

**SALLY SCHWENK ASSOCIATES, INC.**  
**PRESERVATION PROFESSIONALS**  
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KANSAS CITY, MO 64105  
816-221-2672

September 30, 2009

Catherine Montgomery AIA  
City of Oklahoma City Planning Department  
420 West Main Street., Suite 900  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73102

Dear Catherine:

I wanted to provide a brief summary on the resolution of concerns of the SHPO staff regarding the draft report.

1. The database copy prepared for the state has removed the additional fields that the city will need. You should have two final databases on the CD-ROM, one for the city's use, particularly in mapping using parcel numbers, and one for the state.
2. General Comments
  - a. The NPS acknowledgement statement was inserted
  - b. Formatting was changed to double-space, 11 pt narrative font size and 10 pt. footnote and photograph caption font size in Times New Roman. Margins were changed to 1.5 in. on left margin and 1 in. on top, bottom and right side. Margins are left justified. Numbering may not appear to be consistent, but we have checked twice and made correction and it is in accordance with the latest *Chicago Manual of Style* rules, which now consider context and use within the paragraph. It goes against everything I learned, but does have its own logic.)
  - c. Footnotes: Missing footnotes have been corrected. The information on page 24 is not a quote or closely paraphrased information, but based on information gathered and analyzed. Per the style manual, footnotes are not used unless quoting a source or closely paraphrasing one or two sources.
3. Specific Comments
  - a. Architectural history: As we discussed the historic contexts includes broad patterns of history including architectural development and the presence of styles found throughout a community's history. Styles found in Oklahoma City during the survey are included in the Survey Results section of the report. There seemed to be some concern about the appearance of filler. As agreed, we edited and reworked this section and also included some explanatory text to assist the reader in knowing that these two sections are cross referenced.
  - b. Eligibility

Historic Districts: As we discussed small historic districts are allowed under National Park Service guidelines. In the absence of an administrative rule in Oklahoma, all eligible properties must be noted as part of the public participation process mandated in the National Preservation Act of 1966 as amended. They are listed, with information relating to their significance. As agreed, we also included the recommendation that they be nominated as part of a larger Multiple Property Submission that provides cross referencing to a Multiple Property Documentation Form developed for commercial properties in Oklahoma City. The issue is included in the discussion of the MPS format using these small districts as an example and included again in the discussion of nomination of these groupings as districts.

Remaining Recommendations Require Justification. As agreed, we including the justification language that was included on the survey sheets in the discussion of these resources in the survey report. I also inserted a lengthy paragraph relating to these resources' historic architectural integrity and significant associations with contexts developed in the survey. In particular, this seemed like a good place to discuss Modern Movement buildings that are both fifty years of age and those which are not yet fifty years of age. This should pave the way in the future with pre-documentation for both the City and the State. Moreover, it provides the basis for the city to develop preservation plans for protection in a proactive and flexible manner.

I am not comfortable in dictating what Multiple Property Documentation Forms should be prepared relating to Commercial and/or Art Deco at this time. Because this is a phased survey, it would be important to have a more holistic approach. On the other hand if certain types of resources that share associations whether functional or architectural or even more specific such as buildings related to the oil and gas industries in downtown Oklahoma City, are endangered or there are owners interested in nominating these thematic properties, then there is always the option to develop a very wide ranging context or a or a more specific context.

Individual Properties: We reviewed, using the seven criteria for integrity, all of the individual properties that the SHPO staff expressed concerns. We were able to study additional photographic documentation of previous appearance and current appearance and make comparisons in certain instances. We also conducted additional research relating to appearance of the building during period of significant associations. Based on comments by SHPO staff and documentation there were three properties on the cusp that were removed from the list and survey forms adjusted.

Oklahoma City Bombing – As you know we revisited the language and everyone was pleased with the result. We also provided information in the text about the availability of survey forms on file at your office and with the SHPO relating to the buildings affected by the bombing.

Other: I went ahead and made corrections to the text as indicated by the SHPO comments. All photographs have sources. Sentences indicated as awkward or where the reader has indicated that they do not understand the information, were rewritten.

I have removed the word “vernacular” from the text except in the rare instances it applies to indigenous materials and traditional designs that can be traced to a particular cultural group in Oklahoma. I am aware that the term “vernacular architecture” in its broadest sense refers to ordinary buildings and landscapes. In particular, after the advent of the railroad and factory assembled pieces and prefabrication of entire dwellings, neither the materials nor the design is indigenous to an area. In Oklahoma City, non-high style designed buildings identified in the survey are specific forms with generic design treatments found throughout the United States with no reference to local building customs/traditions. Since the use of the term is a topic of continuing debate and the continued imprecise use creates confusion, we have avoided the term except as it applies to the region and used it in its narrowest definition. Moreover, because the National Park Service does not have a building style/category using the term “vernacular” and it its not allowed to be sued as a defining term for a building design under the category of “other,” we elected to avoid confusion by lay and professional readers unfamiliar with the ongoing debate and used it only in the narrowest sense relating to indigenous use found in the Oxford English Dictionary. Instead, we have used terms such as traditional, generic, etc. to indicate the lack of formal architectural design and identifiable stylistic family.

I also completed some heavy editing in the discussion of the pre-World War II and post-World War II Modern Movement terms as they apply to sub categories.

On the issue of number of religious buildings found I revisited the text and found no change necessary. There are four in the survey area as shown in the chart; three are already listed in the National Register as noted in the text.

We reformatted several paragraphs dealing with identified functional property types and assigned headings in according with the NPS data categories for functions and uses.

We classified findings according to both functional property type and architectural property type, per NPS guidelines in Bulletin 24. This will translate directly to the preparation of Multiple Property Documentation Forms in the future should the city wish to utilize the Multiple Property Submission format to nominate properties to the National Register. Sub-headings indicate that the classification to be discussed is functional.

In the chart on Historic Architectural Styles on draft page 62 the term NeoClassical Revival, NeoElectric Styles: Neo-Tudor, and NeoClassical Revival are terms used by the McAlisters to denote post World War II adaptation of earlier styles. The McAlisters' terminology has been adapted to the terminology used by the National Register program and it is a recommended source by the NPS in preparing National Register nominations.

I changed the heading and edited the section on wholesale remodeling of early twentieth century buildings to post-World War II Modern Movement treatments. I left it as a stand-alone paragraph as agreed.

All maps illustrating findings of the survey were printed in 11 x 17 inch fold-out format at the end of the report. The map in the introductory section was changed to reflect the initial map of the survey area in the RFP.

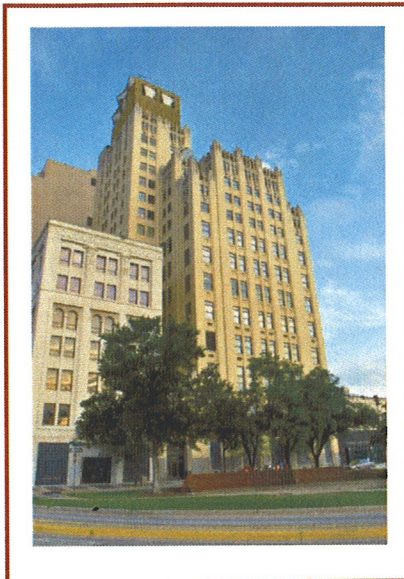
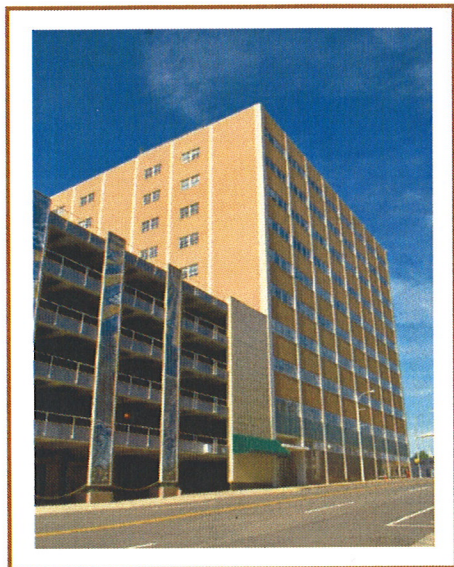
Sincerely,

Sally Fullerton Schwenk

**DOWNTOWN OKLAHOMA CITY INTENSIVE SURVEY—  
PHASE I**

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**SURVEY REPORT**



**OKLAHOMA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROJECT #08-607**

**Prepared for**

**CITY OF OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA**

**By**

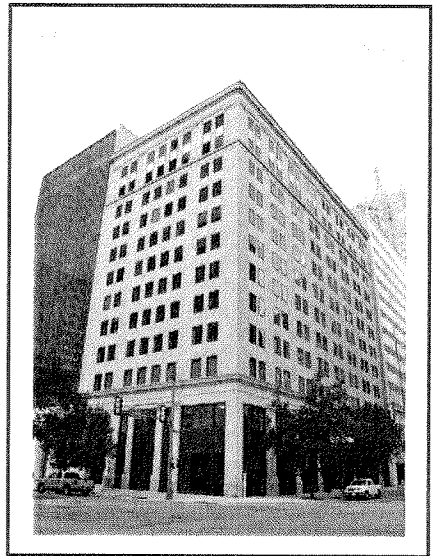
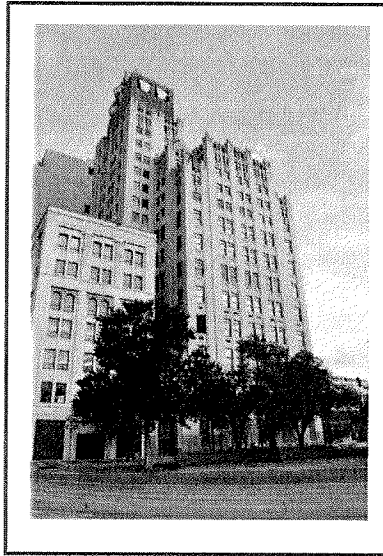
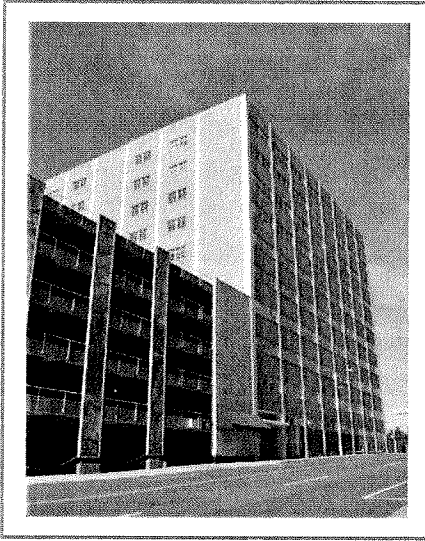
**SALLY SCHWENK ASSOCIATES, INC.**

**SEPTEMBER 2009**

**DOWNTOWN OKLAHOMA CITY INTENSIVE SURVEY—  
PHASE I**

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**SURVEY REPORT**



**OKLAHOMA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROJECT #08-607**

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**SEPTEMBER 2009**

**DOWNTOWN OKLAHOMA CITY INTENSIVE SURVEY—  
PHASE I**

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**By**

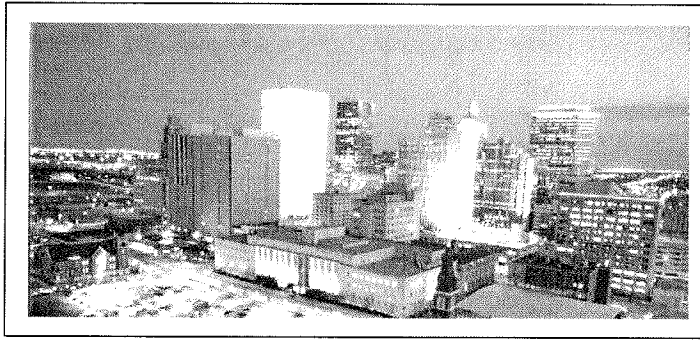
**Sally F. Schwenk and Kerry Davis**

**Of**

**SALLY SCHWENK ASSOCIATES, INC.**

**SEPTEMBER 2009**

The Phase I Oklahoma City Downtown Intensive Level Survey project is the subject of this survey report has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior. This program receives federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C. Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



### **Mayor**

MISSY GIBSON

### **City Council members**

Gary Marrs

Sam Bowman

Larry McAtee

Pete White

J. Brian Walters

Meg Salyer

Ronald Skip Kelly

Patrick J. Ryan

### **Historic Preservation Commissioners**

Roland Tague, Chairman

Karen Collier, Vice-Chair

Allen Brown, AIA

Heather A. Clemmer

Thomas J. Daniel IV

Patrick Gaines

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Karen Nelson

Thomas Small, AIA

Marnie Taylor

Karen Zimmer

### **City of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Planning Department**

Catherine Montgomery, AIA, Historic Preservation Architect

Paul A. Ryckbost, Planner II

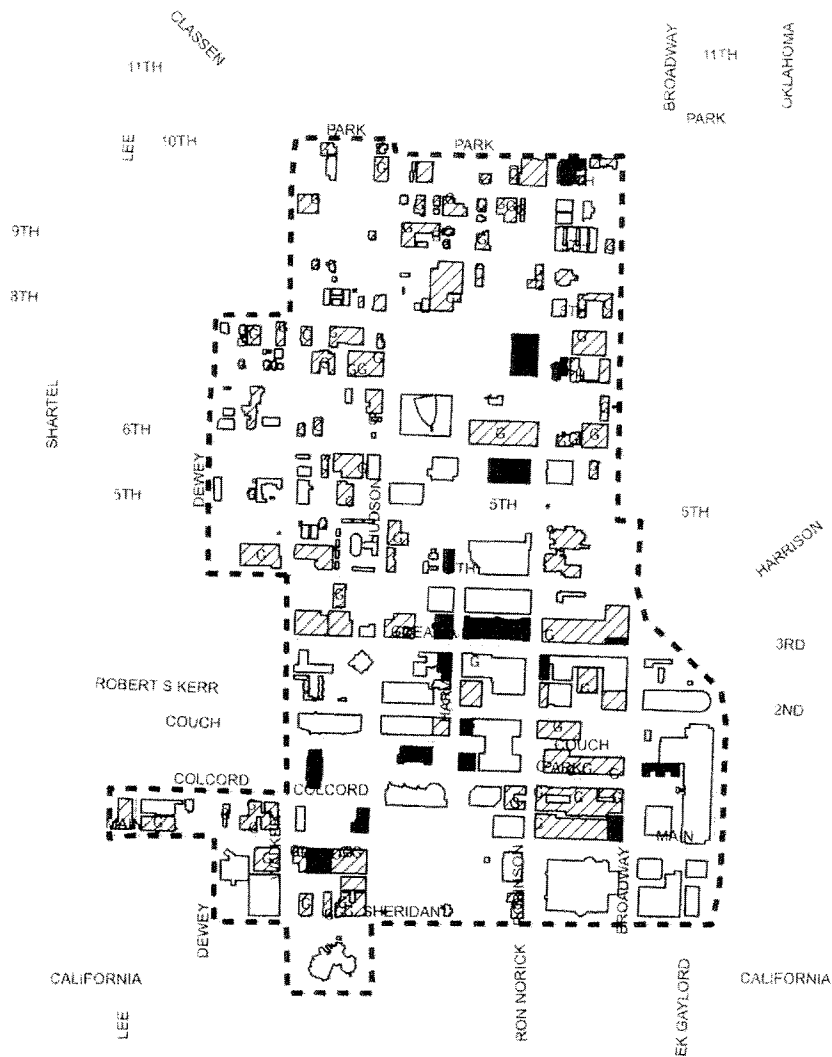
## PREFACE

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


The City of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma contracted with the firm Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. Preservation Professionals (SSA), located in Kansas City, Missouri, to conduct the first phase of a multi-phase cultural resource survey effort over a five-month period that began in May 2009 and, which provided for the identification and evaluation of historic properties for individual significance or as contributing properties to a historic district. The phased project is part of a strategy to implement the development of a complete, fully documented, and comprehensive inventory of historic properties located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, by conducting survey in accordance with *National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Survey: A Basis for Preservation Planning* and *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

The first phase of the survey included the downtown central business district as well as the south part of what is commonly referred to as Midtown. The survey area included 215 primary resources generally bounded by North Walker Avenue to the west, West Sheridan Avenue to the south, North Broadway to the east, and Northwest 10th Street on the north. The survey included commercial, institutional, and residential resources. The Phase I Survey revealed a high concentration of historic commercial resources with residential resources generally located at the north and west edges of the survey area and continuing in adjacent neighborhoods.

# Historic Preservation Survey of Downtown Oklahoma City\*



## Legend

- G Address Points for Pre-1964 buildings (112)
-  Buildings built before 1964 (approx. 75) \*\*
-  Buildings built 1964 or later (approx. 136)
-  Buildings listed on National Register (18)



The City of  
**OKLAHOMA CITY**  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

\* Building information based on Oklahoma County Tax Assessor data, current as of 10/7/2008

\*\* Building footprints may contain multiple buildings

DOWNTOWN OKLAHOMA CITY INTENSIVE LEVEL SURVEY - PHASE I

Sally Schwank Associates, Inc.

## WHAT IS A CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY?

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 committed federal agencies to a program of identification and protection of historic resources. Amendments to the Act required all states to “compile and maintain a statewide survey and inventory of historic properties.” The law mandates that the survey process:

- identify properties eligible for state and federal grants-in-aid programs;
- aid federal, state, and local governments in carrying out their historic preservation duties;
- identify, nominate, and protect eligible properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;
- work with federal, state, and local agencies to ensure that historic properties are considered throughout planning and development projects; and
- assist as an information, education, training, and technical source for federal, state, and local historic preservation programs.

A cultural resource survey is a process of identifying and gathering information on a community’s architectural, historical, and archaeological resources. As applied to the identification and evaluation historic and architectural resources, the assessment of the significance of properties involved:

- a field investigation to photograph, verify the location, and determine the architectural character, associated features, and historical integrity of each property;

- a literature search and archival research to gather information concerning the survey area's historical contexts and associated functional and/or architectural property types; and
- analysis of the survey data and historic contexts to determine which properties appear to have historical/architectural significance and to formulate management recommendations for future identification, evaluation, and protection strategies.

Work products generated from the survey process include an individual property survey form produced from the electronic database for each surveyed property and a survey report. The survey forms contain information specific to each property and should be viewed as part of the city's ongoing inventory of historic properties and as an appendices to the survey report. The survey report is a general document that provides an understanding of the data on the survey form, the survey methodology, the historic contexts and property types that are associated with significant resources identified in the survey process, and management recommendations for future evaluation and protection of significant resources identified in the survey area. Thus, together, the survey forms and the survey report provide property-specific data, as well as broad-based contextual analysis.

The information yielded in a cultural resource survey is important because it:

- identifies properties that contribute to the city's character, illustrate its historical and architectural development and, as a result, deserve consideration in planning;
- identifies properties or areas whose study and research may provide information about the community's past and contribute to scholarship and understanding about the city's historic contexts of growth and development;
- assists in establishing priorities for future survey, conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation efforts within the city;

- provides the basis for using legal and financial tools to recognize and protect historic resources;
- provides planners with a property database and computer generated mapping to utilize for the establishment of preservation planning efforts;
- increases awareness in the public and private sectors on the need for preservation efforts; and
- provides guidance toward developing a comprehensive preservation plan, enabling local governments and federal agencies to meet their planning and review responsibilities under existing federal legislation and procedures.

## EDITORIAL METHOD

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This technical report is a public document that records the results of a cultural resource survey. The survey activities and subsequent report of those activities follows the guidelines of the Department of the Interior, National Park Service. As recommended by that agency, the report follows the editorial guidelines of the most current edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Some modifications in punctuation occur that are based on archaeological writing style guidelines adapted to historic preservation methodology and practices. As a technical report documenting the results of a cultural resource survey, and in accordance with the guidelines published in *National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning*, it involves the development of historical contexts of the past, identification and evaluation of existing cultural resources, assessment of the present condition of historic functional and architectural property types, and formulation of future management recommendations. As a result, the technical nature of the report and temporal subject matter involve referencing the past, present and future and, as recommended by the National Park Service, utilization of active voice in the use of the primary verb(s). Where appropriate in the general text, capitalization and punctuation have been modernized.

## INTRODUCTION

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### CAPITALIZING ON OKLAHOMA CITY'S HISTORIC ASSETS

The historic development of Oklahoma City is a unique and important story. It defines the culture of the community and the tangible reminders of this past create a unique “sense of place.” The story of Oklahoma City is intrinsically entwined with the story of the development of the United States, of the State and of the region — an evolution of over two hundred years of ethnic and cultural amalgamation. The story of Oklahoma City is likewise a story of diversity, both in the built and natural environment, as well as in cultural heritage.

The physical impact of rapid growth and sprawl in a city that is 607 square miles that experienced cycles of a boom and bust economy, post-World War II development, and more recent commercial and residential development already obscures significant tangible reminders of Oklahoma City's beginnings and early development, in particular in the central business district. Less obvious is the random loss of buildings, structures, and sites that have associations to the State Capital, colleges and railroad market center that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The loss of elements that historically defined the core of the community significantly impacts the City's identity — its unique attributes that distinguishes it from other communities in the region.

Oklahoma City will continue to change, and change provides the opportunity to strengthen and enrich the city's visual character and to enhance the quality of life already appreciated by many residents and visitors. The goal of this survey effort is to initiate identification and evaluation of historic resources as part of an ongoing effort to develop strategies to protect significant resources and enhance their setting as well as to move toward change in a positive manner — as a catalyst for capitalizing on the synergy of the old and new. To achieve this goal, it is necessary first to recognize and understand the existing assets, both old and of the recent past that contribute to the city's unique physical and cultural character; to then forge a consensus in the community



regarding their preservation; and to develop goals, policies, and initiatives to assist the city in the future identification, interpretation, evaluation, and protection of its remaining cultural resources.

## **BENEFITS OF PRESERVATION**

Preservation has its own intrinsic value in celebrating a community's history. As noted by the former dean of the Tulane School of Architecture, John W. Lawrence, it enables the citizens of today and tomorrow "...to understand the present as a product of the past and a modifier of the future." It allows a greater awareness of the relationships of the past, the present, and the future — a deeper understanding of the continuity and contrasts of life.

An additional compelling argument for protecting historic resources is simply that people like them. People seek out historic settings because they offer quality craftsmanship and materials, create variety, and encourage human interaction in a familiar context. Moreover, preservation has proven utilitarian value as a tool for economic development and environmental stewardship.

### **Economic Benefits**

Nationally known real estate professional Donovan D. Rypkema, in his book *The Economics of Historic Preservation*, observes that a commitment to preservation may be one of the most effective acts of fiscal responsibility governmental entities can undertake. Older neighborhoods and commercial centers represent a considerable taxpayer investment in infrastructure and building stock. Conservation of buildings, neighborhoods, and sites of historic and aesthetic value is one of the best tools for recovering the worth of past investments while fueling new economic activity.

### EXAMPLES OF THE BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- ✓ The physical appearance of its buildings and streetscapes reflects the community's overall vitality and economic health.
- ✓ Maintaining the vitality of the city's older commercial and residential areas, including rehabilitating older buildings and designing quality new buildings, can attract larger commercial ventures to the community, even if these ventures do not locate in the historic core of the city.
- ✓ Rehabilitation of individual buildings is more attainable and stabilizing to a local economy than a single large economic development project.
- ✓ Cultural resources most clearly reflect a community and region's evolution, history, diversity, and differentiation from other areas. Rehabilitating older buildings and sites distinguishes one community from another by preserving the unique character of each.
- ✓ The value of a property is determined by the buildings, public improvements, and activities around it. Rehabilitation of a historic property directly benefits adjacent property owners and nearby businesses.
- ✓ The value of rehabilitated properties in a city's historic core increases more rapidly than the real estate market in the larger community.
- ✓ Older buildings with easy access to professional and support services are ideal for many smaller and start-up businesses, which typically generate a majority of new permanent jobs.

The most successful revitalization efforts in the country utilize historic rehabilitation as the core of their revitalization strategies. These efforts document that the most successful approach to create sustainable communities merges the old and the new. The creative combination of preservation, adaptive reuse, and new construction capitalizes on the aesthetics and craftsmanship of other eras, and promotes architectural innovation, thereby enhancing the community's character and fabric.

The State of Oklahoma and the federal government recognize the role rehabilitation of historic buildings can play in strengthening the local economy. To encourage sustainable neighborhoods and communities, as well as to encourage preservation of important cultural resources, they provide incentives to encourage rehabilitation of historic buildings. Investment tax credits for rehabilitation of historic buildings are available from both the state and federal governments.

Both the 20 percent Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit and the 20 percent State Rehabilitation Tax Credit apply to owners and some renters of income-producing National Register listed properties. Federal law also permits depreciation of such improvements over 27.5 years for a rental residential property and over 31.5 years for a nonresidential property. The rehabilitated building must be subject to depreciation. Rehabilitation tax credits can be “sold” to an equity partner in return for investment of capital in the rehabilitation project. When used together, the federal and state tax credits can capture approximately 38 percent<sup>1</sup> of eligible rehabilitation costs in tax credits.

The rehabilitation work must comply with the “Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.” The Standards address changes that allow older buildings to function in the twenty-first century. The common sense guidelines provide for new construction, as well as rehabilitation.

In addition, both the federal government and the State of Oklahoma offer a 10 percent tax credit for buildings constructed before 1936 that are not eligible for listing in the National Register. The 10 percent credit applies only to buildings rehabilitated for *non-residential* uses. Project work undertaken for this lesser credit must satisfy all Internal Revenue Service requirements, which include retention of 75 percent of the external walls and 75 percent of the internal structural framework.

### **Environmental Stewardship**

Using preservation as a tool for conservation of resources provides a rational and effective economic and environmental strategy for the future. There is growing consensus in support of environmental conservation efforts. After years of exploitation of resources, people are now beginning to consider how their surroundings fit into the larger environment. This includes the recognition of the important embodied energy contained in built resources and efforts to

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<sup>1</sup> State tax credits are taxable income under IRS regulations.

encourage better stewardship of older buildings and structures. Buildings contain energy that has already been expended, materials that have been mined or harvested, manufactured, shipped, and assembled. Material from demolished buildings accounts for up to 40 percent of landfill materials, the cost of which is indirectly borne by taxpayers. At the same time, new construction consumes new energy and resources.

## METHODOLOGY

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Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. completed Phase I of this multi-phase survey of the historic core of Oklahoma City in conformance with the procedures for intensive-level survey outlined in *National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Survey: A Basis for Preservation Planning*. Evaluation of resources for significance was in accordance with *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. In addition to these guidelines, the consultants relied on criteria of the Oklahoma Historical Society's historic preservation program's "National Register Preliminary Opinion on Eligibility Instructions" and the supplemental material and architectural style terms provided by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff.

The survey of cultural resources in downtown Oklahoma City is the first cultural resource survey effort initiated in the community in the last two decades and is an effort to initiate a comprehensive and ongoing program of identification and evaluation of historic and cultural resources within the City of Oklahoma City.

The Phase I Survey Area boundaries were determined by the city's planning staff based on funding and timing parameters and the scope of work for these phases included the following:

- Review of all previous surveys and National Register listings within the survey area;
- Review and update of the previous, reconnaissance survey performed in 1992;
- A building-by-building field investigation of the designated survey area to photograph and document principal and ancillary buildings and their materials and levels of historic/architectural integrity as to location, setting, design, materials, feelings of period of construction, and associations with the history of the community;

- Creation of a database containing the results of the field survey in data fields and information categories that are compatible and in accordance with the Oklahoma SHPO's "National Register Preliminary Opinion on Eligibility Instructions" and that allow data to be displayed and printed in the SHPO's "Historic Preservation Resource Identification Form" format. Database information will also be utilized to create reports and assist in data analysis and mapping;
  
- Creation of maps to document patterns of architectural styles, functional property types and/or vernacular designs, levels of integrity; periods of construction; and other historic/cultural characteristics to assist in the development of historic contexts, as well as to provide mapping of survey results to assist in management recommendations for protection of historic resources through nomination to the National Register of Historic Places; [NOTE: due to the time constraints created by addition properties, the draft document SSA is providing for review includes only the maps relating to properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The other maps will be included in the final submittal as appendices.
  
- Defining functional and architectural property types and evaluating resources for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;
  
- Developing historic contexts relating to the history and development of downtown Oklahoma City to assist in the evaluation of historic properties for National Register eligibility, as well as the future preparation of National Register nominations; and
  
- Preliminary identification of all historically and/or architecturally significant sites, objects, cultural landscapes, buildings, structures, or districts within the defined survey area.
  
- Preliminary identification of each resource's architectural style or vernacular property type, period of construction and significance, architect/builder, and construction materials, if known.

- Evaluation and determination of properties and districts that appear to be potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Developing management recommendations for preservation of cultural and historic resources and for future National Register activities.

### **FIELD SURVEY**

Kerry Davis, architectural historian, completed field survey of the Phase I Survey Area in May 2009. The field survey component included conducting a field inspection and photographing each building, site, and object in the survey area to document building form and materials. The consultants relied on this information in determining the architectural style or vernacular property type and historic architectural integrity for each property.

### **ADDRESS/MAPPING ISSUES**

The property-by-property survey revealed a significant number of address/parcel issues. These stem, in large part, from parcel merging and division that has occurred during the late twentieth century, which results in multiple historic resources sited on a single parcel or multiple parcels assigned to a single historic building. Kerry Davis worked with city mapping staff to reconcile as many of these irregularities as possible. In order to avoid inaccuracies in the GIS mapping as a result of address/parcel issues, city staff created a new GIS layer for each primary resource documented in the survey.

### **ARCHIVAL RESEARCH**

In addition to the documentation of architectural styles, property types, and evolution of land use, research focused on the preparation of historic contexts for the time period in which the survey area developed, and the identification of dates of construction. Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc.,

staff used the archival, research, and records collections of the Oklahoma Historical Society; the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO); the Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City Oklahoma; Mid-Continent Public Library, Independence, Missouri; Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps, the Oklahoma County Clerk, and the City of Oklahoma City.

### **ESTABLISHING DATES OF CONSTRUCTION & INDIVIDUAL BUILDING HISTORY**

Due to the absence of extant building and/or water permits, SSA staff used plat maps, local history publications, vertical files, previous cultural resource survey information, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps, telephone and city directory indexes, and architectural style to establish a construction date range. During data analysis, SSA staff compared data from different sources and assigned an actual or an estimated date of construction. When exterior appearance did not correspond with previous survey dates or when there was no information documenting the date of construction, SSA estimated a date based on the known date of construction of other buildings with similar architectural treatments in the survey area. As a result, many dates of construction are not exact, but are estimated to a circa (c.) date, which generally denotes the age to be five years before or after the year listed. When this research yielded information about the original owners, this was included in the "Significance Description" section of the resource identification form.

### **COMPILATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. used a Microsoft Access database to compile the survey information using the template provided by the SHPO that corresponds to the information required by the "Historic Preservation Resource Identification Form." This included data fields for each building's historic and current functional use, physical features (e.g., principal materials, style, roof type, and condition); architect and/or builder, if known; estimated or documented date of construction; presence of historic outbuildings; source(s) of historic information; and notes about the history of the property. In addition to these fields, the database includes fields for parcel identification numbers; historic architectural integrity assessments of National Register



eligibility as an individual resource or as a contributing resource to a potential district; and additional information that aid in the analysis of the property. When linked with the digital records of future surveys, this database will enhance the understanding of historic resources in Oklahoma City. This information can also be linked to geographic information systems and mapping software to create visual presentations of the data.

The consultants analyzed four categories of data to identify contiguous districts, discontinuous thematic resources, and individual properties that are potentially eligible for National Register listing. The following four categories address issues important in determining the significance of a property or properties for listing in the National Register.

- Architectural Integrity
- Date of Construction
- Original Building Use/Function
- Architectural Style/Vernacular Property Type

A detailed description of the four areas of analysis and results appears in the “Survey Results” section of this report.

## **HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS**

After compiling and reviewing the results of the field survey and completing the archival research, SSA identified broad patterns of development in Oklahoma City and in the specific blocks in the survey area. At the same time, work on developing architectural contexts began with the review of photographic documentation and database information relating to the survey area. *What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture* by John C. Poppeliers, S. Allen Chambers, Jr., and Nancy B. Schwartz and *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Lee and Virginia McAlester provided guidelines for determining residential architectural forms, styles, and sub-types as well as assuring the use of nomenclature consistent with National Register

guidelines. *The Buildings of Main Street* by Richard Longstreth provided guidelines for nomenclature and determining commercial architectural forms, styles, and sub-types. Review of the survey data not only revealed the architectural styles and vernacular property types and forms, it also provided information to begin to determine development patterns and building chronology.

In order to provide management recommendations, the consultants conducted preliminary evaluations for all inventoried properties according to the criteria and standards for historic resources established by the Secretary of the Interior. This included a preliminary assessment of individual eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or as potentially contributing elements in a National Register District. The recommendations herein apply to the Phase I Survey Area and are addressed in the final mapping and analysis holistically.

In addition to retaining the integrity of their historic architectural design, properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places must meet certain criteria of historic significance. Historic significance is the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture of a community, a state, or the nation. To be listed, properties must have significance in at least one of the following areas.

- Criterion A: Association with events, activities, or broad patterns of history.
- Criterion B: Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Criterion C: Embody distinctive characteristics of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Criterion D: Have yielded, or be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

## ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY

All properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places whether for individual significance or as contributing<sup>2</sup> elements to a district, must retain sufficient historic architectural integrity to convey the period of time in which they are significant.<sup>3</sup> The National Park Service uses the following areas to define integrity.

- Location
- Design
- Setting
- Materials
- Workmanship
- Feeling
- Association

The consultants visually inspected the exterior of each of the buildings in the survey area. Each building received an integrity rating of Excellent, Good/Fair, Poor, or Non-Historic based primarily on how much of the building's original design, workmanship, exterior materials, and overall feeling of a past period of time remain. The following criteria served as the basis for rating historic architectural integrity.

### Excellent

- The majority of the buildings' openings are unaltered or are altered in a sensitive and appropriate manner, using similar materials, profiles, and sizes as the original building elements;
- The exterior cladding material had not been altered;

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<sup>2</sup> A contributing property to a historic district does not have to meet the threshold for individual significance, but it must contribute to the district's area of significance. Properties contributing to a district's significance for architecture must retain a higher degree of architectural integrity than in a district significant for associations with an important individual or with historical events or patterns of history.

<sup>3</sup> Historic architectural integrity should not be confused with the physical condition of a building or structure. A building may be in excellent physical and structural condition, but may have lost its historical character-defining elements. Conversely, a building may retain all of its historical architectural features, but may be structurally unsound and, therefore, in poor condition.

- Significant decorative elements are intact;
- Design elements intrinsic to the building's style are intact;
- The overall feeling or character of the building for the time period in which it was erected is intact. Changes over a period of time are sympathetic and compatible to the original design in color, size, scale, massing, and materials;
- Character-defining elements from the time period in which the building had significant associations with events or important individuals remain intact; and
- If over fifty years in age, the building is individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or would be a contributing element to a historic district.

**Good/Fair**

- Some alteration of original building openings or spaces has occurred using new materials and profiles, but not causing irreversible damage to the original configuration of openings and spaces;
- Significant portions of original exterior cladding material remain or if the historic exterior building material is covered by non-historic material (such as modern siding), the significant form, features and detailing of the building are not obscured.”
- Significant decorative elements remain intact;
- Alterations to the building are reversible and the historic character of the property could be easily restored;

- Additions to a secondary elevation are in an appropriate manner, respecting the materials, scale, and character of the original building design;
- The historic feeling or character of the building is weakened by change or lack of maintenance; and
- The building would be a contributing element to a historic district and/or it might be individually eligible for listing in the National Register if restored in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

**Poor**

- The majority of the building's openings, such as windows and doors, were altered in an inappropriate manner using new materials, profiles, and sizes;
- Exterior materials were altered;
- Alterations are irreversible or would be extremely difficult, costly, and possibly physically damaging to the building to reverse;
- Later additions do not respect the materials, scale, or character of the original building design;
- The overall historic feeling and character of the building is significantly compromised; and
- Further investigations after removal of non-historic materials and alterations may reveal that the structure retains greater architectural integrity than originally apparent and should be reevaluated.

## **Non-Historic**

- The building has a construction date after 1975.

## **BUILDINGS LESS THAN FIFTY YEARS IN AGE**

The National Register of Historic Places generally requires that a property be fifty years of age or more to be considered historic. This allows a sufficient period of time in which to objectively consider the criteria for eligibility. For the purposes of this survey, in order that the data collected to not become outdated too soon, buildings constructed as late as 1975 were evaluated for their existing architectural integrity. This concern is related to another consideration related to associations many of the buildings that are less than fifty years might have with the I.M. Pei Plan/Urban Renewal Plan implemented over several decades. Because the fifty year period is arbitrary and was not designed to be mechanically applied on a year-by-year basis, exceptions may be made for properties with shared associations that span a number of years. As noted by the National Park Service in *Bulletin 22: Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties that Have Achieved Significance within the Last Fifty Years*, "Generally, our understanding of history does not advance a year at a time, but rather in blocks of time which can logically be examined together. The guidelines recommend that a determination as to whether the period under consideration calls for a routine historical evaluation or whether the period needs to be viewed in the context of exceptional importance. Such a determination avoids that problem presented when certain properties that have just passed the fifty year point might be given a greater value than those just less than fifty years old when the resources should have been evaluated together to determine their relative significance. Moreover, the contexts associated with urban planning/urban renewal, and early post-World War II Modern Movement Miesian and International style have received sufficient academic investigation by historians and architectural historians to provide a sufficient perspective to enable an evaluation of properties associated with these events and styles.

## **EFFECT OF 1995 MURRAH BUILDING BOMBING**

It should be noted that the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building greatly affected the architectural integrity of the buildings within the survey area and beyond. Field assessments after the bombing documented the extent of damage to buildings in the vicinity to extend well beyond the downtown area. Structural damage affected buildings as far north as Edmond, Oklahoma, and as far south as Norman, Oklahoma.

A significant number of buildings in the sustained damage, including windows and doors. As a result, a Programmatic Agreement executed in 1996 by and among the City of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Officer regarding properties affected by use of Community Block Development Grant (CDBG) Emergency Supplemental Funds, required the identification of all buildings in the survey project area that were fifty years in age in 1996, including buildings determined eligible for listing in the five years prior to the bombing or already listed in the National Register of Historic Places were identified. The agreement required that the repair or replacement of significant architectural elements of properties already listed in the National Register or determined eligible for listing in the National Register that received the emergency CBDG funding must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation. This included the repair or installation of replacement windows and doors damaged by the bombing. However, the field investigation of this survey documented a noticeably high incidence of inappropriate replacement windows than is normally found in other central business districts. This could indicate replacement of windows and doors without federal funding and/or replacement prior to and after the bombing as well as alterations to eligible buildings not yet fifty years in age.

Although the loss of original window sashes and glazing and inappropriate replacements might normally result in a determination of ineligibility for a historic building in most locations, in downtown Oklahoma City, the bombing was an event of national significance and alterations (inappropriate or appropriate) to buildings may have associations with this event. As part of on-going survey and in the case of assessment of the significance of properties for listing in the

National Register of Historic Places, the significance of these alterations should be considered in the context of a building's historical integrity and in relation to a building or district's period of significance. The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office and the City of Oklahoma City's Planning Department retain copies of the survey conducted as part of the 1996 Programmatic Agreement.

### **NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY STATUS**

The physical characteristics and historic significance of the overall property provide the basis for evaluating component resources. Related information about each resource, such as date of construction, function, associations, and physical characteristics apply to the significance of the overall property.

Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. analyzed data relating to the historic architectural integrity and historic significance of each property within the survey area to begin to identify contiguous districts, discontinuous thematic resources, and individual properties that appear to minimally meet National Register criteria. The evaluation utilized the following categories to assist in formulating the management recommendations emanating from survey.

- **Not Eligible** applies to those properties that are not individually eligible and are not within a potential district due to lack of historic/architectural integrity or because they do not clearly represent associations with established historic context(s).
- **Individually Eligible** applies to those properties that retain a high degree of historic architectural integrity and clearly represent associations with established historic context(s).
- **Contributing to a District** applies to a property that possesses historic integrity and is located adjacent to or near other similar properties that share the same historic context(s). Because of their historical/architectural integrity, these properties have the potential to add to the historic associations and historic architectural qualities for which a streetscape, neighborhood, or



area is significant because it was present during the streetscape, neighborhood, or area's period of significance and relates to its documented significance. A National Register District possesses a significant concentration, linkage, and/or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects that are united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. Contributing properties do not have to be individually distinctive, but must contribute to a grouping that achieves significance as a whole within one or more historic contexts. The majority of the components that add to a district's historic character, even if they are individually undistinguished, must possess integrity, as must the district as a whole. A property that independently meets National Register Criteria can be considered as a contributing property to a district if it has associations with the district's areas of significance.

- **Non-contributing to a District** applies to properties located within a potential historic district but that no longer possess historical architectural integrity due to alterations, disturbances, additions, or other changes that render them incapable of yielding important information about a period of significance; or do not independently meet the National Register criteria.
- **Less Than Fifty Years of Age** applies to properties that are less than fifty years in age. As noted previously The National Register Criteria exclude properties that achieved significance within the last fifty years unless they are of exceptional importance. Sally Schwenk Associates, Inc. staff assigned this eligibility category to buildings constructed before 1976 that retain integrity from their original period of construction and are likely to become eligible within the next fifteen years if their integrity is retained. This category also allows buildings that are less than fifty years in age to be considered for eligibility in the context of general architectural and planning events that began more than fifty years ago. This designation is intended to give the city a "heads-up" on buildings that may become eligible in the near future and the ability to plan future designations based on the significant impact of urban planning and development programs associated with the mid-twentieth century in downtown Oklahoma City.

## HISTORIC CONTEXTS

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### ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF DOWNTOWN OKLAHOMA CITY

To fully understand the findings of this survey of cultural resources, it is important to interpret the survey information in context with the development within the survey area and this development in relationship with the forces that influenced the development of the Oklahoma City. The National Park Service defines historic context as “a broad pattern of historical development in a community or its region that may be represented by historic resources.” Inherent in the development of a historic context is the identification of important connections between local, regional, state, and national history and the historic resources in a defined area. When survey findings are viewed in relationship to this information, it is possible to apply the criteria for evaluating eligibility for designation in the National Register of Historic Places and to local historic registers and landmarks. Moreover, an understanding of how historical change affected the community is extremely useful in evaluating community resources that might be threatened and in integrating protective strategies in planning efforts.

Historic contexts developed as part of a survey should not be confused with a comprehensive history of the community. The survey report is a technical report and development of historic contexts is one component that assists in providing technical analysis of the resources identified. Generally, establishing historic contexts involves reviewing the known history of the community, the region, and the state and seeking to define important patterns in the development of the area through time that may be represented by historic properties within the community and, specifically, within the survey area. The level of documentation depends on whether the survey is conducted at a reconnaissance level or an intensive level and the size of the survey area in relation to the community as a whole.

The establishment of historic contexts is a base step in targeting survey efforts and in determining recommendations for future identification and evaluation effectively. It also directs the efficient use of personnel. For example, the presence of academically trained architects in Oklahoma in the late nineteenth century or the identification of individual owners of commercial businesses may not be as relevant to the patterns of development of Oklahoma City's built environment as the location of the railroad depots and tracks and planned growth of the medical school.

Accordingly, SSA directed resources and personnel toward 1) the identification and evaluation commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings in the survey area; 2) documentation of the types of businesses that evolved in the city's commercial center over the years; 3) development patterns and phases of planned development affecting the central business district; and 4) identification of the evolution of architectural styles and building forms in Oklahoma's downtown area. The resulting information relating to this context is far from definitive, but it establishes areas of obvious importance in relation to National Register criteria and allows specific management recommendations for future identification, evaluation, and designation of cultural resources.

The following narrative overview establishes historic contexts for defined chronological eras. Within these time periods, it identifies important development patterns, including geographic limits, historical themes, and the evolution of architectural styles and property types. Specific data from the survey is related to the contextual information in the "Results of Survey" and "Management Recommendations" chapters of this survey report. Because of the survey area's geographical boundaries and its period of development, the survey does not fully address many of the established historical contexts for Oklahoma City in general, particularly an in-depth examination with the historical development patterns associated with evolution of areas adjacent to the survey boundaries, or with specific associations with residential, educational, and cultural contexts applying to the city in general.

## FORMATIVE CONDITIONS AND PATTERNS

Located in the rolling plains of the Red Beds region in the southeast corner of Northwestern Oklahoma near the center of the state, Oklahoma City is today the largest city in population in the state (551,789) and is one of the largest cities in area in the United States. A network of railroads and highways directly connect with all sections of the state and with surrounding states. The 607 square miles of incorporated area include land in McClain, Cleveland, Canadian, Pottawatomie and Oklahoma Counties. The central portion of Oklahoma City is now the modern central business district.

### OKLAHOMA CITY POPULATION BY DECADE

1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
64,250	91,295	185,389	204,424	243,504	324,253	359,671	403,136

Key to understanding the historic contexts related to the evolution of Oklahoma City's commercial center and the forces that shaped it, is the boom and bust cycles that defined the economic history of the city and the region. As noted by Bob L. Blackburn, PhD, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Historical Society, the first fifty years of economic activity in Oklahoma City was primarily extractive . . .

*For those early pioneers, wealth came from the land, either in the form of crops and livestock or oil and gas. Once extracted, the commodities were exported to consumers in distant markets and revenues were used to import manufactured goods and capital resources. If prices declined on world markets, or if the extractive process was interrupted by drought or dry holes, there was no manufacturing or banking infrastructure to take up the slack.<sup>4</sup>*

Oklahoma's climate, soils and topography form five major agricultural land-use areas in the state. Large transitional zones between these areas are not clearly defined. Raising livestock was and is

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<sup>4</sup> Steve Lackmeyer and Jack Money, *OKC Second Time Around* (Oklahoma City: Full Circle Press, 2006,) ix.

a common denominator for these regions. Hay crops and specialty crops such as vegetables, fruits and berries dominate the northeastern region in which Oklahoma City is located.<sup>5</sup> Agricultural initially formed the basis of the economy in this region. Many of the Native American tribes who moved into Eastern Oklahoma came from a culture with agrarian practices. When they settled on the reservations allotted to them, they continue farming as did most of the white settlers who later moved into the unassigned lands.

Oklahoma has long been one of the principal petroleum and natural-gas producing states in the nation. Although early settlers found oil springs in Northeastern Oklahoma, the earliest production of oil in the state was thirty barrels in 1901. Most of the oil and gas production within Oklahoma historically comes from giant oil or gas fields having an ultimate recovery of more than 100 million barrels of oil and 1 trillion cubic feet of gas respectively.<sup>6</sup> The discovery of one of the state's largest oil fields beneath the city in 1928 brought the first major diversification to the local economy.

The development of agriculture and related commerce in the nineteenth century, and then oil and natural gas industries in the twentieth century was closely dependent upon railroads. The city's original town site was free from any topographical restraints. Two main stream channels flowed east-west. The North Fork of the Canadian River was the most important of these and historically formed a barrier between the main business center and the southerly Capital Hill area. Most of the railroad tracks followed the lower, more level portions of the city where the change in grade is gradual.

The railroad connections that ultimately assured Oklahoma City's dominant economic role in the state were part of plans developed for railroad networks prior to the onset of the Civil War. The envisioned network included connecting the Great Lakes with the Missouri River, the Missouri Valley with the Gulf of Mexico's coast and the Mississippi River with California. The first

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<sup>5</sup> John W. Morris, Charles R. Goins and Edwin C. McReynolds, *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma, Third Addition* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 69.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

railroad line to the Pacific Ocean became a reality when the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific railroad tracks met at Ogden, Utah in 1869. The Union Pacific's planned southern branch followed the route of the Chisholm Trail's Texas cattle road and connected eastern Kansas with the Gulf of Mexico. By 1873, railroad tracks extended from Chetopa, Kansas, across Indian Territory to the Red River. Crossing the Arkansas River on a bridge, this first line into the land assigned to the Five Civilized Tribes ran southwest through Muskogee, Eufaula, McAlester, Atoka and Durant. Connections with Oklahoma City began in 1886 with the north-south line of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. In 1891, the Choctaw Coal and Railway Company entered Oklahoma County from the east. Next into Oklahoma City, in 1898, was the St. Louis and San Francisco (Frisco) which entered the area from the northeast. In 1902, the Rock Island Company bought the properties of the now named Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad, creating an east-west line with connections between El Reno, Oklahoma City, Shawnee, Wewoka, and McAlester.<sup>7</sup> The Missouri-Kansas-Texas (KATY) railroad followed in 1902.<sup>8</sup>

## **TERRITORIAL PERIOD: PRE – 1907**

### **FOUNDING OF OKLAHOMA CITY**

What is now the state of Oklahoma is part of the original 1803 Louisiana Purchase, a period when indigenous plains tribes occupied the land. By the 1830s, most of Oklahoma was, by federal legislative action, declared "Indian Territory," designated land not only for native tribes, but also as the new home for Native American nations forced by the federal government to abandon their lands in the Southeast United States. Among the displaced aboriginal peoples relocated to the Indian Territory in the 1830s were the Five Civilized Tribes—Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole peoples — who established independent nations in the new territory.

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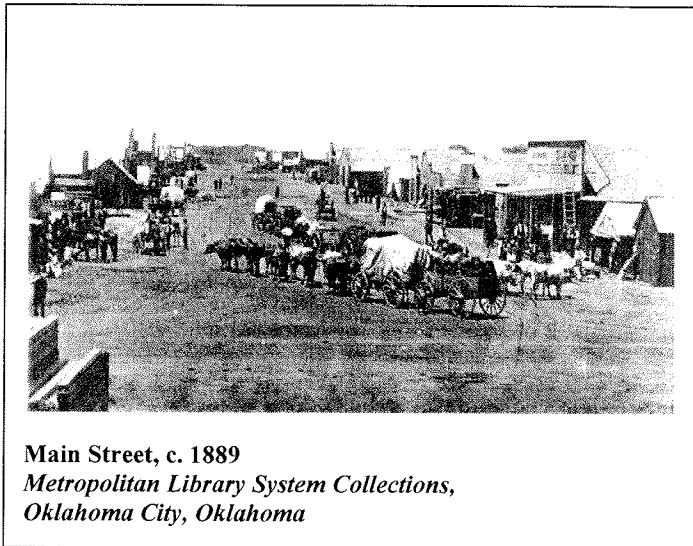
<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>8</sup> Bob L. Blackburn, Arn Henderson and Melvena Thurman. *The Physical Legacy: Buildings of Oklahoma County 1889 to 1931* (Oklahoma City: Southwest Heritage Press, 1980), 6.

However, beginning soon after the end of the Civil War, expansion by Anglo-Americans into the Indian Territory led to government approved railroad right-of-ways and the opening of some land for white settlement.

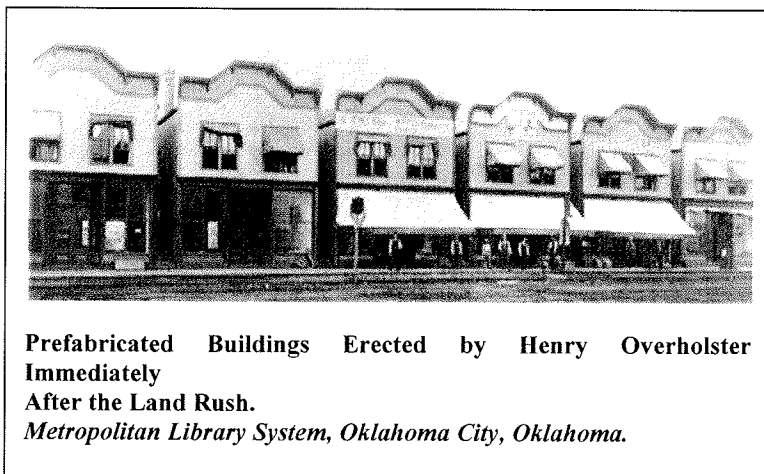
The Santa Fe Railroad selected the future site of Oklahoma City in 1886 when it extended its

tracks through Oklahoma Territory and established a fuel and water stop.



**Main Street, c. 1889**  
*Metropolitan Library System Collections,  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

The lonely outpost changed at noon on April 22, 1889 when thousands of homesteaders crossed the borders of “Unassigned Lands”<sup>9</sup> during the opening land run into Oklahoma Territory; by nightfall, a tent city of ten thousand



**Prefabricated Buildings Erected by Henry Overholster Immediately After the Land Rush.**  
*Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*

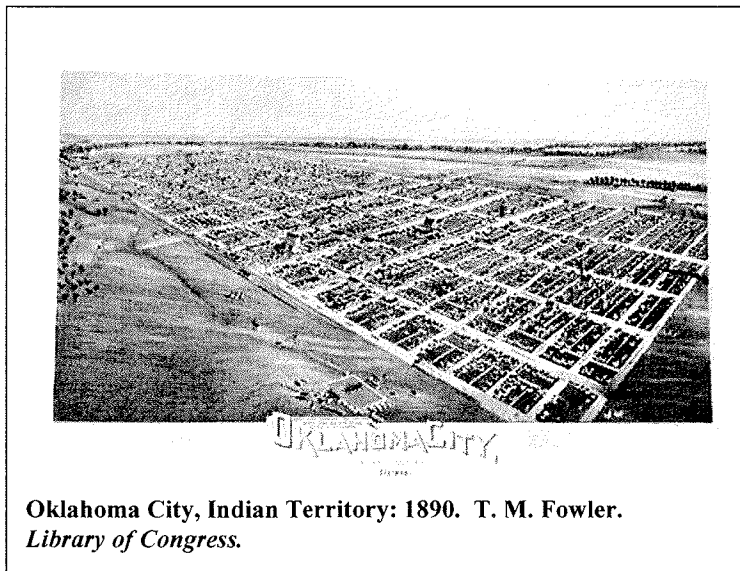
people occupied the prairie land surrounding the Santa Fe railroad’s single-track boxcar station. Initially, commercial construction occurred along Main and Grand Streets west of the Santa Fe tracks. Here, entrepreneurs hastily erected warehouses, mercantile stores, hotels, lumber yards, cattle pens, and saloons.

<sup>9</sup> Land in Indian Territory that had not been assigned to any Native American nations.

However, within a year of staking claims, the number of settlers dropped significantly to less than four thousand people. Drought and competition from other boom towns in the newly created territory precipitated the decline as many of the land run participants sold their claims and moved away. Nevertheless, a few weeks after the western half of Indian Territory became the Oklahoma Territory, the community incorporated as Oklahoma City on May 23, 1890.<sup>10</sup>

In response to the loss of population, community leaders united to forge partnerships using public and private incentives to attract investment, a practice that would continue through the twentieth century. Their first major effort was to use a combination of political and promotional persuasion matched by cash to convince the officials of the Frisco Railroad to bypass the territorial capital city of Guthrie and to extend their tracks west to Oklahoma City, creating a direct link between that community to the nation's largest rail heads – Kansas City, Chicago and St. Louis and from these hubs to world markets.<sup>11</sup>

Oklahoma City swiftly became one of the new territory's largest cities. Additional rail connections established it as a trade center for processing the agricultural products of the region. An improved agricultural economy resulting from new cultivation and record crops, particularly in cotton,



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<sup>10</sup> Morris, et al., 69.

<sup>11</sup> Lackmeyer and Money, x.



promoted growth. By the time Oklahoma became a state in 1907, Oklahoma City was the commercial hub of the new state and its population outnumbered that of Guthrie, the territorial capital.

The Seminole Land Company platted almost all of the area of what became Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma Town Company claimed and laid out the southern few blocks. The two companies' plats extended to and met near what is now Sheridan Avenue, resulting in an irregular juncture of north-south streets that remained until the 1990s.<sup>12</sup>

Between 1898 and 1906, Oklahoma City experienced a building boom, as brick and stone structures replaced many of the hastily built wood buildings erected during the initial establishment of the community. In 1900, new construction in Oklahoma City, most of which was one- or two-story buildings, had a value of more than \$1.2 million.

The main core of the settlement, Broadway Avenue, with its 100 foot right-of-way, served as the primary north-south street of the growing new town and extended north as far as N.W. Fourth Street. The first few blocks north of Grand Boulevard (now Sheridan) were prime commercial lots. A concentration of industrial and large wholesale distribution businesses located east of the Santa Fe Railroad and south of the Rock Island tracks. Here an eight-block area soon developed a system of side tracks, creating industrial development along Reno, California, Grand and Main Streets that included foundries, food and grain processing plants, manufacturers, and warehouses companies. The early retail commercial area expanded to the west from a point where numerous one- to three-story brick buildings lined Main Street and Grand Avenue.<sup>13</sup> Here business buildings provided a wide variety of retail sales and services – undertakers and funeral homes, shoe and boot stores, department stores, “gentlemen’s furnishings establishments,” hardware and furniture stores, pharmacies, cafes, saloons, the American Express telegraph office, billiard and pool halls, printing companies and stationer shops, confectioners, barber shops, real estate land

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<sup>12</sup> Robinson Boeck Architects, “Reconnaissance Level Survey of a Portion of Central Oklahoma City” (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma City Neighborhood and Community Planning Department, 1992), 34.

<sup>13</sup> Blackburn et.al., 9.

developer offices, physicians and dentists, law offices, banks, harness makers, car dealerships, photo and plumbing supply shops, gunsmiths, upholsters, wholesale and retail music stores, S. H. Kress five and dime store and specialty stores, theaters, and laundries.

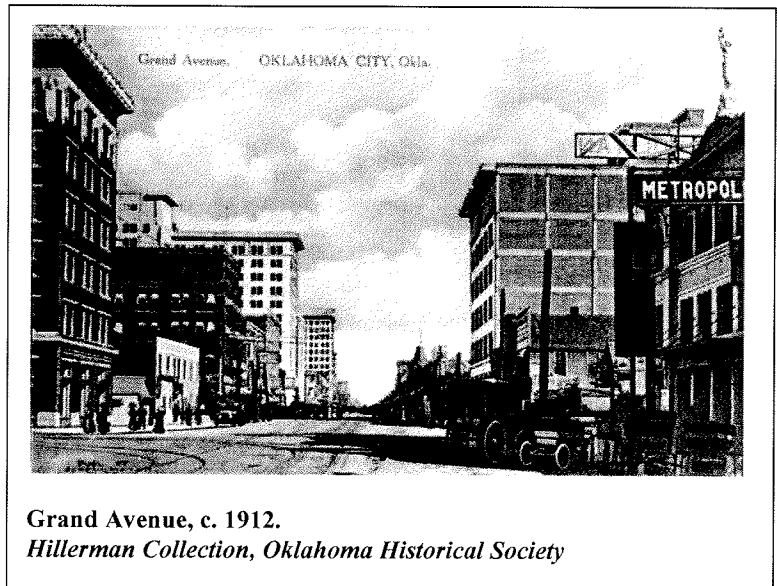
In 1907, a national financial recession slowed the region and the nation's growth. The same year, the Oklahoma and Indian territories merged and the United States Congress admitted them into the Union as the state of Oklahoma. At this time, the new state's 1,414,177 inhabitants comprised a population larger than any other state's upon admission to the Union.

## **EARLY STATEHOOD**

### **YEARS: 1908-1918**

During the first years of the twentieth century, the city's early settlement period ended. Railroad connections and population growth brought the specialization that characterized economic development. By the turn of the twentieth century, Oklahoma City was the

premier location for wholesale houses, distribution and warehousing businesses, and light industrial production. Such commercial and industrial enterprises expanded to the east, south and west of an evolving retail center between the trackage of the railroads and along the North Canadian River. The areas to the northeast, the south and the central city attracted working class residents who, by necessity, lived within close walking distance of their places of employment.<sup>14</sup>



<sup>14</sup> Boeck, 3.

In 1908, the Chamber of Commerce launched an effort to recruit meat-packing businesses to the city. In exchange for \$300,000 in cash, tax exemption for the stock yards for five years, a new sewer line to the Canadian River, connecting streetcar lines, and a railroad belt line, the firm of Nelson, Morris and Co.<sup>15</sup> located a packing house in the city.<sup>16</sup> Three months later, the Chamber received another proposal from the Schwartzchild & Sulzber Packing Company<sup>17</sup> demanding similar concessions.<sup>18</sup> These large plants, the Oklahoma National Stockyards, and the Livestock Exchange Building, built in 1910, created over 4,000 new jobs and continued to be of primary economic importance to the city for decades.<sup>19</sup>

As the city's population grew in the first decade of the twentieth century from ten thousand to exceed sixty-four thousand, streetcar lines<sup>20</sup> (another public/private effort) "transformed the town from a compact walking village to a suburban city with neighborhoods popping up in former pastures more than a mile from downtown."<sup>21</sup> Residential growth, stimulated by the expansion of the streetcar system, expanded past Thirteenth Street as housing doubled between 1907 and 1910. Building permits reached a value of \$6,937,675 during the building boom of 1910.<sup>22</sup> Efforts to bring order to the boom town included passage, in 1909, of a bond issue to create a park system that consisted of a boulevard that formed a loop around the city and four large parks in the northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest quadrants of the city.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Now Armour and Company.

<sup>16</sup> Terry L Griffith, *Images of America Oklahoma City Statehood to 1930* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 9.

<sup>17</sup> Now Wilson & Co.

<sup>18</sup> Boeck, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Lackmeyer and Money, xi

<sup>20</sup> In addition to several streetcar lines in the City, the Oklahoma Railway Company also operated interurban lines to El Reno, Guthrie, and Norman from 1904 to 1947.

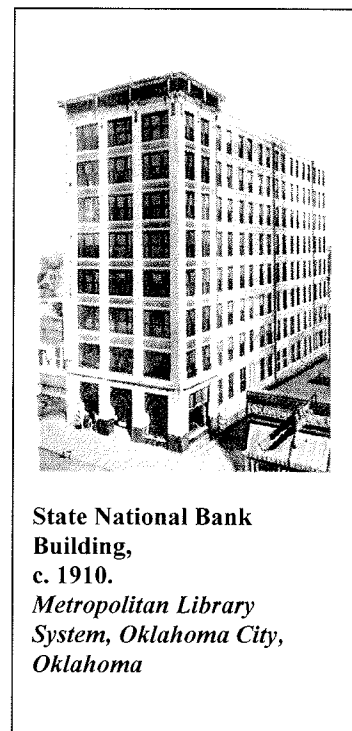
<sup>21</sup> Lackmeyer and Money, xi.

<sup>22</sup> Griffith, 23.

<sup>23</sup> Linked by Grand Boulevard, the boulevard land eventually provided much of the land for an interstate highway loop around the city later in the century.

Meanwhile, downtown was a construction zone. Where the tallest buildings in 1903 were four-or five stories, by 1908, a new generation of “skyscrapers” dominated the skyline. Among the tall buildings was the seven-story, limestone-clad Sullivanesque office building built in 1907 for the Pioneer Telephone Company. Along Robinson, the Colcord and State National Bank buildings were part of an emerging office building property type. The twelve-story Colcord building, completed in 1910, was the city’s first skyscraper constructed of reinforced concrete. The eight-story, State National Bank building reflected the tripartite design of Louis H. Sullivan and the Chicago School. In 1909, construction began on ten large buildings erected at a cost of \$100,000 to \$350,000. In addition to the Colcord and State National Bank buildings, they included the Lee-Huckins Building, the American National Building, the Herskowitz Building, the Oklahoma Railway Company Terminal Building, the Harvester International Building and the Stock Exchange Building.<sup>24</sup>

The success of a statewide vote to move the state capital from Guthrie to Oklahoma City in 1910 stimulated new commercial construction. Builders in 1910, however, erected smaller buildings rather than a large number of tall office structures. The only major buildings under construction in 1910 were the Levy Building, the Patterson Building and the Miller Brothers Building, which were all office buildings, and the Skirvin and Kingkade hotels.<sup>25</sup> By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, three generations of business buildings could be found in the downtown area: remnants of the wood frame buildings erected in the 1880s and 1890s, one- to three-story brick and stone buildings, and the city’s new steel and concrete skyscrapers of five to twelve stories.



<sup>24</sup> Blackburn, et.al., 19.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 22.

As evidence of the growth in population and the new accessibility afforded by a growing streetcar system,<sup>26</sup> for the first time, property owners and developers erected many of the smaller office and retail buildings away from downtown. Commercial development occurred as far west as North Walker Avenue and as far east as Stiles Avenue. Department stores and other retail businesses constructed new buildings blocks away from the core of the business district at Broadway and Grand. A nascent automobile retail center, extended north from downtown along North Broadway. In 1909 alone, thirteen multi-storied hotels located in all sections of town as far north as Tenth Street and west to Walker Avenue opened in Oklahoma City.

Industrial and wholesale distribution and warehouses continued their expansion to the east. Goods manufactured in Oklahoma City increased from \$7 million in 1908 to around \$17 million in 1910. The total amount of goods distributed by wholesale houses went from \$23 million to \$39 million during the same time period. To accommodate these expanding operations investors erected more than 200 business buildings by 1910.<sup>27</sup>

By 1913, the boom was over; a national recession hit the city's investors. New building projects totaled only \$174,721. Following this downturn were disruptions to the market economy caused by the United States entry into World War I and the growing intensity of rivalry with Tulsa, where the discovery of oil and gas in surrounding area made it, by 1920, the "Oil Capital of the World."<sup>28</sup>

## **WORLD WAR I**

Germany's blockade of Allies' ports effectively closed exportation of American agricultural products. The result in Oklahoma was devastating. Prices for the region's primary crop, cotton, dropped 20 percent to a low of six cents a pound. Wheat prices followed the same pattern. As the

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<sup>26</sup> Organized in 1903, the Oklahoma Street Railway Company, operated, by 1910, forty miles of track in Oklahoma City and had another forty-four miles under construction to the communities of Yukon, Moore and Edmond.

<sup>27</sup> Blackburn, et.al., 22.

<sup>28</sup> Lackmeyer and Money, xi.

United States moved closer to entering the war in late 1916, some European markets reopened. At the end of that year cotton farmers in Oklahoma received eighteen cents per pound and, at the end of the war in November 1918, prices broke the thirty-cent mark.<sup>29</sup> The increase in crop prices, however, was only a respite. The effects of an agricultural depression in the 1920s continued for more than a decade negated any initial gains.



**U.S. Post Office Building**  
*Hillerman Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society*

### **THE CITY BEAUTIFUL MOVEMENT**

Out of the chaotic growth that occurred in cities in the late nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century, the impact of growing technology in industry, and the effect of waves of immigrants from Europe as well as the migration of tens of thousands of poor African Americans from rural areas to the cities created a nationwide trend in urban planning to address and rectify the decay and demoralization of urban communities through the beautification of the city. Elected officials, charitable organizations, architects and developers increasingly realized the critical importance of community planning, not only in sustaining urban growth and beautification of their cities, but also to organize and direct provisions for the health and safety of its citizens.

Generally stated, the City Beautiful Movement advocates sought to alleviate social ills through beautification that would inspire civic loyalty and moral behavior in the impoverished, bring American cities into parity with their European competitors through the use of the Beaux Arts

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<sup>29</sup> Oklahoma Historical Society, "Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture:" available from <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/W/Woo25.html>; Internet; accessed 15 August 2009.

Classical architectural idioms, and encourage the upper classes to work and spend money in urban areas. Concurrently, the Progressive Movement in America, which focused largely on corruption in local government, exploitation of the laboring classes, and improvement in housing conditions in large cities, quickly embraced the concept of the City Beautiful as a method of reform. Not coincidentally, a nationwide urban parks movement that advocated city planning and the creation of open public spaces in the nation's cities occurred at the same time. By the late nineteenth century, many of the nation's cities embraced the tenets of city planning, urban parks, and new traffic thoroughfares as an antidote for blighted areas and a method to increase tax revenues.

As early as 1903, members of the city's various women's clubs organized the Civic Improvement League patterned after national models. The League's primary purpose was community beautification and improvement of sanitary conditions. In addition to hiring a landscape gardener, the League also produced an ordinance giving the organization, among other duties, the power over the design of city parks, streets, pavements, sidewalks, and location of trees.

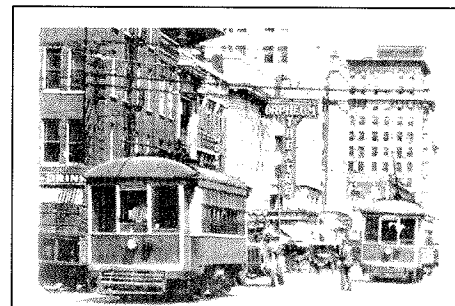
Although the beginnings of the City Beautiful Movement occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century in Oklahoma, it evolved over a longer period of time than in other states, lasting into the 1920s and 1930s. Nationally, the movement began to wane by the end of the first decade of the century. Nevertheless, components of the movement, including a preference for classicism in Architecture continued through World War I. Moreover, while Oklahoma City planners and civic leaders early on gave significant attention park development and classical architectural motifs in their public buildings, other less visible implementations of the tenets of the City Beautiful Movement included city planning and zoning, landscape design, and creation of a modern infrastructure that included paved streets, curbs and sidewalks; trash removal; sewer systems; and street lighting. In Oklahoma City, many elements of the movement permeated city planning and development until the end of the twentieth century.

The public support for a park and boulevard system in Oklahoma City grew out of the city's adaptation of the philosophies of the City Beautiful Movement. The effort began in 1909, following an extensive parks acquisition program, when the city engaged W. H. Dunn, Superintendent of Parks in Kansas City, Missouri, to develop the first parks plan for Oklahoma City. The 1910 Park-Dunn plan, recommended purchasing two thousand acres for city parks and the construction of Grand Boulevard. By 1920, the plan was not fully implemented.

### **Kessler Plan**

In January of 1920, upon the recommendation of noted Oklahoma City architect Solomon Layton and developer, Anton Classen, the city named St. Louis landscape architect George E. Kessler<sup>30</sup> as a consultant to complete the first comprehensive plan for the city. Kessler's previous commissions in Oklahoma City included the landscape design for the State Capitol and for Harn Park. His credentials also included the successful use of the City Beautiful tenets in the city plans for rapidly expanding cities such as Denver, Kansas City, and Dallas. The stated objectives for the Oklahoma City plan was to address future growth, as well as to resolve existing problems ranging from street widening to prevent dumping of sewage in the North Canadian River.

Although Kessler died in 1923 before he completed the plan, he did finalize major components of the plan, which provided the basis for later planning efforts. In 1920, the Oklahoma City Council appointed the city's first Planning Commission. In 1923, changes in the state planning enabling legislation preceded the reorganization of the Planning Commission role in



**1920s Downtown Streetscape  
*Metropolitan Library System,  
Oklahoma, City, Oklahoma***

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<sup>30</sup> Other work attributed to Kessler in Oklahoma includes: the Guthrie State Capital Grounds, 1907; Lawton Camp Doniphan (part of Fort Sill), 1918; Norman, University of Oklahoma, 1907; Oklahoma City Parks and Boulevard System; Emworth University, 1902; and Fairlawn Cemetery, 1892.



relation to a regional commission. With these laws in place, the city enacted a zoning ordinance based on Mr. Kessler's studies and plans. The new zoning code created specific land-use zoning districts: local business districts, residential districts, apartment districts, business and light manufacturing districts, heavy industrial districts, oil and gas districts, and a central business district. The zoning code regulated the intensity of land use and open space in these districts, required setbacks on buildings taller than twelve stories, and directed the relation to height of buildings and traffic flow.<sup>31</sup>

Nearly five years later, in 1928, the city hired planning consultants, S. Herbert Hare of Hare and Hare of Kansas City, Missouri, to finish Kessler's City Beautiful inspired plan. Sid Hare came highly recommended for his work as a planning engineer in the cities of Fort Worth and Houston, Texas. He previously collaborated with Kessler on public and private projects in Kansas City, Missouri, and completed many of Kessler's projects after his death. In addition to finishing Kessler's comprehensive plan, the city enlarged the scope-of-work to address the enormous amount of on-going and projected development. This included preparation of historical information, socio-demographic data, a comprehensive street plan, a civic center plan, a parks plan, a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. The document, *The City Plan for Oklahoma City*, was the first comprehensive plan for the city.

## **POST-WORLD WAR I DEVELOPMENT: 1919-1930**

During the 1920s, the population of the city doubled. Building permits reflect the amount of commercial growth. Between 1900 and 1910, the city's population grew to around 64,000, and new construction amounted to almost \$15 million. During the next decade, the population grew to 91,295 and construction totals nearly reached \$29 million. The greatest growth occurred between 1920 and 1930 when the population grew to 182,845 and construction costs reached \$113,455, 279.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Report of the City Planning Commission. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1930* (Kansas City, MO: Hare and Hare City Planning Consultants, 1930), 55.

<sup>32</sup> "Oklahoma City Grows," *The Oklahoma*, 29 June 1930, p. 9. [article on-line] available from <http://i8.photobucket.com/albums/a49/DougLoudenback/1920-1930/> Oklahoman; Internet; accessed 15 July 2009.

In the northern portions of the city residential development for the affluent continued. The oldest of this residential development pattern were the neighborhoods that developed to the northeast towards the state capital building. The north central portion became known as Heritage Hills. Middle-class housing followed the streetcar lines to the northwest. At the same time, the rural and industrial characteristics of land use in the southern portion of the city defined its neighborhoods.

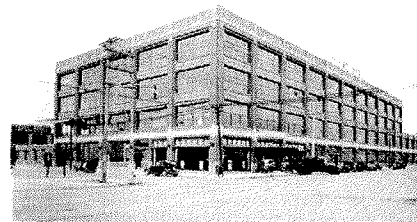
Growth did not occur as it had in the boom era of the first decade of the twentieth century. A brief period of economic turbulence followed the allied victory in World War I. Nevertheless, the return to "normalcy" signaled prosperity for many urban Oklahomans. In the rural areas, however, increased agricultural production meant declining prices for most farm products. Despite the economic problems affecting rural farmers, the State's cities remained prosperous until after the collapse of the stock market in 1929.

The primary factor behind the accelerating growth at a time of high agricultural sales and low farm income was Oklahoma's emergence as an agricultural clearing house for the State's farmers. As a result of improved all-weather roads and railroad and interurban rail connections, merchants in Oklahoma "sold, processed and shipped more food and fiber than ever before."<sup>33</sup>

Adding diversity to the local economy was the emergence of an automobile industry. In 1907, only five dealerships sold automobiles and trucks within the city limits. By 1910, the city boasted



**Buick Dealership, c. 1910**  
*Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma, City, Oklahoma*

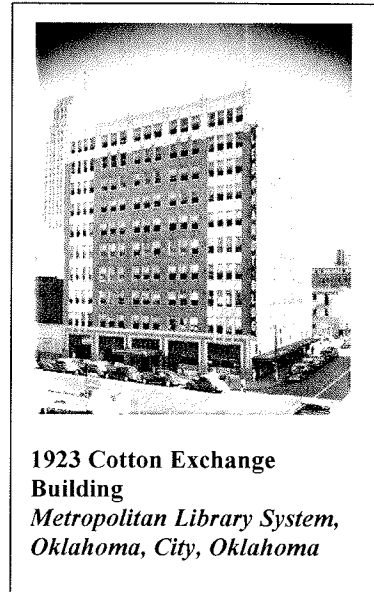


**Albert Kahn's 1915 Ford Assembly Plant**  
*Hillerman Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society*

<sup>33</sup> Blackburn et.al., 45.

thirty-four dealerships. The most important component of the city's automobile industry was the Ford Model-T assembly plant designed by Albert Kahn and erected on West Main.<sup>34</sup>

By 1921, seventy-six dealerships operated in the Oklahoma City. The high number of automobile agencies resulted in a district commonly referred to as "Automobile Alley" stretching just north from downtown along North Broadway from Fourth to Thirteenth Streets. At this time, fifty-two of the city's seventy-six dealerships were in the district. A report released in 1923, estimated that Oklahoma City dealerships accounted for ninety-five percent of the 244,883 vehicles registered in the state.<sup>35</sup>



By 1922, the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce boasted of the 267 industries located within the city limits. At this time the city had 1,716 retail businesses. The city's manufacturing and processing plants produced \$111 million worth of goods annually and stimulated related gross income of wholesale and jobbing companies of \$145, million a year.<sup>36</sup>

The growing number and types of commercial buildings reflected an economy that was, by the third decade of the twentieth century, becoming increasingly diversified. Businessmen invested \$2 million in new milling facilities. The Cotton Exchange Building, erected in 1923, reflected the city's preeminent role in the State in marketing \$118 million in cotton sales annually.<sup>37</sup>

The growing need for new buildings for banking, offices, and retail sales created a building boom that surpassed that of 1909. In 1926, the value of building permits issued for construction in Oklahoma City was \$16,800 million. During the decade of the 1920s through 1930, the

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<sup>34</sup> The architect of the plant, Albert Kahn, was the first to use steel sash in concrete-framed structures; he pioneered the use of long span steel trusses, freeing floor areas of columns. Kahn also helped develop buildings for continuously moving assembly lines maximizing the use of natural light and ventilation.

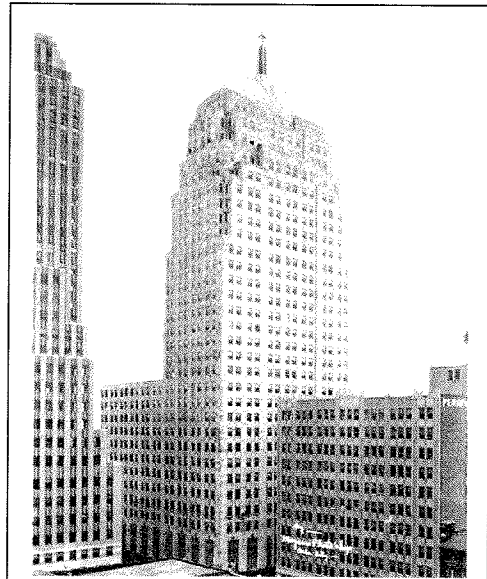
<sup>35</sup> Blackburn et.al., 45.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

population doubled from 91,194 to 182,845. During that same period, cost of building construction almost quadrupled from \$29,175,430 to \$113,455,279.<sup>38</sup> The city's skyline and streetscapes in the central business district changed dramatically with the addition of twenty-nine commercial buildings.

The social and economic changes of the 1920s affected Oklahoma's business community in numerous ways other than the number of new buildings and associated cost of construction. Changes included the locations of firms, as well as the size of individual companies. The decade of change spawned a generation of new businesses such as services and goods relating to the growing use of the automobile and the advent of large chain department stores. One of the earliest and largest department stores was the ornate Art Deco style Montgomery Ward Company, which constructed its five-story regional sales and distribution building on West Main Street in 1928.



**1931 Ramsey Tower (L) and First National Bank and Trust Company (R)**  
*Hillerman Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society*

<sup>38</sup> *The Oklahoman*, 20 June 1930, 9.



As Oklahoma City expanded, the central business district retail area spread north and west. One of the most important changes was the abandonment of the Rock Island and Frisco trackage and completion of construction of a Mission Revival style Union Station at 300 West Seventh Street. Industrial enclaves adjacent to the downtown at this time included the growing Bricktown warehouse area on the east side of the central business district between South E. K. Gaylord and Lincoln Boulevards, including Reno and Sheridan Avenues and Main Street. Freight-related businesses located near the Rock Island Railroad and the North Santa Fe Railroad freight depot areas. Manufacturing plants sprang up in the area near Northwest Sixth and Seventh Streets along Robinson, Hudson, and Walker Avenues; on Northeast Second Street and West Main, on Oilfield Row, South Walker Avenue and S.W. Third Street<sup>39</sup>

In 1928, Oklahoma City flourished as a railroad market hub and as a governmental, financial, and manufacturing center when the discovery of one of the state's largest oil fields beneath the city occurred. Within a year there were fifty-three producing wells, fifteen of which produced in excess of sixty thousand barrels a day.<sup>40</sup> Oklahoma City finally joined Tulsa in enjoying the direct economic benefits of the State's petroleum resources and industry. Adding to these benefits in 1930 was discovery of a gigantic deposit at the Mary Sudik well, which eventually produced a total of one million barrels of oil.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Boeck, 4.

<sup>40</sup> Blackburn et.al. 46.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

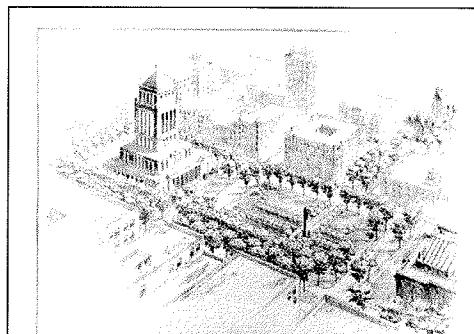
**NEW DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS  
1920-1930**

- 1930, Bass Furniture Building, 100 N Walker;
  - 1927 Wells Roberts Hotel, 15 N Broadway\*;
  - 1926 Automobile Hotel, First Street (demolished);
  - 1928 Southwestern Bell Telephone Building, NW 4th & Broadway
  - 1929 Hightower Building, 105 N Hudson;
  - 1929 Commerce Exchange, Grand & Robinson\*;
  - 1923-29 Cotton Exchange, 228 R.S. Kerr;
  - 1930 OPUBCO Building Expansion, NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street;
  - 1925 Kerr's Department Store, 312 W. Main;\*
  - 1930 Skirvin Hotel Expansion, Broadway at Park Avenue;
  - 1927 Petroleum Building, 134 R.S. Kerr;
  - 1929 Motor Hotel, 1 North Hudson;
  - 1929 Montgomery Wards Store, Main & Walker;
  - 1929 Harbour-Longmire Building, 410 W. Main
  - 1927 Perrine Building, 119 N. Robinson;
  - 1920 American National Bank, 140 W Main;\*
  - 1928 Oklahoma Gas & Electric Building, 321 N Harvey;
  - 1923 Braniff Building, 324 N. Robinson
  - 1923 Federal Reserve Branch of NW Third & Harvey;
  - 1929 Oklahoma Savings & Loan, 306 Robinson;
  - 1921 Tradesmen National Bank, 101 W Main;
  - 1925 Medical Arts Building, 100 W First;
  - 1926 Mercantile Building Expansion, Main & Hudson;
  - 1920 McEwen-Halliburton Department Store;\*
  - 1923 Oklahoma Club, 202 W Grand;\*
  - 1924 Elks Club, 401 N. Harvey;
- Not pictured in the collage are:
- 1928 Siber Hotel,
  - 1928-30 Hudson Hotel;\* and
  - 1928 Herriman Apartment Hotel

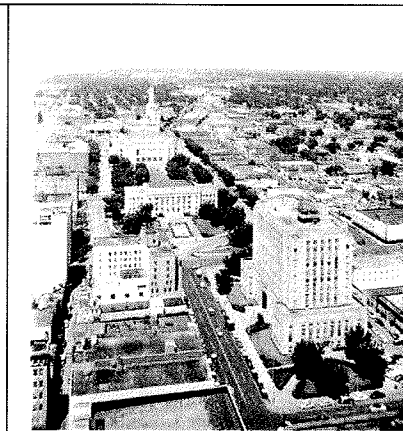
The new oil money stimulated more commercial construction. In 1929, Oklahoma City issued more than \$24 million in building permits followed by approximately \$20 million for proposed construction in 1930 and \$15 million projected for 1931. The buildings erected in this boom period were some of the city's tallest and included the Skirvin Tower Hotel, the First National Bank and Trust Company building, the Ramsey Tower, the Black Hotel, the Young Women's Christian Association building, and the Oklahoma Biltmore Hotel. These buildings in particular introduced the tall vertical Art Deco style to the city's skyline and streetscapes. Combined with the construction of new railroad facilities and government buildings in a three-year period, the downtown construction in the 1920s and 1930s amounted to the most dramatic change in the appearance of the central business district since the 1889 run.<sup>42</sup>

### **THE CITY PLAN, 1930**

The City of Oklahoma City hired Hare and Hare, planning consultants from Kansas City, in 1928 to complete the Kessler Plan and to write a final report containing historical data, socio-demographic data, a street plan, a civic center plan, a parks plan, a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. Hare and Hare submitted their report, *The City Plan for Oklahoma City*, to the City Planning Commission on December 24, 1930. Oklahoma City's current Civic Center is largely based on the Hare and Hare Plan.



**Civic Center Plan**  
*Oklahoma City Planning and  
Development Department*



**1930s Civic Center**  
*Hillerman Collection, Oklahoma  
Historical Society*

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

In addition to building on Kessler's work, the plan also included the Grand Boulevard Plan developed by W. H. Dunn in 1909. As a result, the city acquired much of the railroad right-of-way and constructed portions of the boulevard. The idea of a loop around the central business district was not implemented, however, until the development of the Interstate Highway system.

### **THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR II: 1931-1945**

Following the end of World War I, Oklahoma suffered an agricultural depression. Large surpluses of crops drove prices downward. Oil and natural gas discoveries brought transient periods of prosperity to some areas in the State. Those taking the brunt of the losses were tenant farmers. By 1931, overproduction sent oil prices to disastrously low levels. Oklahoma City's business community began to feel the effects of the depression after 1931 and, as a result, construction ceased. By 1935, rural migrants and unemployed workers erected shanties and tents on the south bank of the North Canadian River.

Aside from federally funded projects, little construction occurred in the United States during the Great Depression. In Oklahoma City federal programs included the Works Progress Administration (WPA) funded Civic Center projects (City Hall Municipal Building and police station, the Oklahoma County Courthouse, and the Municipal Auditorium). Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and WPA projects reduced the level of the Canadian River to control flooding and erected one of the first public housing projects in the country.

Compounding the economic plight, a severe drought that began in 1932 deepened the depression in the state. Agricultural profits, already diminished by the Great Depression, became worse during the drought. The federal land use policies, which focused on improving erosion control and rangeland improvements, and new price controls in the marketing of cotton, resulted in removal of land from cotton production, severely limiting one of Oklahoma City's economic staples. By 1940, the region's croplands reverted to cattle grazing.<sup>43</sup> Low prices, drought, and failed federal policies resulted in the widespread eviction of tenant farmers and sharecroppers.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 226.



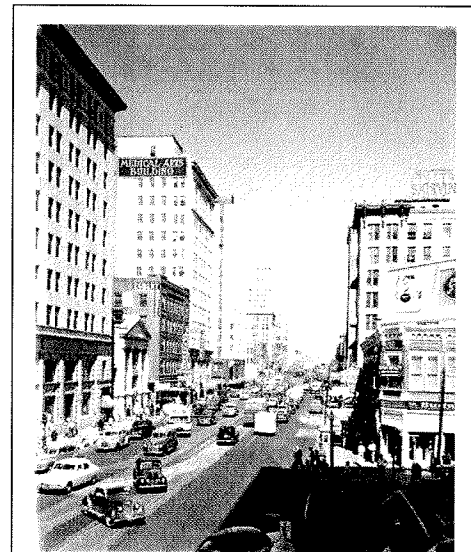
Throughout the depression, as farmers lost their land in foreclosure, many left the state or migrated to the nearby cities in search of work. At the same time new petroleum discoveries worldwide forced oil prices down.

## **WORLD WAR II GROWTH**

As the advent of war in Europe became a reality with the German invasion of Poland in 1939, Oklahoma community leaders successfully lobbied for a share of defense spending. These efforts, political maneuvering, a year-round climate ideal for flying, and a network of rail connections paid off. Federal dollars poured into the state for training pilots, establishing military bases, and new facilities for wartime production. At the same time, the Selective Service Act of 1940 radically reduced unemployment in the State.

In June 1941, Will Rogers Field opened southwest of Oklahoma City. The air field facility provided training for aerial photo reconnaissance and bombing crews. The next month, work began on the city's east side on an air supply and repair facility, dedicated as Tinker Field<sup>44</sup> in 1942. Within a year, the facility had fifteen thousand civilian employees. The Midwest City Douglas Aircraft Company Plant east of Tinker cost \$20 million and provided employment for twenty-three thousand workers.<sup>45</sup>

In 1942, Oklahoma voters elected oilman Robert S. Kerr as governor. Kerr succeeded in securing a



**Downtown Oklahoma City, 1947.**  
*Hillerman Collection, Oklahoma  
Historical Society*

<sup>44</sup> Initially designated the Midwest Air Depot, the facility was renamed in honor of Maj. Gen. Clarence Tinker, an Oklahoman of Osage heritage, who died leading a bombing raid against Japanese positions on Wake Island

<sup>45</sup> Oklahoma Historical Society, "Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture:" available from <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/W/Woo25.html>; Internet; accessed 15 August 2009.

disproportionate share of federal defense spending for Oklahoma. The funding allowed the State of Oklahoma to retire its debt and restored fiscal stability.<sup>46</sup>

### **POSTWAR DEVELOPMENT 1946-1959**

Prosperity continued after the surrender of Japan. Much of the economic synergy continued to be near Tinker Air Force Base, large wartime industrial sites, and in the suburbs and along highways. The post-war period saw Oklahoma City grow to become major hub in the ever-evolving Interstate Highway System during the Eisenhower Administration. Tinker Air Force Base became the largest air depot in the country.

### **THE COMPREHENSIVE CITY PLAN, 1949**

Anticipating the end of the war, and an expansion of the nation's federal highway system, in July of 1944, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, and the Oklahoma City Board of Education engaged Harland Bartholomew and Associates to prepare a comprehensive plan to direct the growth of the city and the county for the next twenty-five years. After the state legislature passed enabling legislation based on most of the plan's recommendations, the city and the county adopted an updated version of the Bartholomew Plan, titled *The Comprehensive City Plan: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*, in July 1949. The comprehensive city plan included a major streets' plan, a new zoning ordinance, master plans for Will Rogers Field and the Wiley Post Airport, a parks plan, and a plan component to guide construction of schools.

By the mid-1950s, the plan did not alleviate concerns by Oklahoma City's leaders regarding the future of downtown. Many of the concerned businessmen were aware of the new laws for revitalizing the historic city core and linking of the central business districts with a national network of highways. Eventually referred to as "urban renewal," the federal program provided an alternative to the difficulties created by out-of-town property owners, small lots and street grids

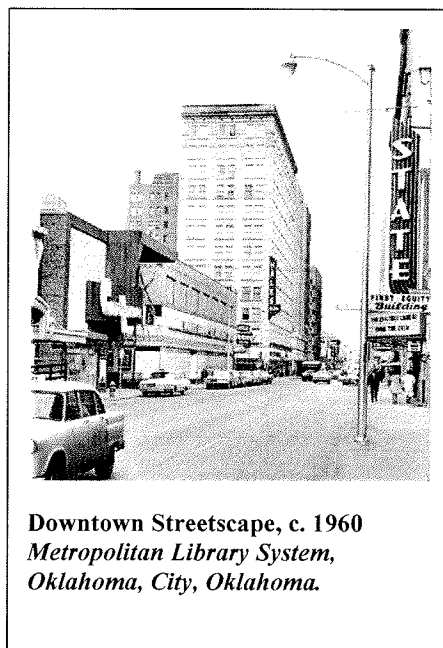
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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

that made large-scale development difficult, and addressed the growing threat of suburban commercial development keeping pace with continuous annexations.

### **BEGINNINGS OF DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION**

In 1956, Edward K. Gaylord whose family owned the state's largest newspaper; Harvey Everest and C.A. Vose, representatives of the directors of Oklahoma City's two largest banks; Ray Young, owner of T.G. & Y stores; Stanley Draper, executive director of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce; and Dean A. McGee, president of the Kerr-McGee Oil Industries, Inc.<sup>47</sup> met with Senator Robert S. Kerr in Washington D.C. to discuss downtown redevelopment. At that time the city's downtown presented the appearance of modest prosperity. It served as the major retail center in the area, providing numerous department stores, restaurants, medical offices, county and city courthouses, and office buildings for lawyers, physicians, and other professions. Smaller buildings provided a wide array of services and products. Finding easily accessible parking was difficult; many used the streetcar system to commute to work or to 'go downtown,' to shop.



**Downtown Streetscape, c. 1960  
Metropolitan Library System,  
Oklahoma, City, Oklahoma.**

Oklahoma City, like other communities, had a pent-up desire to build anew after two decades of stagnation. Downtown looked shabby and the adjacent residential areas reflected not only neglect due to depression and war, but also to the lack of minimum housing codes. Attempts to get federal funding for slum clearance began around 1955. However, getting urban renewal passed

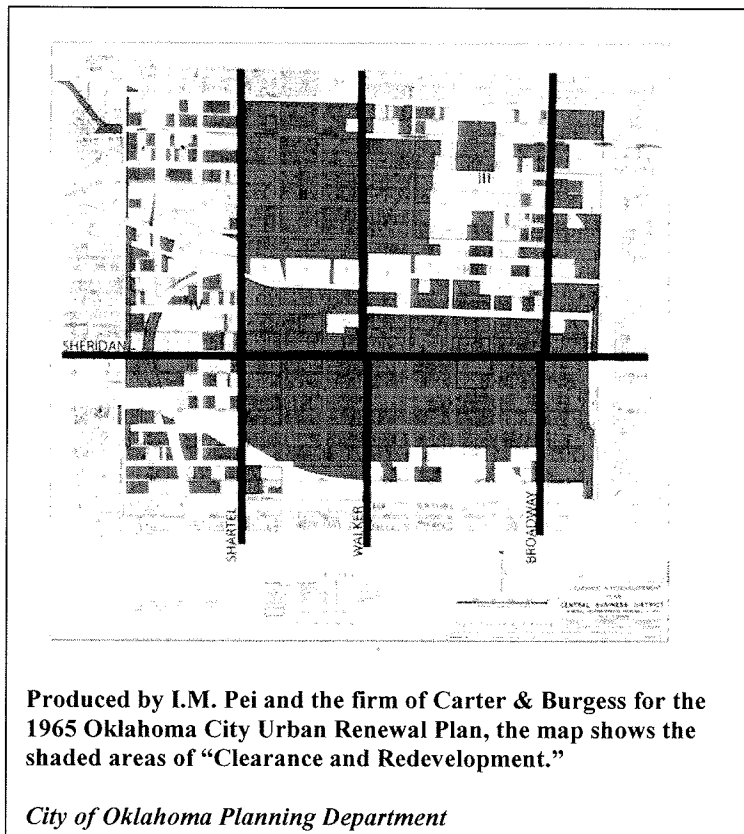
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<sup>47</sup> The Kerr-McGee Corporation, founded in 1929 as the Anderson & Kerr Company, a small drilling company that grew to become one of the country's more successful medium-sized energy and chemical companies. In 1965, the company, then called Kerr-McGee Oil Industries, Inc., became the Kerr-McGee Corporation

into state law would require years of lobbying efforts by Oklahoma City and Tulsa. Moreover, suburbanization was a reality to Oklahoma City's downtown businessmen and property owners after the 1948 groundbreaking of the Penn Square shopping center, several miles northwest of the central business district. Retail companies scheduled to locate stores in the City's first mall included the S.S. Kresge, S.A. McKnight, Montgomery Wards, Humpty Dumpty grocers, John A. Brown, and Peyton-Marcus Company.<sup>48</sup>

### **URBAN RENEWAL ERA 1960-1975**

Between the end of World War II and 1961, Oklahoma City grew from 80 to 475 square miles. With a series of annexations and development of highways and freeways, suburban residential development became dense enough to create a demand for large shopping centers. By 1962, fifty-three downtown retailers closed their doors or moved to the suburbs. The downtown's main occupants became bankers, insurance companies, lawyers, and real estates firms. Dean A. McGee, chief executive officer of Kerr McGee & Company, determined to save the central business district by building a new corporate headquarters,



<sup>48</sup> Lackmeyer and Money, 2-3.

began an effort that he believed would initiate a downtown renaissance.<sup>49</sup>

Impatient with the process to implement a federally funded urban renewal program, McGee and the group who had traveled to Washington D.C. six years earlier founded the Urban Action Foundation in 1962 and sought and hired controversial and nationally acclaimed architect and planner, I. M. Pei. Pei's radical plan for a 528-acre area in the central business district called for clearing most of the city's central core and construction of new facilities carefully designed to financially and visually support and enhance each other. The plan included a new street grid to improve traffic flow, self-parking garages, and the abandonment of any hope that public transportation would revitalize the downtown. New hotel towers would surround a new convention center and new office towers of up to thirty stories would provide modern office spaces. Only a few select landmark buildings would be retained; the removal of hundreds of other buildings would create "super blocks" that would serve as sites of a new galleria shopping center and residential towers. Pei also advocated creating a modern version of the Tivoli Gardens to serve as a centerpiece attraction. He estimated the plan, to be completed by 1989, would require \$31 million in local funds and generate \$280 million in private investment.<sup>50</sup>

The Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority (OCURA), established in 1961, continued planning and development projects over the next two decades based on Pei's vision. The length of time to implement the plan, however, contributed to the downtown area's commercial decline. Throughout the decades of revitalization efforts, suburbanization continued to drain the life from the central business district and its surrounding neighborhoods.



**Early Twentieth Century Baum Building Demolished as Part of the Pei Plan**  
*Hillerman Collections, Oklahoma Historical Society*

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 6.

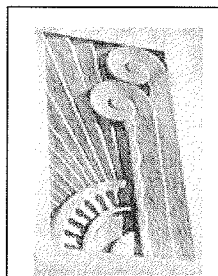
<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

Public and private efforts to implement the plan included demolition of the aging theater district and other notable historical buildings, many of which declined in value due to OCURA ownership of adjacent land, mothballed buildings, as well as the agency's *eminent domain* powers. Owners of other buildings such as the Tivoli Inn and the Sheridan Hotel remodeled their buildings in anticipation of the completion of the plan for a modern downtown. Although the urban renewal program successfully removed real blight, the failure to secure, early in the revitalization process, adequate funding to complete Pei's plan in a timely manner left huge voids in the downtown streetscapes that remained vacant lots or functioned as surface parking for decades.

By the mid-1970s, downtown featured new office buildings, a new convention center, and a new theater. Urban Renewal planners began to address their next redevelopment phase, anticipating that new hotels, a Tivoli Gardens inspired attraction, and a downtown shopping mall would become a reality.

## HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL STYLES AND PROPERTY TYPES

The availability of water and suitable building materials influenced the location, configuration, and physical appearance of communities such as Oklahoma City during the state's early settlement period. Whether they built their business houses of wood, stone, or brick, the builders of the first permanent buildings in Oklahoma followed the vernacular building traditions and styles they had known in their home communities. In Oklahoma City, the earliest structures utilized wood framing, including prefabricated wood structures. For the community's second generation of institutional and commercial buildings, builders adapted popular architectural styles and modified them according to the skills and materials available in the new community.



**Art Deco Detail.**  
**Oklahoma City**  
**Municipal**  
**Building**  
*City of*  
*Oklahoma City,*  
*Oklahoma*

As in other communities in the late nineteenth century, Oklahoma City's elected officials, organized land uses to specific areas and relegated residential, administrative, retail, wholesale, industrial, recreational, and professional buildings and sites to specific locations. Architects and builders designed new building types for specific functions or reinterpreted and adapted traditional designs for new uses. From this, designs emerged for the commercial block, office building, city hall, courthouse, schoolhouse, opera house, hotel, department store, manufacturing plant, and warehouse.<sup>51</sup>

Commercial buildings erected in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries followed many general forms and patterns. They fall into two distinct design categories — those that reflect popular academic “high style” designs and those that feature simple utilitarian commercial forms. The latter building type includes the One-Part Commercial Block, the Two-Part Commercial Block, the Stacked Vertical Block, the Two-Part Vertical Block, the Three-Part Vertical Block, and the Temple Front design.<sup>52</sup>

Most of the first commercial buildings in Oklahoma City were simple temporary vernacular designs or prefabricated units capable of housing various business functions. As soon as possible, owners replaced their first business houses with brick and/or limestone. Most were one, two, or three stories in height. Rooms on the upper floors served as offices, assembly rooms, or provided residential space for the merchant's family or tenants such as the offices of lawyers, doctors, and other professionals. Every commercial center had special services buildings, such as livery stables, which had a unique plan and design to meet its function. Certain special services buildings, such as banks, hotels, and opera houses, were the town's most impressive structures and usually reflected popular high style architecture.

The evolution of Oklahoma City's commercial center mirrored that of other communities in the region. There was a physical and emotional need to make order from the chaos of the early

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<sup>51</sup> Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (New York: Times Mirror New American Library, 1980), 193.

<sup>52</sup> The late nineteenth and early twentieth century building forms identified in this report are based on the forms and nomenclature developed by Richard Longstreth in the *Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*.

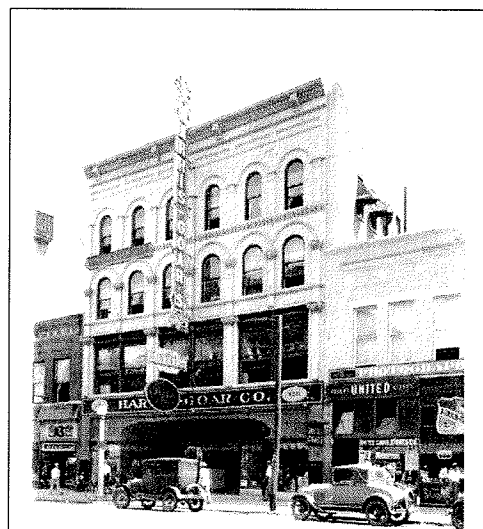
settlement period. Elected officials commissioned the erection of bridges and paving of streets and citizens approved bond issues to install gas, electricity, and telephone lines. New concerns for public health and safety resulted in fire and building codes, as well as the creation of water and sewer systems. Through the boom years of the late nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, the shape of Oklahoma's downtown business center expanded as more types of businesses, banks, manufacturing plants, offices, hotels, and retail shops appeared.



**1904 Romanesque Revival County Courthouse. Demolished During Urban Renewal in the 1970s.**  
*Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

Architects and builders in the early nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries designed most commercial buildings to be seen from the front rather than as freestanding structures. As a result, the primary front façade provided commercial architecture with its distinctive qualities. Side walls were often party walls, shared with or secured to those of the adjacent structure. Walls at the end of blocks or facing onto alleys had simple, utilitarian design treatments. Lot dimensions determined the building's form and commercial buildings filled most, if not all, of their respective lots. Most lots shared standard dimensions, were rectangular, and were deeper than they were wide.<sup>53</sup>

By the early twentieth century, Oklahoma City's appearance reflected the typical Midwestern city's high



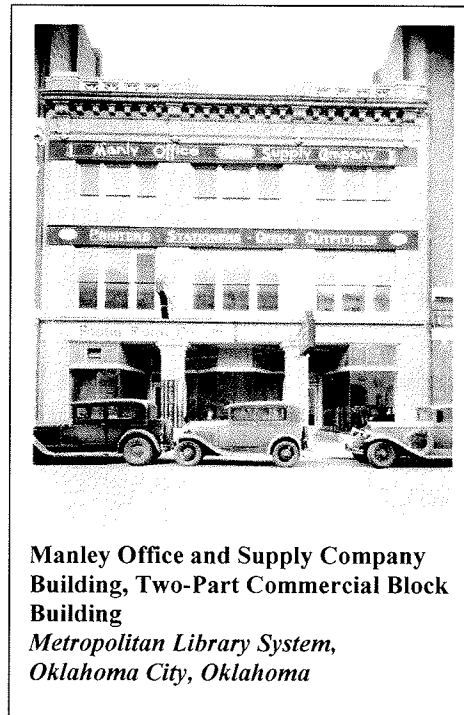
**Typical Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Commercial Building Forms and Architectural Styles.**  
*Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

<sup>53</sup> Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1987), 17.



style train depots, banks, hotels, and county courthouse, and many of the town's successful merchants erected business buildings in the latest style to advertise their prosperity. These buildings reflect styles that enjoyed wide public support and are easily defined by their form, spatial relationships, and embellishment. Those commonly built in the 1890s and early twentieth century in Oklahoma includes Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Classical Revival styles. These buildings often exhibited the elaborate ornamentation that characterized the popular architectural styles of the period. Fancy brickwork and intricate stonework; carved and cast details on windows, pillars and cornices; bay windows and turrets enlivened the façades of these buildings, while regularly spaced windows, repetition of decorative details, and the use of common building materials created a sense of unity.<sup>54</sup> Common to all of these styles was a conscious reinterpretation, manipulation, and distortion of familiar architectural elements — flattened arches, clustered windows, reinterpreted cornices, and column details.

No matter how intricate their details, the composition of the façades of most commercial buildings can be reduced to a few simple designs that reveal the major divisions and/or elements. Those designed for human occupation, rather than storage, reflected an effort to provide the greatest possible amount of natural light and air through the use of large display windows, transom windows, light wells, and skylights.<sup>55</sup> Materials, doors, windows, cornices, porticos, decorative details, and stylistic expressions were secondary characteristics that related to the basic compositional arrangement of the building.<sup>56</sup>



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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

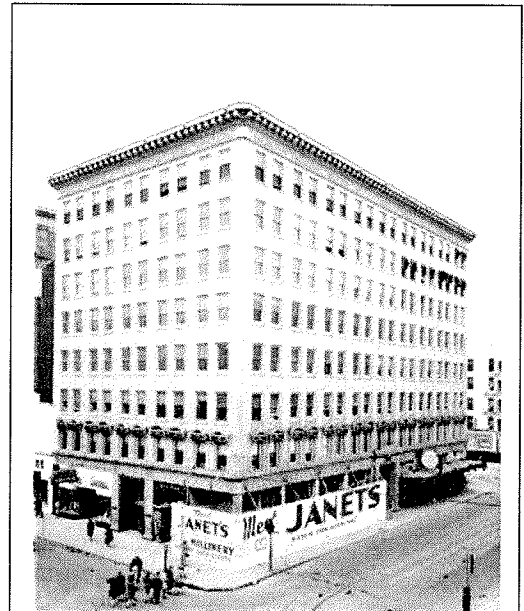
<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

While several popular architectural styles defined many of the buildings erected in Oklahoma City, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a great many of the commercial buildings erected had simple plans and designs augmented by minimal architectural ornament. Ornament on these buildings was often limited to local adaptations of popular architectural styles or vague references to a particular style. At other times, the design of the façade incorporated a mixture of stylistic idioms. More often than not, ornamental embellishment took the form of brickwork juxtaposed against limestone belt courses and sills, with the minimal use of molded and cast ornamental tiles and brick.

Whether executed in a popular high style or a simple generic design, the downtown commercial buildings found in communities like Oklahoma City were variations on the One-Part Commercial Block, the Two-Part Commercial Block, Two-Part Vertical Block, and the Three-Part Vertical Block commercial forms.

Typical of masonry construction, the One-Part Commercial Block is always one story in height and Two-Part Commercial Block Buildings are between two and four stories in height. They have a distinct hierarchy of architectural elements. Most have a cornice at or above the roofline. A horizontal band or belt course usually separates the first story and the upper stories. This division reflects the different uses of the ground floor and the upper stories. The storefront cornice line spans the width of the storefront below. Often located below this cornice line are transom windows. Flat or recessed entrances (to the first and second stories) and display windows fill the storefront area below the transom windows. Below the display window is a solid bulkhead supporting the window frames. Doors often

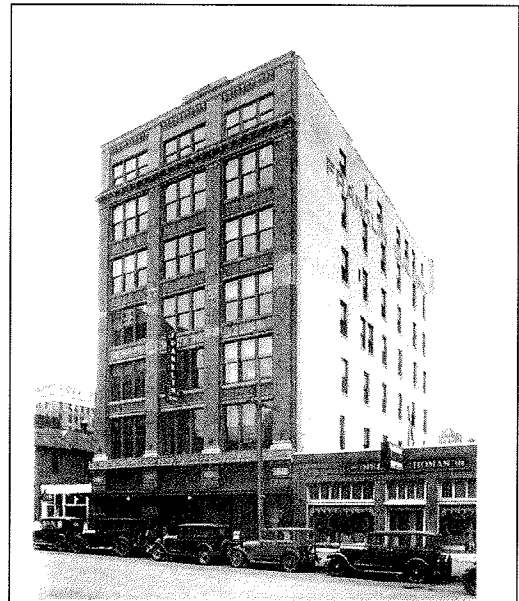


**1910/1926 Two-Part Vertical Block Levy  
Mercantile Building**  
*Hillerman Collection, Oklahoma Historical  
Society*

have kick plates in a corresponding location. In addition to the visually and/or physically supporting elements of the first-story storefront, pilasters, and columns provide vertical definition, framing the ends of the display windows, as well as the transition to the entrances.

The Two-Part Vertical Block is most commonly associated with office buildings, department stores, hotels, and institutional buildings. These buildings are at least four stories high and feature a facade that has two major horizontal zones that are different yet carefully related to one another. The lower zone rises one or two stories and serves as a visual base for the upper zone. The upper zone features prominent architectural detailing and is treated as a unified whole. Many of the larger commercial buildings erected by national companies and local wholesale distributors utilized this design for their district offices and warehouses in Oklahoma City.<sup>57</sup>

The Three-Part Vertical Block is identical to the Two-Part Vertical Block except that it has a distinct upper zone at the top of the building that is generally one to three stories in height. More commonly found in tall buildings erected in the 1920s, the tripartite design is also found in commercial buildings with four or more stories erected in the late nineteenth century. These designs commonly feature a lower zone, a transitional zone of one or more stories, and an upper “attic” zone of one story. The level of architectural embellishment is uniform throughout the façade.<sup>58</sup> These buildings reflect the taller buildings that began to appear in Oklahoma City at the end of the nineteenth century and continued to be built through the 1920s that were a new treatment of the Three-Part Vertical Block popularized by Chicago architects. These designs used restrained ornamentation



**Three-Part Vertical Block Franklin Building and Adjacent One-Part Commercial Block.**  
*Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 166.

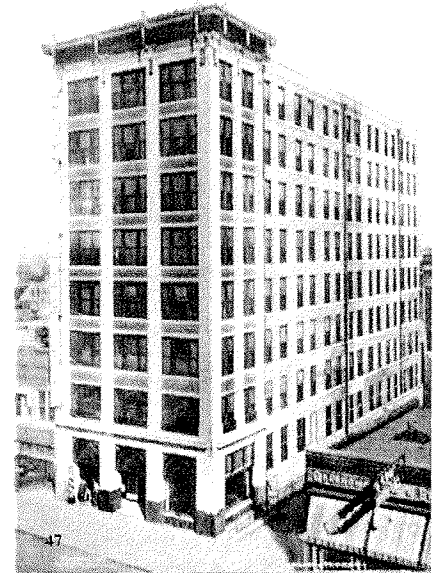
and emphasized the grid-like pattern created by the steel-skeleton construction and by a balanced treatment of horizontal spandrels and vertical piers. The design frequently used a three-part window composed of a wide, fixed pane flanked by narrow double-sash windows as the principal element of pattern and ornamentation.

Beginning in the early 1890s, buildings over five stories often incorporated these elements and the hierarchy created by Chicago architect, Louis Sullivan. Sullivan's use of lower stories to create a heavy base and attic stories to establish an expressive and definitive crown, with the intermediate stories serving as a shaft created by vertical piers, became the model for what became known as the Chicago School style.<sup>59</sup> Whether executed in the Romanesque or a Classical Revival ornamental treatment, the form of the first Chicago School style buildings remained the same.

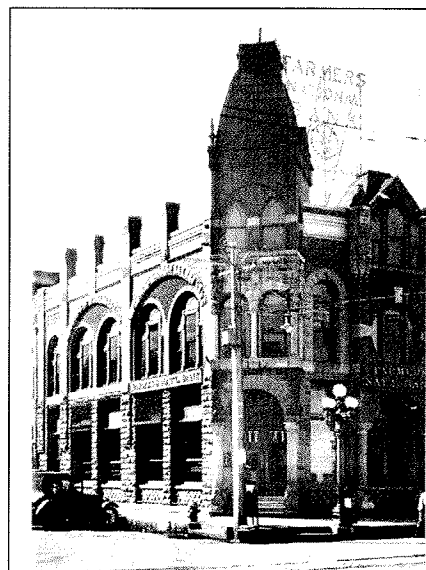
Late Victorian versions were more ornate than those erected during earlier and later periods, reflecting changing preferences in decoration. The explosion in population nationwide after the end of the Civil War, which continued until the twentieth century, resulted in rapidly changing architectural styles. The popular Late Victorian architectural styles, with their exuberant designs, appealed to the citizens of the prosperous post-Civil War period. These styles usually featured an accentuated cornice

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 195-96.



**1910 Chicago School Style Insurance Building**  
*Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*



**1901 Farmers National Bank**  
*Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*

serving as an elaborate terminus to the whole building. Decorative surrounds or caps frequently embellished the windows. Ornamental framing often occurred in the form of a stringcourse or cornice between each floor of the upper zone, with differing vertical treatments on the sides.<sup>60</sup> During the late nineteenth century, the amount of ornament and the variety of elements and materials employed increased due to advances in technology that allowed for the mass production of architectural ornaments. Builders could easily order standard products from catalogs or purchase stock items at the local lumberyard or iron works. Downtown buildings typically featured applied cornices with patterned brickwork and corbels, brackets, dentils, and moldings carved from wood or made from pressed metal. It was not unusual for wall surfaces to be covered with decorative patterns executed in wood, stone, brick, and/or cast or stamped iron.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, many two-part commercial block buildings were relatively simple, with only a few surface details or large ornamental elements to suggest their period of construction.<sup>62</sup>

The mass manufacture of building products and the creation of new materials allowed thousands of buildings to attain a distinctive appearance previously reserved for only the costliest edifices. As a result, the commercial center became a collage of competing images. At the same time, they represented the extent and degree of economic resources of the individual owners and, to a general extent, that of the community.<sup>63</sup>

As the nineteenth century drew to an end, larger plans for commercial buildings emerged. The open plan department store, which created spacious accommodations to display a variety of goods, is an important example of the evolution of



**Early Twentieth Century  
Downtown Streetscape  
*Metropolitan Library System,  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.***

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 35-36.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

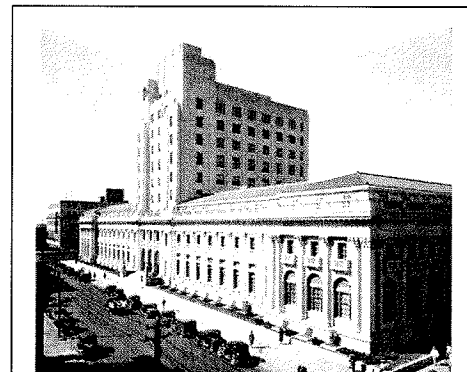
<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 16.

the specialty store plan. Modest 25- to 30-foot-wide buildings began to appear, integrated into three- to six-unit blocks that created an impressive and modern effect along the downtown streetscape.<sup>64</sup>

The specialized function of commercial and institutional buildings in the late nineteenth century also determined the materials and technologies used in their design. The designers of these buildings utilized both traditional and new materials in a variety of combinations to create a rich and dramatic effect. Typical of these juxtapositions in commercial buildings in the late nineteenth century was the use of smooth, hard, dark red or dark brown brick with crisp, icy-toned limestone. Other designs for the more important buildings in a community featured the use of both rough-hewn ashlar and polished stone treatments. In Oklahoma City, the common use of both brick and ashlar limestone for institutional and commercial buildings brought diversity to the city's downtown<sup>65</sup>

The history of public, institutional, and commercial buildings in Oklahoma during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as in other states, also reflects the systematic adaptation of the latest in structural systems and the quest for fireproof buildings. Iron, steel, and finally, reinforced concrete, replaced wood beams, rafters, joists, and studs. Tile, stone, and terrazzo replaced wood floors and appeared as interior elements in important buildings.

Beginning in the 1890s and becoming well-established by the first decade of the twentieth century, was a subtle shift in American architecture. The change had its origins in the growing progressive reform movement that eschewed the sentimentality and ornamental excesses of the Victorian era. Initially, there was a



**Beaux Arts Style U.S. Post Office Building**  
*Hillerman Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society*

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<sup>64</sup> Rifkind, 194.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

return to the classical architectural styles that had become well established by 1895 and continued until the late 1920s. When executed in commercial and public buildings, these styles tended to be larger, grander, and more elaborate than earlier nineteenth century revival styles.<sup>66</sup> From urban ensembles sited along grand boulevards, to the college campus and the county courthouse square, a wide range of public buildings utilized the revival styles. They include civic monuments, memorial buildings, and commemorative sculptures; courthouses and capital buildings; symphony halls and museums; libraries and university halls; banks and hotels; and fire and police stations.

Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893 played a major role in popularizing these changes, particularly in the Plains states. The Columbian Exposition introduced classical architectural forms and mass-produced building materials and products to the owners of businesses in rural and urban commercial centers. The 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, as well as the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, influenced the popular acceptance of classical and Mediterranean revival styles, as well as the Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>67</sup> As a result, the important styles that influenced commercial architecture in Oklahoma at the beginning of the twentieth century included Colonial Revival (1870-1920); Romanesque Revival (1890-1910); Classical Revival (1890-1920); Renaissance Revival (1890-1920); and Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival (1915-1940).<sup>68</sup> This period of change demonstrates the difficulty of affixing a particular stylistic terminology to many structures of the early twentieth century. Very few were truly in one style.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 220.

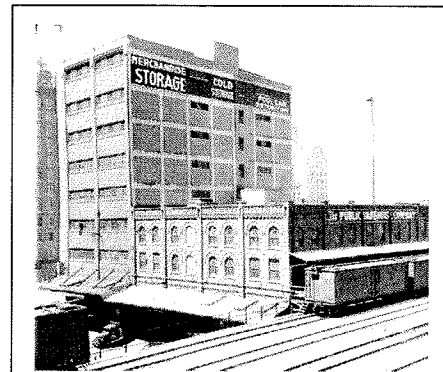
Designs that were more generic represent the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century American Movement Commercial Style that evolved during this period. These are the simple late Victorian and early twentieth century commercial buildings that have flat roofs, symmetrical fenestration, and traditional storefront designs. Most decorative, stylistic ornamentation occurs on the upper stories of the façade and includes a restrained parapet or a false front treatment; arched or rectangular windows with a stringcourse; and terra-cotta or glazed brick ornament separating the ground floor from the upper stories.

Part of the movement to more simple lines and orderly spaces that occurred in the first decades of the twentieth century was the result of the industrial revolution. Inexpensive mass-produced wood products, ready-made millwork and ornamentation, and steel for structural framing came into common usage during this period, stimulating new streamlined building styles. The widespread use of elevators, steel frame construction, and reinforced concrete during this period changed the physical appearance of commercial areas. Most of these buildings have brick veneer walls and minimal stone or terra-cotta ornamentation. At the same time, public and commercial buildings became larger and taller during this period.<sup>69</sup>

This was part of a larger continuum that began in the second half of the nineteenth century, when new materials and processes occurred with great rapidity. The industrialization of glass production led to the use



**1915 Classical Revival Style Security National Bank Building.**  
*Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*



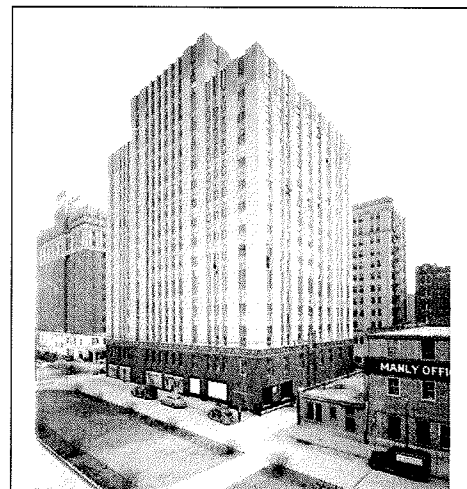
**Poured Concrete Public Warehouse Building Adjacent to Earlier Romanesque Revival Style Warehouse.**  
*Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*

<sup>69</sup> Jorbe Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1961), 136-137.



of the large plate glass window in late Victorian period. After the Civil War, fabrication and use of iron and then steel as structural building components transformed construction technology. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the nation's increased capacity to supply structural steel in a range of shapes and forms led to the demise of the less satisfactory wrought iron and cast iron. At the same time, the manufacture of Portland cement, which began in 1870, gave impetus to the use of brick and stone masonry for the walls of large buildings. During the first decade of the century, reinforced concrete came into use, particularly in commercial and industrial architecture, further stimulating the construction of large buildings with more open plans. The advent of steel skeleton buildings and the accompanying prospect of fireproof construction stimulated, in turn, developments in ceramic and clay products.<sup>70</sup>

The types and styles of commercial buildings and structures built after World War I and before the Great Depression reflected both national trends and the unique circumstances of Oklahoma City itself. Most utilitarian office and non-retail commercial buildings had minimal architectural ornamentation that included patterned brickwork and sparse terra-cotta details. During this period, the use of pastel-colored terra-cotta and unglazed bricks with soft yellow and russet tones for masonry walls created a rich tapestry-like effect. By the 1930s, poured concrete construction and cast concrete ornament came into common usage. The use of welding, rigid-frame trusses, and the cantilever accelerated the use of steel construction during the 1920s and the Great Depression. The greater strength created by the use of steel welding and synthetic adhesives created lighter construction. Electric welding tool and cutting tools utilizing cemented



**Art Deco Style Skirvin Tower**  
*Hillerman Collection, Oklahoma  
Historical Society*

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<sup>70</sup> James Marston Fitch, *American Building: The Historic Forces That Shaped It* (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 168.

tungsten carbide and tantalum carbide, as well as compressed air tools, all provided the ability to employ new building materials. These innovations led to streamlined, standardized construction processes including mass production and prefabrication.<sup>71</sup>

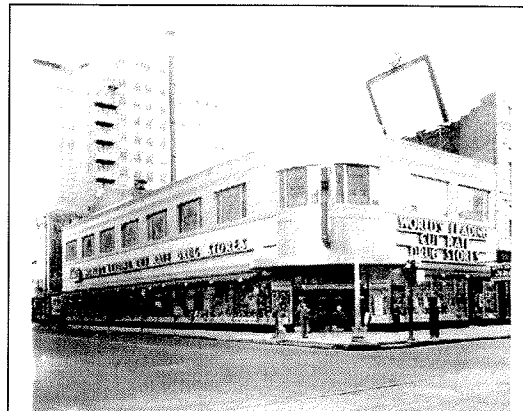
The prosperity enjoyed by Oklahoma City in the 1920s brought, by the end of the decade, a general acceptance of designs inspired by the Modern Movement's Art Deco style. The style originated in Europe and gained popularity in America in the late 1920s, becoming the first widely popular style in nearly three decades to depart from the traditional revival styles that Americans chose for their government, commercial, and institutional buildings. The style took its name from the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, which was held in Paris in 1925 and repudiated classical and revival styles and embraced artistic expression that complemented the modern machine age. By the end of the decade, both high style and restrained versions of the Art Deco style quickly appeared in commercial buildings on the main streets of America's towns and cities, including those in Oklahoma.

The initial phase of Art Deco design in the United States gained popularity during the late 1920s and the 1930s and featured geometric forms and vertical massing and ornamentation. Often piers placed at regular intervals extended the full height of the façade, and often above the parapet wall,, creating a distinct vertical emphasis. Ornamentation included striated and abstract details that embellished wall surfaces. Art Deco designs introduced Formica, black glass, marble, bronze, and terra-cotta into common usage in commercial and institutional buildings.

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<sup>71</sup> Rifkind, 218, 294.

In contrast, a subsequent streamlined phase of Art Deco design introduced during the 1930s and 1940s utilized sleek, machine-inspired motifs. Decorative bands, ribbon windows, smooth wall surfaces, and rounded corners emphasized the façade's horizontality.<sup>72</sup> This was a reaction to the sobering realities of the Great Depression, making the high style Art Deco building seem extravagantly fussy. The first designs inspired by what became known as the Moderne<sup>73</sup> or Art



**Moderne Style Katz Drugstore Building  
Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma  
City, Oklahoma.**

Moderne style as interpreted in America, featured cubic and cylindrical forms with a horizontal emphasis, smooth surfaces, curving shapes, and a minimum of ornamentation. Buildings executed in this style often employed large expanses of glass, glass brick, chrome, and stainless steel. Poured concrete construction and cast concrete ornament became more frequent.<sup>74</sup>

The new public architecture erected during the Great Depression reflected these changing national stylistic preferences. The federal government's employment of architects during the depression to design for federally funded public work programs such as the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA) stimulated the spread of these simplified modern architectural forms throughout the country. By the late 1930s, Modern Movement designs resulted from the new structural principles based on the use of reinforced concrete and steel frame construction methods. Poured concrete, cast concrete ornament, and glass and steel became commonly used materials, replacing brick and stone.

## POST-WORLD WAR II MODERN MOVEMENT ARCHITECTURE

<sup>72</sup> Longstreth, 47-49.

<sup>73</sup> The Moderne (Art Moderne) style was in America a late variation of the Art Deco style. Its architectural style emphasized curving forms, long horizontal lines, and sometimes nautical elements (such as railings and porthole windows). It reached its height in popularity in the late 1930s. Both the Art Deco and the Moderne styles are part of the larger Modern Movement style that began in the early twentieth century and continued in the post-World War II period.

<sup>74</sup> Rifkind, 218.

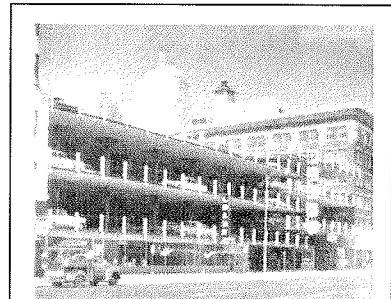
Initially, commercial buildings dating from the immediate post-World War II era were simpler and more restrained in appearance than their predecessors, setting a new tone. Following the barren years in private construction due to the Great Depression and World War II, the reemergence of the Modern Movement in the United States can be traced to a number of factors. Underlying specific events was the fact that the dormant ideals of the International Style resurfaced and exerted a powerful influence on architects, major corporations, and institutions. As the economy shifted from wartime to civilian production, there was a pent-up desire to demolish decaying nineteenth and early twentieth century structures and erect new buildings that reflected the optimism of a new era. Instead of nostalgia for the past or a retreat into romanticism, the simplest approach was to continue the institutional methods that had so efficiently marshaled resources during the war. As a result, a “pragmatic utilitarianism” became the motivating factor in commercial and institutional architecture in the United States.<sup>75</sup>

In Oklahoma, the post-war treatments included removal or covering of pre-war building fronts with sleek, up-to-date modern designs. New construction in the central business district introduced a modern self-parking garage design, which replaced the valet parking garage of earlier eras.

Another factor that built upon the popular use of what became classified as the Modern Movement were the advances in building technology that became readily apparent after the return to peacetime production. Traditionally, architectural design in America changed either imperceptibly as a



**1956 Lerner Shops Façade Renovation**  
*Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*

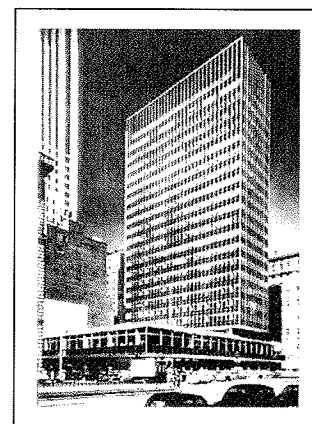


**Late 1950s Parking Garage**  
*Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*

<sup>75</sup> Leland Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 277.

result of the accumulation of small changes, or noticeably as the result of singular structural invention. In the post-war period of retrofitting from wartime production to private manufacturing, technological changes of the past decade and new inventions became overwhelmingly noticeable and commonplace. Among the most significant were new designs for wind bracing and the development of rigid steel frames and new composite structural systems of steel and concrete that reduced building sway and vibration, and made thin curtain walls of glass and aluminum feasible. Revolutionary improvements in the design, fabrication, and installation of cladding and joints led to taut, smooth exterior surfaces and allowed the installation of glass and cut stone of larger dimensions. The development of laminates, reflective tinted glass, synthetic sealants, and improved gaskets and anchors were a major departure from traditional materials. Better floor finishes and improved ways of concealing and zoning air-handling systems emerged. The commercial fluorescent lamp, first marketed in 1938, became a staple for commercial and institutional buildings, as did central air conditioning. "Engineering became almost a fetish and the interest was inevitably reflected in the appearance as well as the working of the architecture."<sup>76</sup>

Despite a consensus among architects supporting simple utilitarian designs, a single cohesive modern style did not emerge after World War II, as had the Craftsman or Art Deco styles of the early twentieth century. Because the Great Depression and World War II interrupted the merging of European and American modernism, American architectural preferences in the late 1940s and early 1950s initially were an exaggerated adherence to the particular style of individual architects. Among those who achieved early ascendancy were the European modernists who immigrated to the United States during the 1930s, including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

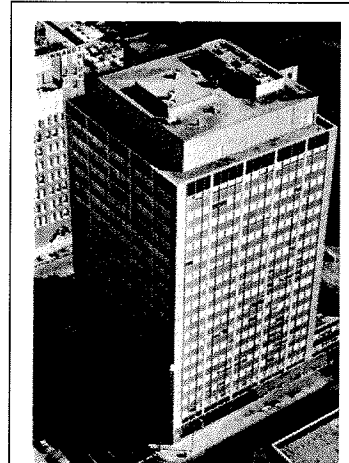


**1952 Lever House in  
New York City**  
*Skidmore Owings and  
Merrill*

<sup>76</sup> John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, 411.

## THE MIESIAN OFFICE BUILDING

As director of the School of Architecture at Chicago's Armour Institute of Technology<sup>77</sup> and through the reconstruction of its campus, Mies van der Rohe's work attracted considerable national attention in the late 1940s. A commission to design a number of high-rise apartment buildings on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago sealed his reputation for producing cutting edge modern design and distinguished him from the other modernists in the more mainstream International Style. The designs for these Chicago apartment projects — simple boxes formed by structural frames constructed of steel and broad expanses of glass for fenestration — secured a following among students, designers, and architects who became deeply committed to the Miesian design philosophy.



**1957 Miesian Style  
Fidelity Bank Building in  
Oklahoma City**  
*<http://dougawg.blogspot.com/2007/07/fidelity-bank.html>*

The design of the glass curtain walled Lever House in 1952 by Gordon Bunshaft, designing partner of the architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill (SOM), utilized elements of earlier designs of Mies van der Rohe. The curtain wall design of the Seagram Building (1954-1958) by Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson reflected “a steady, undeviating, long evolution of strongly contrasted forms, precisely articulated structures and decisive details” that were the fruition of Mies van der Rohe's design ethos dating to the 1920s.<sup>78</sup>

While curtain wall construction dates to the early twentieth century, the design of Lever House and the Seagram Building created an “expressive new language” for the curtain wall. “Strict rules governed the manner of joining elements together, of ordering horizontal and vertical

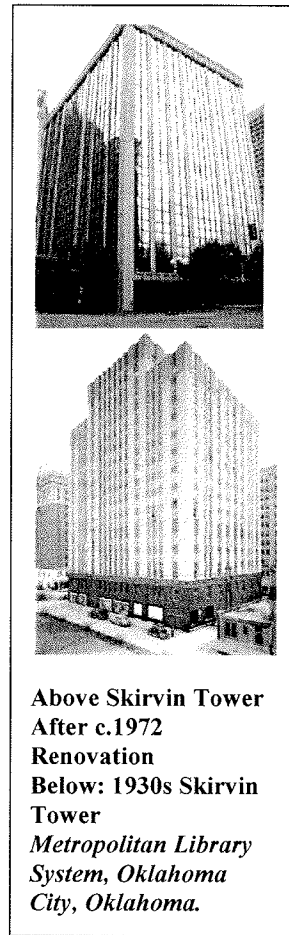
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<sup>77</sup> Later the Illinois Institute of Technology.

<sup>78</sup> Burchard and Bush-Brown, 439

members, of proportioning part to part.”<sup>79</sup> The result was a new abstract aesthetic created by industrially produced building elements utilizing “careful proportions, the studied craft of simplicity and the inexorable regularity of repeating elements.”<sup>80</sup>

By hanging the glass curtain wall in front of the structural columns, the architects dispensed with the rhythm created by vertical columns and created a uniform fenestration of dark glass or panels, creating an opaque appearance. Moreover, despite the orientations of exterior walls and the widely differing thermal heat gains on different elevations, there was absolutely no variation in the appearance of the tower walls.<sup>81</sup> The siting on the open plaza, which exposed the entire box to public view, created on the exterior and interior no sense of front or back. Thus, the Miesian glass box, a study in simplicity strictly organized with a rectangular grid curtain wall, presented no complexities and focused only on the “exorable regularity of repeating elements”<sup>82</sup> and could be utilized for commercial or residential purposes and sited at any location. Moreover, unlike the designs of other contemporary architects, the Miesian order that emerged with Lever House and the Seagram Building could be easily learned and repeated.<sup>83</sup> The two buildings catapulted the Miesian office building, with its geometric glass and metal curtain wall and open public plaza, to the forefront of American architecture and it became the country’s most influential and copied office building design. The Miesian glass tower, with its remarkable functionalism, became the symbol of American business in the



**Above Skirvin Tower  
After c.1972  
Renovation  
Below: 1930s Skirvin  
Tower  
Metropolitan Library  
System, Oklahoma  
City, Oklahoma.**

<sup>79</sup> Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 267.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Roth, 284.

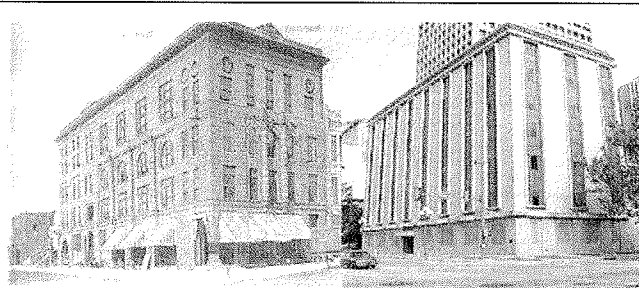
<sup>82</sup> Gelernter, 267.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

post-war period, providing the sense of aloof isolation and regal image desired by corporate clients. At the same time, the smaller Miesian building provided a more hospitable and engaging image.<sup>84</sup>

The popularity of the style, however, was short lived. Beginning in the early 1970s, economic conditions and technological advances resulted in the construction of taller and taller buildings, and eventually their sheer height encouraged verticality rather than a grid effect. By the mid-1970s, a number of architects eschewed the severity and austerity of Miesian towers and explored treatments that elaborated on the basic frame and curtain wall construction, blending aesthetic goals with functional efficiency.

In Oklahoma City, the glass curtain wall continued in popularity into the 1970s. In particular, the renovation of earlier twentieth century multi-storied buildings included removal of cladding walls and installation of curtain walls or other contemporary treatments.



**The India Temple- Wright Building before and after c.1961 placement of a concrete paneled facade over the original exterior.**

*Steve Lackmeyer, blog.newso . Modern Photograph, Oklahoma County Assessors Office, Leonard Sullivan.*

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<sup>84</sup> Roth, 286, 278, 291.



## SURVEY RESULTS

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### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY AREA

#### LOCATION AND SETTING

The Downtown Oklahoma City Intensive Level Survey – Phase I examined 215 resources in the central business district of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The survey area is generally bounded by Northwest tenth Street to the north, North Broadway to the east, Sheridan Avenue to the south, and North Walker Avenue to the west. The properties within the Phase I Survey Area contained a total of 215 primary resources, which include 23 secondary buildings/structures.<sup>85</sup>

Early-to-late twentieth century commercial development characterizes the Phase I Survey Area. Commercial buildings and structures dominate the vast majority of area investigated, with high numbers of interspersed vacant lots and parcels, particularly north of Dean A. McGee Avenue. Concentrated south of Northwest Fourth Street and east of North Hudson Avenue are skyscrapers (above ten stories in height) with construction dates spanning much of the twentieth century. Smaller, One- and Two-Part Commercial Block buildings occupy parcels throughout the survey area. The few historic single-family and multi-unit residential buildings generally occur north of Northwest Fifth Street and west of North Robinson. Scattered institutional buildings, including governmental, educational, and religious buildings, occur throughout the survey area, often close to commercial concentrations and at main intersections.

All lots in the survey area are on a grid system platted between 1890 and 1903, the majority of which belong to the Original Town Plat of 1890. Lot sizes vary depending on residential, institutional, or commercial uses and reflect numerous mid- to late-twentieth century parcel boundary alterations as a result of parcel splitting/merging and various street alignment

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<sup>85</sup> While the survey identified primary resources and ancillary buildings or structures, the architectural and functional analyses did not consider the design of the identified ancillary resources. Discussion of ancillary buildings is located within each primary resource's building description in the survey forms.

alterations since the 1930s. Paved streets, concrete curbs, and concrete sidewalks characterize the commercial streetscapes.

The Phase I Survey Area features a diverse mixture of architectural styles on each streetscape. All reflect development beginning in the early twentieth century and continuing through to the early twenty-first century.

The original commercial area's arrangement illustrates a traditional alignment to the original Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railroad tracks that form the southeast boundary of the survey area. Broadway is parallel to the north-south aligned tracks and Main Street is perpendicular. The core of downtown Oklahoma City is north and west of this intersection. Late twentieth century commercial development and parking structures replaced warehouse and light-industrial buildings that once located adjacent to the railroad alignments within the survey area.

A review of historic maps revealed numerous street name changes. These changes are as follows:

- Northwest Third Street changed to Dean A. McGee Avenue after 1975.
- North Walker Avenue ended at Northwest Third Street until it was extended south between 1928 and 1932.
- Northwest Second Street changed to Robert S. Kerr Avenue between 1955 and 1964.
- Colcord Drive did not exist until some time between 1932 and 1941, when the Frisco Railroad siding was removed.
- Northwest First Street became Park Avenue between 1952 and 1955.
- Couch Drive dates to the period between 1930 and 1949 after removal of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad tracks.
- Prior to 1922, North Dewey Avenue was known as North Colcord Avenue south of Northwest First Street and Brusha Avenue north of Northwest First Street.
- Between 1904 and 1922, North Missouri Avenue became North Lee Avenue.

## DATES OF CONSTRUCTION

Using the information provided by historic maps, previous survey documentation, city directories, and other secondary sources, as well as architectural style, the consultants estimated dates of construction for the resources surveyed.

ESTIMATED DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	
ERA	NUMBER OF RESOURCES
Before Statehood: Pre 1907	11
State hood to World War I: 1908-1918	21
Boom Years: 1919-1930	69
Great Depression, World War II: 1931-1945	15
Post-World War II, Modern Era & Urban Renewal: 1946-1959	43
Post Modern Era: 1960-1975	24
Post 1975 (non-historic)	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>215</b>

## HISTORIC PROPERTY TYPES

A property type is a set of individual properties that share physical, functional or other associative characteristics. Property types link the events and patterns incorporated in historic contexts with surviving historic properties that illustrate these contexts. As a starting point for identifying and defining historic property types for the City of Oklahoma City, the consultants identified resources according to original function and architectural style; thus including both shared associative (functional) as well as physical (architectural) characteristics.

### **ORIGINAL BUILDING FUNCTIONAL PROPERTY TYPE**

Drawn from the National Register of Historic Places and Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office subcategories for function and use, the consultants identified different categories of the

original historic building function for surveyed properties. While the functions of some buildings changed over time, the analysis considered only the original building function. Buildings and structures in the survey area represent a wide range of functional types, including residential, commercial, recreational, social, institutional, and industrial buildings. The dates of construction documented include construction and use over an extended period of time, adding to the diversity of resources identified.

ORIGINAL BUILDING FUNCTION (BUILDINGS BUILT BEFORE 1976)	
FUNCTION	
Domestic / Residential	32
Commerce / Trade	110
Social	6
Government	6
Education	3
Religion	4
Funerary	1
Recreation and Culture	2
Agriculture-Related	1
Industry	7
Landscape	1
Transportation	10
N/A — non-historic	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>215</b>

### Functional Property Type

The Commercial Building functional property type is the most prevalent functional property type identified in the Phase I Survey Area. There is a high degree of diversity within this functional category due to the over 100-year span (c.1905 - c.2008) in building construction dates. The majority of commercial buildings in the survey area have retail/wholesale sales/service or

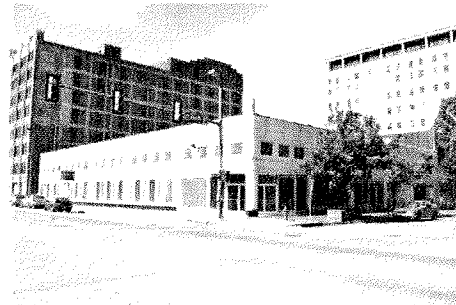
business/professional office functions typically found in large city business districts throughout the Midwest.

#### Wholesale/Retail Sales and Service Buildings

Usually sited on one, two, or three lots, these buildings have a rectangular plan with the narrow side facing the street. They are typically one to four stories in height. The multi-story designs incorporate public sales/services spaces on the first floor and commercial/professional office space, meeting rooms, residential quarters and/or storage space on the upper floors. A characteristic feature of the property type is a well-defined ground floor “storefront” that is distinctly separate from the upper stories and reflects the difference in uses of these levels.

#### Skyscraper Office Buildings

These buildings compose a sub-type of the larger commercial property type and are typically concentrated in the core of the central business district. In Oklahoma City, these buildings occur in the eastern and southern parts of the survey area. Usually sited on multiple lots and at street intersections, they are usually more than ten stories in height, have steel or reinforced concrete structures, and exhibit stone, brick, glass curtain wall, and concrete panel wall materials.



**Top: Mixed Retail/Wholesale Building  
Middle: Retail Commercial Building  
Lower: Skyscraper**

### Wholesale Distribution Buildings and Warehouses

Buildings housing wholesale distribution businesses and commercial warehouse buildings compose a sub-type of the larger Commercial Functional Property Type and are typically adjacent to or near railroad tracks at the edge of the retail business district. Their design and materials are function-specific. In Oklahoma City, late mid-to-late twentieth century redevelopment replaced many of this property sub-type; the remaining examples of these buildings occur at the edges of the downtown retail area, along West Main and on the numbered streets west of North Broadway above Northwest Fifth Street. They include warehouses designed for the receiving, storing, sorting, and shipping of goods. Usually sited on double or multiple lots, they are between one and two stories in height flanked by open space and driveways with street/alley access. The warehouse buildings often include multiple vehicular bays, an open floor plan, and loading docks. They often lack a defined front-office space. Roof shapes are either flat, low-rise gable end, false front, or barrel-shaped. Stylistic concerns were secondary for these buildings, often resulting in a false front treatment, restrained brick pattern work, or no decorative embellishment.

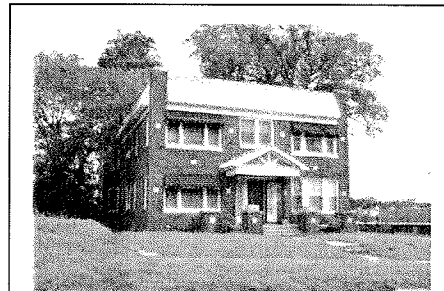
Several commercial buildings served as distribution offices for various national companies and incorporated front offices, show rooms and warehouse spaces.

### **Residential Functional Property Type**

The residential functional property types found in the survey area reflect three property sub-types: Single-Family, Multi-Family, and Hotel buildings.

#### Single-Family Residential Functional Property Type

The survey documented only four single-family residential buildings. All have significant alterations



**Top: Four-family Flat  
Bottom: Residential Hotel**

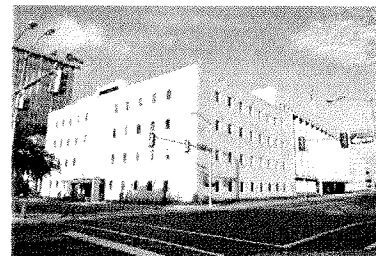
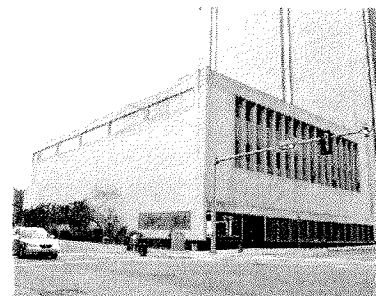
completed in recent decades and none retain sufficient integrity to be eligible for listing nor are there enough to determine functional patterns for this property type. They occupy lots in the northwest part of the survey area and represent rare extant examples of single-family houses that once filled most of the blocks north of Northwest Sixth Street as late as the mid-1950s.

#### Multi-Family Functional Property Type

In addition to the few single-family residential properties, the survey identified a number of historic multi-family dwellings scattered throughout the north half of the survey area, including four-family flats, six-family flats, and multi-unit apartment buildings. Most are two to three stories in height, are constructed of brick or concrete, and reflect the popular architectural styles of their period of construction.

#### Hotel Property Type

The Hotel property type is a sub-type of the larger, Residential Property Type. The survey identified nine examples scattered throughout the survey area. These second-tier hotels provide housing to both transient and long-term residents and occur at the edges of the central business district along West Main, North Walker, Northwest Tenth Street, and north of Northwest Sixth Street. They are typically two to five stories in height with a flat roof, and brick cladding. The larger, downtown hotels are located within the core of the central business district, often rise ten or more stories, have brick, stone, or glass curtain wall materials, and feature retail spaces on the first story.



**Top: Religious Building**  
**Middle: Library Educational Building**  
**Bottom: Government Building**

## **Public and Private Institutional Building Functional Property Types**

The survey also identified numerous institutional buildings including historic religious buildings (churches); governmental buildings (a city hall, a fire station, a government office building, and three courthouses); and educational buildings (two schools and two libraries). All of the buildings incorporate varying degrees of high style architectural treatments of the period of their construction, although some have lost their historic architectural integrity.

### Religious Buildings

Most of the religious buildings found in the survey area were churches that incorporated a main sanctuary building and religious education buildings or additions. Their architectural treatment reflects high style early twentieth century revival designs popular during the period of their construction. Three of the church buildings, all of which date from the 1904-1910 and have large late twentieth century additions and are listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places for their significance in architecture. They are located at prominent intersections along North Robinson and North Harvey Avenues.

### Education Buildings

The two schools and two libraries identified each reflect distinctive high style architectural treatments popular at the time of their construction and date from 1908 to 2004. They occur along North Robinson, North Hudson, and North Walker Avenues near prominent intersections. With the exception of the non-historic Ronald J. Norick Library, the other educational buildings are either listed in or are individually eligible for listing in the National Register.

### Government Buildings

The identified government buildings are located throughout the survey area, but are concentrated primarily west of North Robinson and east of North Walker. All reflect high style architecture and most have stone cladding. Classical Revival motifs are typical. They date from 1912 to circa 1967.



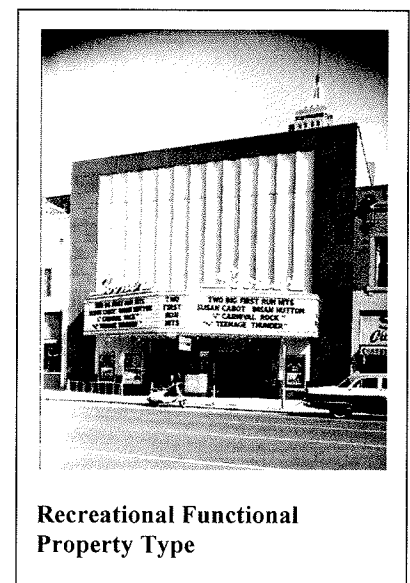
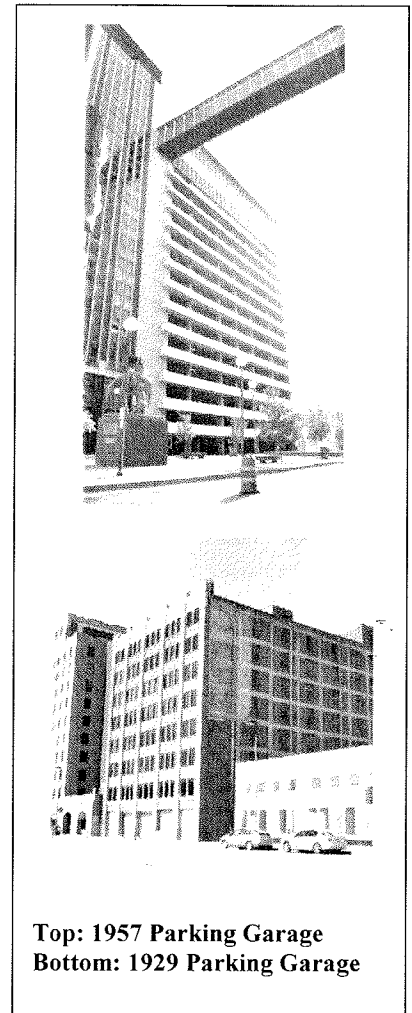
## Transportation-Related Functional Property Type

### Road Related Property Type

The Phase 1 survey identified a historic bus station and nine parking garage buildings/structures. The bus station dates to 1941 and is an excellent example of the Moderne style. The parking garage structures date from the 1920s through the mid-1970s and include two garage buildings converted from another commercial function to an auto parking function more than fifty years ago. Most exhibit a distinct architectural style from their period of construction and only two have no discernable style. In the survey area, these buildings/structures are all south of Northwest Seventh Street. They are one-to-thirteen stories in height, have a flat roof, and have either a load-bearing brick or reinforced concrete structure.

### **Other Functional Property Types**

Several buildings in the survey area also have plans specific to their function and include a funerary building (a funeral home garage); two recreational buildings (theaters); a handful of social function buildings (fraternal and labor union meeting halls); agriculture-related properties (a dairy processing building); a few industrial buildings (communications related); an energy facility; and a park. Because the survey included so few examples of these function-specific properties, it is not possible to define property type characteristics for these buildings. All have exterior architectural treatments reflecting conscious design choices specific to their function.



## ARCHITECTURAL PROPERTY TYPES

Building classifications based on shared physical attributes include categorization by building style and/or form. The architectural styles and forms identified in the Phase I Survey Area and assigned to the properties follow the terminology and classifications accepted by the National Register of Historic Places program. This hierarchy and nomenclature relies heavily on forms and styles discussed in *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* by Richard Longstreth and *A Field Guide to American Architecture* by Carole Rifkind for commercial buildings and *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia and Lee McAlester for residential properties.

The buildings and the streetscapes they create in downtown Oklahoma City define both the functional and visual character of the city's central business district. Their appearance and physical condition play a significant role in defining the community. Dating from circa 1905 through the early twenty-first century, most of Oklahoma City's in the survey area are simple commercial buildings of one or two stories. The common building materials are brick and stone. A high number reflect mid-to-late twentieth century façade alterations, including the use of non-original stucco, EIFS, concrete block, stone, and metal wall cladding. The majority of changes reflect the modernization of the first-story display windows, transoms, and entrances. Many of these alterations left the original openings and spatial relationships of the storefront intact. Other changes are easily reversible, such as the addition of awnings and the applications of wood or metal sheathing over the original openings. The upper stories often retain their original integrity and are the principal references used to identify the original appearance and style. The architectural styles and building forms of the buildings constructed before 1976 are tabulated below.

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL STYLES  
(BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED BEFORE 1976)**

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	TOTAL
<b>COMMERCIAL STYLES (INCLUDES INDUSTRIAL &amp; TRANSPORTATION-RELATED BUILDINGS)</b>	
Late 19 <sup>th</sup> & Early 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Revivals	2
Classical Revival	1
Colonial Revival	1
Late Gothic Revival	4
Second Renaissance Revival	3
Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival	1
Chicago School Style & Sullivanesque	4
Modern Movement	25
Art Deco	8
Moderne	2
International Style	1
New Formalism	4
Brutalism	4
Post Modern: Contemporary	1
NeoEclectic Styles: NeoClassical Revival	1
NeoEclectic Styles: Mansard Style	1
Mixed	1
<b>RESIDENTIAL STYLES (INCLUDES HOTELS)</b>	
Queen Anne	2
Classical Revival	5
Chicago School	1
Bungalow/Craftsman	1
Modern Movement	8
Art Deco	2
New Formalism	1
Ranch Style	1
NeoEclectic Styles: Neo-Tudor	1
Post Modern: Contemporary	1
<b>INSTITUTIONAL STYLES (INCLUDES SOCIAL &amp; RECREATIONAL BUILDINGS)</b>	
Romanesque Revival	1

Late Gothic Revival	1
Classical Revival	4
Second Renaissance Revival	1
Tudor Revival	3
Modern Movement	3
Art Deco / PWA Moderne	2
New Formalism	1
NeoEclectic Styles: NeoClassical Revival	1
Post Modern: Deconstructive & Contemporary	2

<b>HISTORIC BUILDING FORMS</b> (BUILDINGS WITH NO DISCERNABLE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE) <sup>86</sup>	
RESIDENTIAL FOLK HOUSE BUILDING FORMS BUILDING FORMS	TOTAL
SINGLE FAMILY: GABLE-FRONT FOLK HOUSE FORM	1
SINGLE-FAMILY: AMERICAN FOUR-SQUARE	1
APARTMENT & HOTEL BUILDINGS	7
COMMERCIAL BUILDING FORMS	
One-Part Commercial Block	39
Two-Part Commercial Block	23
Two-Part Vertical Block	1
Other Function-Specific Commercial Building Forms	2
Institutional & Other Non-Commercial Buildings	3

### COMMERCIAL BUILDING FORMS

Longstreth classifies commercial buildings by building form, such as the One-Part Commercial Block. Such terminology is often combined with the building's style (e.g., Modern Movement One-Part Commercial Block). However, despite the inclusion of commercial building form categories by Longstreth, there are still a number of forms found in Oklahoma City (as in other communities) that these authorities do not address. Consequently, the nomenclature for an architectural style or form property type used by the National Register program does not categorize some buildings in the survey area. This does not imply that the design of these

<sup>86</sup> Buildings that have a construction date of circa 1975 or earlier and do not exhibit a distinct architectural style.

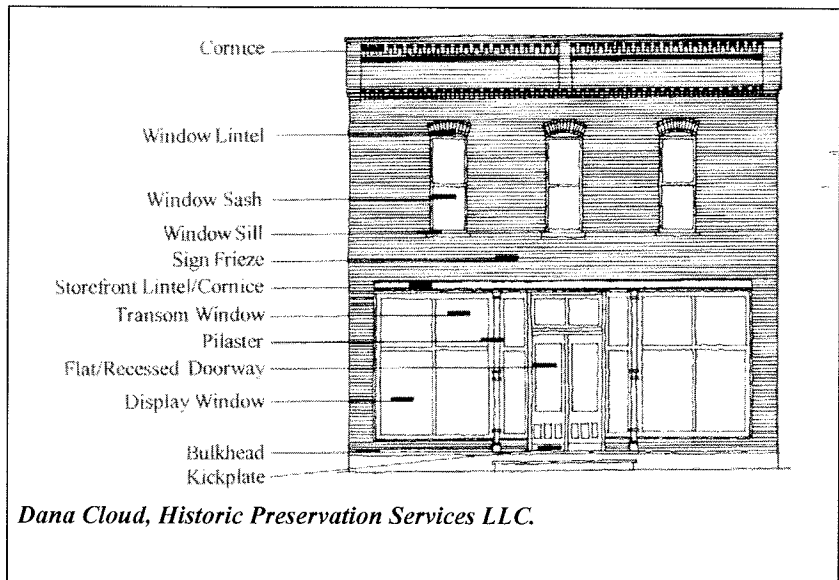
buildings cannot be classified or described, but merely that authorized survey terminology does not take into consideration local building forms.

Many commercial buildings in the survey area do not exhibit a distinct architectural style, instead featuring loose interpretations of commercial styles popular in the era in which they were built.

The buildings are typically of brick or concrete block masonry with a flat roof.

Depending on the date of construction, structural elements include the use of load-bearing limestone, brick, concrete block, steel frame and/or poured-in-place concrete wall construction. Similarly, storefronts incorporate combinations of wood,

metal, masonry, and glass. The survey found that 84 of 215 buildings exhibited no distinctive style.



Commercial architecture is distinguished first by building form and second by its architectural style. Due to their functional nature, many commercial buildings exhibit restrained architectural details. The first-story storefront is the most prominent and distinctive feature of a commercial building and is an important merchandising element. The rest of the commercial building's key design elements visually relate to the storefront. Important character-defining elements of the storefront are display windows, bulkheads, doors, transoms, signs, kick plates, corner posts, and entablature.

As noted previously, In *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, Richard Longstreth identifies and categorizes buildings common to central business

districts and neighborhood commercial areas according to the composition of their façades. Despite intricate detailing and stylistic treatments or the lack thereof, the organization of the commercial façade can be reduced to simple patterns that reveal major divisions or zones. Longstreth classifies different arrangements that appear frequently as types that can be applied to places of business serving the general public, including retail facilities, banks, office buildings, hotels, and theaters. Other free-standing building types found in commercial areas possess designs more similar to high-style public and institutional buildings or to high-style domestic architecture, such as railroad depots. Longstreth also acknowledges building forms developed in the twentieth century for auto-centric or special-function buildings such as gasoline stations, motels, roadside restaurants and diners that constitute a genre that is significantly different from the mainstream of commercial buildings.

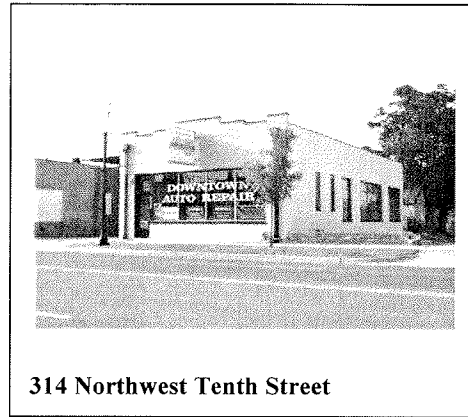
Utilizing Longstreth's basic commercial building types, the survey identified the following commercial property types: One-Part Commercial Block, Two-Part Commercial Block, Two-Part Vertical Block, and Three-Part Vertical Block. One- and Two-Part Commercial Blocks are the dominant commercial building types found in downtown Oklahoma City. Of masonry or steel frame

construction, these buildings are between one and four stories tall. They include buildings executed in high style architectural treatments and more generic design treatments. The storefront area typically features a transom window that spans the width of the building, display windows, and one or more recessed entrances. Below the display windows is a solid bulkhead that supports the window frames. Pilasters and/or columns often provide additional vertical definition, framing the ends of the display windows as well as the transition to the entrances.

### One-Part Commercial Block

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The One-Part Commercial Block building is a simple single-story building with a storefront façade. In many examples, the street frontage is narrow and the façade comprises little more than plate glass windows and an entry with a cornice or shaped parapet spanning the width of the façade. The example at **314 Northwest Tenth Street** is a good example with the shaped parapet wall and display windows characterizing the primary façade.

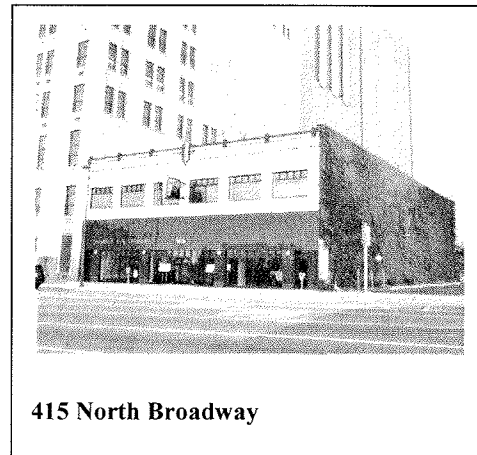


**314 Northwest Tenth Street**

### Two-Part Commercial Block

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Slightly more complex than their one-story cousins, Two-Part Commercial Block buildings are typically two to four stories in height. There is a clear visual separation of use between the first-story retail/customer service space and the upper-story office, meeting room, or residential uses. Similar to One-Part Commercial Block buildings, the styling of the first story focuses on the storefront glazing and entrance(s). The design of the upper stories identifies the building's architectural influences. The building at **415 North Broadway** illustrates the character-defining features of the Two-Part Commercial Block building, including the decorative treatments of the upper wall face and the cornice embellishment offsetting the first-story storefront.

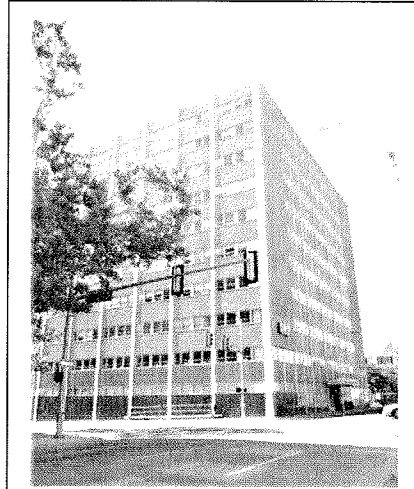


**415 North Broadway**

### **Two-Part Vertical Block**

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Though similar to its Two-Part Commercial Block cousin, the Two-Part Vertical Block incorporates a larger, clearly prominent upper zone that is treated as a unified whole. The distinct terra-cotta and polished stone-clad base and clearly defined brick and curtain wall shaft of the Southwestern Bell Headquarters at **707 North Robinson Avenue** distinguish it as an example of this relatively rare commercial form in Oklahoma City. This building type is commonly used for office buildings, hotels, and large department stores.

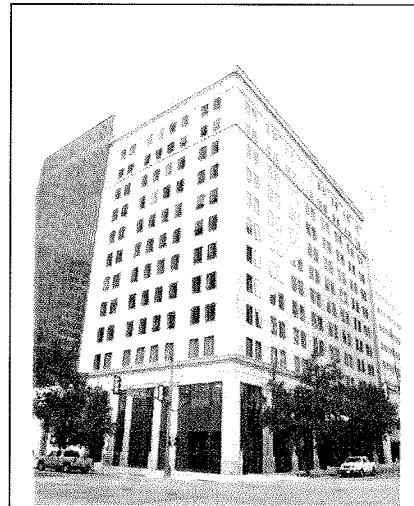


**707 North Robinson Avenue**

### **Three-Part Vertical Block**

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The distinct upper zone distinguishes the Three-part Vertical Block from a Two-part Vertical Block. The dominant form for tall buildings constructed well into the 1920s, the Three-Part arrangement is meant to reflect the divisions of a classical column: base, shaft, and capital. The 1924-25 Medical Arts Building at **100 Park Avenue** is one of several examples in Oklahoma City, all of which also exhibit distinct architectural styles.



**100 Park Avenue**



## COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLES<sup>87</sup>

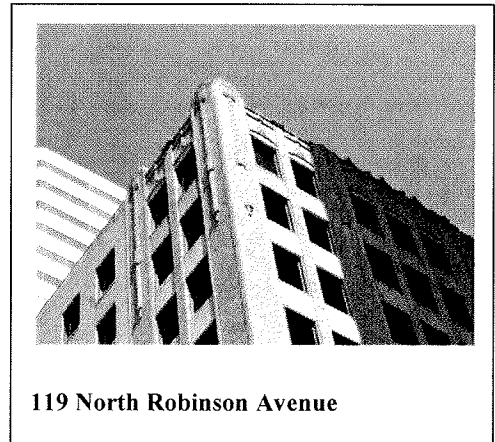
### LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS<sup>88</sup>

In downtown Oklahoma City, the twelve extant Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals commercial buildings date from circa 1870 to circa 1897. They reflect the influences of contemporaneous Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, late Gothic Revival, Second Renaissance Revival, and Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style sub-types.

#### Late Gothic Revival Style

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Of the four extant examples of Late Gothic Revival in the survey area, one is a 1904 church that authoritatively exhibits the defining elements of Late Gothic Revival style architectural features such as a steeply pitched steeple and peaked arches over every opening. The other three stylistic examples are all 1920s skyscrapers that incorporated restrained Late



**119 North Robinson Avenue**

Gothic Revival style elements into their vertical design. The Perrine Building at **119 North Robinson Avenue** reflects common 1920s designs with its slender column applications and cast stone lintels with peaked arch motifs on the uppermost windows.

### LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

The survey identified five buildings reflecting the influences of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements that date from circa 1907 to circa 1925. All are examples of the

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<sup>87</sup> The elaborated discussion of architectural styles has been restricted to only the most prevalent styles for which at least four examples were identified in Phase 1 survey. Also included are those styles for which singular, individually eligible examples are extant.

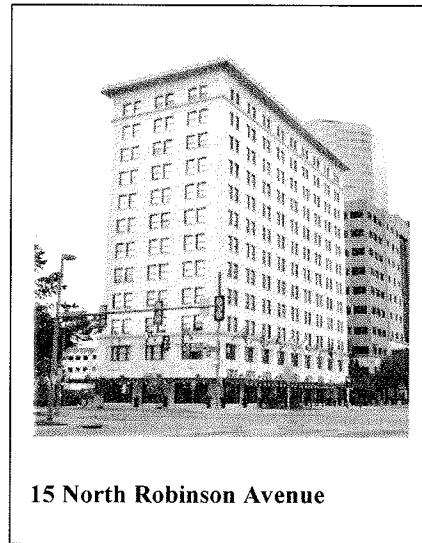
<sup>88</sup> Commercial architectural styles are arranged in this report based on the National Register classification categories.

Chicago School Style, also sometimes referred to as Commercial Style. Four are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, one of which is further defined as Sullivanesque.

### **Chicago School (aka Commercial Style)**

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Important advances in construction technology led directly to the commercial architecture of the Chicago School. Previously, the massive thickness required of load-bearing masonry walls restricted building height. With the advent of the elevator and subsequent development of steel structural skeleton in the 1880s, tall buildings with improved fireproofing and wind bracing became possible for the first time.<sup>89</sup> It was in Chicago that architects, such as Louis Sullivan and Daniel Burnham, developed an architectural vocabulary for the exterior treatment of this new building type and design. The Chicago School commercial building is usually between six and twenty stories with a flat roof and a terminating cornice.<sup>90</sup> Because the exterior walls no longer carried huge structural loads, use of large expanses of glass were possible and wall ornamentation became subordinated to allow for an outward expression of the internal structure within. Sullivan's commercial office building designs for the initially modest mid-rise office building applied a classical tripartite formula of a base, shaft, and capital; the expression of horizontal and vertical structural relationships; and the rigorous simplification in door and window enframements, wall surface, and cornice design. The National Register-listed Colcord Building at **15 North Robinson Avenue** exemplifies this style.



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<sup>89</sup> John C. Poppeliers, Allen Chambers, Jr., and Nancy B. Schwartz, *What Style Is It?* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1983), 72.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

## MODERN MOVEMENT

In downtown Oklahoma City, examples of Modern Movement commercial designs date from circa 1925 to circa 1985. During this period, architects began applying the streamlined forms popular in industrial design to buildings.<sup>91</sup> Beginning in the 1920s, the vertical and rectilinear Art Deco style brought structural glass and marble, bronze, and terra cotta into common usage in commercial and institutional buildings. In the late 1930s, the Moderne style featured cubic and cylindrical forms with a horizontal emphasis, smooth surfaces, curving shapes, and a minimum of ornamentation. Cast concrete, buff-colored brick, glass, and steel replaced dark red brick and stone. During the 1950s and through the 1970s a second wave of Modernism took place, with architects and designers exploring the aesthetic boundaries of advances in building technology.<sup>92</sup> As a result, numerous forms and styles emerged. Among them are the Miesian Style, International Style, New Formalism, and Brutalism, all styles well-represented in downtown Oklahoma City.

### Art Deco Style

Originating in Europe and gaining popularity in the United States during the 1920s, the Art Deco style became the first widely popular style in nearly three decades to depart from the traditional revival styles in America. Characterized by verticality, smooth wall surfaces, and geometric and stylized motifs applied to door and window surrounds and at the building's cornice, this style promulgated modern machine age designs.<sup>93</sup> Twelve buildings in the survey area exhibit the Art Deco style. Of note is the Ramsey Tower at **204 North Robinson Avenue**. Completed in 1931, it



<sup>91</sup> McAlester, 468.

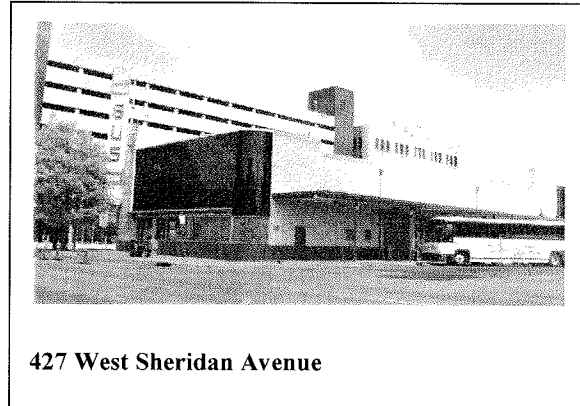
<sup>92</sup> General Services Administration, *Growth Efficiency, and Modernism: GSA Buildings of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s*. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005), 6.

<sup>93</sup> Poppeliers, 88.

reflects classic Art Deco verticality, emphasized by the vertical brown brick stripes between each stacked window and the progressive set backs dictated for tall buildings by building codes which appeared in the United States in the 1920s.

### **Moderne Style (Art Moderne)**

By the mid-1930s, the Moderne style surpassed the Art Deco in popularity.<sup>94</sup> Characterized by smooth wall surfaces, curved wall corners, and an overall horizontal emphasis, the Moderne style occurs in downtown Oklahoma City at the Union Bus Station (**427 West Sheridan Avenue**). Classic Moderne elements of the

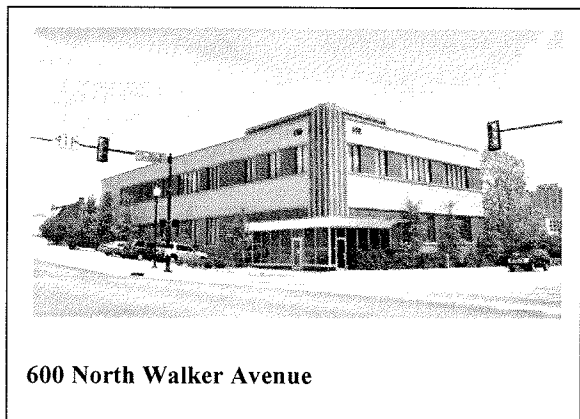


**427 West Sheridan Avenue**

Union Bus Station include the curved wall corners, the use of smooth structural glass wall cladding, and the horizontal bands of projecting brick on the corner tower.

### **International Style<sup>95</sup>**

Deriving its name from an exhibition of modern architecture that took place at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932, the term International Style is often used interchangeably with Modern Movement. In its most broad usage, it describes buildings that feature smooth wall surfaces, expansive windows, an absence of ornament, cantilevered extensions (such as entryways, balconies, or even vertical projections), and always a flat roof. The Hertz the Hertz Drivurself Station (**600 North Walker**) clearly conveys an overall sense of horizontality through

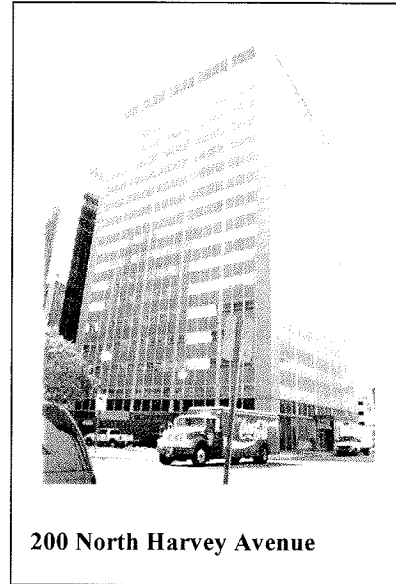


**600 North Walker Avenue**

<sup>94</sup> McAlester, 465.

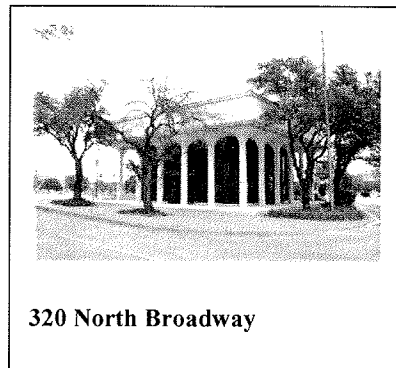
<sup>95</sup> Poppeliers, 92.

the use of contrasting bands of buff and brown brick, which are further enunciated by courses of cast stone and strips of windows and solid planes. An excellent example of the tall Miesian style office building sub-type with its floors of office space stacked on top of one another and expanses of glass curtain wall, is the 1957 Fidelity National Building (Park Harvey Center) at **200 North Harvey Avenue**, which includes each of these elements.



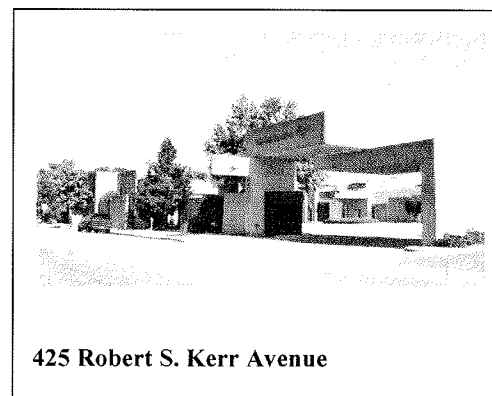
### **New Formalism**

Typically dating to the late 1960s and early 1970s, New Formalism is easily recognizable for its highly structured symmetry that is usually expressed in tall, slender columnar supports that form a round arch or stylized arcade across the primary elevations. Additional characteristic elements include smooth wall surfaces (usually stucco or concrete), vertical lines, and flat, projecting roof lines. The Liberty Bank Drive-In at **320 North Broadway**, constructed circa 1972, is an excellent example in downtown Oklahoma City.



### **Brutalism**

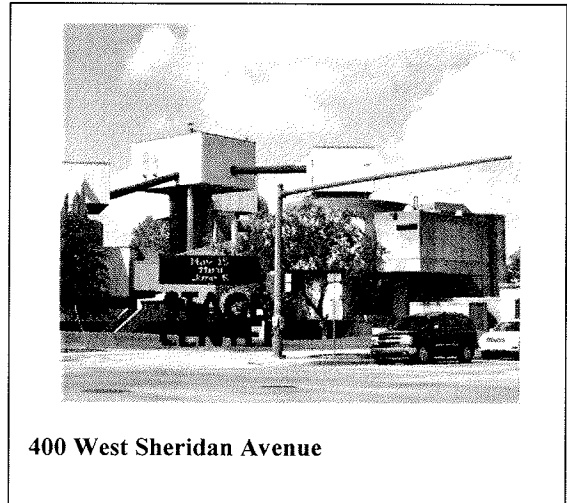
From the French term *béton brut*, which translates as “raw concrete,” the term Brutalism describes buildings that evoke a strong expression of the nature of modern materials, usually concrete. A popular style for governmental and institutional buildings, it was a short-lived architectural movement, with most examples occurring in the



1960s and early 1970s. In Oklahoma City, due in large part to the latter phases of the Urban Renewal program and the influences of the University of Oklahoma School of architecture, retains four good examples dating from circa 1963 through 1973. The First National Motor Bank at **425 Robert S. Kerr Avenue** is a relatively rare commercial example.

### **POST MODERN**

The term Post Modern continues to inspire debate among architectural scholars as to its definition and associated stylistic characteristics, though most agree its onset dates to the mid-1960s. The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office accepts the term and is in the process of



**400 West Sheridan Avenue**

developing a statewide architectural context for architectural styles for the second half of the twentieth century. During the Post Modern period, the Deconstructive style emerged as architects and designers attempted to “reveal the truth” of buildings. The survey identified nineteen examples of Post Modern-era buildings, only one of which is eligible for listing in the National Register.

### **Deconstructive**

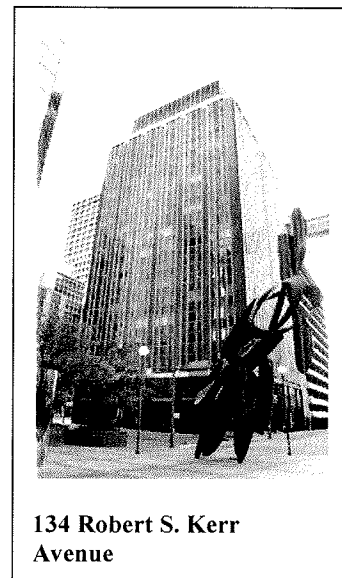
Epitomizing Deconstructive architectural style, the Stage Center Theater at **400 West Sheridan** received the Honors Award from the American Institute of Architects upon its completion in 1970. Described as “idiosyncratic,” “anti-geometric,” and as an “inside-out” building, it is widely accepted as one of the finest examples of Post Modern architecture in the nation and the original architect’s model is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

## COMPREHENSIVE ALTERATION

The survey identified a relatively unique pattern of comprehensive remodeling of early twentieth century buildings that occurred during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. While post- World War II and late twentieth century remodeling of commercial buildings was common nationwide, examples found in downtown Oklahoma City notably occur on tall buildings, exhibit high-style Modern Movement design, and are so thorough that the original building's style and/or form is unrecognizable. They are located in the 100 blocks of Robert S. Kerr and Park Avenues and their retrofitted design suggest a concerted response I.M. Pei's modern plan for downtown redevelopment and/or to mimic with the large, contemporary buildings constructed in the vicinity. Documented examples include: the India Temple (later Wright Building) at **101-11 Robert S. Kerr Avenue** constructed in 1902 and remodeled circa 1961; the Petroleum Building at **134 Robert S. Kerr Avenue** constructed in 1927 and remodeled in 1964; the Kerr-McGee Building at **135 Robert S. Kerr Avenue** constructed in 1928 and remodeled and linked with the 1918 YMCA Building circa 1959; and the Skirvin Tower Hotel at **101 Park Avenue** constructed in 1932 and remodeled circa 1972.

## RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURAL FORMS AND STYLES

The survey identified thirty-four residential buildings, comprised of four, single-family houses, nineteen multi-unit apartment buildings, and eleven hotels. The single-family houses date from circa 1895 to circa 1915 and include two Queen Anne style houses, an American Four-Square residence, and a Gable-Front Folk House form. None of the single-family houses retain sufficient integrity to be eligible for listing in the National Register and their low number prevents the



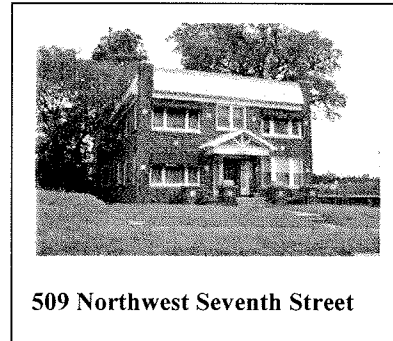
**134 Robert S. Kerr Avenue**

identification of any patterns.

### **MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TYPES**

The advent of buildings designed and erected as multi-family dwellings are often called “purpose-built apartments,” and include row houses, flats, and duplexes, as well as low-rise and high-rise apartment buildings. The survey identified nineteen purpose-built, multi-family dwellings, all of which date to before 1976. This property type typically occurs as a function-specific, multi-unit form; however, some exhibit the influences of styles popular during the period of their construction. The survey identified the followings styles expressed on purpose-built apartment buildings: Classical Revival (3), Bungalow/Craftsman (1); Art Deco (1); Modern Movement (1); Contemporary (1); and Neo-Tudor (1).

Depending on the period of construction, contemporary stylistic norms, and the number of units, the size, scale, and massing is highly variable. Many resemble popular single-family residential styles. The circa 1925 Memory Lane Apartments at **509 Northwest Seventh Street** is a four-family flat that exhibits the influence of the Craftsman style with its gabled entrance porch with faux half-timbering, exposed rafter tails, and modest tapestry brick wall treatment.

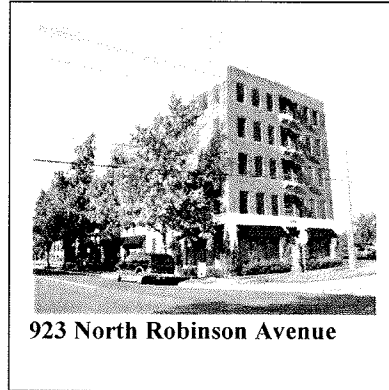


In contrast, the 1959 Bel-Aire Apartments at **1014 North Robinson Avenue** illustrates the post-World War II Modern Movement style with its lack of applied ornamentation and use of simple geometric pattern to enliven the façade, including contrasting fields of brick and concrete block masonry and the decorative diamond shaped face of each concrete block unit.



## Hotel Residential Property Types

In a large city, such as Oklahoma City, it is not unusual to find a large number of hotel buildings that housed transient visitors and/or long term renters. The survey identified eleven hotel buildings<sup>96</sup> in the survey area, nine of which date to before 1976. Large first-tier hotels are concentrated in the core of the central business district, exhibit high-style architectural design, rise ten stories or more, and cater to upper middle class the higher-income clientele. The survey area contains six first-tier hotel buildings dating from 1911 to 2000. Second-tier hotels occur at the fringes of the central business district, rarely rise above six stories, and catered to traveling salesmen, jobbers, and the middle- and low-income classes. They typically have no distinctive architectural style or evoke traditional revival styles, such as Classical Revival. After World War II, the motel or motor lodge became the popular second-tier transient residential property type. In the survey area, five primary resources could be classified as second-tier hotels, including the Travelodge Motel at **601 North Walker Avenue** constructed circa 1960 and the Herriman Hotel at **923 North Robinson Avenue** built in 1926.



**923 North Robinson Avenue**

## ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS

Institutional and public buildings are often more architecturally expressive than commercial buildings, although they are generally conservative in their selection of an architectural idiom. Classical motifs and traditional styling with historical antecedents are the most common stylistic treatments. Sub-types identified in the survey include religious buildings, educational buildings, and government buildings. Of the four educational buildings identified – the Central High School (1908-10) is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the downtown Library (1952) is

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<sup>96</sup> Buildings are assessed based on their historic functional property type and may not currently operate as hotels.

individually eligible, the Emerson School (1910/1949/c1952) is individually eligible, and the Ronald J. Norick Library (2004) is non-historic.

### **GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS**

The survey identified six government buildings constructed before 1976. The Oklahoma City Municipal Building (1936-37), the Oklahoma County Courthouse (1936-37), and the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse (1912/1918/1937) are all listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The 1959 Neoclassical Revival Federal Building at **200 Northwest 4th Street** and the Modern Movement Oklahoma City Fire Station Number 3 (1945) at **1111 North Hudson Avenue** are both individually eligible for listing in the National Register. The circa 1967 County Office Building at **320 Robert S. Kerr Avenue** represents an excellent example of New Formalism style, as well as the continued incorporation of the historicism that typically inspired traditional governmental building design in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through its full-width colonnade.

### **RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS**

The survey identified church buildings dating from circa 1904 to circa 1910 that all represent “high style” architecture. Styles represented are Late Gothic Revival, Tudor Revival, Classical Revival, and Romanesque Revival. Three are listed in the National Register. All feature mid- to late-twentieth century additions and are located on main thoroughfares.

### **ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY**

All properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and for local designation as landmarks or historic districts under the city’s ordinances must retain sufficient architectural integrity to convey the period of time for which they are significant. As described previously in the methodology section, each building received an integrity rating of Excellent, Good/Fair, Poor, or Non-Historic.

INTEGRITY	PERCENT
Excellent	13%
Good/Fair	49%
Poor	24%
Non-Historic (Constructed after 1975)	14%

### PROPERTIES CURRENTLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Currently, the following properties located in the survey area are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

- St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, 301 Northwest 4th Street (listed 1978)
- Oklahoma City National Memorial, 200 Northwest 5th Street (listed 1997)
- St. Paul's Cathedral, 127 Northwest 7th Street (listed 1977)
- Eisele Motors/Claude Neon Federal Company, 201-213 Northwest 10th Street (listed as contributing resource to Automobile Alley Historic District in 1996)
- Hedden Hall Family Hotel, 215 Northwest 10th Street (listed as contributing resource to Automobile Alley Historic District in 1996)
- Tradesman National Bank, 101 North Broadway (listed 1979)
- Pioneer Building, 401 North Broadway (listed 1980)
- U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, 201-215 Dean A. McGee Avenue (listed 1974)
- Fidelity National Building/Park Harvey Center, 200 North Harvey Avenue (listed 2008)
- Oklahoma Gas and Electric Building, 321 North Harvey Avenue (listed 1980)
- Elks Lodge Building, 401 North Harvey Avenue (listed 1980)
- Central High School, 800 North Harvey Avenue (listed 1976)
- Hightower Building, 105 North Hudson Avenue (listed 2002)

- Harbour-Longmire Building, 420 West Main Street (listed 1980)
- Skirvin Hotel, 1 Park Avenue (listed 1979)
- Oklahoma County Courthouse, 315 (321) Park Avenue (listed 1992)
- Cotton Exchange Building, 228 Robert S. Kerr Avenue (listed 1979)
- Colcord Building, 15 North Robinson Avenue (listed 1972)
- Braniff Building, 324 (316) North Robinson Avenue (listed 1980)
- India Temple Shrine/Journal Record Building, 621 North Robinson Avenue (listed 1980)
- First Christian Church, 1104 North Robinson Avenue (listed 1984)
- Oklahoma City Municipal Building, 200 North Walker Avenue (listed 2007)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### GENERAL COMMENTS

The City of Oklahoma City has, over the years, initiated a number of programs to preserve, rehabilitate, and enhance the appearance of its central business district and its older neighborhoods. According to *Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation in Oklahoma*, a study commissioned by Preservation Oklahoma with the Oklahoma Historical Society (SHPO) and conducted by researchers at Rutgers University and Oklahoma State University, many of the city's property owners are part of statewide historic preservation activities that generated a total of \$357 million for the local and statewide economies during 2007." These efforts recognize that the conservation of buildings, neighborhoods, and sites of historic value is one of the best tools for recovering the worth of past investments while fueling a new economic force. Oklahoma City also recently received designation as Oklahoma's eighth *Preserve America* Community, a White house initiative that provides support to such designated communities.

To aid the city's future development and preserve the investment in its older neighborhoods and commercial centers, Oklahoma City should continue to implement public policy that promotes historic preservation in targeted areas and integrates it into the city's planning and land use processes and policies. As indicated in previous survey efforts and in the findings of this phase of survey, a variety of historic and cultural resources contribute to defined areas and have the potential to form a marketable identity for those neighborhoods and commercial centers. Development of a preservation program within the context of revitalization of the older neighborhoods and commercial centers of Oklahoma City can provide a level of certainty and stability that is necessary to attract investment. Preserved neighborhoods that accommodate appropriate new construction, create stability of population, an expanded tax base, job retention, and less drain on city services.

Today, as in the past, there is a heterogeneous mix of property uses in the survey area. As in many communities, new commercial and residential growth presents unique challenges for older mixed-use, residential, and commercial streetscapes. While individual buildings may have the potential to attract new businesses or residential investment, if the area as a whole is to become viable, it must compete with other local and regional development. Experience demonstrates that areas that create and/or retain a unique visual character that combines the historic and the new to enhance an existing “sense of place” are the most successful competitors.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION AND PROTECTION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

The following is a summary listing of preliminary recommendations developed as a result of the survey of downtown Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

#### **PRESERVATION PLAN**

As part of the initiation of a phased survey effort, the City of Oklahoma City should continue to develop an updated preservation plan that identifies and refines as many of the community’s historic contexts and property types and establishes updated priorities for on-going identification, evaluation and protection. This effort is important to integrate preservation strategies as part of their planning and land use/development processes. An up-to-date preservation planning process will organize preservation activities (identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment of historic properties) in a systematic as well as a strategic and timely manner. The inventory and evaluation of community resources is the first step to developing local private and public programs that not only preserve important historic properties, but that also utilize preservation as a tool for economic development and the revitalization of older neighborhoods and commercial centers.

Survey is on-going. Concurrent with identification of historic resources is the need to target specific resources for protection through proactive measures such as assisting in nominating

eligible properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and, thus qualifying significant properties for voluntary participation in federal and state rehabilitation tax credit programs.

Other resources may merit protection by designation through overlay zoning as local historic districts or landmarks that require design review by the city prior to owners undertaking major alterations and/or demolition. Some areas may need a lesser degree of protection, through conservation district design guidelines for only new construction and demolition, with the goal of stabilization and eventually qualification for rehabilitation incentives.

Thus, to be effective, future survey and protection efforts must be undertaken in a strategic manner, taking into account Oklahoma City's planning needs, the support and interests of its citizens and property owners, available funding, and the nature of its historic resources.

#### **PRESERVATION PLAN COMPONENT:**

#### **NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION STRATEGIES**

The City's Preservation Plan should incorporate updated strategies to nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places. Cultural resource surveys provide preliminary identification and evaluation of historic resources and set the stage for implementing protective efforts to preserve significant resources. Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places provides one level of protection. In addition to recognition of a property's significance, a number of incentive and protection programs are associated with listing in the National Register.

- **Tax Credits.** The state of Oklahoma offers a state income tax credit equal to 20 percent of rehabilitation expenses for income-producing historic properties. Owners of National Register listed properties used for income-producing purposes are also eligible for a federal tax credit equal to 20 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenses. The state and federal tax credit programs are administered through the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and are designed to be utilized concurrently.

- **Federal Charitable Tax Deductions** are also available for contributions of easements for conservation of historically significant land areas or buildings.
- **Protection from Federal Undertakings.** Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) requires federal agencies to consider the effect of undertakings (federal licenses, permits, or funding projects) on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If a project threatens to harm such properties, the State Historic Preservation Office and the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation must be consulted to consider ways to avoid or minimize damage.
- **Grants.** Properties listed in the National Register receive priority in federal and state incentive programs for historic resources.

### **National Register Listing**

The National Register criteria allows for a variety of ways to nominate properties based on their level of significance, historic architectural integrity, and proximity to other historically significant resources. Properties can be nominated individually, as contributing elements to a historic district, or as part of Multiple Property Submissions.

Applications to list properties in the National Register of Historic Places utilize survey information but also require additional research. Recommendations based on recent survey projects provide an initial assessment of historical architectural integrity that serves as a threshold to meeting the National Register criteria. Resources then must be evaluated for their associations with known general historic contexts developed as part of the preliminary research for the reconnaissance-level survey.

All of the properties recommended in this survey report as being potentially eligible for listing in the National Register meet the minimal historical/architectural integrity requirements and appear



to be eligible under one or more National Register criteria. Additional research and assessment and early consultation with the SHPO will be necessary to pursue preparation of nominations for properties identified in this survey as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register as individual properties or as properties contributing to a district.

#### Multiple Property Submissions

It is recommended that the city utilize the Multiple Property Submission (MPS) format in nominating commercial, institutional and industrial properties associated with the central business district and other commercial /industrial resources to the National Register of Historic Places.

A National Register Multiple Property Submission (MPS) is a format for nominating both contiguous and discontinuous individual properties and/or districts that share the same theme. The MPS includes a cover document called a Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) that identifies functional and architectural property types that have shared physical characteristics and historic contexts such as commerce and architecture. It defines integrity requirements for these thematic resources to qualify for listing in the National Register. Subsequent individual property or district nominations to the National Register need only provide the physical description and history of the property being nominated and reference the contexts, property types, and registration requirements outlined in the MPDF cover document. This makes the nomination process significantly easier, quicker, and cost-effective. With a MPS in place, property owners or the city can initiate nominations that require significantly less time and effort to prepare. I

For example, the survey documented the presence discontinuous groupings of a small number of contributing buildings with shared contexts among their group but also have associations with contexts relating to the larger downtown area. The ability to compare these small groupings and link them with common themes and associations with larger discontinuous groupings of commercial resources as part of a MPS is recommended. Such an approach will provide maximum historic contextual references and assist in development of integrity thresholds that benefits from comparisons with like resources located in nearby areas. Overall, the contexts and

description of property types developed and documented in the Phase I survey report, will facilitate the preparation of a MPS for the survey area and, perhaps, for other commercial resources outside the survey area boundaries.

The MPS format provides an economy of scale by allowing like resources to be nominated under one MPDF cover document, thus avoiding redundancy. Furthermore, because the National Register nomination process requires a certain level of owner support, the ability to nominate similar properties over a period of time under one cover document provides flexibility to the city in implementing nominations based on level of endangerment and/or level of owner support.

A MPDF establishes one or more historic contexts, describes associated property types related to these historic context(s), and establishes significance and integrity requirements for nominating properties to the National Register. For example, a broad thematic MPDF could be "Historic Commercial and Industrial Resources of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma." Within the document would be a variety of historic contexts such as "Downtown Commercial Resources of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma," and/or a specific cultural context such as "Post-World I Modern Movement Commercial and Industrial Resources in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma." Using this general thematic approach, individual properties and districts can be nominated based on information yielded from the phased survey. Future nominations using the same cover document could include similar neighborhoods that have yet to be surveyed.

It is common for a city to fund preparation of the MPDF cover document and the property owners to pay the cost of preparing the abbreviated "plug-in" National Register application for their property or district. Preparation of Multiple Property Submissions and National Register nominations by Certified Local Governments is an activity funded by the Oklahoma SHPO utilizing federal Historic Preservation Fund grants.

The database fields and historic contexts developed in the Phase I survey in Oklahoma City will provide guidance in the development of thematic nominations that can be built upon as the

inventory of historic resources throughout the city continues and as new contexts are developed and existing contexts augmented.

#### National Register - Historic District Nominations

It is recommended that the city act as the initiator, solicit support, and identify financial strategies to support the listing of the identified potentially eligible historic districts.

A more targeted and less comprehensive approach than the MPS to nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places is for the city to prioritize, based on level of endangerment or the desirability of qualifying specific properties for federal and state rehabilitation tax credits, the nomination of specific historic district(s). In this case, the city would solicit the support of a majority of property owners and provide partial or full funding to nominate specific residential and/or commercial districts such as a cluster of historic buildings in the central business district. (Targeting districts for nomination can also be done as “plug in” applications linked with a more general (MPDF).

As noted in the discussion of MPS, several small clusters of intact early to mid-twentieth century commercial and industrial buildings occur in the survey area. These resources, in their respective groupings, meet the National Register architectural integrity criteria and have significant associations with the patterns of commercial development of Oklahoma City, as well as the evolution of commercial and residential architecture in the city. The clusters include buildings with integrity ratings ranging from fair to excellent and are very similar to a significant number of similar resources located throughout downtown Oklahoma City. The variety of styles and design treatments convey information about the unique continuum of commercial architecture found in Oklahoma City and the buildings’ historic uses provide an understanding of the development of the city. As a group, their setting, design, materials, and workmanship convey feelings and provide associations with the evolution of the city’s commercial and government centers. The research and analysis of building history and façade alterations in the preparation of National Register nominations will be necessary to provide additional clarity to the evolution of the these areas. The following areas have small groupings of contiguous historic properties that may not be

individually eligible, but would contribute to a district. As noted, previously, it is recommended that priority consideration be given to nominating these small districts as part of a Multiple Property Submission.

- District One: the block of early twentieth century commercial buildings bounded by North Hudson, West Sheridan, North Walker, and West Main. This potential district comprises a rare intact grouping of early to mid-twentieth century commercial resources in downtown Oklahoma City that meet National Register integrity criteria and have associations with commercial development in Oklahoma City.
- District Two: the buildings on the north side of West Main at the intersection with North Lee Avenue. This potential district is eligible as a surviving cluster of early twentieth century commercial resources. This grouping meets National Register criteria for Integrity. The vast majority of similar resources were removed in downtown Oklahoma City over time. A MPDF for Commercial Resources in Oklahoma City would be a useful vehicle through which to nominate this district.
- District Three: the buildings at the southeast corner of Robert S. Kerr and North Robinson Avenues. As a small intact grouping, the Petroleum Building and the Petroleum Club Building clearly communicate the past architectural and commercial development of downtown Oklahoma City during the late 1950s and early 1960s. In addition to their architectural historic integrity, they have strong associations with the oil and gas business conducted in downtown Oklahoma City.
- District Four: the buildings at the northwest corner of North Broadway and Dean McGee Avenue. This grouping of buildings represents a clear sense of past time and place and reflects trends in Oklahoma City's commercial architecture from the early twentieth century. A MPDF for Commercial Resources in Oklahoma City would be a useful vehicle through which to nominate this district.

- District Five: the buildings at the northeast corner of North Walker Avenue and Northwest Fourth Street. This potential district is eligible as a surviving cluster of early twentieth century commercial resources that retain sufficient integrity to communicate their historic commercial associations. A MPDF for Commercial Resources in Oklahoma City would be a useful vehicle through which to nominate this district.
- District Six: the buildings at the northwest corner of North Robinson Avenue and Northwest Sixth Street. These buildings have strong associations with the Post-World War II commercial development in downtown Oklahoma City and both clearly communicate a high degree of architectural integrity. A MPDF for Commercial Resources in Oklahoma City would be a useful vehicle through which to nominate this district.
- District Seven: the buildings in the area of the 400 block of Northwest Seventh Street. This potential district comprises a rare intact grouping of early to mid-twentieth century commercial resources in downtown Oklahoma City. A MPDF for Commercial Resources in Oklahoma City would be a useful vehicle through which to nominate this district.
- District Eight: the buildings at the southwest corner of North Robinson Avenue and Northwest Ninth Street. This potential district comprises a rare intact grouping of early twentieth century commercial resources in downtown Oklahoma City. Most of this functional and architectural property type have been removed over the years. A MPDF for Commercial Resources in Oklahoma City would be a useful vehicle through which to nominate this district.
- District Nine: the buildings at 123 and 124 Northwest Eighth Street. This potential district comprises a rare intact grouping of early twentieth century commercial resources in downtown Oklahoma City, most of these functional and architectural property types have been removed from other areas in the central business district over the years. A MPDF for Commercial Resources in Oklahoma City would be a useful vehicle through which to nominate this district.

- District Ten: the buildings at the northeast corner of North Robinson Avenue and Northwest Ninth Street. This grouping of buildings represents a unique 1950s public subsidized housing redevelopment project in downtown Oklahoma City. This intact grouping clearly reflects Modern Movement styles as applied to multi-family public residential buildings.
- District Eleven: the buildings at the southwest corner of North Harvey Avenue and Northwest Tenth Street. This intact grouping clearly reflects its historic early twentieth century commercial associations. A MPDF for Commercial Resources in Oklahoma City would be a useful vehicle through which to nominate this district.
- District Twelve: the buildings to the east of the intersection of Northwest Tenth Street and Classen Drive. This potential district clearly reflects its Post-World War II commercial and architectural associations. A MPDF for Commercial Resources in Oklahoma City would be a useful vehicle through which to nominate this district.

#### National Register - Individual Property Nominations

The City of Oklahoma City should support individual property owners in nominating individually eligible properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The city can support register listing by maintaining a list of potentially individually eligible properties and notifying owners of the benefits of listing, such as rehabilitation tax credit incentives, as well as the procedures for nominating properties.

The following individual properties appear to retain sufficient architectural integrity for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places<sup>97</sup> if they have strong associations with one or more of the historical contexts identified in this survey.

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<sup>97</sup> The National Register criteria also serve as the basis for local designation of historic properties.

## **INDIVIDUALLY ELIGIBLE FOR LISTING IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

All of these buildings retain sufficient historic architectural features that are common to a particular class of resources. Many reflect the individuality or variation of the features that occurs within a class. Others reflect the evolution of a particular architectural and/or functional property type or the transition between functional and/or architectural property types. In particular, attention should be given to the early post-World War II Modern Movement style buildings which are particularly important as a transitional group in Oklahoma City. Moreover, the evolution of the Modern Movement style buildings in the 1960s and 1970s reflect associations with the Pei plan and the evolution of this class of buildings from the post war period as well as after the initiation of the I.M. Pei plan in the 1960s. As such, many of these buildings, including those not yet fifty years in age, have design significance that has been the subject of academic research which meets criteria considerations. Associations with I.M. Pei's plan is of national significance in urban design and architecture for associations with Pei's early designs. At the time of the Oklahoma Plan, only two other of his plans of this scope had been initiated in the United States. Finally, the wealth of post-World War II Modern Movement designs in downtown Oklahoma City is significant in itself for its associations with commercial design and development in the city and should be incorporated into the city's protective planning program and as a first step, utilize the National Register program as a protection methodology. Properties that appear to be individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by virtue of the retention of historic architectural integrity and their association with historic contexts developed in the survey include:

- **Federal Building/US Courthouse, 200 Northwest 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Neoclassical Revival Government Building, 1959.** This building is an excellent example of governmental

development in downtown Oklahoma City and is a good example of the influence of Modern Movement architecture on institutional buildings. It retains most of the seven National Register aspects of integrity, including location, materials, design, workmanship, feeling of a specific period of time, and association.

- **Rockwall Hotel/Rockwall Apartments, 424 Northwest 6th Street, Art Deco style Apartment Building, 1933.** This building retains historic integrity and is a good example of high-style, multi-family residential architecture in downtown Oklahoma City, as well as an excellent example of Art Deco style. As defined in *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the Criteria for Evaluation*, there are even aspects of integrity and a property must “possess several, and usually most, of the aspects.” The Rockwall Apartments possesses most of the seven aspects of integrity, including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling of a specific period of time, and associations with the commercial development of the project area. The replacement of a select few window sashes affects integrity of materials, but does not compromise the overall ability of the building to convey its significant historic associations with the residential and architectural development of downtown Oklahoma City.

- **Memory Lane Apartments, 509 Northwest 7th Street, Apartment Building, c.1925.** This building retains excellent integrity and is a good example of early twentieth century multi-family residential architecture in downtown Oklahoma City. It retains most of the seven National Register aspects of integrity, including location, materials, design, workmanship, feeling, and association.

- **Sunrise Apartments, 516 Northwest 8th Street, Modern Movement Apartment Building, c.1960.** This building is an excellent example of Modern Movement styling as expressed in a multi-family residential building with no apparent alterations to its original materials. It represents residential development during a period of significant redevelopment in downtown Oklahoma City. Its exact construction date is uncertain, however if not yet fifty years of age, it will become eligible for individual listing within a short time. It retains most of the National Register aspects of integrity required to convey historic significance, including location,



design, materials, workmanship, feelings, and association, and should be noted as potentially eligible in the near future.

- **Cline Hotel, 228-230 Northwest 10th Street, Apartment Building, c.1910.** Despite recent window replacement and interior alterations, this is a rare surviving example of its property type and merits additional research and reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Officer as to its individual eligibility. It retains most of the National Register aspects of integrity, including location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association, and clearly communicates its historic associations.
- **Mager Building, 231 Northwest 10th Street, Modern Movement Commercial Office Building, c.1959.** Designed by Sorey, Hill & Sorey, this building retains excellent integrity from its original construction period and is an excellent example of Modern Movement styling as applied to a small commercial office building. As such it is a unique architectural property type. It retains all seven aspects of integrity and it clearly conveys its historic associations with the architectural and commercial development of downtown Oklahoma City.
- **Southwestern Bell Telephone Company Building, 405 North Broadway, Art Deco Style Skyscraper, 1927-28.** A landmark, Art Deco skyscraper, this building has strong associations with the long-term investment by Southwestern Bell in downtown Oklahoma City. Communication on file at Oklahoma SHPO from Melvena Heisch, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, in 1996 determined this building individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; the building has not changed in appearance since that time. As a telecommunications facility in continuous use since its original construction, the rooftop antennae date to some time before 1996 and have been screened to minimize the visual affect. This feature has associations with the building's continued historic use in communications. Despite the replacement windows, the building retains integrity sufficient to convey its significance. As defined in *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the Criteria for Evaluation*, there are even aspects of integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association) and a property must "possess several, and usually most, of the aspects." The

Southwestern Bell Headquarters building possesses most of the seven aspects of integrity, including location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association.

- **Downtown Library, 131 Dean A. McGee Avenue, Modern Movement Style Institutional Building, 1952.** This building retains integrity from its original period of construction and continues to clearly convey its architectural associations with the occurrence of Post-World War II Modern Movement styling in downtown Oklahoma City. It also has associations with the change in the design of library buildings that occurred after World War II. Furthermore, it reflects Post-War institutional development patterns in downtown Oklahoma City. The windows are replacements installed as a direct response to the 1995 Murrah Building bombing and reflect the original glazing pattern and arrangement of the original windows. The building retains all of the National Register aspects of integrity, including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and is individually eligible for listing in the National Register.

- **Security Federal Savings & Loan Building, 301 North Harvey Avenue, Modern Movement Commercial Office Building, c.1959.** This building retains excellent integrity from its original period of construction and continues to clearly convey its architectural associations with the occurrence of Modern Movement styling in downtown Oklahoma City and commercial development after World War II. It retains all seven National Register aspects of integrity.

- **Oklahoma City Fire Station Number 3, 1111 North Hudson Avenue, Modern Movement Style Building, 1945.** This building is a good example of the influence of Modern Movement style on governmental buildings and retains excellent integrity from its original period of construction. It retains a majority of the seven National Register aspects of integrity.

- **Medical Arts Building, 100 Park Avenue, Chicago School Style Commercial Building, 1924-25.** This tall building clearly reflects its commercial and architectural associations with the development of Oklahoma City during the 1920s. It retains most of the seven National Register aspects of integrity, including location, setting, design, workmanship,

feeling, and association. The loss of the original windows affects the integrity of materials, however this does not compromise the building's overall ability to communicate its original historic identity for which it is significant.

- **Petroleum Club Building, 120 Robert S. Kerr Avenue, Modern Movement Parking Garage/Office Building, 1957.** A unique vertical parking garage topped with office suites, this building retains excellent integrity from its original period of construction and represents the Post-World War II period development in the heart of the central business district. It retains all seven of the National Register aspects of integrity.
- **Kerr-McGee Building, 135 Robert S. Kerr Avenue, Modern Movement Commercial Building, c.1924/c.1959 remodel.** This building is an excellent example of the onset of wholesale remodeling of earlier structures to reflect a more modern appearance and represents the pattern of vast redevelopment in downtown Oklahoma City that occurred during the late 1950s and through the 1970s. In particular, it represents the vision of Dean a. McGee to redevelop downtown Oklahoma City after World War II. The building retains excellent integrity from the period of the remodeling, an alteration that has gained significance in its own right.
- **Perrine Building/Cravens Building, 119 North Robinson Avenue, Late Gothic Revival Skyscraper, 1924-27.** This building is a good example of the 1920s building boom that occurred downtown. It retains most of the National Register aspects of integrity, including location, setting, design, workmanship, feeling, and association.
- **First National Bank/First National Center, 120 North Robinson Avenue, Art Deco Style Skyscraper with Modern Movement and New Formalist Additions, 1931/1948/1957/1972.** This building represents a unique continuum of commercial development of a single financial institution throughout much of the twentieth century. Two of the three additions occurred more than fifty years ago, do not obscure the original building, do not attempt to mimic the original building's character or materials, and are subservient in height to the original building. Based on a recent publication distributed by the National Register ("Evaluating

the Significance of Additions and Accretions A National Register White Paper,” by Linda McClellan, April 2008) additions that represent the continued development or expansion of a significant entity into the less-than-fifty-year period can be considered eligible. The additions at the First National Bank clearly reflect the ongoing commercial expansion of the bank, clearly communicate its commercial significance in downtown Oklahoma City, and have gained significance in their own right. Moreover, the additions appear to have associations with the role of the Voss family, beginning in 1956, in the Pei plan for downtown redevelopment that served as the basis for urban renewal financed change throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

- **Ramsey Tower, 204 North Robinson Avenue, Art Deco Style Skyscraper, 1931/1951.**

This landmark Art Deco tower continues to clearly convey its historic commercial and architectural associations with the early twentieth century development of downtown Oklahoma City. The additions to the east elevation are historic, appear clearly on the 1955 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, represent an evolution of the commercial development of the property, and have gained significance in their own right. As defined in *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the Criteria for Evaluation*, there are seven aspects of integrity and a property must “possess several, and usually most, of the aspects.” The Ramsey Tower building possesses most of the seven aspects of integrity, including location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association. The loss of the original windows hinders the integrity of relating to retention of some of the materials, however this alteration does not compromise the building’s overall ability to communicate the historic identity for which it is significant.

- **Southwestern Bell Headquarters, 707 North Robinson Avenue, Modern Movement Commercial Building, 1958-59.** A landmark, Modern Movement office building, this building has strong associations with the long-term investment by Southwestern Bell in downtown Oklahoma City. This building possesses all seven National Register aspects of integrity.

- **Union Bus Station, 427 West Sheridan, Moderne Style Transportation Building, 1941.** This building retains excellent integrity from its original period of construction and continues to clearly convey its architectural associations with the occurrence of Modern

Movement styling in downtown Oklahoma City. It retains all seven National Register aspects of integrity.

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- **Emerson School, 715 North Walker Avenue, Tudor Revival Style School with Modern Movement addition, 1910/1949/c.1952.** This educational complex represents a half-century of expansion at this location and represents a continuum of educational design and programming. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps show that the additions and the nursery school building all occurred historically and each retain integrity from their period of construction. Despite the replacement windows, the school complex retains integrity sufficient to convey its significance. As defined in *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the Criteria for Evaluation*, there are seven aspects of integrity and a property must “possess several, and usually most, of the aspects.” The Emerson School possesses most of the seven aspects of integrity, including location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association. A rare surviving example of a downtown school, this building clearly communicates its historic educational and architectural associations.

## **PRESERVATION PLAN COMPONENT: LOCAL PROTECTION STRATEGIES**

### **LOCAL LANDMARK OR LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

The National Register criteria also serve as base guidelines for local designation of individual properties and historic districts for the City of Oklahoma City. The City of Oklahoma City has a preservation ordinance as part of an effort to provide for protection through the administration of a design guidelines program for locally designated properties, and to meet the guidelines of the Certified Local Government Program. One of the advantages of utilizing the National Register criteria is that both federal and Oklahoma court decisions recognize the criteria as a standard for determining historical significance. Thus, properties identified as minimally meeting National Register criteria in this study are eligible for local designation as well.

Applications to list properties in the local register of historic places utilize survey information but also require additional research and determination of design guidelines that address the character defining elements of the resource(s) to be designated. Recommendations for listing include the initial assessment of historical architectural integrity in the survey, which serves as a preliminary threshold to local designation. Resources are then evaluated for their associations with known general historic contexts developed as part of the preliminary research for the reconnaissance-level survey.

### **LOCAL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

A tool that is gaining popularity nationwide for upgrading properties to meet National Register of Historic Places standards or for providing protection to historic resources that do not retain sufficient integrity themselves to be listed as a local landmark and/or in the National Register is the creation of Conservation Districts. Locally designated Conservation Districts can be used to stabilize and increase property values in older neighborhoods and to create a buffer zone for National Register or locally designated historic districts. In addition, through designation of Conservation Districts, a local government can establish specific design guidelines to direct improvements that will upgrade contributing historic resources to meet National Register criteria and qualify for incentives reserved for National Register properties. Design review of major changes, such as new construction, significant alterations, and demolition, occurs in Conservation Districts in an effort to limit adverse changes to the visual context of the district while encouraging property owners to make appropriate changes to their buildings, including rehabilitation of historic buildings that have the potential to contribute to a future National Register or local historic district.

### **Criteria for Designation of Conservation Districts**

A group of structures, landscape elements, or any integrated combination thereof should meet one or more of the following criteria to be designated by city ordinance as a Conservation District:

1. was developed at least fifty years ago and retains distinctive architectural and historical characteristics that are worthy of conservation, but which has less historical, architectural, or cultural significance than a Historic District, which must meet National Register of Historic Places criteria;
2. has a recognized neighborhood identity and character by virtue that it possesses unifying distinctive elements of either exterior features or by environmental characteristics that create an identifiable setting, character, or association;
3. has a relationship to an identifiable neighborhood center or historic area where preservation of this relationship is determined to be critical to the protection of such center or historic area; and/or
4. owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or city.

### **Conservation District Designation**

The city should investigate establishing Conservation Districts and design review as tools for upgrading properties not currently meeting National Register standards and to protect further loss of historic/cultural fabric.

The survey identified a number of areas that appear to retain sufficient historic and architectural character to communicate the historic development of Oklahoma City and that are worthy of conservation, which do not currently meet National Register standards. The city should consider establishing Conservation Districts and design review as tools for upgrading properties not currently meeting National Register standards to protect further loss of cultural fabric; to promote appropriate new development and construction; and to create transitional buffer zones between National Register and/or local historic districts and non-historic areas.

The city should initiate a cooperative program with property owners in neighborhoods adjacent to potential National Register Districts to create Conservation Districts that act as transitional buffer zones between new development and historic resources. In addition to protecting resources that have potential for National Register listing, some of these neighborhoods retain enough visual character to provide a transitional buffer zone to National Register or National Register-eligible districts and/or locally designated historic districts. Management of appropriate demolition, new development, and land use in these areas is crucial to maintaining stable property values and defining appropriate transitions between commercial areas and residential neighborhoods. Crucial design issues for new construction and renovation are compatibility of size, scale, massing, and materials.



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## APPENDICES

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## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION — A FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIP**

### **DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRESERVATION MOVEMENT**

For at least one hundred years, individuals and organizations have recognized the importance of buildings and sites that represent important links to the past. During the late nineteenth century, increasing numbers of local historical groups formed throughout Oklahoma and focused on developing patriotic programs, lectures, research publications, and archival and artifact collections. These groups and the general public also shared an interest in community heritage and preservation of local landmarks.

National interest in preservation focused initially on archaeology. The federal Antiquities Act of 1906 was the nation's first legislation to protect prehistoric archaeological sites. In 1916, the federal government established the National Park Service as a component of the Department of the Interior. In addition to conservation and management of a new federal parks system, Congress mandated that the Park Service manage the historic sites acquired by the federal government.

During the 1920s, the reconstruction of Colonial Williamsburg by the Rockefeller family focused national attention on preservation of the historic built environment. The Williamsburg project approached preservation from an educational perspective, that is, the restoration and reconstruction of a historic site as well as the interpretive activities to provide insight into the daily activities of residents of a particular time period. Effects of the Williamsburg effort and other similar programs such as Sturbridge Village captured national interest and, based on the work at restored sites, affected the popularity of house styles and even paint colors. Following the Williamsburg model, restoration and reconstruction of historic landmarks for the education of the public, usually as museums, became an accepted preservation methodology.

It was not until 1935 that federal legislation focused on historic properties. The Historic Sites Act of 1935 authorized the Department of the Interior to survey and acquire historic properties of national significance and to establish education programs for their interpretation.

During the 1930s, federal programs promoted historic preservation. In 1933, the National Park Service directed the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and used historians for preservation, restoration, and reconstruction work. That same year, the establishment of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) inaugurated a national jobs program for architects

to identify and document historic buildings. The work of these two programs resulted in the development of a preservation methodology and base technology that served as the foundation for developing a comprehensive preservation program for historic sites within the National Park System, and later for the administration of public preservation programs through state and local governments.

During the post-World War II period, the effort to address the problem of decaying inner cities and to build a national highway system resulted in the urban renewal land clearance approach to urban planning. Wholesale demolition became public policy. The loss of significant cultural resources served as the impetus of the national preservation movement.

During the 1960s, the preservation movement came into its own, due in large part to the ravages of land clearance programs. In 1966, the federal government passed the National Historic Preservation Act, which expanded the National Register of Historic Places to encompass sites of local significance, emphasized preservation as a responsibility of local governments, established the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and created state programs to administer grant and regulatory programs of the federal government. In 1980, the federal government amended the National Historic Preservation Act and created the Certified Local Government Program.

#### **PRESERVATION PARTNERSHIPS — THE FEDERAL, STATE, AND CITY PRESERVATION NETWORK**

Nationwide, a variety of federal and state laws and incentive programs protect many historic properties. In general, local preservation laws provide the most substantive protection for historic properties.

#### **Federal Framework**

A large number of federal laws affect historic preservation in various ways:

- by establishing preservation programs for federal, state, and local government agencies;
- by establishing procedures for different kinds of preservation activities; and
- by creating opportunities for preservation of different kinds of resources.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, is the centerpiece of the national historic preservation program. The primary mandates of the act of 1966 are as follows.

- Authorizes the Department of the Interior, National Park Service to expand and maintain the National Register of Historic Places.
- Provides for the establishment of State Historic Preservation Officers to administer federal preservation programs.
- Specifies how local governments can be certified for participation in federal programs.
- Authorizes preservation grants-in-aid to states and local governments.
- Provides a process for federal agencies to consider and mitigate adverse impacts on historic properties that are within their control.
- Establishes a rehabilitation tax credit program for private property owners that is also part of the Internal Revenue Code. The tax codes also allow charitable contributions through façade and scenic easements.

#### National Park Service

All preservation programs are administered by the National Park Service (NPS), Department of the Interior. One component of this charge is the development of programs and standards to direct federal undertakings and guide other federal agencies, states, and local governments in developing preservation planning and protection activities on a local level.

#### Secretary of the Interior's Standards

The centerpiece of this effort is the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation. These standards provide all federal agencies, state historic preservation officers, and other organizations with methodologies and guidelines for the preservation of historic and archaeological resources. These standards and guidelines address issues relating to preservation planning, which includes the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic/cultural resources. They serve as the standards for all projects undertaken with federal funding, incentives, loans, or action by the federal government that impact significant historic resources. They have been upheld in federal and state court decisions. Perhaps most importantly, the standards serve as the base for design guidelines in the majority of designated districts and sites throughout the United States. In the three decades the standards have been used, they have proven to stabilize and increase property values.

#### National Register of Historic Places

The National register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of properties important in the history, architectural history, archaeology, engineering, and culture of the United States. The

National Park Service oversees the National Register program. In each state the State Historic Preservation Office administers the National Register program. Properties of local, regional, state, and national significance may be nominated to the National Register. Resources listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects. Listing a property in the National Register has a number of advantages.

- Recognition of the property's value to the community, state, and nation;
- Eligibility for grants and loan programs that encourage preservation;
- Qualification for participation in federal and state rehabilitation tax credit programs; and
- Consideration in planning for federal or federally assisted projects.

While listing a property in the National Register provides recognition, eligibility to participate in federal and state incentive programs and limited federal protection from demolition or inappropriate change depends on state law and local landmark ordinances.

#### Section 106

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, requires federal agencies to consider the effect of federally assisted projects on properties listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. If a project threatens to harm such properties, the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation may be consulted in a process designed to promote consideration of ways to avoid or minimize such harm.

#### Federal Law

Other laws protecting cultural resources include:

- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
- Housing and Community Development Act of 1974
- Surplus Real Property Act of 1972
- Public Buildings Cooperative Use Act of 1976
- AMTRAC Improvement Act of 1974
- Emergency Home Purchase Assistance Act of 1974
- The Department of Transportation Act of 1966
- Archaeological and Historic preservation Act of 1974
- Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979
- Antiquities Act of 1906
- Historic Sites Act of 1935
- Executive Order 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment

### Certified Local Government Program

The federal government established the Certified Local Government (CLG) program in 1980 to promote the preservation of prehistoric and historic resources and allow local communities to participate in the national historic preservation program to a greater degree. Prior to this time, preservation programs developed within a decentralized partnership between the federal and state governments, with the states carrying out the primary responsibility for identification, evaluation, and protection of historic properties. Through the CLG program, Congress extended this partnership to the local government level to allow local participation in the preservation planning process. Communities that meet Certified Local Governments qualifications have a formal role in the National Register nomination process, establishment of state historic preservation objectives, and participation in designated CLG grant fund.

### Grants-in-Aid Programs

The National Park Service provides grants-in-aid to states to promote preservation activities on the state and local level. In Missouri, grants are awarded for identification, evaluation, and protection of historic and archaeological resources according to federal and state guidelines.

### Federal Preservation Incentives

Tax incentives for the preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties are among the most useful tools for a local government to encourage the protection of historic resources. The most widely used federal incentives are the historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit and the charitable contribution deduction. Since the passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the most widely used federal tax incentives allowed under the Internal Revenue Code are the Rehabilitation Tax Credit, the Charitable Contribution Deduction (Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980), and the Low Income Housing Credit.

### **State Framework**

Each state has a State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) appointed by the Governor to administer federal preservation programs. The Oklahoma Historical Society staff work for the Deputy SHPO in carrying out federal and state preservation programs. The program's responsibilities include:

- conducting ongoing surveys to identify and evaluate cultural resources;
- preparing comprehensive statewide preservation plans;
- nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places;
- reviewing federal projects for effects on cultural resources;
- administering the rehabilitation state and federal tax credit program;
- administering a range of assistance programs;



- providing public information, education, and training programs; and
- furnishing technical assistance to counties and local governments in developing local preservation programs.

### **Local Framework**

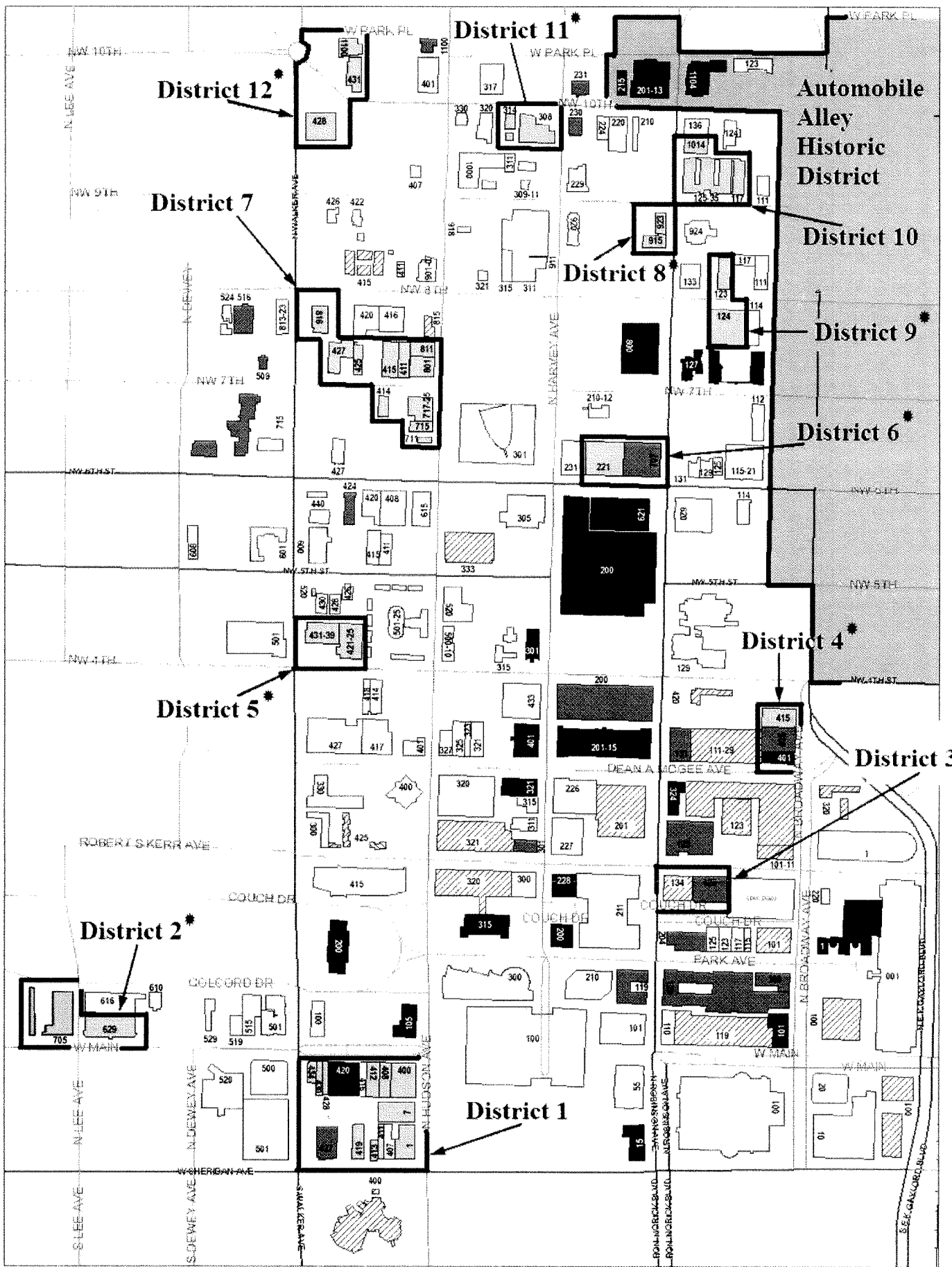
As noted in the discussion of federal programs, local governments strengthen their local historic preservation efforts by achieving Certified Local Government (CLG) status from the National Park Service (NPS). The NPS and state governments, through their State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), provide valuable technical assistance and small matching grants to hundreds of diverse communities whose local governments are endeavoring to retain what is significant from their community's past for the benefit of future generations. In turn, the NPS and state governments gain the benefit of having a local government partnership in the national historic preservation program. Another incentive for participating in the CLG program is the pool of matching grant funds SHPOs set aside to fund CLG historic preservation sub-grant projects, which is at least 10 percent of a state's annual Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant allocation. Grant funds are distributed through the HPF grant program, administered by the NPS and SHPOs.

Jointly administered by the NPS in partnership with SHPOs, the CLG Program is a model and cost-effective local, state, and federal partnership that promotes historic preservation at the grassroots level across the nation. Working closely with such national organizations as the National Association of Preservation Commissions, the CLG program seeks: (1) to develop and maintain local historic preservation programs that will influence the zoning and permitting decisions critical to preserving historic properties and (2) to ensure the broadest possible participation of local governments in the national historic preservation program while maintaining preservation standards established by the Secretary of the Interior.

<b>PRESERVATION NETWORK</b>	<b>PUBLIC</b>	<b>PRIVATE</b>
<b>FEDERAL / NATIONAL</b>	<p>NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS)</p> <p>ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION</p>	<p>NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION</p> <p>PRESERVATION ACTION</p> <p>NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONS</p> <p>AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY</p> <p>ASSOCIATION FOR PRESERVATION TECHNOLOGY</p> <p>SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY</p>
<b>STATE</b>	<p>STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICES (SHPO)</p> <p>REGIONAL OFFICES FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS)</p>	<p>PRESERVATION OKLAHOMA</p> <p>REGIONAL OFFICES FOR THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION</p>
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b>	<p>CITY OF OKLAHOMA CITY PRESERVATION COMMISSION</p>	<p>LOCAL PRESERVATION AND HISTORY ORGANIZATIONS</p>

## MAPS








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# Intensive Level Survey

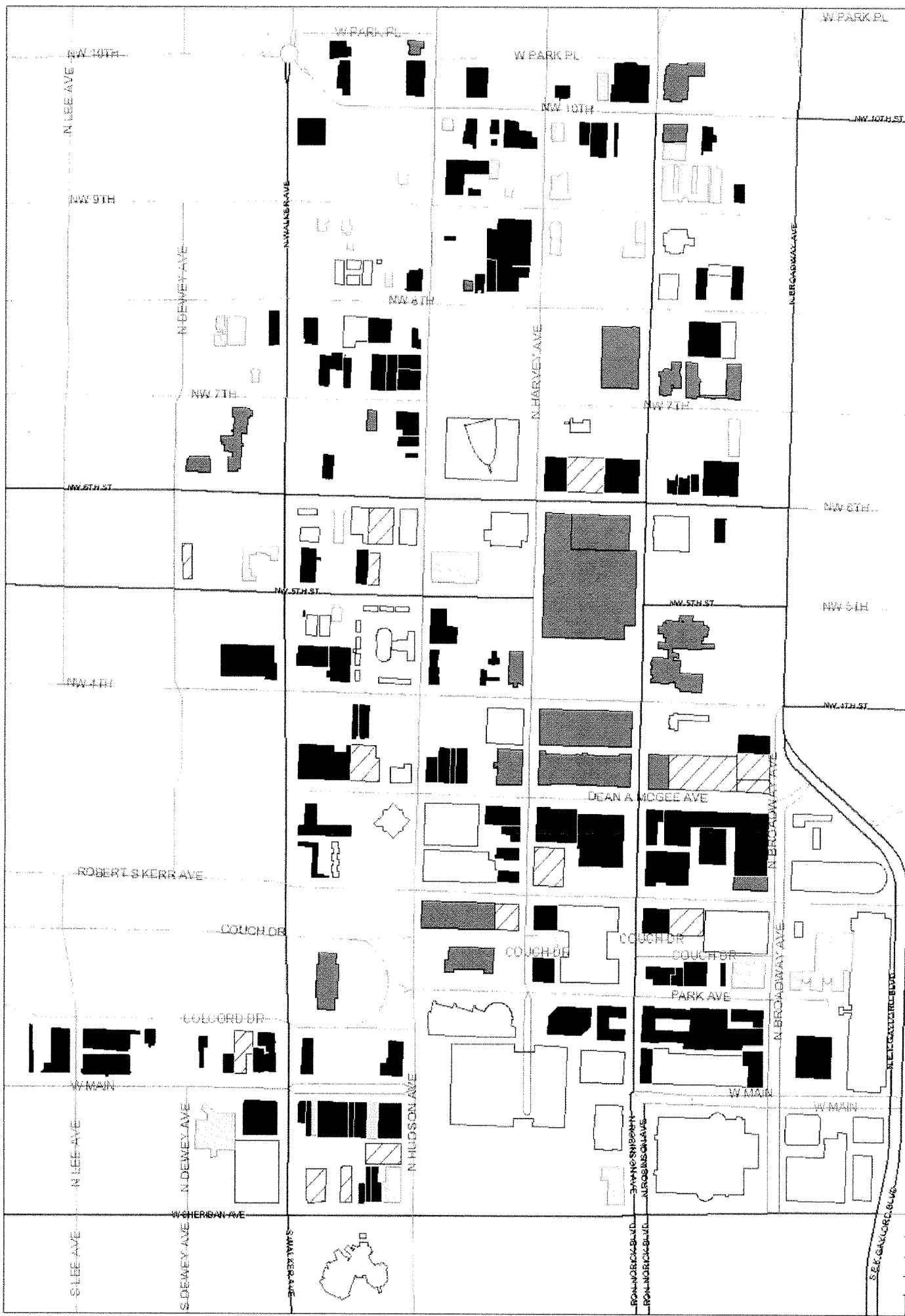
## Map Legend

### Eligibility

-  Listed on the National Register
-  Individually Eligible
-  Contributing to Potential Historic District
-  Built Before 1976, yet Less than 50 Years of Age
-  Not Eligible
-  Potential District Boundary
-  Commercial MPDF Recommended









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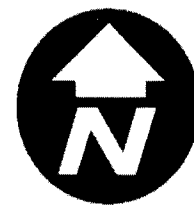


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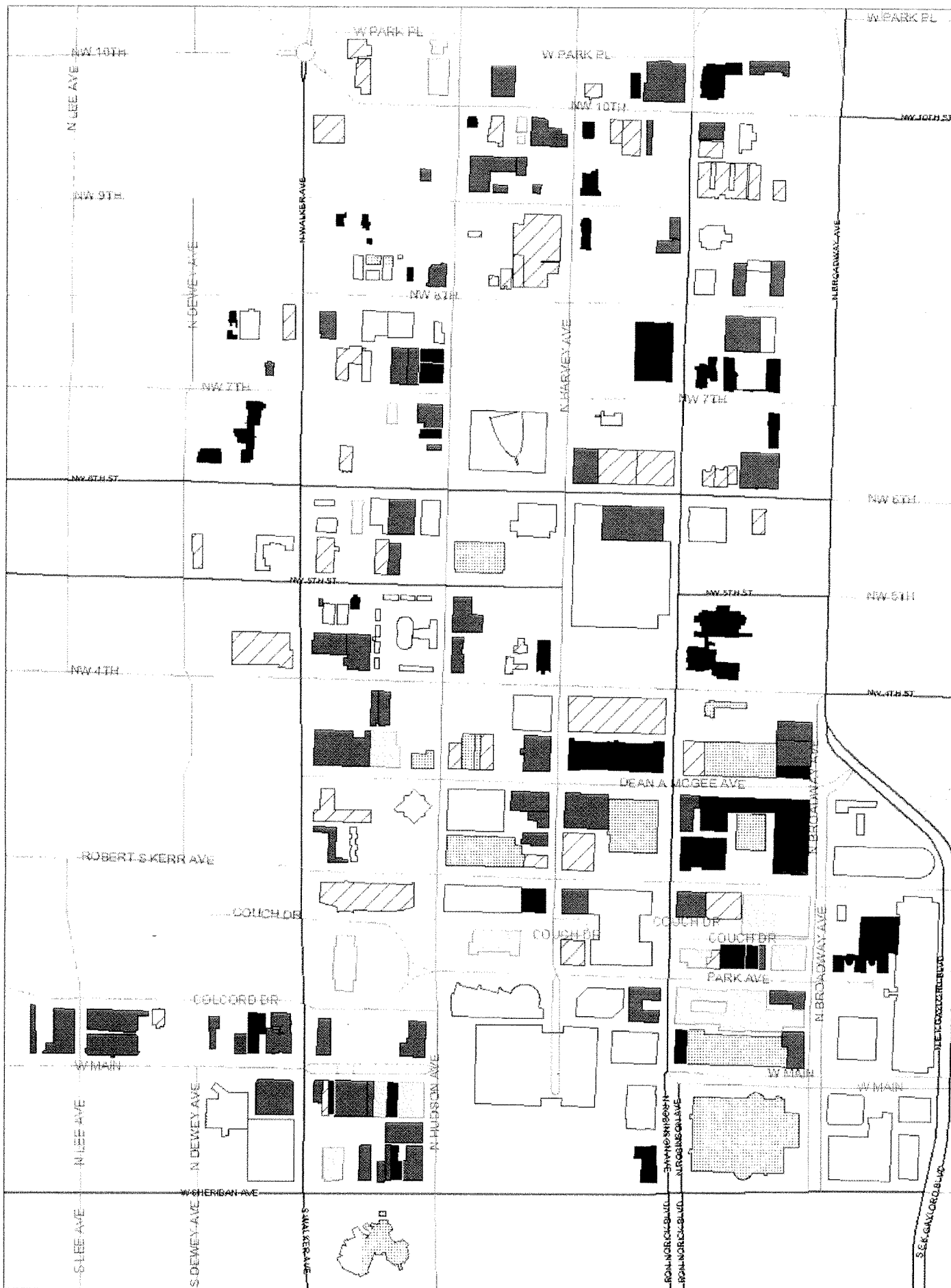
## Intensive Level Survey

### Historic Function

-  Commercial
-  Institutional
-  Domestic
-  Industrial/Ag/Transportation
-  Other
-  Non-Historic




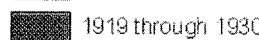
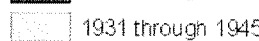
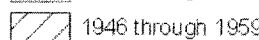
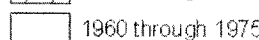

NOT TO SCALE



# Intensive Level Survey

## Intensive Level Survey

### Date of Construction

-  Before 1919
-  1919 through 1930
-  1931 through 1945
-  1946 through 1959
-  1960 through 1975
-  After 1975



NOT TO SCALE