NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Wentz Camp

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Intersection of L.A. Cann Drive and E. Prospect Avenue (South Side) ☐ not for publication

city or town Ponca City ☐ vicinity

state Oklahoma code OK county Kay code 071 zip code 74604

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination __ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets __does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national __statewide X local

Bob Blackburn July 19, 2010
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property _meets _does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

_entered in the National Register _ determined eligible for the National Register

_determined not eligible for the National Register _removed from the National Register

_other (explain:) _____

Jon Edson Beall 9.3.10
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Wentz Camp
Name of Property

Kay County, Oklahoma
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [ ] private
- [X] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [ ] building(s)
- [X] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
14	4	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
3	0	structure
0	0	object
17	4	**Total**

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture/Sports Facility
Recreation and Culture/Outdoor Recreation
Social/Meeting Hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture/Sports Facility
Recreation and Culture/Outdoor Recreation
Social/Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Romanesque Revival
Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete
walls: Stone/Limestone
roof: Asphalt
other: Ceramic Tile
Metal/Steel

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Wentz Camp is located 5.4 miles northeast of the center of Ponca City, Kay County, Oklahoma. The camp covers approximately 33.5 acres and is situated on a hill overlooking Lake Ponca to the southeast. The district is composed of three contributing structure and fourteen contributing buildings constructed between 1928 and 1949. The centerpiece of the camp is a large above ground swimming pool. The grounds are dotted with small stone cabins, a mess hall/recreation hall and a concession stand. A water tower features prominently on the site and a caretaker's cottage is located on the eastern edge of the site. Primarily constructed between 1928 and 1935 with later additions during the 1950's, the appearance of the camp is unified with Romanesque Revival architecture carried out with uncoursed native limestone masonry. There are four non-contributing buildings located within the district. The district possesses a high degree of historical and architectural integrity.

Narrative Description

The Entrance (1930)

Wentz Camp is approached from the north through an entrance gate that typifies the overall design of the property. Designed by Leonard H. Bailey and built in 1930, the entrance is defined by three octagonal limestone structures that serve as ceremonial guard houses. Designed in the Romanesque Revival style, the uncoursed stone exteriors, arches and crenellated parapets are used as design features throughout the park.

The center structure is the smallest of the three (approximately 14' high) and sits on a center median that divides the drive in two – an entrance and an exit. The exterior of the center guard house is identical to the two larger structures. There are arched openings on the north and south sides of this structure with arched window openings on the east and west sides. A limestone voussoir surrounds each arch. The parapet is crenellated and capped with cast stone. Below is a cast stone cornice with brackets. On either side of the center structure are stone columns that are used to support the large metal gates that are also on either side of the center guard house.

A metal plaque with the inscription "Wentz Camp donated by L.W. Wentz to Ponca City and Community" is positioned on the side of the middle structure. The plaque is copper and was made by melting the original pool light covers.

The larger guard houses (approximately 18' high) are similar in design to the center guard house with modified Latin crosses built into the stone masonry on three sides. Each structure is clad with uncoursed limestone with two arched, open entrances and two arched window openings. The guard houses are crenellated with a cast stone cornice below. Each merlon (the solid area between the crenels) is capped with cast concrete with a peaked top. The round arches are highlighted with limestone voussoirs.

The entry is completed with stone walls with crenellation and cast stone caps that projects from either side of the outside guard houses toward the east and west completing the entry way. The west wall extends approximately twenty feet; the east wall is approximately 90 feet in length and follows the rolling hillside.

Leading south from the gates, into the camp, is an asphalt drive divided by a grass esplanade. The drive splits into single roadways that lead both east and west and circle the camp. At the split, there is a single stone column capped with a wrought iron lantern. Slightly south of the column is an iron flag pole. The drive is edged with a concrete curb. The large above ground pool is located at the apex of the drive.

The Pool (1930)

The above ground pool is the centerpiece of Wentz Camp. Designed by Leonard H. Bailey, construction began in 1928. The pool was completed in 1930 and is 150' by 50'. Located at the bottom of a 100 foot incline and overlooking Lake

Ponca, the pool is positioned within an elaborately designed Romanesque Revival setting. At the top of the pool are two octagonal stone structures that overlook the forty-nine steps that serve as the viewing pavilion and entrance to the pool. Surrounding the pool is a large tile pool deck bordered by a cast stone and limestone balustrade. The pool is located on a hill and is surrounded by a limestone wall on three sides. The tallest elevation is the south side which faces Lake Ponca and is approximately twenty feet high.

The approach to the pool is located approximately 100 feet above the pool deck on the north side and is accentuated and framed by two, open air octagonal stone structures, each capped with a crenellation. Under the crenellation is a bracketed stone cornice. There are identical arched openings on each side of the structures. On the south side of each octagon, overlooking the pool and Lake Ponca, are projecting concrete decks surrounded with a cast stone balustrade. These two structures serve as open shelters and flank the entrance to the pool deck.

Bridging the entry to the pool are twenty-three stairs that link the octagonal shelters to the pool deck and pool. The stairs are forty-nine feet and were designed to be used as a pavilion that would seat 500 spectators.[i] The treads are two feet in depth, each covered with small blue and white mosaic tiles (non original). At the top of the stairs is a decorative rectangle of tile (ca. 1930) with a "W" that stands for Wentz and the date "1930." On either side of the stairs are stepped stone walls capped with cast stone. The stone wall is punctuated with truncated stone columns. On each column is a wrought iron light, approximately five feet tall, with a glass globe. In addition, metal bollards mounted on the steps are occasionally used to direct pedestrian access to and from the pool. At the bottom of the stairs is the pool and pool deck.

The pool ranges in depth from ten feet on the east to three feet on the west end and is surrounded by a tiled deck (non historic). The interior of the pool was originally covered with ¾ inch white tiles with dark specks imported from Italy. In 1974 the original tile was replaced with 1 inch tile, similar in color and later replaced again in 1988. Both replacements were made to correct repair problems. The current interior is concrete with a stripe of 1 inch light blue tile above the water line. The entire pool deck is covered with mosaic tiles. There are few, if any, original tiles remaining due to replacements necessary for repair.

The pool was originally lit with neon lights arranged at a space about six feet apart near the bottom of the pool. These lights and the original copper covers have been removed. New lights have been installed.

The original diving structure is located on the east end of the pool. A central diving tower is flanked by two diving towers. The central tower rises to approximately twenty feet and was originally the location of a single diving board that was sixteen feet above the water.[ii] The diving boards on the flanking towers are nine feet and nine inches above the water. In addition there are single diving boards on either side of the tower on the pool deck (non original). The entire diving tower is tiled using a combination of blue and yellow. There are green floral tile accents and below each diving platform is a terra cotta water spout shaped to form a lion head.

The smaller side towers are separated from the large tower with tiled arched openings that allow access to the front and rear diving towers. The towers also have arched tile openings on both side elevations. Each diving tower is accessed by painted metal ladders. The center tower has a concrete diving deck surrounded with a wrought iron railing and is covered with an eight-sided metal canopy.

Also located on the east end of the pool are stairs that lead to the area below the pool deck. This area was designed to be used as dressing areas for men and women bathers. The dressing area, now used for pool equipment and maintenance, are access by curved, tiles stairs located on either side of the diving tower. Curved railings with cast stone balusters identify these openings. The original brass handrails remain in place. The exterior of the above ground pool can be accessed on all four sides from beneath the deck. The dressing areas are no longer accessible to the public.

Other features in the pool area include two metal life guard stations (non historic), and two metal ladders (non historic). Although the current life guard stations are not original, there are remains of the original brass fixtures at the base of the stations. The life guard stations are located on the south and north sides of the pool approximately thirty feet from the west end. The original life guard stands were also used to support an approximate eight foot wide wooden bridge that was placed across the pool for beauty pageants and other events.[iii] These supports and the bridge are no longer extant.

[i] "Water Carnival to Dedicate New Pool," *Ponca City News*, 3 August, 1930.

[ii] Ibid.

[iii] Photograph, *Ponca City News*, 12 June 1949.

On the south side of the pool is a projecting deck. Surrounding this area is a half-circle balustrade that is distinctly articulated on the exterior south wall of the pool. This area is covered with round metal poles and a metal canopy (non original). This deck was designed specifically for bathers.

A water feature is located in the center of the pool in the shallow end. It consists of a round metal pole with a metal umbrella (ca. 2000). Although the feature is not original, the plumbing that supplies the water is original to the construction of the pool. Originally, it was covered with a canvas roof. It currently has a metal awning. The design of the original water feature is unknown.

At the bottom of the wall on three elevations is a small stepped course of stone capped with a single row of uncut stones. The top of the wall is punctuated with square stone columns with wrought iron lamp posts and round globes. Between the stone columns are cast stone balusters set on concrete footings with a cast concrete handrail. These balusters are punctuated with short brick piers. Centered between each pier are the windows in the exterior walls.

There are a total of fifteen windows and two stone filled arches on the south elevation of the pool. The projecting deck, comprised of a half circle with rectangular extensions on either side, has one window on the front of the half circle and one window on each of the two exposed sides of the square extensions. Between these windows are the stone filled arches. In addition to these two windows, there are four windows on either side of the projecting deck on the south elevation.

The corners of the exterior wall are curved, complementing the half-circle projection, and continue up the hill, surrounding the entire pool. At each corner are single windows identical to those on the south elevation. On the east and west elevations there are an additional three arched windows. These windows are aligned with the windows on the south elevation. As the walls climb the hill, the distance between the window sills and the ground decreases, until the upper windows are even with the ground.

The original half-circle metal windows are divided into ten panes. These windows provided light for the original showers and dressing rooms which were located beneath the deck of the pool, between the pool and the outside walls. These facilities have been removed from below the pool.

Located outside the pool at the west end, but connected to the pool structure is a small concrete block pump house and filtering system. The east and south elevations are concrete block. The north elevation has been covered with uncoursed limestone. The west elevation is also sheathed in limestone and has a single entry door with a wood screen door. A large filtering system is located directly south of this building.

The Pool Bath House – Noncontributing (2008)

The pool Bath House is a one-story limestone faced building with a small capped concrete parapet. The single doors are flat metal slabs. Exterior ornaments are limited to over-the-door lighting and a stainless steel water fountain. This building, along with a small parking lot, was built on the northeast side of the pool. It is located on the sloping area to the north of the pool and tucked under the east entry deck to the east of the steps. It is inconspicuously located and was built to accommodate all park users, including handicapped visitors. The parking lot, the bath house and the pool are on the same elevation. The building is noncontributing to the district.

The Concession Stand and Pavilion – Noncontributing (Circa 1953)

The concession stand was built in 1953.[iv] This is the third concession stand built on the grounds; the first two are non-extant. Constructed by George Smith, one of the first camp grounds caretakers, the "pavilion and concession stand"[v] is similar in style and materials to the original structures and buildings. This includes uncoursed limestone walls, a crenellated parapet with a cast stone cornice below, and arched metal casement windows.

[iv] "Pool at Wentz Camp To Be Opened Today," *Ponca City News*, 30 May, 1953.

[v] Ibid.

The south elevation and entrance faces the pool and consists of a large rectangular entry to an open air pavilion. The east and west elevations of the open air pavilion are identical with arched openings near the concession area. In addition there are three square open windows with stone sills. The roof of the open air pavilion also serves as an observation deck. The upper deck is enclosed with a metal fence and railing and is accessed with a dog leg metal staircase with a rock covered platform. The staircase is located on the west side of the open pavilion.

Attached to the pavilion is the concession stand. The floor plan of the enclosed portion of the concession stand is similar to the cabins with a center door (rear door) set in an arched opening with single flanking arches with metal windows on the north elevation. The metal casement windows are arched. On the east and west elevations are windows identical to those on the north elevation. Crenellation tops the structure with a cost concrete cornice below.

The Water Tower – Contributing (1928)

The Water Tower was built in 1928 and is located near the center of the camp, directly north of the pool behind the concession stand. The tower was constructed prior to the construction of the pool. It was built by the Chicago Bridge and Iron Works and has a capacity of 30,000 gallons. The spherical storage tank is 21 feet in diameter and sits on a slender supporting shaft. A spiral staircase is inside the shaft and leads to an observation deck on top of the tank. A series of oval openings are located on the shaft of the water tower and are aligned with the spiral staircase. The openings serve as windows and for ventilation.

When the tower was constructed a telescope was installed on the observation deck. The tower is no longer open to the public and the telescope has since been removed. The name of the manufacturer and date of construction is on the door leading to the spiral staircase at the bottom of the tower.

The Cabins – Contributing (ca. 1930-1934)

Twelve Romanesque Revival style cabins are located along the northern edge of the drive. The cabins were design by Leonard Bailey and built between 1930 and 1934. Spreading west of the central entry drive are five girls cabins and one girls restroom and dressing room; and, on the east side are seven boys' cabins and one boy's restroom and dressing room.

Each cabin consists of a single room with a hexagonal floor plan. The twelve cabins are identical. The exteriors are sheathed with uncoursed limestone with a crenellation capped with cast concrete. Below the crenellation is a cast stone cornice. Each of the eight walls is approximately seven feet tall. The front elevation has one door that is set in a stone arch on the front and one window in a stone arch in the rear. The remaining four sides are stone devoid of openings.

The original doors (style and material undetermined) have been replaced with steel slab doors and the original steel-framed windows with rounded fanlights over double casement windows have been replaced with vinyl, divided light window with a divided arched window above. The floor plan was designed to accommodate four, triple bunk beds for twelve campers and has remained unchanged.

Bath Houses – Noncontributing (1953)

In 1959 the original bathrooms, which were identical to the existing cabins, were converted to cabins. Two larger bath houses were built; one for the boys and one for the girls. In each bath house, the single entry with an arched opening surrounded by voussoirs is T-shaped, similar to one-half of a cabin. Joined on each side are two more "halves" with a flat rear wall. The interior is one room with showers, sinks and toilets. Some of the original materials remain in place, including the concrete floors. The exterior limestone walls are identical to those of the cabins.

Mess Hall (1934)

The Mess Hall, also known as the Scout's Mess Hall and the Recreation Hall, is located in the southwest corner of Wentz Camp. Architectural plans[vi] indicate the hall was designed in 1934 by George J. Cannon, a prominent Ponca City architect. Identical in many ways to the pool, cabin and entry, this building is symmetrical in design and is approximately 66 feet by

[vi] Original blueprints, 1934. City of Ponca City, Oklahoma. Planning Department.

32 feet. All four elevations have crenellated parapets with a cast stone belt course below. The exterior walls are uncoursed limestone with arched windows.

The entry is located on the northeast elevation. The façade is gabled with a crenellated parapet with a cast stone belt course below. The entry is arched with stone voussoirs. The original fixed half-circle metal and divided pane clerestory remains over the entry door. The original double wood flush entry doors with strap hinges and six panes have been replaced with a single metal door with a single square pane of glass. The original wrought iron sconces remain on either side of the entry door. Flanking the entry are five-sided bays with stone arches. Located within the arches are single, metal casement windows with divided lights. The tops of the bay windows are flat and capped with cast stone. Below the cast stone is a second row of projecting cast stone, similar to the design of the cabins, restrooms, entry and pool facility.

The southwest (rear) of the building is identical to the northeast elevation with the exception of the exit door. The original doors have been replaced with a pair of metal doors.

The southeast and northwest elevations are also identical in design. Side entrances are located midway on each elevation and are located in partial hexagons, similar in every way to the design of the cabins. The roof line on the sides of the building is straight, with a crenellated parapet with a cast stone belt course below. The parapet conceals a flat roof.

The interior is a large open room with a partially enclosed kitchen. There is a small basement area, accessible through the kitchen, below the kitchen. There are also two small bathrooms located in the projecting octagon entrance on the north side of the building. The original ceiling is obscured with dropped ceiling tiles. The original floor and trim remain intact. The original fireplace faced with smooth limestone and a stone mantle is also intact.

The Caretakers' Cottage (circa 1935)

The caretaker's cottage is located on the west side of the camp. Originally located on the southwest corner of Hubbard Road and L.A. Cann Drive, it was moved to Wentz Camp in the late 1930's, renovated and veneered to match the other buildings.[vii] The renovation was designed by Leonard H. Bailey. This Craftsman style cottage is one-story in height and is sheathed with uncoursed limestone, similar to other structures in the camp. The detailing on the house includes round arches capped with limestone voussoirs, steel-frame casement windows with limestone sills and lintels, and exposed rafter tails. The main portion of the residence is covered with a hipped roof with three gables projecting to the west, east and north.

The entrance is located on the west elevation and has an arched wood entry door on the north end, recessed under the hipped roof line. The entry is further expressed with a sloping brick wall with two arched openings that forms a small courtyard. South of the entry, under the projecting gable is the dining room. It is possible this room was originally a garage and later incorporated into the house. It has been incorporated into the residence and the garage door replaced with a window identical to the original windows. There are two metal casement windows on the west elevation.

The south elevation has one metal casement window with a cast stone sill. This the south side of a two bay barrage that was added to the south end of the residence and sheathed with uncoursed limestone. The windows for this addition match the original. The addition was altered in 1987 and converted to a bedroom and bathroom. French doors with single panes were used to replace the garage doors (west elevation).

The west (rear) elevation reveals the rear of the original residence at the north end and the two-car garage addition on the south end. The original residence contains five historic metal casement windows and the original back entrance. There is a large stone chimney on the west elevation of the original residence. Between the original residence and the addition is a small connecting room with a second rear exit. The garage doors for the addition have been removed and replaced with a sliding glass door.

Alterations/Additions

Few alterations have been made to Wentz Camp. Changes to the pool are generally limited to the tile on the steps, the deck, and inside the pool itself. The deck and step tiles were replaced due to failure of the adhesive and the tile on the interior of the pool was removed and changed to concrete due to maintenance issues. Additional structures were added

[vii] *Ponca City News*, June 1, 2008

over time, but have since achieved historical and architectural significance. These include the conversion of the original two one-room bathhouses to cabins and the construction of two larger bath houses in 1959. The pool bath house, built in 2008, was built to comply with federal and state guidelines regarding handicapped access to the pool and restrooms. The design is simple and in keeping with the surrounding architecture.

None of these alterations has significantly affected the integrity of the buildings or structures. The district continues to possess a high degree of integrity.

Wentz Camp
Name of Property

Kay County, Oklahoma
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Entertainment/Recreation
Other/Philanthropy
Architecture

Period of Significance
1928-1949

Significant Dates
1928; 1929; 1934; 1935; 1949

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Wentz, Louis Haines

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Bailey, Lenard H.; Cannon, George J.;
Chicago Bridge and Iron Works; George Smith

Period of Significance (justification)
The period of significance for this property encompasses the years 1928-1949 which includes the year construction commences and ends with the death of Louis Wentz in 1949.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Wentz Camp, built between 1928 and 1953, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district under Criterion A for its association with recreation in Ponca City, Oklahoma. It is eligible under Criterion B for its association with Lew Wentz (Lewis/Louis Haines Wentz), a nationally recognized oilman and philanthropist, who built the camp for the children of Ponca City, Oklahoma. It is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as an outstanding example of Romanesque Revival architecture. The period of significance for this property encompasses the years 1928-1949, as the association with Wentz's philanthropy extended until his death in 1949. The facility has been in continuous use since it opened in 1930.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Association with Recreation

The centerpiece of Wentz Camp is a 150 foot by 50 foot Olympic size above ground pool in a rural setting on the side of a hill overlooking Lake Ponca, 5.4 miles northeast of the center of Ponca City. Pools of such size were extremely popular during the 1920's. Although more commonly funded by the public, the pool and the surrounding camp site was financed by Lew Wentz, a wealthy Oklahoma oil man. Many such pools were built in cities across the nation and were used by both working class and middle class families. Often the pools were located in large parks and functioned as centers of community life. Most of these large, elaborate facilities were built in big cities, but smaller towns also constructed pools that included bathing areas and spectator seating.

This period of pool building began after World War I and lasted until 1929 when prosperity ended with the crash of the stock market. The next wave of public pool building is associated with the Works Progress Administration when the government built and reconstructed roads, hospitals, schools, airports, parks, and swimming pools.[viii]

After acquiring the land, the first structure at Wentz Camp was the water tower, constructed by the Chicago Bridge and Iron Works in 1928. By August of 1930 the pool, the cabins, and the entry way was complete. Original plans called for forty cabins,[ix] however only twelve were completed. The pool officially opened August 20, 1930 with a water carnival. Swimmers from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, and Kansas were invited to attend.[x]

A mess hall/recreation hall was constructed circa 1935. The pool, cabins, and associated buildings and structures have remained in continuous use.

This was the second pool financed by Lew Wentz in Ponca City. Lincoln Pool, a small neighborhood pool opened in June of 1926, was free to citizens of Ponca City. As a result of the enthusiasm generated by Lincoln Pool, (demolished in 1991), Wentz went forward with the pool at Wentz Park.[xi] Ponca City had two additional pools. The original Bogan Pool was built in the early 1920s and later replaced by the new Bogan Pool, completed in 1983.[xii]

As in most small towns prior to WWII, recreation was limited to outdoor activities, movies and swimming. The construction of swimming pools and their availability to the public made swimming one of the most popular activities in Ponca City.

Wentz Camp was built and ran by Lew Wentz until his death in 1949. Wentz left the camp to the City of Ponca City and it has remained a city-owned recreational facility. The original use of the park has remained unchanged and the cabins,

[viii] Jeff Wiltse, Contested Waters: A social History of Swimming Pools in America. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 93.

[ix] "City Bordered by Many Projects Which Add to Sum of Work Done Here," *Ponca City News*, 6 January, 1929.

[x] "Water Carnival to Dedicate Pool," *Ponca City News*, 3 August, 1930, p.4.

[xi] Lincoln Pool Brings Back Memories," *Ponca City News*, 7 August 1991.

[xii] "New Bogan Pool Ceremony," Ponca City News, 2 May 1983.

mess hall, and pool have remained in constant use. Two concession stands (non-extant) pre-dated the current concession stand that was built in 1953. The original bath houses were built in the same, small configuration as the cabins. In 1959 these were converted to cabins and the boys'/girls' bathhouses were built in a style similar to the original cabins. These additional buildings, designed in the same style as the original structures, illustrates the importance of the park to the City and its' citizens. Over the years, the City continued to maintain the property and retain a high degree of integrity each time repairs and changes were made.

Association with Lew Wentz

Lew Wentz, a local Ponca City resident and nationally known oilman, financed the construction of the park. Wentz arrived in Oklahoma in 1911 from Pennsylvania, a state well known for its' oil fields. Hired by John G. McCaskey, a wealthy gentleman from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, Wentz was sent to the Ponca City area to manage McCaskey's investments in the oil industry. Eventually Wentz partnered with McCaskey and both men made large fortunes in the oil business in Oklahoma. This arrangement lasted until McCaskey's death in 1924.

Wentz then organized the Wentz Oil Corporation.[xiii] Two years later, in 1926, Wentz was rated among the seven richest men in the United States.[xiv]

By 1927 the Wentz Oil Corporation was making one million dollars each month.[xv] It was this same year that he purchased the first Model A in Oklahoma from the Ford Company.[xvi] Wentz sold his oil holdings in 1928 and when the stock market crash occurred in 1929 his investments were safe. His worth after selling the company was 25 million dollars. He later invested in auto agencies, newspapers, agriculture, and a mortuary. Many times these ventures included backing entrepreneurs and later, after the business became a success, selling his interest to back to them. He continued to lease land and one of the last leases acquired by Wentz in 1948 was sold after his death for 10 million dollars. In 1985 Wentz was inducted posthumously into the National Petroleum Hall of Fame, joining other well-known oil industrialists including E. W. Marland (Marland Oil), Howard Hughes (Hughes Tool Company), Frank Phillips (Phillips Petroleum), William Skelly (Skelly Oil Company), Earle Halliburton (Halliburton Corporation), and Sen. Robert S. Kerr (Kerr-McGee).[xvii]

State and national politics had interested Wentz since he was a young man. While in Oklahoma he campaigned for state Republicans and supported and campaigned for Thomas E. Dewey. He was considered to be a friend of Dewey, who narrowly lost the presidency to Harry S. Truman. Asked to run many times for state governor and as a United States senator, Wentz stated in 1944, "I have widely scattered activities and business ventures which just cannot be neglected and I am not considering dollars. These activities, together with the duties of a senator, would require more physical effort over a strenuous seven-year period than I could sustain. Believing no man should accept a responsibility he feels he cannot perform fully, I have reluctantly concluded not to enter the contest for United States senator."[xviii]

In 1940 Wentz did seek and win the office of Republican National Committeeman from Oklahoma which he held at the time of his death on June 9, 1949.[xix] He also served as state highway commission chairman during the administration of Governor William J. Holloway.[xx]

[xiii] "Lew Wentz, Oklahoma Citizen-Philanthropist, has Widely Varied, Civic, Business Interests, *Ponca City News*, 10 September, 1939.

[xiv] "Lew Wentz named Petroleum Honoree," *Ponca City News*, 20 March, 1985.

[xv] "Lew Wentz: Industrious, Compassionate," *Ponca City News*, 23 April 1985, p. 7

[xvi] "Wentz To Get First Model 'A'," *Ponca City News*, 25 December, 1927.

[xvii] "Lew Wentz Named Petroleum Honoree," *Ponca City News*, 20 March, 1985.

[xviii] "Lew Wentz Active in Politics, But Never Ran for Office," *Ponca City News*, 23 April, 1995.

[xix] Ibid.

[xx] "Lew Wentz Is Dead," *Ponca City News*, 9 June, 1949.

Wentz had a game reserve which was located just north of Wentz Park. He was fond of Shetland ponies and kept a stable full of horses. Other animals on the reserve included herds of deer, sheep, goats, Hereford cattle, quail and wild turkeys.

Wentz was equally well-known as a philanthropist and in this role is his association with Wentz Park. Lew Wentz was responsible for numerous contributions to the citizens of Ponca City and to the state of Oklahoma. During his early years in Ponca City he is attributed to purchasing shoes and stockings for every child in the Ponca City school system that could not afford them. This activity continued for many years and later he added purchasing toys for children at Christmas. The toy give away became an annual civic event. During the late 1920's and early 1930's he financed free moving pictures for under privileged people in Ponca City. Wentz is also credited for paying for the remaining costs of the Pioneer Woman Statue in Ponca City.[xxi] The idea of the statue came from E.W. Marland and he had pledged funds to pay for the monument. Due to the hard times that came to Marland as a result of the decline of oil production after the stock market crash in 1929, Marland was unable to pay his original pledge.[xxii]

Wentz's statewide philanthropic activities included establishing student loan foundations to the University of Oklahoma and to Oklahoma State University. The funds he donated continue to be used for student loans at both universities.

One of his other causes included assisting crippled children and he is credited with helping pass one of the best crippled-children laws in the nation during Governor Henry Johnston's administration (1927-1929).[xxiii] This law was referred to as the "Wentz plan"[xxiv] and was used as a prototype for other states including Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa. He is also credited with underwriting the expenses of five young Kiowa artists during the 1940's to study at the University of Oklahoma. These five students were later known as the Kiowa Five and represent the beginning of the Indian art movement associated with Dr. Oscar B. Jacobson and the University of Oklahoma.[xxv]

His dedication to assisting young men was quite well known and he was an ardent supporter of the Boy Scouts and similar work supported by the Rotary Club.[xxvi] His intentions for Wentz Park were to have it open to boys organizations throughout the state. A large banquet facility and barracks were included in the original plan for Wentz Park but were never built.

Wentz Camp is the remaining physical legacy of Lew Wentz. Never married, Wentz lived in the same hotel (non-extant) in Ponca City from the time he moved there until his death. He purchased the hotel in 1932. Unlike other oil men such as E. W. Marland, Wentz never built a mansion in which to live. A 1948 six-page article about Lew Wentz in the Saturday Evening Post began with "the problem of how to be virtually homeless though a multimillionaire has been solved neatly by Lew Wentz, of Ponca City, Oklahoma."[xxvii] The article details Wentz's decision to remain in the same boarding house (later the Arcade Hotel) and never purchase a home. Even Wentz states "it is a strange thing and I don't understand it."[xxviii] Although not a personal residence or an office building, he did invest in Ponca City and presented the town with the gift of a park.

From the beginning Wentz Park was a regional recreational attraction. The swimming pool was open during the day and late into the night. Special lights in the pool provided safe swimming in the evenings. The spectator area was large and many visitors went to the park to watch the activities, including swimming and the yearly bathing beauty contests which

[xxi] Harrison, Walter Munford, Me and My Big Mouth, (Oklahoma City: Britton Publishing Company, 1029), pp. 171-174.

[xxii] "Landmarks Are Due To Oilman Lew Wentz's Generosity," *Ponca City News*, 7 January, 1987.

[xxiii] Rex Harlow, Oklahoma Leaders: Biographical Sketches of the Foremost Living Men in Oklahoma, (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Company, 1928).

[xxiv] Ponca City Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, The Last Run: Kay County, Oklahoma, 1893, (Ponca City, Oklahoma: Courier Printing Company), 1939.

[xxv] "Father of Indian Art, With Assist by Wentz, Provides Books by OU", Unknown newspaper article. Circa 1967.

[xxvi] "Wentz Camp for Boys of Ponca and Vicinity to Get Under Way," Unknown newspaper article. Circ 1927.

[xxvii] Jack Alexander, "Lew Wentz: Oklahoma's Godfather," *Saturday Evening Post* (December 1948).

[xxviii] Jack Alexander, "Lew Wentz: Oklahoma's Godfather," *Saturday Evening Post* (December 1948).

were sponsored by Mr. Wentz. During the opening week of the swimming pool The Ponca City News stated that the pool had been built at a cost of $95,000.[xxix] Later estimates of the total costs of the park vary from $250,000 to $400,000. When the pool opened there was no charge for entry, however, later a small charge was added. Wentz never entered the actual pool, although he was very involved in the children's bathing beauty contest and would come in the evening to manipulate the underwater neon-lighting system.[xxx]

Wentz Park was donated to the City of Ponca City after the death of Lew Wentz on June 9, 1949. The city began operating the facility in the summer of 1950.[xxxi]

Architectural Significance

Wentz Camp is significant as an excellent example of the Romanesque Revival style of architecture. Although typically associated with buildings constructed between 1880 and 1900, the availability of local limestone and sandstone in Oklahoma extended the use of the style after the turn of the century. Excellent examples of the style can be found in Guthrie, Oklahoma. Wentz Camp, built mainly during the 1930's, also took advantage of locally accessible limestone. The use of the style during the 1920's can be attributed to the Eclectic movement of architecture that used all previous styles for inspiration. The Tudor Revival style (1890-1940) shares some characteristics of the Romanesque Revival style. This very popular style could be easily used for all types of residences. Common characteristics include the use of natural stone, cast stone, and in some cases, crenellation. The Romanesque Revival style, massive and expensive, was used far less frequently.

The original entry, pool enclosure, cabins and mess hall are built using rough-faced stonework. The wide, rounded Romanesque arches that identify the style are found on every building. The entry, with its' three guard houses and curved stone wall set the stage with each arched opening. All of the buildings included doorways and windows set into arches. Another typical feature of the style is arches incorporated into stone walls. This is evident on the outer walls of the pool enclosure.

Borrowed from the Gothic Revival movement and associated with the English Medieval style are the flat roofs with crenellation. The flat roofs were selected for the cabins, and later for the concession stand (1953) to be used as observation decks.[xxxii] The crenellation served as a decorative parapet and railing. This use of this type of parapet was not uncommon on public buildings.[xxxiii]

The architect for the pool, cabins and entry was Leonard H. Bailey, an Oklahoma City architect. Wentz met Bailey through the Rotary Club and their shared interest in assisting crippled children.[xxxiv] In 1924 he was elected the first president of the Oklahoma State Association of Architects. At that time his practice was Bailey and Alden and his address was 1207 Colcord Building in Oklahoma City. Later, he was a member of the architectural firm of Bailey, Dickenson, Roloff and Bozalis. Bailey began work on the project in 1927 and made many visits to Ponca City.[xxxv]

The architect for the mess hall was George J. Cannon, a local Ponca City architect. He designed the mess hall in 1934 and it was built shortly after. Cannon designed other Ponca City buildings including the Orville Savage Motor Co. (1927), the Ponca City Library (1935), the Zimmerman House (1926), the L.K. Meek House (1927), and the Soldani Mansion. The Mansion, built in 1925, is currently the Ponca City Art Center and listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NR 1982).

[xxix] "Water Carnival to Dedicate New Pool," *Ponca City News* 3 August 1930.

[xxx] Jack Alexander, "Lew Wentz: Oklahoma's Godfather," *Saturday Evening Post* (December 1948).

[xxxi] "City Soon Will Assume Ownership of Wentz Swimming Pool and Camp," *Ponca City News*, 18 April, 1950.

[xxxii] "Water Carnival to Dedicate New Pool," *Ponca City News*, 3 August 1930.

[xxxiii] Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1984).

[xxxiv] Earl D. McBride, M.D., "Chronicles of Oklahoma: Crippled Children in Oklahoma," Volume 27, 1949.

[xxxv] Martha Bailey Ray, personal letter, 4 April, 1988. Wentz files. Pioneer Woman Museum. Ponca City, Oklahoma.

Conclusion

Wentz Camp is an outstanding representative of the large swimming pools and recreational areas built after World War I and prior to the stock market crash of 1929. The pool and the camp was used by a wide cross-section of the community for swimming and other celebratory events and served as a focal point for recreation in Ponca City and the surrounding region. Financed by Lew Wentz, it is the best remaining physical example of his philanthropy. The camp, owned by the City of Ponca City since 1959, has been in continuous use since it opened in 1930. Its' original design continues to have a high degree of integrity and its use remains the same.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Alexander, Jack. "Lew Wentz: Oklahoma's Godfather." *The Saturday Evening Post* (18 December 1948): 21, 76, 81-83.

Architectural blueprints, City Engineer's Office, Drawer 46, Ponca City, Oklahoma.

Harlow, Rex. *Oklahoma Leaders: Biographical Sketches of the Foremost Living Men in Oklahoma.* Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Company, 1928.

Harrison, Walter Munford. *Me and My Big Mouth.* Oklahoma City: Britton Publishing Company, 1929.

McBride, Earl D, M.D. *Chronicles of Oklahoma: Crippled Children in Oklahoma.* V 27, 1949.

Ponca City Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution. *The Last Run: Kay County, Oklahoma, 1893.* Ponca City: Courier Printing Company, 1939.

Ponca City News. Ponca City, Oklahoma. 25 December 1927; 6 January 1929; 3 August 1930; 10 September, 1939; 9 June 1949; 12 June 1949; 18 April 1950; 30 May 1953; 2 May 1983; 20 March 1985; 23 April 1985; 7 January 1987; 7 August 1991; 23 April 1995;

Smith, Helen. Interview by Laura Streich, 23 March 1988. Located in Lew Wentz file at Pioneer Woman Museum, Ponca City, Oklahoma.

Wentz File at Pioneer Woman Museum, Ponca City, Oklahoma.

Wentz File at Ponca City Library, Ponca City, Oklahoma.

Wentz File at Oklahoma Historical Society: State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Wiltse, Jeff. Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

__X__State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 33 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	676550	4067583
2	14	676550	4067450
3	14	675968	4067450
4	14	676044	4067553
5	14	676119	4067583

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

A tract of land in the North ½ of the Northwest ¼ of Section 18, Township 26 North, Range 3 East, Kay County, Oklahoma; more specifically described as: Commencing at the North ¼ corner of Section 18, T26N, R3E; thence west along the north line of said section for a distance of 706.38' to the true point of beginning; thence sought with a 90 degree interior angle for a distance of 890' to the southeast corner of said camp; thence west with an interior angle of 90 degrees along the south boundary of said camp for a distance of 1819.89' to the southwest corner bondary of said camp; thence in a northeastern direction with an interior angle of 63 degrees 36 minutes for a distance of 599.44'; thence in a northeastern direction with an interior angle of 183 degrees 45 minutes for a distance of 382.7' to the northwest corner of said camp, said corner being on the north boundary line of said section; thence east along the north line of said section a distance of 1405.72' to the northeast corner of said camp, said true corner of beginning.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary comprises the land originally acquired for the construction of the park.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Maryjo Meacham/edited by Lynda B. Schwan

organization Meacham and Associates/OK SHPO date April 20, 2010

street & number 2109 NW 28th Street telephone 405/537-5545

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73107

e-mail

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Wentz Camp

City or Vicinity: Ponca City

County: Kay State: Oklahoma

Photographer: Lynda B. Schwan

Date Photographed: 6 May 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

No.	Subject	Dir.
0001	Entrance	SW
0002	Girls Bathroom	NW
0003	Girls Cabins	NE
0004	Dining Hall	SE
0005	Concession	NW
0006	Pool Steps	NW
0007	Pool and Life Guard Tower	E
0008	Pool Steps	SE
0009	Changing Rooms	E
0010	Water Tower	NW
0011	Boys Cabins	NW
0012	Caretakers Cottage	SE

Wentz Camp
Name of Property

Kay County, Oklahoma
County and State

Property Owner:

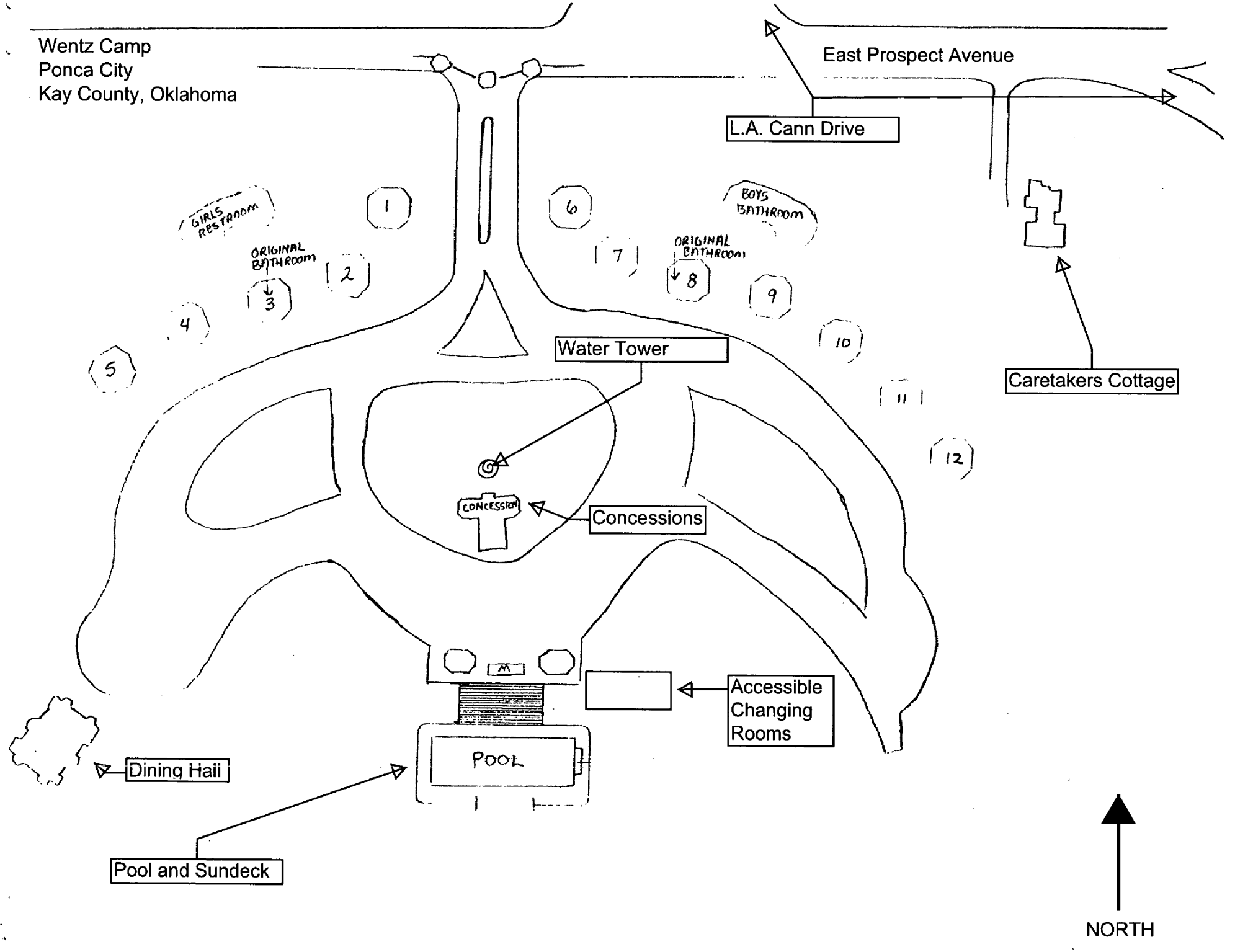
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

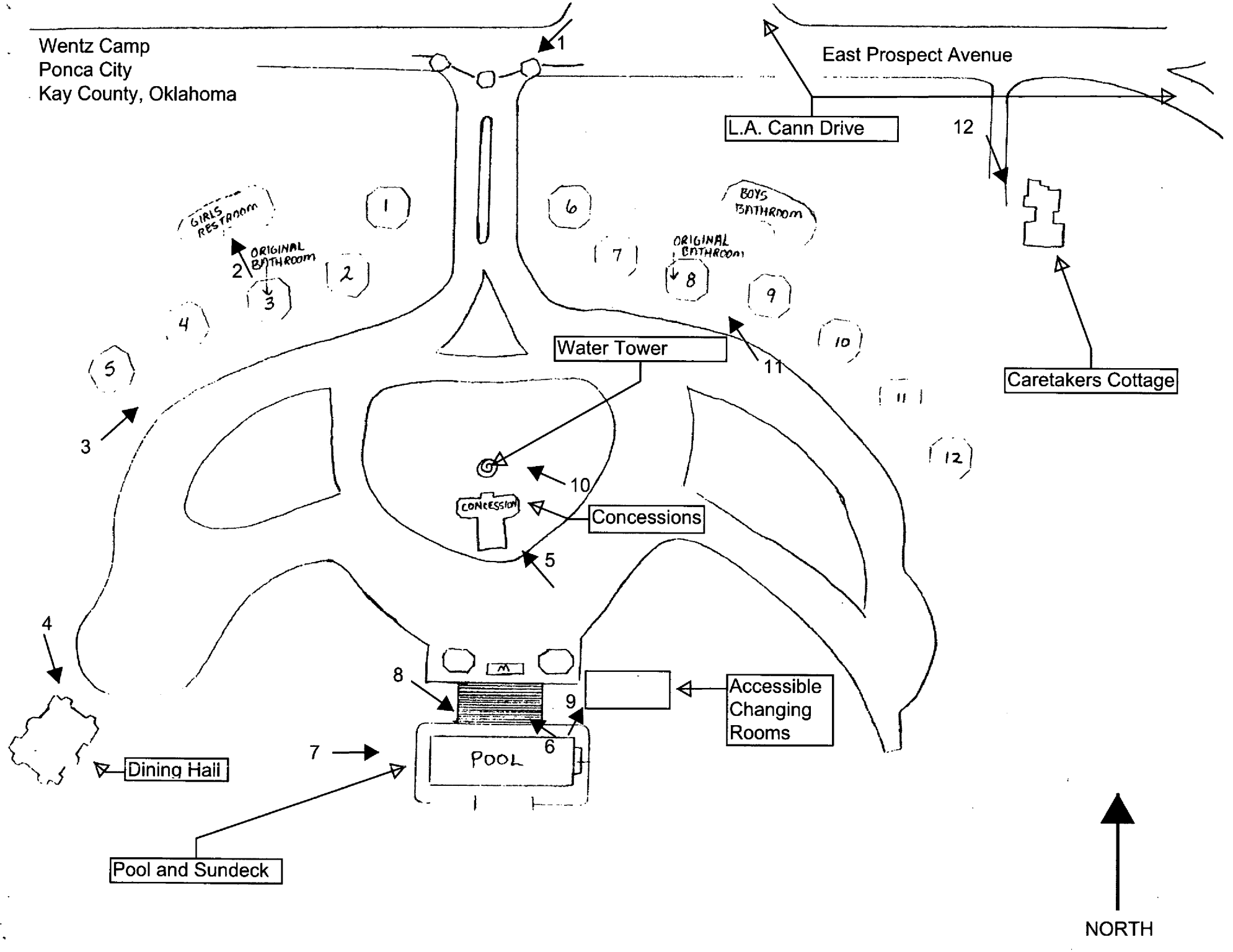
name City of Ponca City

street & number PO Box 1450, 516 E Grand Ave telephone

city or town Ponca City state OK zip code 74602

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.


Wentz Camp
Ponca City
Kay County, Oklahoma
East Prospect Avenue
L.A. Cann Drive
GIRLS RESTROOM
ORIGINAL BATHROOM
BOYS BATHROOM
ORIGINAL BATHROOM
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
Water Tower
Caretakers Cottage
CONCESSION
Concessions
Accessible Changing Rooms
POOL
Dining Hall
Pool and Sundeck
NORTH


Wentz Camp
Ponca City
Kay County, Oklahoma
East Prospect Avenue
L.A. Cann Drive
Water Tower
Caretakers Cottage
Concessions
Accessible Changing Rooms
Dining Hall
Pool and Sundeck
POOL
GIRLS RESTROOM
ORIGINAL BATHROOM
BOYS BATHROOM
ORIGINAL BATHROOM
CONCESSION
NORTH

OK_Kay County_ Wentz Camp_0001

OK_Kay County_Wentz Camp_0002

OK_Kay County_Wentz Camp_0003

OK_Kay County_Wentz Camp_0004

OK_Kay County_Wentz Camp_0005

OK_Kay County_Wentz Camp_0006

OK_Kay County_Wentz Camp_0007

OK_Kay County_Wentz Camp_0008

OK_Kay County_Wentz Camp_0009

OK_Kay County_Wentz Camp_0010

OK_Kay County_Wentz Camp_0011

OK_Kay County_Wentz Camp_0012