercial Historic District," Section 8; Stockley, "Crittenden County," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, "West Memphis," maps (1930, 1938, 1949); Terry Buckalew, "'Steady Rolling Man': Arkansas Bluesman Robert 'Junior' Lockwood," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 75-89; *The WPA Guide to 1930s Arkansas*, with an introduction by Elliott West (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1987): 222.

<sup>14</sup> Information submitted by Deborah Griggs, Executive Director, Main Street West Memphis; in the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (2005); Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, "West Memphis," maps (1930, 1938).

<sup>15</sup> Sandra Taylor Smith, "The Civilian Conservation Corps in Arkansas, 1933-1942." From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (1999): 4; Rachel Silva, "Pulaski County in the National Register of Historic Places: The History and Architecture of the Joseph Taylor Robinson Memorial Auditorium," *Pulaski County Historical Review* 56, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 130-133.

<sup>16</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933," reprinted in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 2, 1938 (New York City: Random House, 1938): 11; Silva, "Joseph Taylor Robinson Memorial Auditorium," 130-133.

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increase industrial prices and encourage the creation of trade associations to regulate wages, work environments, production, and costs. The act also established the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works or the Public Works Administration (PWA).<sup>17</sup>

The purpose of the PWA was to put people to work on projects that would benefit the general public and stimulate the local economy. Municipalities and private contractors applied to the PWA for funding of new construction projects that would truly result in a beneficial resource. Projects were financed by grants, loans, or a combination of both. In the beginning, municipalities were entitled to grants that covered 30 percent of the labor and material costs for each project. The grant allocation was raised to 45 percent in 1935. If the PWA approved the project, the grant recipient would raise the remaining balance by issuing bonds. If it was not possible to raise the remainder of the money through the sale of bonds, the PWA purchased the bonds at a low interest rate. The PWA program created an incentive for cities to improve their infrastructure and construct civic buildings for the entire community's enjoyment while stimulating the sluggish economy. The West Memphis City Hall was the town's largest PWA project.<sup>18</sup>

The PWA initially approved a \$16,500 loan and a \$13,500 grant for the city hall project and later approved another \$14,000 grant. A city ordinance was passed to issue bonds for the remaining construction costs. A site for the city hall was chosen just to the southwest of the busy intersection at Broadway Avenue/U.S. Highway 70 and Missouri Street. The city hall would be built on a semi-circular drive called Court Street on the south side of Broadway Avenue. R. D. Eberdt was the architect and engineer for the project. Construction began on July 29, 1938, with a crew of fifty people. The building plans called for two-story front and rear wings connected in the center by a one-story corridor. This would separate the city offices in the front wing from the fire department and city jail in the rear wing. The city hall was completed on June 13, 1939, and officially opened on July 18, 1939. The city jail was ready for occupation in August, and the first city council meeting was held in the building on September 3, 1939.<sup>19</sup>

During the World War II years, transportation of soldiers and goods on the roads, river, and rail lines in the Memphis/West Memphis area created a greater need for lodging and human services. Construction of a

<sup>17</sup> Holly Hope, "An Ambition to be Preferred": New Deal Recovery Efforts in Arkansas, 1933-1943." From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (2006): 23-24; Franklin D. Roosevelt American Heritage Center Museum, "New Deal Achievements," Internet; available from [http://www.fdrheritage.org/new\\_deal.htm](http://www.fdrheritage.org/new_deal.htm). Accessed 12 November 2008; Silva, "Joseph Taylor Robinson Memorial Auditorium," 130-133.

<sup>18</sup> Hope, "An Ambition to be Preferred," 23-25; Information submitted by Deborah Griggs, Executive Director, Main Street West Memphis; in the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (2005); Silva, "Joseph Taylor Robinson Memorial Auditorium," 130-133.

<sup>19</sup> Information submitted by Deborah Griggs, Executive Director, Main Street West Memphis; in the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (2005).

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second automobile bridge across the Mississippi River connecting Memphis and West Memphis in 1949 created another influx of automobile traffic through West Memphis.<sup>20</sup>

To accommodate the growing population, a courtroom addition was constructed in 1954-1955 on the West Memphis City Hall. A jail annex was constructed in 1960-1961. The West Memphis City Hall is now known as the O. I. Bollinger Building, named in honor of a 33-year city council member, and houses the municipal court and a police dispatch station.<sup>21</sup>

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although West Memphis officially incorporated in 1923, flooding on the Mississippi and St. Francis rivers slowed the town's expansion. West Memphis experienced dramatic growth during the 1930s due to increased automobile traffic, industrial development, and the presence of river and railroad transportation. In June 1938 Mayor William H. Hundhausen appointed a committee to determine necessary city improvements. The committee immediately suggested the construction of a city administration building, which would house the city hall, a fire station, and a city jail. Prior to 1938, the city council met in various local businesses and fire protection was sub-par. The mayor's committee enlisted the support of the Public Works Administration (PWA) in order to fund construction of the city administration building. Part of Roosevelt's New Deal, the PWA put people to work on projects that would benefit the general public and stimulate the local economy. The West Memphis City Hall, located at 100 Court Street, opened its doors on July 18, 1939, after about one year of planning and construction. A courtroom addition was completed in 1955, and a jail annex was constructed in 1960-1961. The West Memphis City Hall is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** for its association with the development of municipal services in West Memphis and for its association with the PWA.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, "West Memphis Commercial Historic District," Section 8; Mills, "Memphis and Arkansas Bridge," Section 8; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, "West Memphis," maps (1930, 1938, 1949).

<sup>21</sup> Information submitted by Deborah Griggs, Executive Director, Main Street West Memphis; in the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (2005).



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West Memphis City Hall  
Name of Property

Crittenden County, Arkansas  
County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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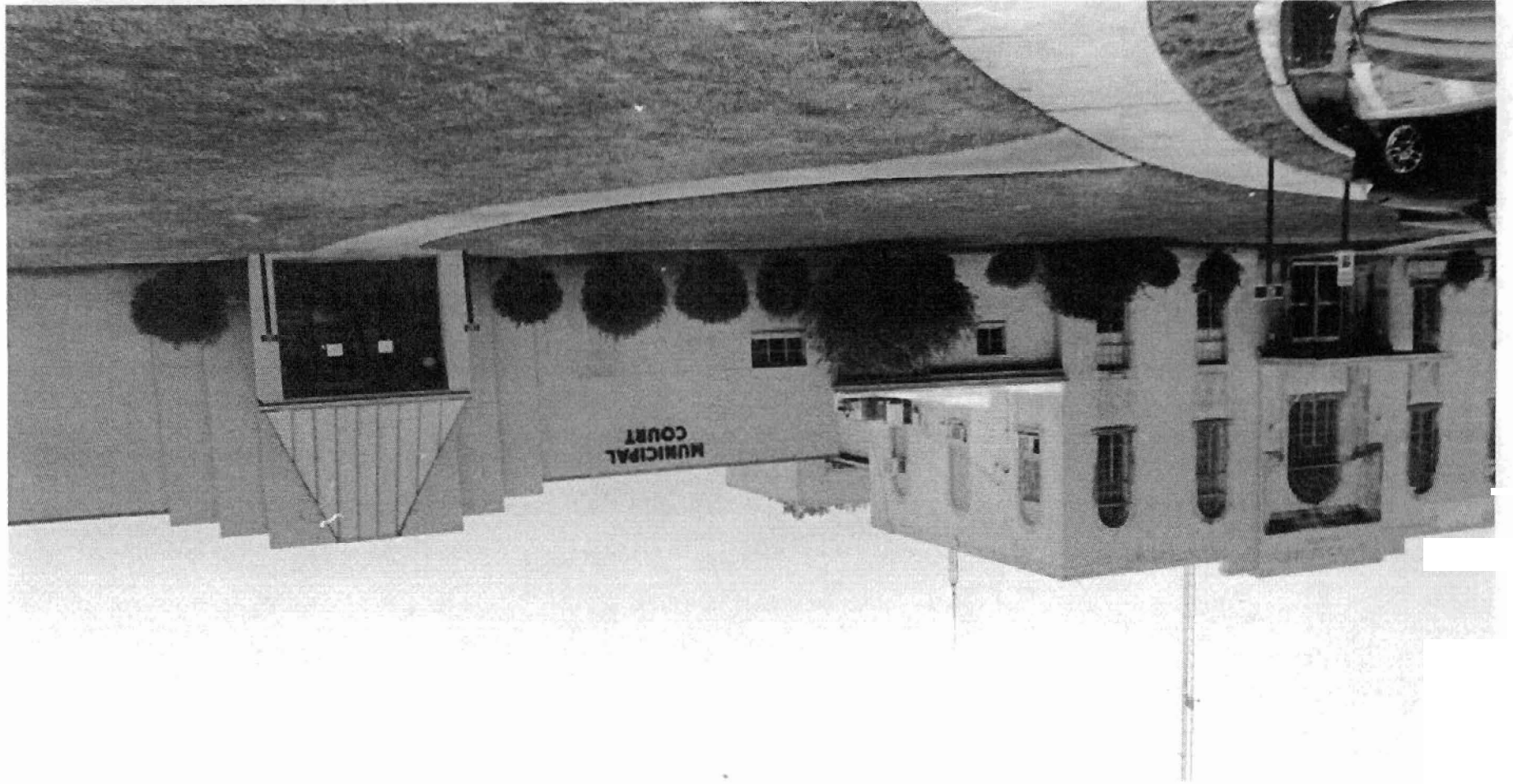
### Verbal Boundary Description

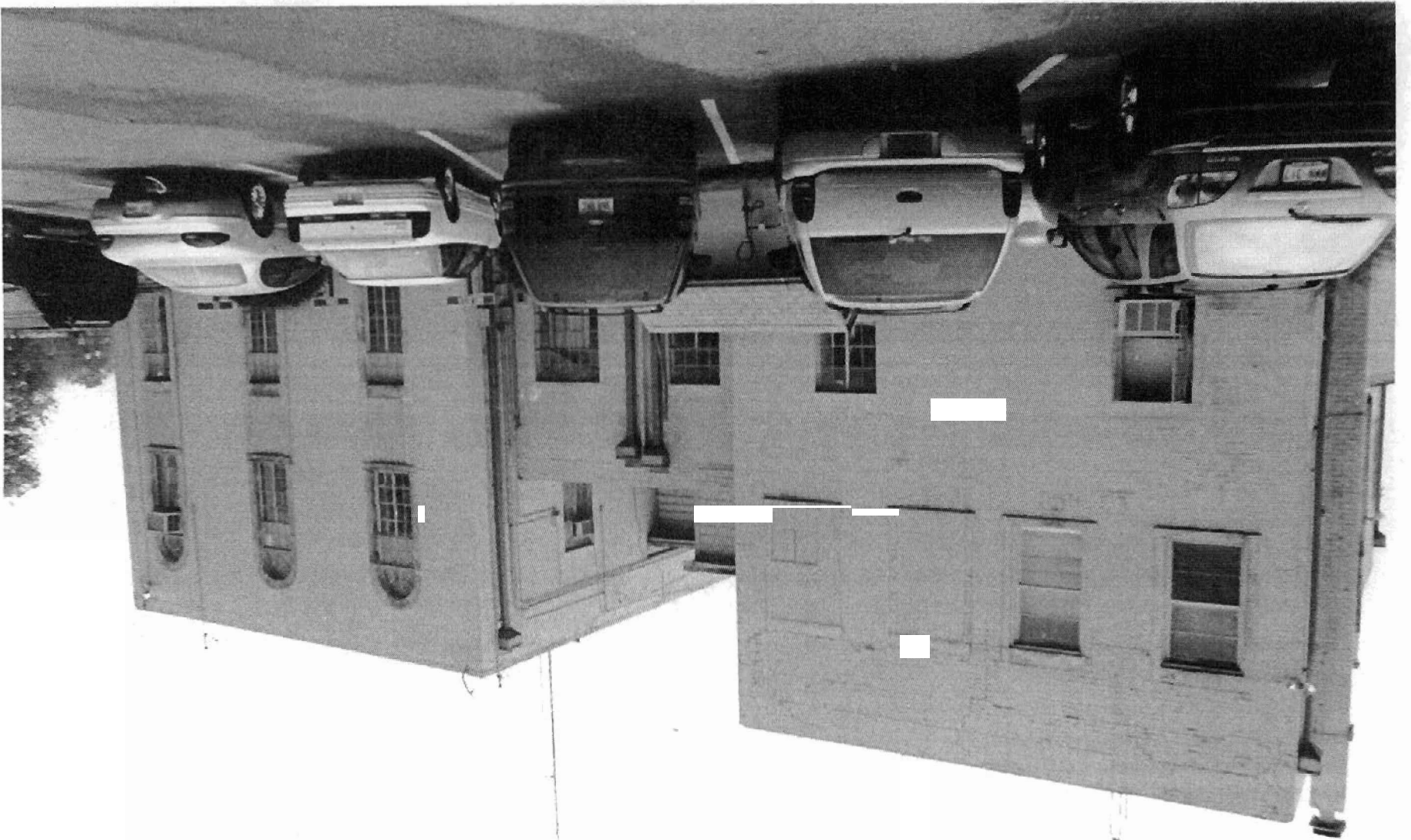
The West Memphis City Hall occupies Lot 3, Block 1 in the Eugene Woods Subdivision, City of West Memphis.

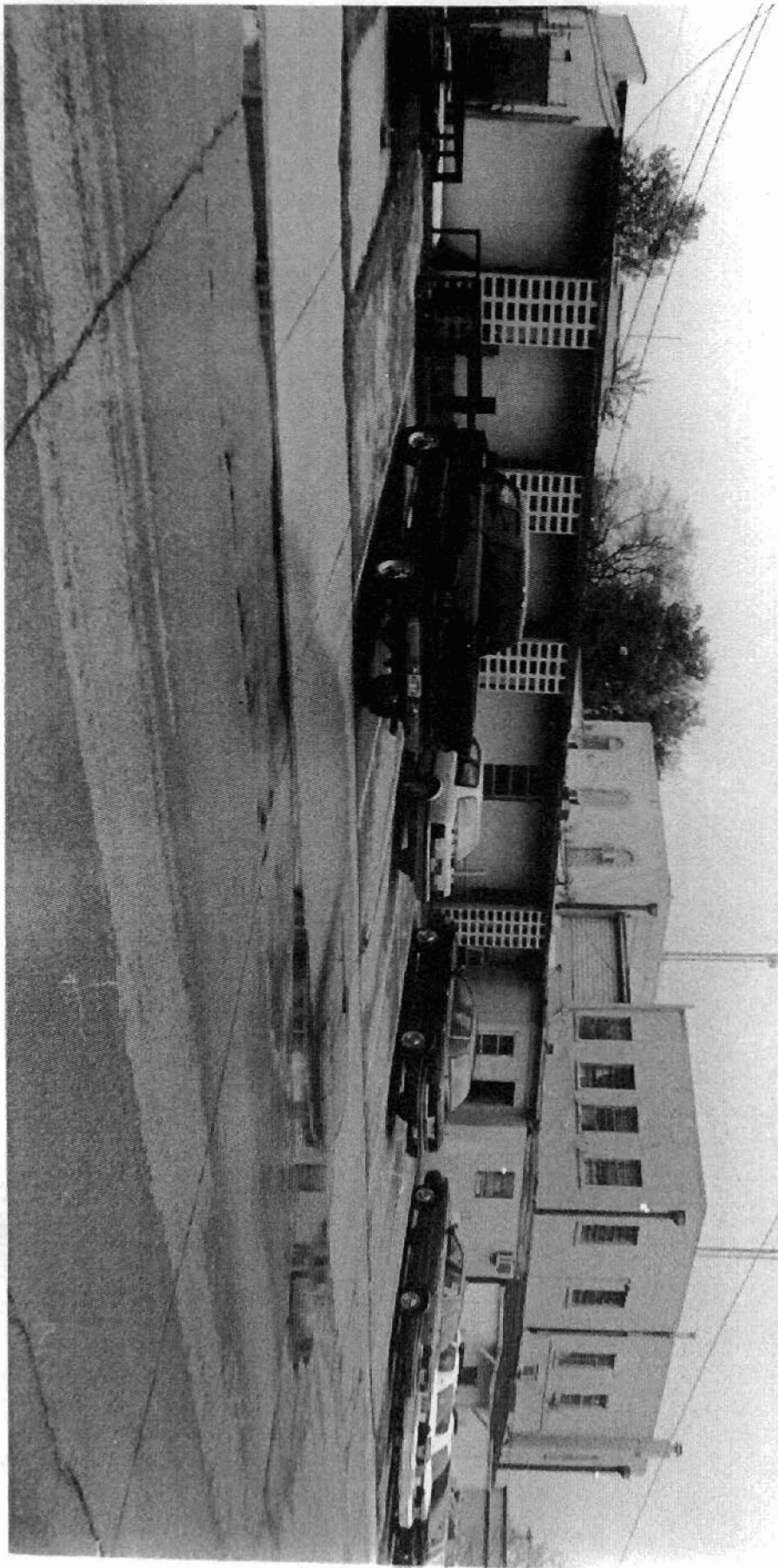
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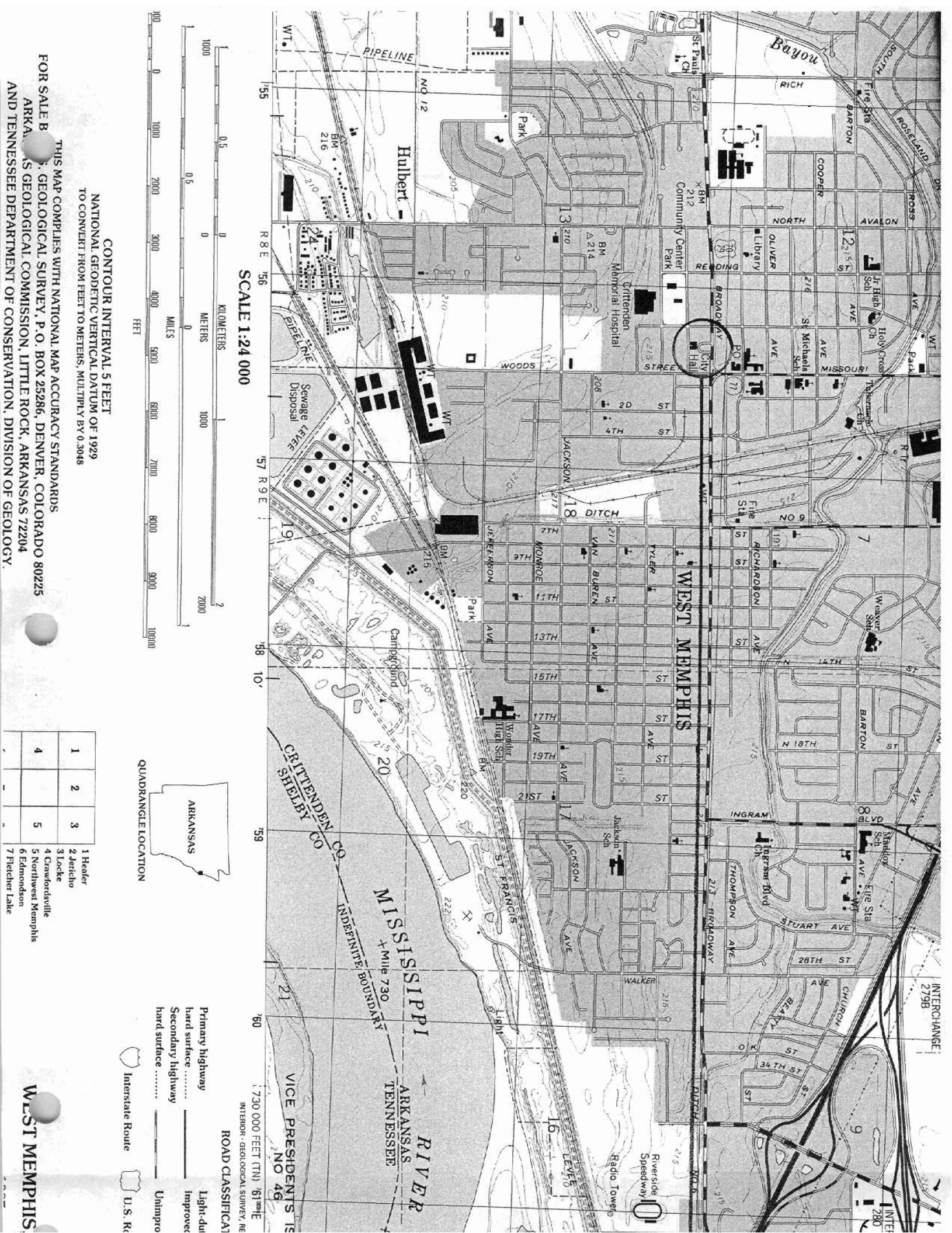
The nominated property includes the parcel historically associated with the West Memphis City Hall.



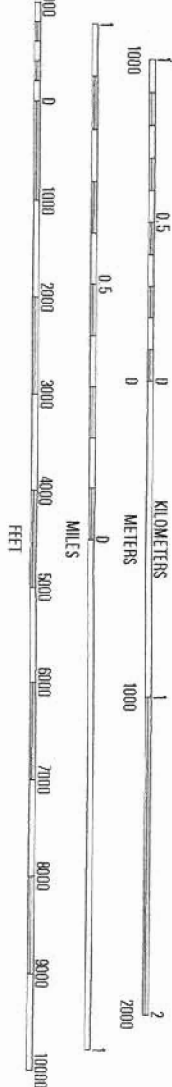






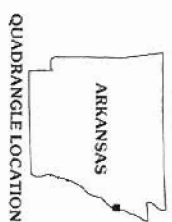


SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET  
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
 TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
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 AND TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION, DIVISION OF GEOLOGY.



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- 1 Healer
- 2 Jericho
- 3 Locke
- 4 Crawfordsville
- 5 Northwest Memphis
- 6 Edmondson
- 7 Fletcher Lake

- Primary highway
- hard surface
- Secondary highway
- hard surface
- Interstate Route
- U.S. Route
- Light-duty
- improver
- Unimproved

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

1:730 000 FEET (TN) 1:61 000  
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