

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building

Other names/site number: JFCD 318

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

2. Location

Street & number: 531 Court Place

City or town: Louisville State: KY County: Jefferson

Not For Publication: n/a Vicinity: n/a

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___x___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ___x___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<p>Signature of certifying official/Title: Craig Potts/SHPO Date _____</p> <p><u>___</u> Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office <u>___</u></p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p> <hr/> <p>Signature of commenting official /Title: _____ Date _____</p> <hr/> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

Category of Property

Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing
<u>1</u>
<u> </u>
<u> </u>
<u> </u>
<u> </u>
<u>1</u>

Noncontributing
<u> </u>
<u> </u>
<u> </u>
<u> </u>
<u> </u>

buildings
sites
structures
objects
Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

GOVERNMENT / government office

Current Functions

GOVERNMENT / government office
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

MODERN MOVEMENT / Art Deco

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property:
Brick, limestone, concrete

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

7. Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building (JFCD 318) is a ten-story, county government office building in downtown Louisville, Kentucky that was designed with ten stories and purpose-built in two sections: the first six stories were constructed in 1938 and the top four stories in 1956. “Its reinforced concrete and steel skeleton frame is faced by buff-colored brick curtain walls which rise above a twelve foot limestone-clad first story on the [south] façade and [west] elevation. The Fiscal Court Building is U-shaped from the first to the tenth floor with windows on all but the east side, which was once a common wall with another building.”¹ The building has simplified Art Deco styling and occupies most of its quarter-acre site. Its primary, southern façade faces Court Place – which is closed to regular vehicular traffic – and the west lawn of the historic Jefferson County Courthouse (NRIS #72000537, listed 1972). The west elevation of the Fiscal Court building meets the sidewalk boundary along Sixth Street and a parking deck is immediately north of the building. The eastern elevation is adjacent to a vacant lot with the Jefferson County Courthouse Annex the next parcel over to the east (NRIS #80001607, listed 1980). Louisville City Hall (NRIS #76000905, listed 1976) is located to the southwest across Sixth Street. This nomination proposes the listing of one contributing building, the Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building, on 0.24 acres, with no non-contributing features.



(Left) Fiscal Court Building location highlighted in red; (Right) 2019 Google street view of primary facade

¹ Historic Designation Report, 2001.

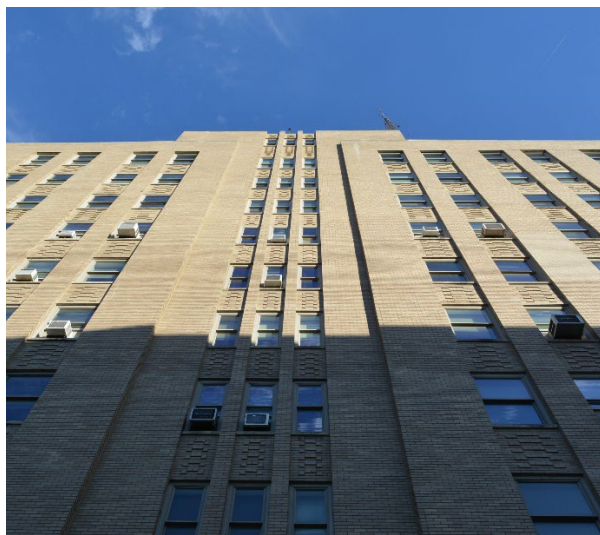
Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Exterior Description

South elevation: The Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building faces south and presents with simplified Art Deco styling in its decorative brick work, brick veneer, and use of limestone on the ground floor, including around the main entrance on Court Place:

*"Fenestration consists of wood or steel double-hung windows that rise in three paired vertical strips to the tenth floor. A narrower vertical trio of windows accents the slightly recessed central bay that rises to an eleventh-story elevator tower. Below each window is a spandrel with projecting decorative brickwork. This same decorative brickwork forms the parapet trim of the central tower. From the first to the fifth floors, the windows on the north wall have been removed with the construction of a parking garage. The slightly projecting, limestone entrance is flanked by curved and fluted jambs below the carved words, " Fiscal Court Building, Jefferson County." On either side is a metal, banded tubular light fixture."*²



(Left) Looking up at decorative brick work above the main entrance; (Right) Main entrance, 2018 photo.

West elevation (photo next page): The west elevation runs along the east side of Sixth Street and displays Art Deco styling similar to what is seen on the southern façade with vertical strips of paired windows and decorative brick work in the spandrels. Limestone wall panels are also present on the ground floor along the sidewalk on this elevation, similar to the southern façade.

East elevation (photo next page): When the Fiscal Court Building was originally constructed, there was an adjacent two-story building on this now-vacant lot and courtyard area. A portion of the original concrete structural frame can be viewed on this elevation. Windows are only present on the top four floors on this side of the building. The eastern elevation is more utilitarian in appearance.

² Historic Designation Report, 2001.

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State



West elevation, Jefferson Co. Fiscal Court Building



East elevation, Jefferson Co. Fiscal Court Bldg.

North elevation: The building's U-shaped plan is evident on this elevation as a recessed portion of the north wall. Windows are present on the receding wall of the U-shape on this elevation, but there are no windows on the western third of the north face. The absence of the banded windows, seen on the south and west elevations, gives less articulation to the cornice of the building and makes the north side appear more utilitarian. Buildings fronting Market Street were present when the Fiscal Court Building was originally constructed. The top central section is the elevator penthouse. In the 1970s, a parking garage was built adjacent to the Fiscal Court Building's north wall but there is no parking garage access from inside the Fiscal Court Building. The garage is not part of the parcel or proposed boundary and stretches from the north wall to W. Market St.



Windows on north elevation, 2018



Looking towards building from corner of W. Market & Sixth St.

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Interior Description

The building has been used for county and city offices over the course of its life, with many renovations as offices changed and moved. An Aug. 22, 1939 *Courier-Journal* article reporting on the near-completion of the original six-story building described the original office tenants:

“Offices the building is to house now are scattered about the city or located in the Armory. City and County Registration Departments and the Automobile License Department will be located on the first floor; the County Health and Probation Departments, including the Juvenile Court, will be on the second floor; the County Welfare and Road Departments, and offices of the Coroner and Engineer will be on the third floor, and the fourth floor will be occupied by the Fiscal Court, Purgation Board, County Treasurer and County Buyer.”

The general floor plan shows a central elevator bank with common hallway and office wings on each side. There are two stair towers, one accessed from the elevator hallway, and one at the upper northwest area of the building with street access to the exterior on Sixth Street. The first floor has men’s and women’s restrooms centrally located, but the restrooms alternate men’s and women’s on each floor going up. The lobby entrance area on the first floor is used as office space on upper floors.

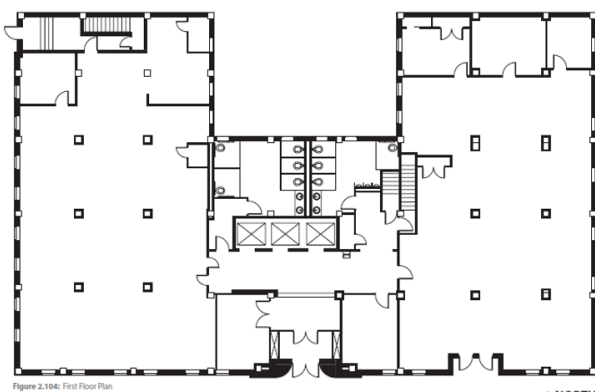


Figure 2.104: First Floor Plan

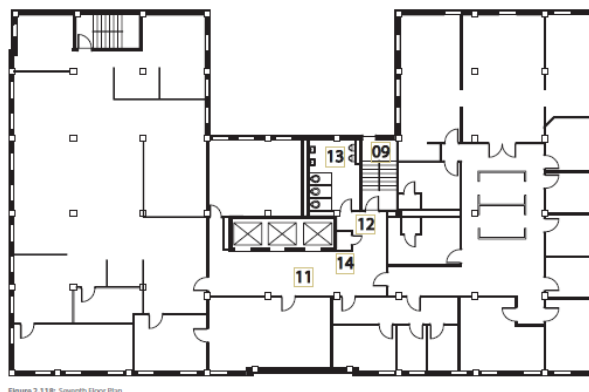


Figure 2.118: Seventh Floor Plan

(Left) First floor plan with central entrance lobby; (Right) Seventh floor plan, as an example

Finishes vary on each floor depending on the department and last renovation – many of the offices have cubicle partitions or other non-permanent wall and door systems. Elevator lobbies have half-wall, white marble wainscot and terrazzo floors. The first and tenth levels have the highest overall ceiling heights, but most have dropped ceiling systems. The seventh floor has wood doors and glass transoms still present.

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State



(Left) Elevator lobby at entrance level on first floor; (Right) Lobby on seventh floor



(Left) Office space on first floor, west wing; (Right) Office space on tenth floor, east wing

Construction History of the Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building

Two historical photos (next page), taken by the Royal Photo Company and held at the University of Louisville Photographic Archives, clearly show the changes between the two major construction periods. The Art Deco styled crenelations at the cornice line were lost when the height was increased, giving the building a more streamlined and modern appearance. Note that the neighboring two-story building was still present in the 1956 photograph.

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

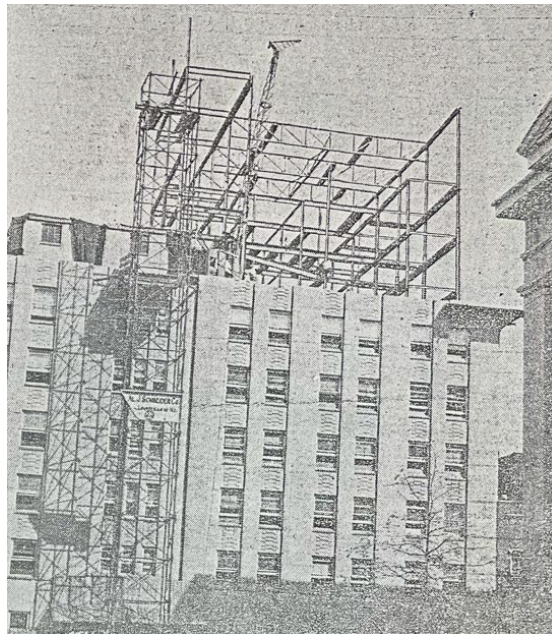


First six stories, December 1938



Completed ten-story building, August 1956.

Construction of the first six stories utilized a concrete frame, part of which can be seen on the east elevation and U-shaped north façade today. The use of a brick veneer with the concrete frame was somewhat new to the time period. The upper four stories were later built with a steel frame, which was more typical of building practices at that time, and the brick veneer continued.



(Left) Photo of unknown publication and date physically cut and pasted into the 1942 chapter written by Chester Bennett (Univ. of Louisville; (Right) Steel beams rising for Fiscal Court Building vertical addition – Louisville Times clipping dated Oct. 5, 1954, found in Samuel W. Thomas papers (Univ. of Louisville)

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Changes Over Time

Besides the vertical addition, the exterior appears much as it did when the building topped out at ten stories in 1956. Brick repair and restoration work have been completed on the primary facades in the past decade, although future tuckpointing and securing may be necessary. Limestone panels at street level show some signs of deterioration, likely due to repeated applications of road salt during cold weather. On the interior, historic materials such as marble wainscot, wood doors, and terrazzo floors are still present in common hallways. Office areas were designed to be convertible as spaces changed, and many of the floors have modern cubicle partitions, dropped ceilings, and other non-historic finishes. The building lacks a central air conditioning system, and window units and rooftop units were added later to provide cooling.

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic 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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance: POLITICS / GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance: 1938-1956

Significant Dates: 1938; 1956 (top 4 stories added)

Significant Person: n/a

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder

1938: Walter C. Wagner (architect)

1956 addition: A. J. Schneider (builder)

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building (JFCD 318) meets National Register Criterion A and is locally significant in the area of Politics/Government. Its significance is evaluated within the context “Local Government Building Development in Louisville, Kentucky, 1900-1960”. The period of significance for the Fiscal Court Building begins in 1938, when construction of the original six stories began, and ends in 1956 when the top four floors were completed. Initially, its merit was seen as a practical solution for bringing civic offices together under one roof. At the time of its design and construction, county government offices were scattered throughout the city and crowded due to expansion of services for population growth in the county. The Fiscal Court Building was “envisioned as an office tower that would allow consolidation of the County’s many departments in modern, efficient space.”³ Citizens of Jefferson County could conduct much of their civic business – such as marriage licenses and auto renewals – in one centralized location. But this efficiency led to a more important step in Jefferson County affairs. Even before the 1930s, Louisville’s citizens were looking beyond the city boundaries to suburbs outside of the city as a desirable place to live. Construction of the Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building in 1938 and its extension in 1956 signaled the growing importance of the areas of the county beyond the city limits when looking at population and economic development opportunities. After several failed attempts over the decades, voters finally dissolved the division between city and county governments by adopting a merged, more responsive form of governance in 2003, officially called Louisville-Jefferson County Metro Government, or “Louisville Metro.” This building played a powerful role in helping citizens conceive of the practicality of unifying the two governments.

Local Government Building Development in Louisville, Kentucky: 1900-1960

The downtown location of the Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building has long been the historic government center of Louisville:

“The importance of the vicinity of Sixth and Jefferson Streets as the seat of local government was established as early as 1780 when the west half of the lot upon which the Jefferson County Court House now sits was designated for use as a public square for the purpose of county government by an Act of Virginia. By 1787, a log courthouse measuring 16 x 20 feet was erected on that site.”⁴

By the early part of the twentieth century, construction of the Courthouse Annex was necessary to provide additional courtroom and office space for functions taking place in the Courthouse. Jefferson County built its Armory for military use in 1905, about 3 blocks south of the Courthouse, but some county offices were also located there in the early decades of the twentieth

³ Historic Designation Report, 2001.

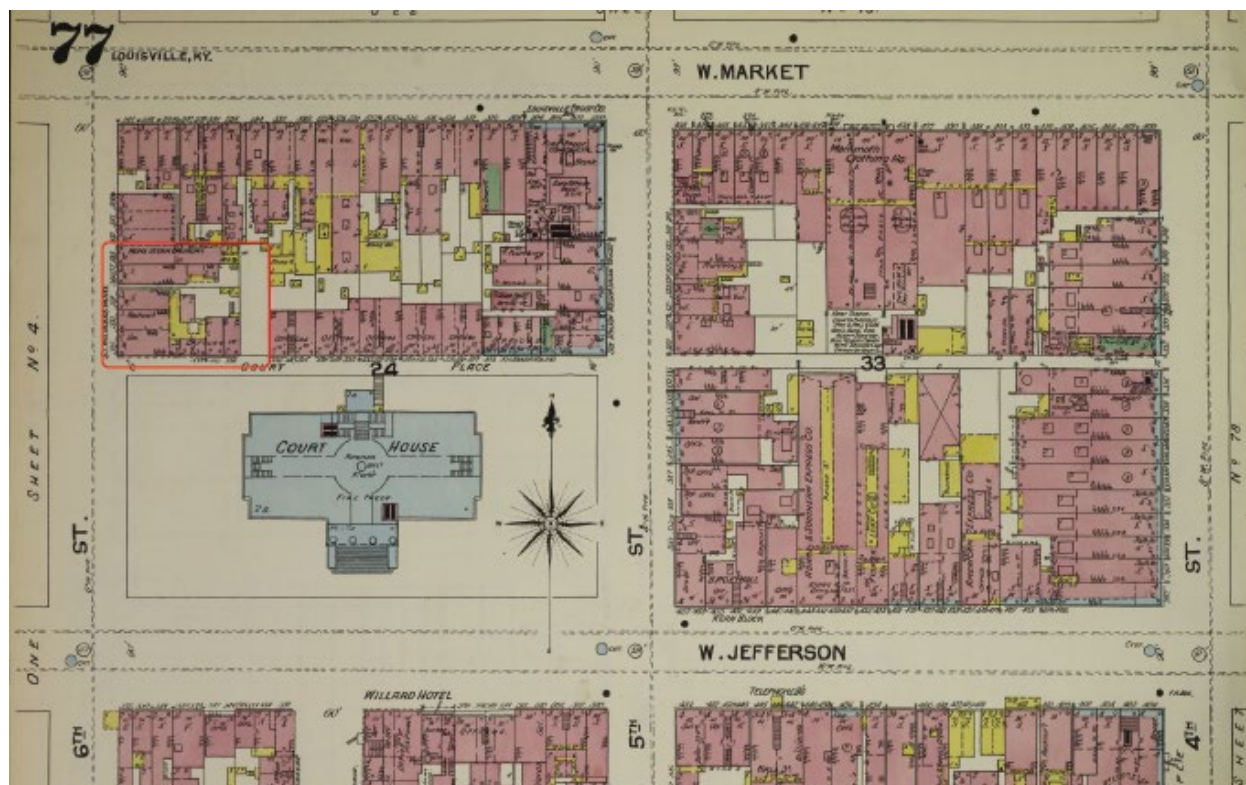
⁴ Ibid.

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

century. In the 1930s, county offices were scattered and crowded, and it was desired to bring many of these departments together in one location in a new building.

The 1892 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the properties that were previously located on the northeast corner of Sixth Street and Court Place: the Home Steam Laundry and the St. Nicholas Hotel (by the 1930s it was called the Congress Hotel). Jefferson County purchased these properties in 1936, initially planning to renovate the existing buildings for office use. However, after the major Ohio River flood in early January and February 1937, the decision was made to demolish the damaged structures and build new on the site.



1892 Sanborn fire insurance map with location of existing Fiscal Court building indicated; this map also pre-dates the ca. 1900 Courthouse Annex, which was built to the rear of the Courthouse across Court Place.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA), a New Deal work-relief program created by President Roosevelt, “employed more than 8.5 million people... WPA employees built bridges, roads, public buildings, public parks and airports:”

“Under the direction of Harry Hopkins, an enthusiastic ex-social worker who had come from modest means, the WPA would spend more than \$11 million in employment relief before it was canceled in 1943. The work relief program was more expensive than direct relief payments, but worth the added cost, Hopkins believed. “Give a man a dole,” he observed, “and you save his body and destroy his spirit. Give him a job and you save both body and spirit”.”⁵

⁵ “The Works Progress Administration,” American Experience, PBS.org

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

WPA workers were busy in Louisville after the 1937 Flood, and in March 1938, the Fiscal Court applied for federal funding from the WPA to build what at that time was planned to be a four-story courthouse annex. Local architect Walter C. Wagner specifically designed the structure to withstand additional stories in the future. In late 1938, the WPA was able to provide additional funding for two more floors of the now-renamed Fiscal Court Building, after construction had already begun in May. The *Courier-Journal* reported in August 1939 that the building would be ready by October: "Six stories high and constructed so that four stories may be added should the need for additional space arise, the building is so roomy that present plans of the Fiscal Court are to place only four of the floors in immediate use... Offices the building is to house now are scattered about the city or located in the Armory."

The departments located in the new Fiscal Court Building were included in a 1942 report by Chester Bennett, a student in Elva Anne Lyon's English 101 class at the University of Louisville:

First Floor: Auto License Department; Marriage License Clerk; City of Louisville Board of Registration Commissioners, and County Registration

Second Floor: Juvenile Court Probation Office; County Health Department

Third Floor: County Board of Registration and Purgation Department; Coroner Jury Room; Coroner; Welfare Department; Road Department

Fourth Floor: Recreation Department; Fiscal Court; County Purchasing Agent; County Judge; County Commissioners; County Auditor; County Attorney; Clerk Fiscal Court; Alcoholic Beverage Control Administration; Aid and Dependent Children

Fifth Floor: County Tax Commissioner and Assessor; County Sheriff; State Welfare Department

It was known that the building was originally designed for an addition, and this cost-saving feature would be realized barely two decades later. Bennett's thoughtful observation in his report, written when only six stories were occupied, noted the economic sense of this decision:

"It is estimated that four more stories will be added, probably several at a time so that the building will have a total of ten stories. When this is done the building will have been increased sixty-six and two thirds percent without purchasing or occupying any additional amount of property."

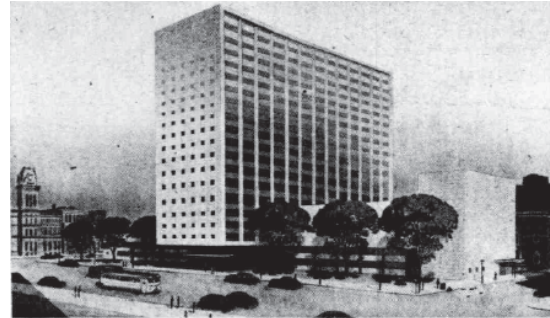
However, in March 1945, a scant five and a half years after the Fiscal Court Building opened, articles and architect sketches were shared in the *Courier-Journal*, looking ahead at future growth opportunities for the historic city center. Again, the need for office space in the Courthouse and Annex was the driving concern. Wings were proposed to be built onto the historic Courthouse, and Walter C. Wagner even proposed a massive 20-story tower to be built in place of the Annex (rendering next page, top left).

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State



If a City-County Building designed by architect Walter C. Wagner is erected at rear of the Courthouse, here is how the combination of buildings would look.



HERE'S ONE IDEA for a Courthouse to serve the County for years. Architects Stratton O. Hammon and Walter C. Wagner emphasized that their artist drew not THE Courthouse, but A Courthouse, sketched on the site of the present one. At left is City Hall, at right First National Bank. West wing, toward left, would house offices having heavy business with general public. Escalators would make use of two stories. Right wing would be auditorium, over Magistrates' Courts. Six top stories of 19 would be jail. In reduced form, jail and auditorium would be omitted.

(Left) Printed in March 25, 1945 issue of the *Courier-Journal*. Note the then-six story Fiscal Court Building on the far left; (Right) Printed in November 30, 1947 issue of the *Courier-Journal*.

A few months later, a small mention appeared on August 23, 1945 to “informally discuss” the “proposal to add four stories to the Fiscal Court Building... the space is needed for the County and Circuit Court clerks.”⁶ But by 1947, large government tower ideas were back in the paper. The same Wagner rendering shown above was shared once more in the July 6, 1947 paper with a new, alarming caption: “Two years ago there was advanced the idea of a skyscraper building behind the present Courthouse. The project outgrew the room available. Now serious consideration is being given to doing away with the present Courthouse altogether. The Fiscal Court Building, at left, would have been retained.” In November 1947, a dramatically different streetscape plan was proposed as a rendering (above right). The historic government building complex in Louisville’s downtown Central Business District might have been completely lost. Thankfully, these plans did not come to fruition.

In January 1954, articles about the need for more county office space started appearing in the *Courier-Journal* yet again. The county was growing and therefore, county office staff also needed to increase: “Fiscal Court hopes to build an addition to the Fiscal Court Building... The County is being forced into this action because there is no more office space available in the Fiscal Court Building, the Courthouse, the Courthouse annexes, and the County Armory. There is very little storage space remaining.” The County Tax Commissioner at the time, George Trager, reported that in 1954, he would handle “230,000 tax bills... compared with about 158,000 in 1945.”⁷ Increased automobile use after World War II led to increased county road construction costs, which delayed progress on office space up until that point.

The four-story addition used steel framing instead of concrete like the original portion, once again adapting to current architectural trends. The county saved money by vertically expanding a building that they already owned. With increased office space and room to grow, county departments were able to operate more effectively. The complex of government buildings remains today as it was completed in 1956 and is still the hub of government activity in downtown Louisville.

⁶ “\$100,000 Addition To Court Discussed.” *Courier-Journal*. 25 Aug. 1945

⁷ “Fiscal Court Would Build an Addition.” *Courier-Journal*. 14 Jan. 1954

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

The city of Louisville, a Certified Local Government, recognized the significance of the Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building by designating it as an individual local landmark in 2001 along with the Jefferson County Courthouse and the Jefferson County Courthouse Annex as part of the Jefferson County Government Buildings Historic Landmark Complex and as examples of “monumental civic architecture.”⁸ The 2001 Historic Designation Report, as cited elsewhere in this nomination, goes into more detail on the Jefferson County Courthouse (now called Louisville Metro Hall) and the Jefferson County Courthouse Annex.

In 2003, Louisville merged with Jefferson County in a city-county consolidation to form the Louisville-Jefferson County Metro Government, or “Louisville Metro”. A ten-year perspective of the merger, completed as an independent research study in 2013, stated that one important result was a “more unified approach to economic development and governance.” Similarly:

“While population growth and economic changes may be only partially attributed to the merger, improvements in government efficiency and efficacy are primarily the product of the merger. The new government has been able to provide a comparable level of service without increasing costs and with fewer employees... Additionally, having a single government setting the agenda and ordering priorities has been beneficial.”⁹

Nearby National Register Listings

The 1970s and 1980s saw many buildings near the Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building listed on the National Register of Historic Places, mostly for significance in architecture:

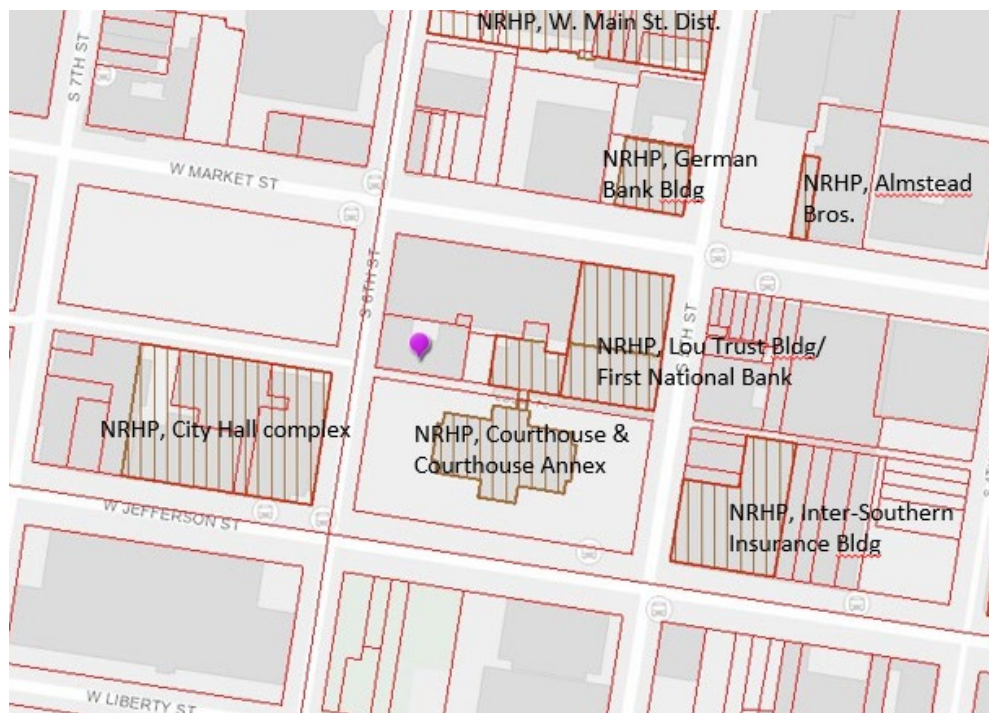
Historic Name / NRIS	Address	Date of Bldg	Date Listed	Criteria
Jefferson Co. Courthouse / 72000537	527 W. Jefferson St.	Ca. 1842	1972	Architecture; Politics/Gov't
Jefferson Co. Courthouse Annex / 80001607	517 Court Pl.	1900-01	1980	Architecture; Politics/Gov't
Louisville City Hall complex / 76000905	601, 603, 617 W. Jefferson St.	1870-73; 1891; 1907-09	1976	Architecture; Politics/Gov't; Sculpture; Social/Humanitarian
Louisville Trust Building / 77000624	208 S. 5 th St.	1889-1891	1977	Architecture; Commerce; Engineering
First National Bank-Kentucky Title Co. Building / 83002664	214 S. 5 th St.	1927; 1953	1983	Architecture
Almsted Brothers Building / 82002704	425 W. Market St.	1930-31	1982	Architecture
German Bank Building / 84000029	150 S. 5 th St.	1914; 1924	1984	Architecture
Inter-Southern Insurance Building / 80001605	239-247 S. 5 th St.	1913; 1922	1980	Architecture

⁸ Historic Designation Report, 2001.

⁹ Wachter, Jeff. “A 10-Year Perspective of the Merger of Louisville and Jefferson County, KY,” 2013.

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State



LOJIC.org basemap with National Register properties indicated by hashes; labels added by J. McCarron; purple marker indicates location of nominated property

Design of the Fiscal Court Building

The committee who selected Walter C. Wagner as the architect for the project chose a Louisville native who was skilled in the design of local institutional buildings: schools, government services, and churches, as well as buildings that were important for their commercial and industrial functions. Wagner, on some level, represented the local genius, which makes the building literally ‘by the people and for the people,’ giving physical shape to the ideal version of American civic government. He designed “a monumental example of civic architecture in a style popular for its day” which remains as a part of the urban landscape as well as a “tangible reminder of our community’s past history.”¹⁰

From the Historic Designation Report (2001):

“Walter C. Wagner, who designed and engineered both phases of construction on the Fiscal Court Building, was born on April 9, 1893 in Louisville, Kentucky where he lived and worked until his death in 1977... Wagner's practice concentrated on commercial and civic buildings. He worked on several distilleries and breweries... theaters. He designed and built over 15 projects for Louisville area churches and schools. Wagner undertook numerous projects for Jefferson County. In addition to the Fiscal Court Building, he was responsible for renovations to the Armory and for helping the county assess damage after the devastating flood of 1937.”

¹⁰ Historic Designation Report, 2001

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Evaluation of the Significance of the Fiscal Court Building within the context of Local Government Building Development in Louisville

The Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building is significant at the local level for uniting civic offices under one roof that were otherwise scattered and crowded in other parts of downtown, essentially satisfying the Kentucky state motto: “United we stand, divided we fall”. The construction of the Fiscal Court Building in 1938 and its vertical addition in 1956 made economic sense and added value to the Central Business District and the historic city center of government buildings: “The erection of each building, in turn had the spin off effect of luring government-related businesses into the vicinity and reinforced the attractiveness of these locations. These buildings set the tone for this north-central portion of downtown as an enclave of business activity.”¹¹ As a WPA-funded project started towards the end of the Great Depression, it remains in active use as a well-designed government office building.

Overall, the Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building is a good example of a twentieth-century utilitarian office building purpose-built in the prevailing architectural style of the time. Perhaps its rather simple Art Deco styling, which had become popularized on many business buildings throughout the country, helped shift the idea of government from an operation that was appropriately depicted in a palatial structure such as a courthouse or city hall, to one that operated more efficiently and professionally, like a commercial business.

Evaluation of the Integrity of the Fiscal Court Building and its current physical condition

A building in Louisville that meets Criterion A for its importance in politics from 1900-1960 needs to retain the physical elements of the property that convey how the county government became important during this era. The physical aspects of any building that convey trends in government will become important features of buildings that help us understand the shift from a government that benefitted few to a government that attempted to serve all.

The Fiscal Court Building has an integrity of **Location** and **Setting**. The Fiscal Court Building has not been moved and remains in its location of the historic government center in Louisville. Prior to its construction, county services were scattered throughout the city; unifying the county offices into a “one stop shop” provided a great convenience to the voters and taxpayers funding these operations. By placing the Fiscal Court Building within the historic setting of finance, commerce, and government, that location and setting gave the county departments two more reasons to conduct themselves in a business-like way.

The Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building retains an integrity of **Materials** and **Design**. The Art Deco-styled Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building presented to the public in 1938 an architectural style that contrasts with the ca. 1842 Greek Revival Courthouse and ca. 1900 Georgian Revival Annex in the historic landmark complex. Its design provided an image of

¹¹ Historic Designation Report, 2001

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building

Name of Property

Jefferson, KY

County and State

county government that was identified with professionalism and commerce, as many business buildings of the day were also given that style. The simplified Art Deco architectural details are sufficiently intact on the exterior so that the Deco styling continues to read today. This includes the use of decorative brickwork, the curved and fluted limestone entranceway, and vertical ribbons of paired windows. The concrete frame, and then steel framing for the addition, were construction materials and processes drawn from methods that saw great use in commercial structures. Inside the structure, high quality materials such as marble wainscot and terrazzo floors are still extant in common hallways to provide us the appearance that people had upon entering the work space in the building. The property's style and materials gave the building a monumental impression and conveyed a modern image of a government that people could identify with, hoping that it operated on professional and business-like terms, rather than favoring the winning political party or certain social groups.

Because the Fiscal Court Building has integrity of setting, location, materials, and design, it can be said to have integrity of **Association**, which is the key integrity factor to support the claim that the building meets Criterion A. The building's physical form helps us associate it with the important aspects of county government administration during 1930s-1950s. The building retains sufficient materials and design to support an integrity of **Feeling** that citizens might have had starting in the 1930s when encountering it. The doors opened in 1938, during the nation's Great Depression, when non-government institutions (e.g., churches) could not provide sufficient economic and social relief to the citizens. This crisis demanded a new approach to government, one which could benefit all citizens. The building blended architectural vocabularies from halls of business and halls of power. The structure expressed a monumentality that people had identified with earlier governmental buildings, but by arranging the structure in a style that had been adopted for commercial construction, the property's form and appearance invited the citizen to conceive of government as an entity available to all. Because the Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building stands beside those earlier places of power in the government building complex, its appearance in 1938 provided a fresh message about the promise that government offered in assisting its citizens to return to prosperity; the building's vertical expansion in 1956 furthered this image of a government that approached its exercise of power in a business-like manner. Sufficient materials and design remain on the building more than 60 years later to enable us to perceive the property and imagine the hopes that the people years ago projected upon the structure.

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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- 1945 March 25: "Adding to Courthouse Called Ruinous to Architectural Gem"
- 1945 August 23: "\$100,000 Addition To Court Discussed"
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- 1947 Nov. 30: "5 Are Named to Study Plan to Build New Courthouse"
- 1954 January 14: "Fiscal Court Would Build An Addition"
- 1954 January 30: "Fiscal Court Building Will Get New Addition"
- 1955 April 6: "Court To Move To 10th Floor Of Building"
- 1955 May 25: "County Studies Plan To Build Courthouse"

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Maps: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: 1892, 1905, 1928-1941, 1928-1951, 1975.
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- Hedgepeth, Marty Poynter. "Jefferson County Courthouse Annex." (NRIS 80001607; Jefferson County, KY). 1980.
- Thomas, Samuel W. "Jefferson County Courthouse." (NRIS 72000537; Jefferson County, KY). 1972.

Staff, Jefferson County Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission. "Historic Landmark Designation" Report (for six Jefferson County-owned properties: the Belle of Louisville, the Buechel Depot, the Fiscal Court Building, the Jefferson County Courthouse, the Jefferson County Courthouse Annex, and the Jefferson County Armory/Gardens). 2001.

Thomas, Samuel W. Papers, "Fiscal Court Building Walter C. Wagner, architect 1938-1940 1954 addition," University of Louisville Archives. Accessed December 2023.

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Wachter, Jeff. "A 10-Year Perspective of the Merger of Louisville and Jefferson County, KY: Louisville Metro Vaults from 65th to 18th Largest City in the Nation." Sept. 2013. Accessed online at Center for Governmental Research.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): JFCD 318

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.24 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
Latitude: 38.25494 Longitude: -85.75989

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State



Verbal Boundary Description

The area proposed for National Register listing is as follows:

BEGINNING at the intersection of the north line of Court Place with the east line of Sixth Street; thence with the said east line, North 8 degrees 46 minutes 54 seconds East 80.73 feet to a point; thence leaving said east line, South 82 degrees 05 minutes 14 seconds East 130.00 feet to a point 81.51 feet north of the north line of Court Place as measured along a line parallel to said east line of Sixth Street; thence South 8 degrees 46 minutes 54 seconds West 81.51 feet to a point in the said north line of Court Place; thence with said line, North 81 degrees 11 minutes 36 seconds West 130.00 feet to the point of beginning.

BEING a part of the same property conveyed to the County of Jefferson, Kentucky, by Deed dated November 6, 1936, of record in Deed Book 1618, Page 543, and by Deed dated August 5, 1937, of record in Deed Book 1647, Page 101, both in the Office of the Clerk of Jefferson County, Kentucky.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the building and the parcel that has been historically associated with the property, which immediately surrounds it.

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jessica McCarron, MHP / Historic Project Manager
organization: Weyland Ventures
street & number: 815 W. Market St. #110
city or town: Louisville state: KY zip code: 40202
e-mail: Jessica@WeylandVentures.com
date: December 2023

Photographs/Photo Log

Name of Property: Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
City or Vicinity: Louisville
County: Jefferson
State: Kentucky
Photographer: Jessica McCarron
Date Photographed: November 30, 2023

Photo 001: Primary façade / south elevation, facing NE.

Photo 002: West elevation and south elevation, facing E.

Photo 003: West elevation, facing E.

Photo 004: Portion of north elevation and non-historic, non-associated parking garage at corner of W. Market St. and Sixth St., facing SE.

Photo 005: East elevation, facing NW.

Photo 006: Interior, first floor elevator lobby.

Jefferson County Fiscal Court Building
Name of Property

Jefferson, KY
County and State

Additional Documentation

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.



(Balloon marker indicates building location)