The tour begins at the historic Rockwall County Courthouse located in the center of the square.

1 | Rockwall County Courthouse
The historic courthouse on the downtown square is the fourth permanent structure to serve the county. Fire destroyed the first and second courthouse buildings in the late 1800s. A third courthouse was constructed of native sandstone, but by the mid-thirties, the mortar was crumbling and the building was condemned. With the effects of the Depression still evident, construction funds were scarce so County Judge Mike Reinhardt traveled to Washington, D.C., to obtain a Works Project grant for courthouse construction. On January 19, 1940, on behalf of Rockwall County, Judge Reinhardt was awarded a $52,000 grant that would go towards the complete construction cost of $92,000. During the night Judge Reinhardt came down with acute pneumonia and died in the early morning hours of January 20 at a Washington hospital. His brother-in-law Carl Miller filled out Judge Reinhardt’s unexpired term and continued overseeing the construction of the new courthouse. The old sandstone courthouse was razed in March of 1941 and by December of that same year the finishing touches were being put on the new Art Deco building.

So, in 1940, when Rockwall was planning their new courthouse, it was entirely fitting that a county that sat in the shadow of Dallas should adopt an architectural style that almost mirrors Dahl’s style of Art Deco. From the angular exterior to the judge’s bench in the courtroom, the Rockwall courthouse incorporates the straight, clean, geometric lines and flourishes that define Art Deco.

In 2002, the historic courthouse underwent a multimillion dollar renovation, and today it stands as one of only seven Art Deco courthouses in Texas.

Take a moment to walk throughout the courthouse, being sure to visit the second floor courtroom. Historic Rockwall photos are on display throughout the building.

The tour continues on the south side of the square at the southeast intersection of Goliad and Rusk.

In Rockwall’s earliest days, this block was one of the most infamous, housing saloons and gambling houses. By the late 1800s, brick buildings were replacing the clapboard structures and a variety of stores took up occupancy. On January 21, 1904, at 11:30 p.m., fire broke out over the Spafford store and much of this block and part of the block to the east were consumed by fire. The owners re-built, but several of the buildings that had previously been two-story were re-built with just one floor. Sometime in the forties another fire did partial damage to several stores along this block.