

# Jack County Historical Commission

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**FILED FOR RECORD**

\_\_\_\_\_ O'CLOCK \_\_\_\_\_ M

November 6, 2025

To the Hon. Commissioners Court of Jack County  
c/o the County Judge of said Court  
100 N. Main St., Suite 206  
Jacksboro, TX 76458

NOV 10 2025

**VANESSA JAMES, County Clerk  
JACK COUNTY, TEXAS**

BY \_\_\_\_\_ DEPUTY

Dear Court Members:

We are in receipt of Judge Umphress' letter of July 15, 2025 regarding the Commission's input on courthouse renovation, repairs, and restoration and specifically regarding seating and floor covering in the District Courtroom (see copy attached).

We have considered the matter after seating a quorum in a recent CHC meeting and would express our appreciation for the Court's interest in preserving and restoring the District Courtroom after a number of instances in which the surfaces were damaged by use and a couple of instances even of water damage and for seeking our input.

There are only two listings in our county currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Courthouse is one of those.

I specifically remember contracting in 2011 as the Commissioners Court with a roofer to remove the original roof and any repairs to the concrete decking to then replace it with a new roof covering.

The contract specifically provided that no more of the roof would be removed at a time than could be replaced that day. On a Friday when they started work four floors above ground level where no one could see, the contractor apparently removed ALL of the roof material on ALL of the roof and went home for the weekend. We had no idea this was done and on that weekend a thunderstorm went through our county and put about 4 inches of rain on our roof in one night.

In our meeting of October 16, 2025, the County Historical Commission adopted a motion that recommends that the County follow the "Texas Historical Commission guidelines in any and all restorations/repairs as closely as reasonably possible, maintaining the integrity of this historical structure to include internal furnishings such as benches, jury seating, flooring, blinds, clocks, lighting, velvet barrier ropes, etc."

I would personally summarize the motion as to restore, in all respects, the building and furnishings as it was on Friday, May 9, 1940 when it was initially occupied after completion.

My experience in the preservation of this building and others is that there are resources and artisans available to do the work necessary to accomplish the project, e.g., in replacing a missing marble spandrel, in our last restoration efforts the architect knew of a quarry in Vermont that

might match (and did) the stone of the others. The Texas Historical Commission is a great experienced resource in listing and locating them for the Court.

None of us have adequate experience or training to do this work and all efforts in the district courtroom should be to refinish and restore the benches, counsel table & chairs, and jury panel and chairs to their original state of May 9, 1940. The "bar" presently in the courtroom is wholly inadequate for these purposes; the velvet ropes can be replaced and if used should be as adequate for security purposes as a wooden gate.

Part of my recommendation to you is to hire an expert and experienced consultant in this restoration. I strongly recommend Mr. Joe Ross, a licensed architect, of Wichita Falls. Mr. Ross is very familiar with the story of this building and has even written a book yet unpublished on the Voelker & Dixon courthouses. His firm, Joseph A. Ross Architect, Inc., is the successor firm to and owns the firm records and files of Voelker & Dixon who built our courthouse.

In the alternative, I would also recommend hiring the architects who helped us in the 2011 renovations.

They are not great when printed out but I have attached some photos of the status of the courtroom in 2011 which will show the room close to what it was in 1939.

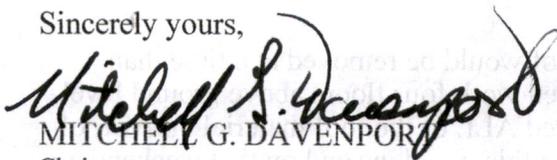
I know all of us are interested in complying with the provisions of the Texas Government Code, Title 4, Chapter 442 as well as the rules for implementing this law are found in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 17.

You are on the precipice of going down the wrong path in this project. Please take time now to do this right.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Sincerely yours,



MITCHELL G. DAVENPOR

Chair

**County of Jack**

**Brian Keith Umphress**  
**County Judge of Jack County, Texas**  
100 N. Main St., Ste. 206  
Jacksboro, TX 76458

July 15, 2025

Jack County Historical Commission  
c/o Mitchell Davenport  
Jack County Courthouse  
100 N. Main Street  
Jacksboro, Texas 76458

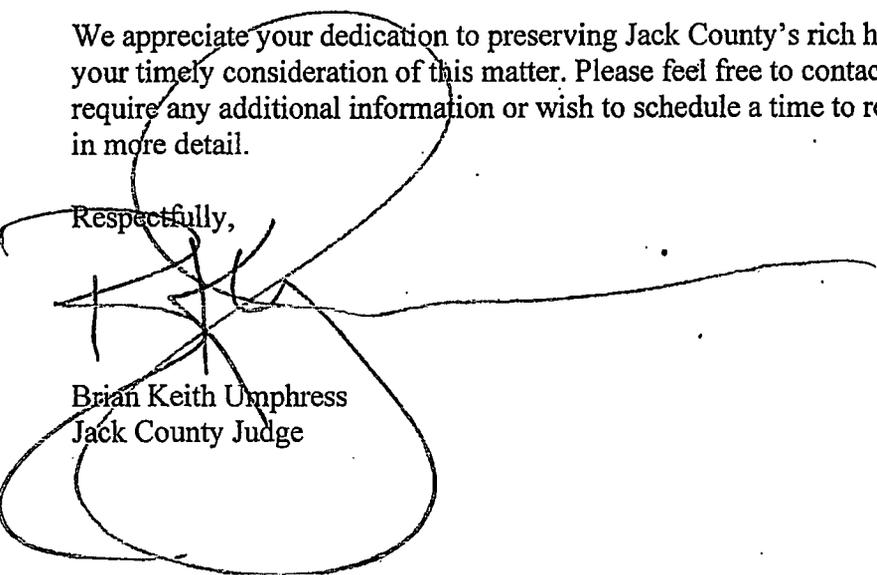
Dear Members of the Jack County Historical Commission,

As you are aware, Jack County is undergoing renovation and preservation work in the historic Jack County District Courtroom located in the Jack County Courthouse. In keeping with our commitment to honor and preserve this important space's historic integrity, we seek guidance and recommendations from the Jack County Historical Commission.

Specifically, we request your recommendation to the Jack County Commissioners' Court Regarding the type and style of both the flooring and the seating to be included in the Renovation plans. Your expertise and insight will be invaluable in ensuring that any updates remain consistent with the historical character of the courtroom while also meeting functional needs.

We appreciate your dedication to preserving Jack County's rich heritage and thank you for your timely consideration of this matter. Please feel free to contact my office should you require any additional information or wish to schedule a time to review the proposed plans in more detail.

Respectfully,

  
Brian Keith Umphress  
Jack County Judge

