NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

940

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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.

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Larkin Hotel
Other names/site number: N/A
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 201 North Main
City or town: Blackwell State: OK County: Kay
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

___**national** ___**statewide** _X_**local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

_X_**A** ___**B** _X_**C** ___**D**

Oct 22, 2013

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**

Larkin Hotel
Name of Property

Kay County, OK
County and State

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:) _____

for Carson W. Beall 12·18·13

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: hotel

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

Commercial Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Larkin Hotel is a four-story with a basement, Commercial style hotel situated in downtown Blackwell, Kay County, Oklahoma. The building was designed by architect J.M. Fuller and constructed in 1923-1924. Historically, the hotel was addressed off of the east-west Oklahoma Avenue; however, current courthouse records identify the address as 201 North Main Street which corresponds to the storefronts located on the east elevation of the building. The red brick building has a flat roof and a concrete foundation. The double hung wood windows are a combination of nine-over-one, one-over-one and two-over-two. The multiple wood doors are glazed paneled and are similar to, if not, the original doors. Much of the building's historic detailing, including signage and cut stone trim, remains intact. The building is located just north of the center of Blackwell's central business district with historic, brick, Commercial style buildings across the streets to the east and south. The majority of two-story buildings that historically occupied the lots to the north of the Larkin Hotel have been demolished with the remaining concrete foundation of the adjacent former two-story building turned into a parking lot. The building is not currently in use and the interior could not be accessed. Changes to the exterior include the raised concrete front steps with a ramp, one modified storefront on the east elevation, replacement of select window glass with metal louvers, and boarding of the fourth floor and rear elevation openings. The setting of the building has been modified by the removal

of the adjacent buildings. Despite the changes, the building retains a high degree of historic integrity, particularly a majority of wood windows and doors.

Narrative Description

Designed by Winfield, Kansas, architect J.M. Fuller at the behest of John P. Larkin, the Larkin Hotel was constructed in 1923-1924. Occupying a prime location on the corner of North Main Street and West Oklahoma Avenue, the building is situated on downtown Blackwell's main thoroughfare. The blocks in the central business district are platted so that the lots along Main Street are east-west running with a twenty foot north-south alley and the lots on the other half of the block run north-south with a short, dividing, twenty foot, east-west alley. Currently, there is a concrete parking lot adjacent to the Larkin Hotel on the north side. According to the 1918 and 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, historically adjacent to the Larkin Hotel on the north side was a two-story building with the remaining lots to the north being filled with a combination of one- and two-story buildings. A small, one-story, American Legion building is located immediately north of the parking area and there are two long, metal, storage buildings symmetrically located to the north of this. West of the hotel and across the dividing north-south alley is another small, metal, nonhistoric, storage building. West of the storage building on the corner of West Oklahoma Avenue and North 1st Street, there is a historic gasoline station and automobile repair shop. To the south of the Larkin Hotel and across Oklahoma Avenue, there is a historic painted brick bank building with a canted corner. While the setting of the Larkin Hotel has been impacted by the removal of buildings, the overall central business district character of the area remains dominant.

The red brick, four-story Larkin Hotel is rectangular in form and occupies two full lots. A generous concrete sidewalk runs along both the south and east elevations of the building. The building has a flat roof, a concrete foundation and a basement. Noted for its fire-proof construction, the reinforced concrete walls of the building were faced with red brick laid in a running bond. The exception to this is the upper three floors of the north elevation. Not readily visible historically, the upper concrete walls on the north elevation were left unadorned. Additionally, to allow light into the interior spaces, the upper three floors are set back to the south with only the first floor wall of the north elevation being flush with the property line.

The south elevation was historically the primary elevation as it contains the centrally located hotel entrance (see photographs 1 and 5). The wall is divided into three sections with symmetrical fenestration. The narrow center section contains the hotel entry. The center section is set off by brick pilasters that have short concrete piers and are topped at the fourth floor by three-piece drop stone ornaments that consist of a horizontal bar connected to a pentagonal shape by a vertical bar. On the first floor, under a curved metal awning, the single, glazed paneled, wood, hotel door is accessed by concrete steps. Based on available historic images (see Continuation Sheet), the steps are not original and the main entry was originally set at ground level. On the north side of the steps, a concrete ramp with a low pipe railing on both sides has also been added. Exactly when the stairs and ramp were added is not known. Rectangular, double hung, one-over-one, wood windows with a tall wood base are located on either side of the entry

and under the awning. The hotel entry has a flat soldier brick header. Directly above the door in the center of the header, there is a stone wedge-shaped panel with raised interlocking letters "H" and "L". The metal awning is suspended by chains attached to decorative medallions located on the wall above the awning. The awning has a scalloped edge, a paneled underside and, in the top center, a projecting ornament with a radiating design.

Above the awning in the center section of the south elevation, there is a decorative brick table with stone corners. On the second floor, there are two paired window openings. Both sets of windows have a continuous stone sill. The east set of windows have been filled with metal louvers at an unknown time; the available historic images show these windows as containing window glass. The paired openings on the west consist of two, wood, one-over-one, double hung windows. Between the second and third floor windows on each side of the center section, there are matching metal panels that are ornamented with a shield. The third floor windows in the center section consists of two arched windows that are composed of three parts within an overall round arch. The window arches are formed by a band of bricks laid in a soldier course. The openings have the same shape but the east openings have been filled with metal louvers to match the openings on the second floor. The windows on the west side consist of a narrow, rectangular, one-over-one, wood, double hung window flanked by narrow, one-over-one, wood, double hung windows that are slanted on the outside edge. In the triangular space created by the two sets of arched windows, there is a decorative stone panel with a stylized design. Directly above this, is a stone table with a metal panel that contains metal letters spelling in all capitals "LARKIN HOTEL." The fourth floor windows in the south elevation's center section, along with all the fourth floor windows on the front wall, have been boarded. Based on available historic images, the two sets of paired windows on the fourth floor were originally multi-paned-over-one, wood, double hung. Above the windows, there is a soldier brick header and, extending from one side of the brick pilaster marking the center section to the other, a decorative band of corbelled bricks. Along the roofline, the center section has a pedimented parapet that is notched on either end. In the center of the parapet, there is a stone ornament consisting of a center oval connected to small rectangular shapes by a horizontal bar. As on the rest of the south elevation, the parapet is capped by a stone coping which also wraps around the east elevation.

The two flanking sections of the south elevation are similar, except on the first floor. Due to the storefronts that occupy the interior east portion of the first floor, there is a single display window on the east corner of the first floor. This corner, matching the decorative detail of the east elevation, is set off on the first floor by a concrete column that is quoined. The fixed wood display window has a concrete kick plate and a four-pane transom window. The transom window has been painted an opaque white. Also matching the east elevation, the display window is topped by a flat header that includes a center soldier brick course outlined by a heading course and stone corner markers. Between the corner window and the small storefront on the west side of the east section of the south elevation, there are no openings in the first floor brick wall. The small storefront features a single, glazed paneled ,wood door with a three-pane, wood transom on the west side. The door is set at ground level without any outside steps. To the east of the door is a double, fixed, wood display window with a concrete kickplate. The storefront has a continuous,

multi-paned, wood transom window that has been painted white. The transom is topped by a decorative brick header that matches the header above the display window on the east corner.

The first floor of the west section of the south elevation is divided into three sets of narrow, rectangular, multi-pane, wood windows. Below the easternmost set of windows, there are four, three-pane, fixed, wood, basement windows. The east set and part of the adjacent set of basement windows are obscured by the nonoriginal concrete ramp that accesses the adjoining hotel entry. The easternmost set and the center set of first floor windows on the east section of the south elevation are identical. Each set of windows consists of a center three-part window flanked by a single window. The windows have a continuous stone sill. The wood, rectangular, decorative paned, fixed, six-pane windows on the first floor of the west section of the south elevation are identical. The flanking single windows are topped by a narrow transom window that features a star pattern. The center triple window is topped by a ten-pane transom. The westernmost set of first floor windows consists of only a triple window that matches the center triple window of the other first floor windows in the west section of the south elevation, including the continuous stone sill and ten-pane transom window.

The second through fourth floor fenestration pattern in the east and west sections of the south elevation are matching with each opening being symmetrical. The second floor windows in these sections are all wood, one-over-one, double hung. The third floor windows are all nine-over-one, wood, double hung and all of the fourth floor windows have been boarded. The windows on the second and third floor all feature continuous stone sills. The fourth floor windows have a sill created by the projecting metal ledge that wraps around the south elevation. The underside of the ledge is ornamented with dentils. The second and fourth floor windows have no header and the third floor windows have a continuous flat soldier brick header. Both the east and west sections of the south elevation feature a set of paired windows on each floor on the outside edge. The other window openings on each floor consist of two sets of four windows. As on the center section of the south elevation, there is stone coping that extends the full length of the roofline in both sections.

The east elevation of the Larkin Hotel fronts onto Blackwell's Main Street (see photographs 1 and 2). Although not the principal face of the hotel, the east elevation was designed to capitalize on the building's location in the central business district with three separate storefronts on the first floor. As originally designed, each storefront was to be flush with the rest of the east elevation. At an unknown time but possibly in the 1930s or 1940s, the northernmost storefront was altered with the door being inset and relocated to the center of the storefront. The original architect's drawing of the building, published in the local newspaper as part of the announcement of impending construction, shows the door for the northernmost storefront being located on the north side of the storefront and a double set of fixed display windows to the south. Based on historic images, the northernmost storefront had matching quoined columns on both sides; however, both columns have been removed. The northernmost storefront now consists of a center, recessed, single, wood, glazed paneled door with a narrow, three-pane, wood transom. The inset entry has a decorative yellow tile walk which extends from the concrete sidewalk to the door. The display windows flanking the door consist of a single display window on the front and

a set of double, fixed, wood windows leading to the door on the inside. The front display window has been painted. Also, along the side of the outside display window and along the top of all the display windows in the northernmost storefront, black glass panels have been added. Above the northernmost storefront is a narrow metal ledge with a ceramic glass sign above that reads in capital letters "Hall's."

The other two storefronts on the east elevation are much as they were originally designed. The center storefront consists of a single, glazed paneled, wood door on the south side. The three-pane wood transom window above the door contains an old metal fan unit. To the north of the door are two fixed display windows with a tall concrete kickplate. There is a multi-pane transom which extends the full length of the storefront that has been painted white. Dividing the center storefront from the southernmost storefront is a white quoined column. The southernmost storefront is identical to the center storefront, except there is not fan unit in the transom window above the door. On the south corner of the east elevation, there is a white quoined column that wraparounds the south elevation. Along the brick wall above the storefronts is a decorative brick table that extends the full length of the elevation. The table is composed of a center row of soldier bricks with a top and bottom heading course. In the center of the table is a white stone square ornament.

The upper portion of the east elevation is divided into three symmetrical sections. The center section of the east elevation has a balcony which extends over the center storefront. The balcony does not appear on the published architect's drawing of the building; the drawing features in place of the balcony an arched window that is continuous on the second and third floors. It is believed that the balcony is original as the treatment of the window openings matches that of the south elevation. The balcony has a wrought iron railing that has scrolled brackets that attach it to the brick wall. The floor of the balcony is concrete with two wedge shaped supports on either side of the bottom. Providing access to the balcony is a single multi-paned wood and glass door. On either side of the door are fixed, wood, multi-paned, full-height sidelights. The space between the second floor opening and the third floor windows contains a decorative panel that matches the panels between the second and third floor windows on the center section of the east elevation. At the same height as the panels, are the stone piers for the brick pilasters that set off the center section of the east elevation. The pilasters terminate at the top of the fourth floor with the same dropped ornaments as on the south elevation.

The single, three-part, third floor window in the center section of the east elevation is reminiscent of the arched shape and composition of the corresponding third floor windows on the south elevation. However, while the east elevation center window has an arched header, its arch features a keystone in the center. Directly above the third floor window is a metal panel that had the name of the building in raised metal letters. The metal panel is edged with horizontal stone bands that extend fully between the pilasters with stone drop ornaments on the corners of the bottom band. Part of the metal panel has broken off, so it now reads "N HOTEL." The brick underneath the metal panel is a common red brick that is visually distinct from the remainder of the wall as it was not meant to be visible. The center section's fourth floor opening is a narrow triple window consisting of three, wood, double hung, six-over-one windows. The windows are

topped by a flat soldier header. Above the header is the corbeled bottom of the brick parapet. The detailing of the center parapet matches the parapet on the south elevation, including the stone coping which extends the full length of the east elevation and wraps around the south wall.

The north section of the east elevation is differentiated from the south section by the small windows on the north side of each floor, as well as the small section of missing brick in the extreme upper north corner of the wall. The small windows are four-over-four, wood, double hung with wide stone sills. The small windows are further defined by an encircling course of soldier bricks on both sides and the top. The corners of the windows are marked by square stone ornaments. Along the inside of the north section, there are a single set of paired windows on each floor. The second and third floor windows are one-over-one, double hung, wood and the fourth floor windows are nine-over-one, double hung, wood. The second and third floor windows have a continuous stone sill. The fourth floor windows have a sill created by the projected denticulated metal ledge that extends across both the north and south sections of the east elevation and wraps around the south elevation. The second and fourth floor windows have no headers. The third floor windows have a flat soldier brick header.

The fenestration in the south section of the east elevation matches the north section, except there are no small windows along the outside of each floor. The south section is also distinguished by the nonoriginal sign that projects from the wall via a metal support system. The T-shaped sign has "Larkin" in horizontal capital letters and "Antiques" in vertical capital letters. It is unknown when the sign was added but it is not original as it does not appear in early images of the building.

The north elevation is largely concrete, except for a section of common red brick on the first floor of the westernmost section (see photographs 2, 3 and 4). The rest of the first floor is red brick that has been covered with a stucco material, probably due to the removal of the adjacent building. The stucco covering was apparently added at three different times as the material has three different colors. The only openings on the first floor of the north elevation are in the westernmost section of the building, which is described in more detail below.

The upper three floors of the north elevation consist of three unequal sections. The easternmost section of the north elevation consists of three parts. The first part on the eastern edge of the north elevation is flush with the property line on all floors. There are no openings on the north wall of this part; however, on the west wall of the easternmost part, which is created by the setback of the second through fourth floors of the adjoining parts to allow the north rooms to have natural lighting, there are single, one-over-one, double hung, wood windows on each floor. The center part of the easternmost section is sandwiched between the full-height flush part and a narrower projecting part that likely contains an interior stairwell. On each floor of the center section, there are four, wood, two-over-two, double hung windows with concrete sills. The east two windows are single and the west two windows are paired. The rectangular projecting stairwell part has no openings on the east or north walls. The west wall of the stairwell features a single, one-over-one, double hung, wood window on each floor.

The center section of the north elevation is much more expansive than the other two sections. As on other parts of the building, the fenestration pattern is symmetrical. Beginning on the east side of the center section, there is on each floor a set of double windows, then eight single openings, then another set of paired openings. The majority of openings in this section are filled with two-over-two, hung, wood windows. The exceptions from the east are the second and fourth single openings on the second floor and the third and fourth single openings on the third and fourth floors. On the second floor, the second single opening contains a pedestrian door with a metal screen door. The fourth single opening is a single metal door. On the third and fourth floors, the third and fourth single openings on each floor contain window-sized metal louvers. Visible on the roof above the third and fourth single openings is a concrete penthouse for the interior elevator. On the east wall of the penthouse, there is a double fixed wood window with a concrete sill and a brick header. The opening on the west wall of the penthouse is boarded.

The first floor of the west section of the north elevation is differentiated from the rest of the north elevation due to the visible red brick wall material and the window openings. This includes a tall, square, red brick stack just off-center that extends vertically above the fourth floor of the building. Openings on the first floor of the west section include a double set of short, one-by-one, wood windows and two single, two-over-two, double hung, wood windows. The east single window is next to the paired windows and the other single window is near the west edge of the wall. Off-center to west, there is a vertical concrete band in the wall that does not extend the full height of the first floor.

The upper three floors of the west section of the north elevation are concrete. As with the east section of the north elevation, the west section is composed of three parts. On the east side of the upper floors is a rectangular stairwell projection that is similar to the other stairwell in the east section of the north elevation. As on the other stairwell, the west stairwell has no openings on the east or north wall. On each floor of the stairwell's west wall, there are single, one-over-one, wood, double hung windows. In the center portion of the west section of the north elevation, there is a paired set of windows and two single windows on each floor. Each of the windows is a two-over-two, double hung, wood window. The third part of the west section is identical to the easternmost part of the east section, except the single windows on each floor are located on the east wall of this part. There are no openings on the north wall of the westernmost part of the north elevation. The north wall is crossed diagonally by a down spout which extends from the fourth floor to connect to a corner down spout that runs along the northwest corner of the building from the third floor to the second floor before connecting with a down spout on the first floor which goes to the ground on the west side of the building.

The rear or west elevation of the Larkin Hotel is adjacent to the brick north-south alley that extends through the block (see photographs 4 and 5). This elevation is red brick except for the concrete basement stairwell which extends in a north-south direction along two-thirds of the rear elevation. There is a pipe railing, broken in places, which previously extended the length of the basement stairwell with a couple of east-west top railings connecting it to the brick wall. The northernmost section of railing has fallen off with the pieces currently lying on the three-quarters width concrete basement stairs. As with the upper floors, the openings on the backside of the

building have been covered with the four basement openings covered with metal paneling and the upper floor openings being covered with a combination of metal panels and plywood. All of the window openings on the rear elevation have a heading course brick sill.

On the first floor of the west elevation, there is a single uncovered pedestrian door with a tall concrete stoop that also serves as the landing for the basement stairs. The door is topped by a three-light wood transom. Immediately adjacent to the door is a single window that is also topped by a multi-pane wood transom. Off-center to the north is a second full-height window. Partially covering the top of this window is the landing for the metal fire escape that extends to the fourth floor with a connecting metal ladder providing access to the roof. A large electrical box is situated off the south bottom support of the fire escape with various lines extending above. The south portion of the west elevation's first floor contains two, partial, fixed, nine-light, wood windows. These are the only openings on the west elevation that are not completely boarded; however, the south three panes of the north partial window are covered and several of the other glass panes have been broken. The fenestration pattern of the three upper floors on the west elevation is identical. On each floor this is a small window on the north edge, then three evenly spaced single windows and then a fourth single window set at a distance from the others near the south corner of the west elevation.

ALTERATIONS

The Larkin Hotel has not undergone significant alteration since its construction in 1923-1924. There have been no discernible additions to the building. Notable changes to the building consist of the addition of concrete steps and a ramp on the front hotel entry, the switch in window material from glass to louvers in the east set of second and third floor windows in the center section of the south elevation, and the redesign of the north storefront on the east elevation. None of these changes has a significant effect on the ability of the building to convey its architectural and historic significance. Other changes to the building are related to its lack of use, consisting of the boarding of all fourth floor windows and the majority of rear openings. Overall, the Larkin Hotel retains integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association and is an excellent and unique example of a four-story, Commercial style, brick hotel in downtown Blackwell.

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.
- [ ] 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.)

- [ ] 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.)
Architecture
Community and Planning

Period of Significance
1923-1924

Significant Dates

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

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Fuller, J.M., architect
Frankenfeld, P.H., builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Larkin Hotel, located in downtown Blackwell, Oklahoma, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A for its historic association with community planning and development in Blackwell and Criterion C for its architectural significance to Blackwell's built environment. In recognition of this significance and the precarious status of the building due to lack of use, the Larkin Hotel was included on Preservation Oklahoma's 2012 Most Endangered Properties List. Constructed in 1923-1924, the landmark building on the north side of Blackwell's central business district was designed by Kansas architect J.M. Fuller and built for hotelier John P. Larkin of Larned, Kansas. The Larkin Hotel was the first four-story building and the only four-story hotel constructed in downtown Blackwell. For its day, the hotel was thoroughly modern with not only hot and cold running water in each room but also a telephone. Blackwell's Commercial Club provided a $12,000 bonus to Larkin as inducement to encourage the development of the hotel which, according to the local newspaper, had been a recognized community need for years. The Commercial Club's bonus offset the cost of the land and provided the residents of Blackwell with a monetary stake in the enterprise. The 1923-1924 period of significance for the building spans the erection of the building and its initial operation. While the building continued to operate for decades as a hotel, it made its greatest contribution to Blackwell's architecture and community planning and development during its construction and opening.

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

The community of Blackwell was founded in 1893 by a group of businessmen from Winfield, Kansas. The new town was named after Colonel A.J. Blackwell, an adopted Cherokee Indian on whose property the original townsite was located on. In 1893, the town lacked rail connections "...and had few natural advantages except an excellent agricultural territory." Within ten years, the town enjoyed transportation facilities linking it to the larger area and an abundant water supply. The largest industry at the time was the 300-barrel-capacity flour mill. This was augmented by a steam laundry, a machine shop and a brick plant.[1]

While agriculture remained a dominant factor in the town's development through much of the twentieth century, other natural advantages subsequently developed that also contributed significantly to Blackwell's growth. Blackwell's agricultural-based prosperity was first augmented in 1901 by the discovery of natural gas. In the mid 1910s, the discovery of oil provided another major economic stimulus. The Blackwell Field was situated seven miles northeast of Blackwell and at peak production had 129 wells producing over 25,000 barrels a day. Other oil fields in proximity to Blackwell included the Tonkawa (also known as Three

[1] *The Daily Oklahoman*, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), 27 September 1936. See also "Blackwell," (unpublished manuscript, available Vertical Files, Research Library, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), n.d.

Sands) Field, the Deer Creek Field, the Billings Field, the Ponca Field, the Mervine Field and the Kaw City Field. With the town centrally located to all of these fields, various oil related industries were soon blossoming in Blackwell. In 1916, the Blackwell Zinc Company, a subsidiary of the American Metal Company Limited, was established in the community. By 1923, the town's industrial and business resources included five banks, four lumber yards, four oil well supply houses, three refineries, a brick yard, an ice and storage plant, a bottling works, a steam laundry, a creamery and ice cream plant, a wholesale grocery, a wholesale fruit house, a wholesale tobacco and candy house, two planning mills, an osteopathic sanitarium, a hospital, a nursery, a green house, a tank factory, a foundry, a glass factory, and a zinc smelter. With the city economically thriving in the 1920s, services within the community also reached new heights.[2]

In terms of population, Blackwell, along with Kay County as a whole, experienced tremendous growth during the first three decades of the twentieth century. At the time of Oklahoma's statehood in 1907, Blackwell's population stood at 2,644. Within three years, the number of residents jumped to 3,266, nearly a 24 percent increase. More than doubling over the next decade, Blackwell's population numbered 7,174 in 1920, a 119.6 percent increase. According to the local newspaper, the estimated population of Blackwell in 1923 was 11,000. At that time, Blackwell was touted as being centrally located in terms of the area oil pools with railroads entering the town from six directions and state highways in all four directions. However, according to the official census, only 2,347 new residents moved to Blackwell between 1920 and 1930, bringing the 1930 population to 9,521. The discrepancy in the reported 1923 population and the official 1930 population is attributable to the twin factors of the transient nature of oil field employment and declines in oil production in the area during the latter part of the 1920s. For example, production peaked in the Three Sands Field at nearby Tonkawa in 1923 and began to fall rapidly in 1926.[3]

On April 1, 1923, a local newspaper carried the banner headline that "Blackwell is assured of Modern Hotel." The "strictly modern hotel" was to be four or five stories high and contain at least seventy rooms. The building was being financed by John P. Larkin, a reportedly experienced and successful hotel man from Larned, Kansas. Larkin purchased the vacant lots for the building for $12,000 in late March 1923 and was able to immediately secure the commitment of Blackwell's Commercial Club to raise a bonus to reimburse him the cost of the site. Although the $12,000 bonus was noted as a being "considerable," the long felt need for such an establishment in Blackwell was deemed worth the price.[4]

By mid-April 1923, Kansas architect J. M. Fuller had completed the drawings for the new hotel and submitted them to Larkin. As planned, the reinforced concrete building was to be four stories

[2] Ibid, 27 September 1936. See also *Blackwell (Oklahoma) Daily Tribune*, 22 May 1923.
[3] Institute of Community Development, University of Oklahoma, "Blackwell, Oklahoma, A General Plan of Study," (Available Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma), 1960. See also *Blackwell Daily Tribune*, 22 May 1923 and John W. Morris, ed., *Drill Bits, Picks, and Shovels: A History of Mineral Resources in Oklahoma*, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1982), 27-28.
[4] *Blackwell(Oklahoma) Morning Tribune*, 1 April 1923.

in height and measure 50 by 140 feet. Of the sixty-six rooms, all were to be "outside rooms" with a central corridor and have running hot and cold water and a telephone. Forty-two of the hotel rooms were also planned to have their own bath. The first floor of the building was to contain a spacious 36 by 48 feet lobby, offices, cloak rooms, elevator, stairway, a 24 by 40 feet public dining room, a 16 by 22 feet private dining room which faced to the south, kitchens and pantries, and three storerooms facing east. The basement was anticipated to include two 20 by 30 feet sample rooms, a boiler room, laundry and storage, and toilets.[5]

The contract for construction of the hotel was let on June 8, 1923 to P.H. Frankenfeld of Enid, Oklahoma. Harry Gearhard of Blackwell secured the plumbing contract. Construction was anticipated to begin within ten days of the contract letting. By the end of June 1923, excavation work at the building site was underway "by a large force of men and teams." Additionally, material was being stockpiled in order to push the construction to completion "as rapidly as is consistent with good building."[6]

The Daily Oklahoman reported in August 1923 that work on the Larkin Hotel was progressing nicely. By late October 1923, the exterior of the $150,000 building was taking shape with the setting of window frames and laying of brick underway. The local newspaper noted that "The pretty dark red brick will provide a front that is beautiful and the white stone trimmings set off the red to an advantage." At that time, it was reported that the building would be completed and opened by Christmas. With the plastering and finish work expected to go more quickly than the framing, the furnishings were reportedly purchased and slated to be shipped in time to meet the Christmas opening.[7]

At the end of November 1923, the hotel opening, which was anticipated to include a banquet and a dance, had been pushed to January 15, 1924. During the last week of February 1924, the Larkin family moved into the hotel which had yet to open to the public. Work at that time continued on the laying of carpets and placement of furnishings, as well as on readying the passenger elevator, the telephone lines and electric fixtures.[8]

Although the formal opening was still weeks away, the Larkin Hotel began providing accommodations to guests during the second week of March 1924 with the opening of the first two floors and the dining room to the traveling public. With the formal hotel opening delayed until May apparently because of issues with the furnishings, the Fountain of Youth Beauty and Bath Parlor began advertising its rejuvenating bath and all its benefits at the end of April 1924. Located at the Main Street Entrance of the Hotel Larkin, the Fountain of Youth Beauty and Bath

[5] Ibid., 17 April 1923 and 22 May 1923. See also *Daily Oklahoman*, 19 April 1923; *The (Blackwell) Times-Record*, 19 April 1923; and, *The Blackwell Sunday Tribune*, 22 April 1923.
[6] *Blackwell Daily Tribune*, 29 June 1923.
[7] Ibid., 23 October 1923 and 28 October 1923.
[8] *Daily Oklahoman*, 28 November 1923 and 6 March 1924. See also *Blackwell Daily Tribune*, 29 February 1924.

Parlor also offered electro magnetic, sulphur vapor baths, Swedish and medicinal gymnastics and an expert massatherapist (sic) for the ladies. Attendants for men were available after six p.m.[9]

Thirteen months after the announcement of the hotel's construction, it was publicized that a public reception to be held on May 20, 1924 would formally open the Larkin Hotel. In addition to the townspeople, folks from the surrounding area were invited to inspect Blackwell's new and modern hotel. The hotel was opened to the public from 2:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. and again from 8:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. on May 20, 1924 with music and dancing the following evening from 8:30 p.m. to 12 a.m.

Some of the conveniences that the traveling public experienced at the modern hotel included a telephone, hot and cold running water, and from two to six lights in each room. In all, when originally finished, the hotel had sixty-six rooms, three suites, forty-two baths, four sample rooms, and two dining rooms. The plumbing and fixtures for the new hotel were installed by Gearhards Brother's Hardware Company. All of the kitchen equipment in the hotel was furnished and installed by the Zahner Manufacturing Company of Kansas City, Missouri. Conveying passengers between the floors was a Taplin Automatic Elevator installed by the Taplin Automatic Elevator Company of Blackwell.[10]

As noted repeatedly in the local newspaper, the completion of the Larkin Hotel fulfilled a long-felt community need for a modern, spacious hotel. According to the 1918 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, there was only one hotel in Blackwell, the Hotel Savoy located at 102 North 1st Street. At that time, the future location of the Larkin Hotel was occupied by a two-story rooming house. By 1925, and undoubtedly in response to the booming oil economy, there were six hotels in Blackwell, consisting of the Larkin Hotel, the Hotel Blackwell, the Rector Hotel, the Empress Hotel, the Palace Hotel and the Melba Hotel. Of all six hotels, only the Larkin Hotel was over two-stories in height.

The Blackwell community contributed directly to the development of the Larkin Hotel through the Commercial Club's bonus payment to Larkin. Founded in 1911, the Commercial Club became the Blackwell Chamber of Commerce in about 1924 and continues to operate to the present day. In 1923, the Commercial Club reported a membership of over one thousand. While the payment of the bonus was not unusual, it gave the community a tangible stake in the property. This is evidenced by the involvement of the Chamber of Commerce in the opening of the hotel. As stated the week before the formal opening, "Having had a part in its erection of (sic) the chamber of commerce will join with Mr. and Mrs. Larkin in making the "open house" occasion one that will call to the attention of the traveling public the fact that Blackwell now has a new and modern hotel that is a credit to the city."[11]

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[9] *Blackwell Daily Tribune*, 11 March 1924. See also *Blackwell Morning Tribune*, 23 April 1924 and *Blackwell Sunday Tribune*, 27 April 1924.
[10] *Blackwell Morning Tribune*, 14 May 1924 and 20 May 1924.
[11] *Daily Oklahoman*, 23 September 1923. See also *Blackwell Morning Tribune*, 14 May 1924.

There are two other four-story buildings in Blackwell. Both of these buildings are situated on the south side of Blackwell's central business district. The Larkin Hotel is the only four-story building on downtown Blackwell's north side. The red brick, Masonic Temple, situated at the northwest intersection of South Main Street and West Bridge Avenue, was erected in 1925. The Hays-Kennedy/Rivoli Theater Building was constructed in 1928-1929 directly to the east across Main Street from the Masonic Building. The Hays-Kennedy/Rivoli Theater Building is technically a four-story building; however, it includes a mezzanine level which increases the actual height to the equivalent of a five-story building. The tallest building in downtown Blackwell is the Hays-Kennedy/Rivoli Theater Building.

While all three of Blackwell's four-story buildings are classified as being in the Commercial style and occupy corner lots, each building is distinctive. The red brick Masonic Building lacks the ornamental detail of the other two buildings. Many of its first floor openings have also been permanently infilled with brick. Reflecting the exuberance of the late 1920s and movie theaters in particular, the buff brick Hays-Kennedy/Rivoli Theater Building eclipses the Larkin Hotel in terms of height and decorative detail with its striking glazed terra cotta first floor. In addition to its subtle stone trim and metal canopy, the Larkin Hotel is distinguished from Blackwell's other four-story buildings by its primary elevation fronting onto a secondary street, rather than the main thoroughfare. Both the Masonic Building and the Hays-Kennedy/Rivoli Theater Building face directly onto Main Street.

As the first four-story building, the first modern hotel in Blackwell and with the involvement of the Commercial Club in its development, the Larkin Hotel represents a unique advancement in Blackwell's community planning and development. Architecturally, the building is a distinctive landmark in downtown Blackwell. While not in use and exhibiting signs of neglect, the Larkin Hotel nonetheless retains its historic integrity and ably conveys its historic and architectural significance to the Blackwell community.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

"Blackwell." Available Vertical Files, Research Library, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. No date.

The Blackwell (Oklahoma) Daily Tribune. 22 May 1923; 29 June 1923; 23 October 1923; 28 October 1923; 29 February 1924; 11 March 1924;

The Blackwell (Oklahoma) Morning Tribune. 1 April 1923; 17 April 1923; 22 May 1923; 23 April 1924; 14 May 1924; 20 May 1924;

The Blackwell (Oklahoma) Sunday Tribune. 22 April 1923; 27 April 1924;

The Blackwell (Oklahoma) Times-Record. 19 April 1923.

The Daily Oklahoman. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. 23 September 1923; 19 April 1923; 28 November 1923; 6 March 1924; 27 September 1936.

Institute of Community Development, University of Oklahoma. "Blackwell, Oklahoma, A General Plan of Study." Available Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma, Norman Oklahoma. 1960.

Morris, John W. ed. *Drill Bits, Picks, and Shovels: A History of Mineral Resources in Oklahoma*. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1982.

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): ____N/A_____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _Less than One (1) Acre_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: **36.805454** Longitude: **-97.283395**
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:
2. Zone: Easting: Northing:
3. Zone: Easting: Northing:
4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

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

Lots 11-12, Block 77, Original Township, Blackwell, Kay County, Oklahoma.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the Larkin Hotel.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Cynthia Savage, Architectural Historian, for Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.
organization: A.R.C.H. Consulting
street & number: 346 County Road 1230
city or town: Pocasset state: OK zip code: 73079
e-mail: savage3@wildblue.net
telephone: 405/459-6200
date: March 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: **Larkin Hotel**
City or Vicinity: **Blackwell** County: **Kay** State: **Oklahoma**
Photographer: **Cynthia Savage**
Date Photographed: **5 February 2013**

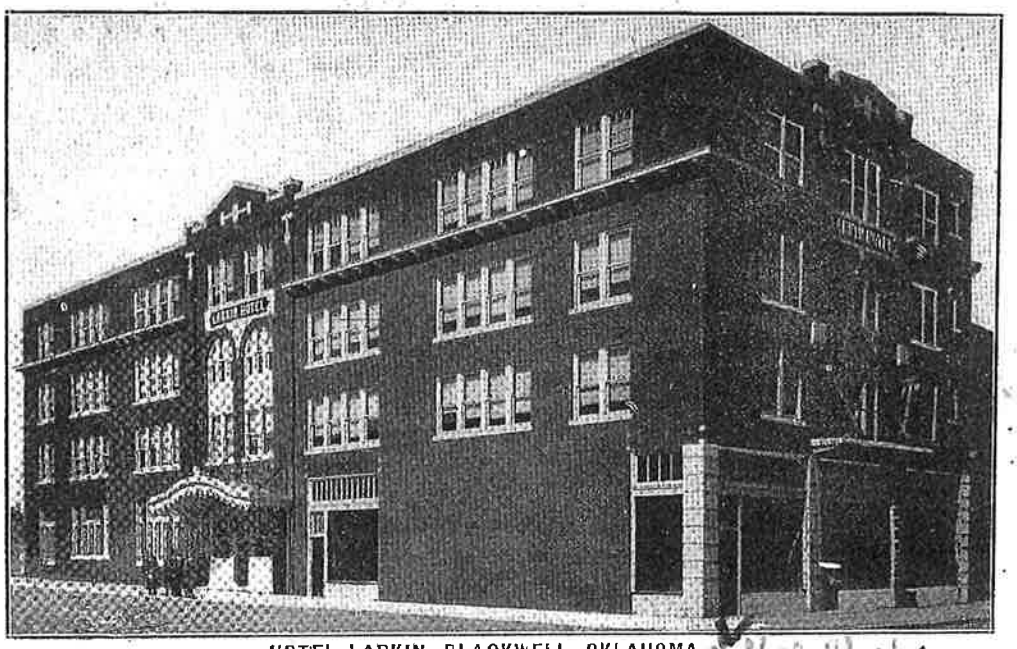
All photographs were printed on an Epson Stylus Photo R2400 printer, using Epson Ultrachrome K3 ink and Premium Presentation Paper Matte.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 0001: South elevation (left), East Elevation (right), camera facing northwest.
Photo 0002: East elevation (left), North Elevation (right), camera facing southwest.
Photo 0003: North elevation, camera facing south.
Photo 0004: North elevation (left), West Elevation (right), camera facing southeast.
Photo 0005: West elevation (left), South Elevation (right), camera facing northeast.

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 100 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.

Undated Historic Images



HOTEL LARKIN, BLACKWELL, OKLAHOMA

Images used with permission of owner, Cynthia Savage.

Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Projection Zone 14
North American Datum of 1983

1:3000 scale

0 100 200 300 400 500 Feet

0 50 100 150 Meters

GN
TN 1°
MN 3°

Magnetic declination of 3E at center of map
on March 17, 2011

LARKIN
ANTIQUES
HOTEL
HALL'S
ANTIQUES
MALL
LARKIN
ANTIQUE MALL
AMERICAN LEGION

LARKIN
ANTIQUE
N HOTEL
HALL'S
ANTIQUES COLLECTIBLES
LARKIN
ANTIQUE MALL

LARKIN HOTEL