NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

942

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: Muskogee Municipal Building
Other names/site number: City Hall
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: 229-231 West Okmulgee Avenue
City or town: Muskogee State: Oklahoma County: Muskogee
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐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**

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:) _____

Carol Ethan M. Beall 12.19.13

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	☐
Public – Local	X
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.)

GOVERNMENT/City Hall
SOCIAL/meeting hall
RECREATION/CULTURE/auditorium

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/City Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
_MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco
_LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: __BRICK/walls

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 Muskogee Municipal Building is located at 229-231 West Okmulgee Avenue in Muskogee, Oklahoma. The surrounding area comprises the Downtown Muskogee Historical District and has many extant commercial buildings from before and after the time of the city office building's erection. Measuring 120 feet by 200 feet in dimension, the detached building is designed with two combined architectural styles, Classical Revival and Modern Movement, in this case, a very restrained Art Deco. The north elevation presents a red-brick "enframed block" with Modern Movement/Art Deco up-stepped wings and decorative elements flanking a central Classical Revival central block with a slightly recessed Classical arcade over three main entrance doors. The west or "arena" elevation is almost entirely characterized by a restrained Art Deco ornamentation, though each of the main elevations has elements of both styles. The Municipal Building has retained excellent integrity in all aspects required for nomination.

Narrative Description

A red brick, three-story detached building, the Muskogee Municipal Building, also called "city hall," was constructed in 1930-31 at 229-231 W. Okmulgee Avenue (Lot 1, Block 53, Muskogee Original Town, the corner of Third Street and Okmulgee. The plan measures 120 feet east to west (along Okmulgee Avenue) and 200 feet north to south (along Third Street). The rear of the building sits on the south line of Lot 1, and the east fifteen feet of Lot 1, outside the east wall of the building, is a utility area/driveway for the building. The roof is parapeted; it is approximately 42 feet from ground to roof. The walls and floors are poured-in-place concrete reinforced with steel rebar, making the building fireproof. Though located in an office block, the Municipal Building was originally detached on all four sides, with all four sides visible. It exists in two functional sections with the long axis along Third Street. The smaller north section, "the office section," gives access to three floors of city offices from Okmulgee Avenue. The surrounding area comprises the Downtown Muskogee Historical District and has many extant commercial buildings from before and after the time of the city office building's erection. The west, or secondary elevation, on Third Street, historically gave access to the arena section, which had the arena and various patriotic groups' quarters on the ground floor. It now houses the Muskogee Police Department.

As built, the Municipal Building had steel casement windows and a combination of full light, multi-light and half-light steel doors. The windows, which are numerous, were originally multi-light center-opening casements. Installed in 2012, they are now uniformly metal multi-light single-hung 4x4 units under 4x2 transoms. The new windows were created to mimic the building's original 1931 multi-light center-opening units. On north and west, most of the steel doors with lights are original, but steel doors on south (one) and east (two) are new and may date from 1966.

The building presents two combined architectural styles, Classical Revival and Modern Movement, in this case, a very restrained Art Deco. The north elevation presents a very dark red-brick "enframed block" with up-stepped wings and decorative elements flanking a central Classical Revival block. The central block has a slightly recessed Classical faux arcade that shelters three main entrance doors. The west or "arena" elevation is almost entirely characterized by a restrained Art Deco ornamentation; the cladding is face brick in a lighter shade of red. Pilasters at the corners and making the bays step up above the roofline and are decorated with tall, narrow inlaid rectangles of stone. The west entrance suggests Classical Revival with shallow piers but in general is a is fairly elaborate Deco presentation, with up-stepped entrance frontispiece and towering façade and geometric applications of inlaid stone squares and string courses of black bricks. The original center-opening narrow casements were also diagnostic of Modern Movement. It is presumed that the architects intended a stylistic variation of the west side from that of the north side to define the functions of two parts of the building. The other south and east elevations are nondescript and are created of red common brick.

A March 1928 artist's conception, attributed to Nieman and Howenstine, showed a strictly Classical Revival Building massed as a "central block with wings" on both main elevations. By May 1928 the design had morphed, and the famed Oklahoma City firm of Layton, Hicks and Forsyth had been added as "Associate Architects." New plans and elevations, the ones that were actually used (in most respects) show that the architects now proposed for both north and west elevations to have elaborate, stylized figural sculptures and geometric patterns in art-carved stone at the tops of each of the massive pilasters and above the doors on both north and west elevations. Also proposed were Deco-style decorative metal grilles for air vents in the east and west auditorium walls. These details would have placed the building firmly into the Modern Movement category, which indicates that architects envisioned a strongly Deco presentation with a nod to Classical. Thus, the building went through a couple of incarnations during the planning. As built, the Art Deco was toned down considerably but the reference to Classical Revival remained to lend dignity and traditional weight to the "government office" section.

North elevation:

This elevation is the enframed block, that is, a central bay and two wings. The two side wings are marked by the massive brick pilasters that step upward at the building's corners and on either side of the arcade. They also step out from the window bays that they frame. Each window bay has a pair of identical windows. In the wings, stylistic elements provide a Deco appearance to this elevation. They include a rectangular stone inlay that extends upward in each pilaster from the water table to the top of the pilaster. The pilasters have stone caps that are stepped. Another detail is the squared window labels above the third-floor windows in the side wings.

The central bay, done in Classical Revival style, is the building's "main entrance to city hall." Four full-height, round Classical engaged columns divide the central bay into five smaller bays of windows and doors. These columns are only engaged on their rear and appear almost "free." They rest on six-sided pedestals that are engaged on their "sixth side" with the portico's rear wall. In addition, a squared column at each side wall is engaged on two sides. The six columns support an entablature with the carved words "MUSKOGEE MUNICIPAL BUILDING." Above this are three more levels of alternating brick and stone cornice. The outer bays have one window on each; the inner three bays have steel double doors, each with a single narrow vertical light, on the ground floor and one window on each upper floor. The entryways are set three feet back under the second floor and have limestone surrounds, or architraves, with several layers of molding, including saw-tooth and "string-and-bead."

The north and west elevations are drawn together by stone bands. A two-part water table extends around the north and west sides of the building. It also serves as the sill for the second-floor windows. Similarly, a stone footing about 2.5 feet in height clads the wall from the ground up to the windowsills on those two elevations. A concrete coping protects the top of the parapet on those two sides. These horizontal elements visually connect the north and west elevations and unite the two stylistic variations.

West elevation:

The west elevation, along Third Street, provided access primarily to the civic arena, and this is evident in the door and window placement. On the north end, which comprises one-third of the whole, all three floors have windows that obviously light offices, and there is one single-entry door into the office section. In contrast, the south two-thirds has windows on ground floor only and has three entries.

The elevation is divided into four irregularly sized bays between shallow pilasters that are identical to those on the north side. Facing the elevation, the farthest bay to the left (north) bay has window pairs on each floor. To the right, the next bay is in two different parts. In the north there is a pair of windows on each floor, but moving to their right, the fenestration ends on the upper two floors, because the arena begins there. The first-floor windows light office areas. On the second and third floors, shallow Classical piers divide this part into windowless bays. The piers have stone plinths and capitals. On the ground floor there are five windows in this part.

The third bay, a major entrance, is centered in the wall of the auditorium section. Two of the customary pilasters bracket it, but they are stepped outward about halfway down. Over the entryway, a square-topped tower is stepped upward and inward between the pilasters, rising far above the roofline. Over the doorway, a wide brick-and-stone pediment sits between the pilasters. Carved into the stone are the words "MUSKOGEE/SEAT OF INDIAN ADMINISTRATION SINCE 1876/PIONEER IN GOVERNMENT CULTURE PROGRESS/1930". Narrow 2x8 multi-light windows flank the doorway. The arena's original main entry doors have been replaced by an assemblage of aluminum-framed, slab-glazed units, including five big transoms over three non-opening windows and two doors There are now only two doors where probably four existed originally, given the width of the space. This is now the entry to the Muskogee Police Department and is so indicated by a small marquee light hanging perpendicular to the wall over the

doors. A concrete ramp, very low pitch, directs traffic to the doorway, which is partially concealed behind a wide concrete knee wall.

The fourth bay is the south end of the auditorium section, which is windowless on second and third floors but punctuated the shallow piers with plinths and capitals. This part has two windows, a single door, another window, and then a double door at ground level in this part.

The two single doors in the west elevation are original, eight-light steel units under large multi-light transoms. Also original is the pair of half-light steel doors under a similar original transom on the far south end.

In the west elevation the window labels seen on the north are repeated on the south in the office section, but the label extends out to become a stone band with no windows under it all the way to the arena entrance. The water table does the same. In the west elevation the shallow piers that divide the windowless bays have stone caps and plinths. All along the auditorium section, the stone footing is capped with a string course of black brick. Up and around the arena doorway black bricks form a two-string surround. Wherever the row of black bricks encounter window and door openings, the string is terminated by a square stone plaque. Other geometric decorations in the form of small, square stone plaques are set at the bottom corners of the pilasters in several places and over the arena doorway.

East elevation:

The east elevation is plain and undecorated. There has always been a ten-foot alleyway to the east of it, giving access to two "side doors" that admitted patrons to the arena and occupants to the offices off the hallway around the arena. In this elevation the functions of the building's two sections is clearly illustrated. The north end (office section) has windows: five on the third floor, four on the second floor, and only three on the first. The south end (arena section) had only ten windows of various sizes, all on the ground floor, and three entries. Eight of the windows were infilled with brick, probably in 1966 when the police department moved into the building. Presently, only two original entries and two window openings (on the northern end) remain. These have older-model steel doors with half lights. Green canvas awnings protect the entries.

Other elements visible on the east include a tall brick chimney. The east wall has several sets of electrical conduits, two drainage downspouts, and a glass case for posting meeting notices. Also within the resource boundaries are a fenced area that hides mechanical system equipment and a "street" light pole that illuminates one doorway.

South elevation:

The south elevation, originally devoid of any openings, was situated across a narrow passageway that separated the Municipal Building from another building on Third Street. In 1966, when the police department moved into the arena, a ramp was constructed up to a new doorway in the approximate center of the wall. The area was covered with a fifteen-by-twenty-foot concrete-block carport or drive-through that has an overhead door on both east and west sides; in 1988 this drive-through was connected to a second ground-level drive-through accessing the new jail (the County/Federal Jail). The two carports have a south/north party wall. This provided shelter/security for prisoners entering the "Booking" section, and now it facilitates their transfer across to the County Jail. The carport attached to the Municipal Building's south wall covers only 180 square feet of the south wall and does not constitute a formal addition to the building.

Basement:

The building also has a full basement. It originally housed various mechanical systems. It serves the same purpose today, with the addition of the fact that city records are stored there.

Interior:

The interior of the building, as mentioned earlier, has two functional sections. The north end, which is office space, comprises about one-third of the volume. Room arrangement has been reconfigured from the original, primarily by subdividing spaces. The south end of the building, comprising about two-thirds, was the arena section. The arena ceased functioning as an arena in 1966 and was reconfigured into police department offices and utility rooms.

The office section is accessed from Okmulgee Avenue through the original three pairs of steel doors that lead into a broad vestibule. The interior doors of the vestibule are three pairs of original multi-light wood units. The vestibule leads to a lobby that has offices on the sides, an elevator/stairwell area, and access to a hallway around the arena section. The vestibule and lobby floors are terrazzo; the walls have marble wainscoting; both terrazzo and marble are original. The office arrangement is new, and on this floor the doors accessing the lobby are new aluminum slab-glass units. Over the decades, on all three floors reconfigurations of space has sometimes re-used the original doors and door facings in various places. The hallways on floors two and three retain original terrazzo and marble wainscoting, as do the stairwell landings and walls.

The plan of the arena section remains as originally configured. It had a lowered arena floor, below grade, and concrete bleachers that climbed almost to the ceiling in a U-shape around the west, north, and east sides. A raised stage was in the south end and had dressing rooms and other staging and storage areas. A U-shaped hallway still surrounds the arena, off which are various offices to west, north, and east. However, the three doorways originally accessing the arena proper have been blocked. The floor of the arena has been ingeniously "adaptively re-used." To see its original configuration and materials, one must crawl through a small half-door at the second-floor level of the office section. Inside, if one climbs partway up the bleachers, one looks down on the top of a two-story concrete-block building erected circa 1966 to accommodate police department functions. Though the new building fills the entire arena floor, the arena otherwise was left virtually intact. From the viewing position in the stands, one sees all the way around the arena, the original stage, and the original suspended lighting fixtures as well as the arched steel trusses that hold up the roof. On top of the block building run all of the HVAC mechanicals and so forth. The concrete block building/police offices are accessible to the public through the arena's original west entrance (described above) on Third Street and by a single door into the arena at stage level on the south side, accessing a concrete block "security" carport.

Alterations:

The original windows have all been replaced. In their stead are all-metal multi-light single-hung 4x4 units under 4x2 transoms; these were installed in 1998 and were designed to mimic the original 1931 multi-light center-opening casements and transoms. The original windows had an assortment of glazing patterns, generally 4x4 in the upper stories and 4x5 in the ground story. Doors were replaced on west and east circa 1966.

The interior has been altered by the rearrangement of rooms (see above). Original elements remaining are the terrazzo and marble in the hallways. In the arena, the bleachers, lighting, and stage remain despite the construction of a building inside the building.

The only alteration to the exterior is the penetration of the south wall for a small doorway into a security carport that accesses another carport to the south of it. The adjacent County/Federal jail complex, situated south of the Municipal Building, is a large, functionally windowless "Modern Movement" quasi-International Style flat-roofed, two-story, red brick building with exposed concrete piers and structural elements. It was erected in 1988 forty feet south of the Municipal Building, on part of Lot 3, Lots 4 through

5, and part of Lot 6 of Block 53. Its long axis is along Third Street. It may be accessed through the aforementioned ground-level small "security" carport that is connected by a doorway to the small 1966 elevated carport that accesses the south wall of the Municipal Building, but the jail is primarily accessed through doors on Third Street and on Columbus Street. The jail building was not erected as an addition to the Municipal Building, but sits well south of the lot line. The jail was merely connected with the city hall by the two contiguous covered drivethrough areas, and therefore, neither the jail nor the carports are included in this nomination as noncontributing buildings.

In sum, the 1931 Muskogee Municipal Building, in downtown at 229-231 W. Okmulgee Avenue, is almost pristine on the exterior and maintains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association that enables it to represent the historic meaning of the building. As such, it maintains more than sufficient integrity for eligibility in the National Register.

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.
- [ ] 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 N/A
(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.)
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
SOCIAL HISTORY
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance
1931-1966

Significant Dates
1931

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

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
ARCHITECT/H. H. Nieman; L. L. Howenstine; Layton, Smith & Forsyth
BUILDER/Manhattan Construction Company

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 Muskogee Municipal Building, located at 229-231 W. Okmulgee Avenue in Muskogee, Oklahoma, is locally significant in three areas because it was planned and executed as a multi-purpose building. Under Politics/Government it is significant as the City's first-ever formal city hall. Erected in 1931, it represents the combined efforts of city leaders and citizens to aggregate their local government departments into one dedicated facility where local laws and ordinances might be made and enforced. It is also eligible in the area of Social History as a formally established meeting place for local patriotic groups, and under Entertainment/Recreation as a venue for large public events. The period of significance extends from the year of construction, 1931, to 1966, the year when it ceased to function as a social and recreational building but continued as the city seat of government.

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

Muskogee, Oklahoma, established in 1872 in the Creek Nation, has always been a center of government, economic, and transportation activities in Eastern Oklahoma. Early on, it was the seat of the administration of justice in the Indian Nations. By the time of statehood it was the second-largest town in Indian Territory. The town incorporated in 1898 and after that time maintained a formal city government. From a population of slightly more than 4,000 in 1900, oil booms and other fortunate economic occurrences raised it to a population of 32,000 by 1920 and has grown little since 1920.[1]

The Muskogee Municipal Building, erected in 1931, is locally significant in the area of **Politics/Government** as the seat of city government. Although it was the most important town in eastern Oklahoma until well into the twentieth century, Muskogee's city government never had a home of its own. For decades the City rented office space for some of its functioning departments in one or another commercial buildings in the downtown area, including a two-story frame building on the south side of Okmulgee avenue between Second and Third streets and a combination fire station-office facility on S. Second Street. When Muskogee went under a city manager form of government in 1920, the various departments were moved into a building in the 400 block of West Broadway. Six years later, they moved again, this time to the Barnes Building, a "skyscraper" at Third and Broadway, where the City offices scattered throughout various floors. For years, government leaders were unable to convince taxpayers that the citizens could afford to build permanent government quarters befitting a town of Muskogee's size and importance.[2] According to historian Grant Foreman, during the 1910s and 1920s city lots were at a premium, with owners holding out for high prices.[3] For its first thirty decades of formal existence, the City had no municipal building in which to consolidate community government's lawmaking and regulating functions.

In 1927 the City Council seriously entertained the idea of building a permanent building for municipal offices, and they cast about for suitable locations. By April three sites were under consideration.[4] The council approved a $400,000 bond issue, despite an organized opposition movement and public meetings both for and against the idea.[5] Both the council and citizens favoring the project envisioned more than a

[1] Wallace F. Waits, Jr., "Muskogee," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, ed. Dianna Everett et al (Oklahoma City: OHS, 2009), 995-96.
[2] *Muskogee Daily Phoenix*, 17 August 1930; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Muskogee, Oklahoma,1912/1951.
[3] Grant Foreman, *Muskogee: The Biography of an Oklahoma Town* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943), 150.
[4] *Muskogee Daily Phoenix*, 3 April 1927.
[5] Ibid., 21 January 1928, 22 January 1928.

mere city hall-type office building. From the outset, plans included office space for various local nonprofit organizations, mostly of the patriotic variety, as well as a large public meeting space. Doing so ran up the price considerably. The City engaged Dawson and Griffiths, two local architects to prepare a very preliminary "sketch" of the building, which, noted the *Muskogee Daily Phoenix*, showed an auditorium with a capacity of 940 that filled "more than half the cubic space of the building. Additional large rooms are designed for storage of National Guard properties and other military apparatus and for a host of other semi-civic and charitable organizations."[6] It soon became apparent that the City Council favored the purchase of a lot at the corner of West Okmulgee Avenue and Third Street belonging to federal judge Charles Raymond, a prominent local personage. Property owners approved the bond on January 25, and the Raymond site was officially selected, for which the City would pay $80,000.[7]

In February the council sent out an "RFP" to the city's five local architect firms. Interestingly, the request included a stipulation that the City of Muskogee reserved the right to use part or all of each proposal in "a composite conception." The firms were M. D. Hardin, Dawson and Griffith, H. O. Valeur, L. L. Howenstine, and H H. Nieman. No outside bids were solicited. The architects were allowed about a month in which to prepare and submit their plans and elevations, which they did. At some point three "out of town" architectural firms also submitted bids, but their identities remain speculation, at this point. The nod went to both L. L. Howenstine and H. H. Nieman.[8] When the two submitted their next set of plans, dated May 1928, the names recorded on them were "H. H. Nieman & L. L. Howenstine, Architects, Muskogee/Layton, Hicks & Forsyth, Associate Architects, Oklahoma City."[9]

Planning aside, execution of the construction contracts was delayed for two reasons, the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, and a lawsuit. For two years the bonds found no buyers, and the situation was complicated by a suit challenging the bond issue's validity. It went to the Oklahoma Supreme court in 1929 and the City's position was upheld. Meanwhile, the bond market went to zero. Finally, in 1930 $80,000 of the bonds were exchanged with Judge Raymond for his Lot 1, Block 53 on Okmulgee Avenue, and three local banks took up the rest of the bonds, providing the money for construction to proceed.[10] Time passed; prices rose. The architects originally planned an exterior combination of elaborate Modernist, almost ZigZag Deco, applications of art-carved stone to vertical projections and frontispieces and other stylistic decorations, combined with a Classical Revival entryway for the municipal office section. Apparently to save money, the final product was pared down. The Classical elements were kept and a few of the simpler Art Deco details retained, but the Zigzag art-carved applications were eliminated. Ground was broken on August 16, 1930, with George Gibson's company as the excavation contractor.[11]

The Muskogee Municipal Building truly comprised a community endeavor. In addition to receiving the financial backing of local financial institutions, the City retained Manhattan Construction Company (L. H. Rooney, owner, headquarters in Muskogee) to do the construction work. Manhattan built it on a cost-plus basis, rather than on a contract. They received a "nominal fee" of $10,500 and the architects a fee of $8,600, but all the materials were obtained through the City Purchasing office. Noted the newspaper, "All materials were purchased and labor hired and supervised by the city." Thus, as the Depression deepened, the city's government was able to provide income for local businesses and jobs for workers during 1930 and 1931. The cost of the building reached $304,000 (plus the cost of the lot).[12]

The building reached completion in mid-May 1931. Dedication ceremonies came on May 29 with a brief program. The 3,000-capacity auditorium filled to capacity with citizens anxious to see what their new city government building looked like. After speechifying by Mayor E. J. Phelps and City manager Ed Brook, followed by the Muskogee Symphony Orchestra and Community Chorus in concert, a dance "in the arena

[6] Ibid., 24 January 1928.
[7] Ibid., 25 January 1928, 17 August 1930.
[8] Ibid., 18 February, 22 March 1928.
[9] "City Hall & Municipal Building, Muskogee Oklahoma, May 1928, Comm. No. 873," Original Plans, multiple sheets (not all as built).
[10] *Muskogee Daily Phoenix*, 17 August 1930.
[11] Ibid., 17 August 1930.
[12] Ibid., 29 May 1931.

of the auditorium" concluded the celebration. The first public event held there was a boxing program in June.

True to the City Council's original concept, the Muskogee Municipal Building became a real civic center. The interior uses remained as planned, with spaces allotted to all of the city's offices, a local history museum, and numerous patriotic and quasi-patriotic organizations. On first floor north, in the "office section," adjacent to the lobby lay offices for the City Clerk and the Cater Department as well as a small museum. The second floor had offices for the Mayor, City Manager, Sanitation Department, Traffic Division, City Engineer, and Health Department as well as the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce. Moving immediately into new quarters on the first floor south, or "arena section" offices were the Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, United Charities, and Junior Chamber of Commerce. The third floor had a large City Council Chambers.

The third floor also illustrates the building's significance for local **Social History**. In the northeast corner was a large Patriotic Hall, which would be "an assembly room for exclusive use of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Spanish-American War Veterans, and others."[13] The national American Legion and VFW were established by World War I vets only recently, in the 1920s. The Patriotic Hall had adjacent rooms for a kitchen, a storeroom, and a lounge room with a water closet. From 1932 through 1965, City Directories list the patriotic organizations among the "occupants" of the Municipal Building although a few "posts" and "units" gradually began to opt for their own buildings around town, especially after World War II brought in a raft of new members.[14]

Interestingly, in its social-patriotic purposes the building compares to the Kingfisher Memorial Hall (1921), a city hall that was erected as a formal, public World War I memorial and housed the American Legion and similar groups (it was also designed by Layton, with Smith and Forsyth). During the 1920s other towns in Oklahoma erected memorial buildings that included patriotic quarters, city offices, and large meeting halls, for example, Ada (1923) and Durant (1939). The 1931 Muskogee building was not designated as a World War I memorial, the impetus for memorializing a very short war having waned. Nevertheless, in the nature of its occupancy, it functioned as such.[15] From 1931 until 1965 the Municipal Building's Patriotic Hall remained in use for all of those organizations and their auxiliaries for their gatherings.

"Social conscience" groups also gladly accepted quarters in the new building. In addition to the Boy and Girl Scouts, the American Red Cross, March of Dimes, and United Charities (later, the Community Chest) occupied the arena section offices from 1931 through the mid-1960s. When the City began reconfiguring the building in 1966, the nonprofits moved out.[16]

The City's arena as served the city's main local **Entertainment and Recreation** venue for more than thirty years, although its utility waned over time. The arena section had concrete bleachers to seat 3,000, a stage that would seat 200 people, and a projection room, as well as dressing and storage rooms. A custom-made curtain, with a design that included the official seals of each of the Five Civilized Tribes, decorated the stage. Remnants of it still hang there. The arena regularly hosted a variety of activities from sports to concerts and conventions through the 1940s and 1950s.[17] Increasingly, in the early 1960s the accommodations became outdated, and events were held in the high school and junior high school auditoriums and the YWCA All-Purpose Room. Construction of a new civic center was begun nearby in

[13] Ibid., 29 May 1931.
[14] Original Plans, May 1928; *R. L. Polk's City Directory of Muskogee, Oklahoma*, 1932-1965.
[15] See Kingfisher Memorial Hall, NR06000487, National Register Nomination, State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City.
[16] *Polk's Directory*, 1932-1968.
[17] Ibid., 1965, p. x, and 1966, p. xv; see also scattered dates in *Muskogee Daily Phoenix* for the period of significance, for example, reports of sporting events on 9 May and 6 June 1963.

1966-67 and opened in 1968.[18] In 1966 the City reconfigured the arena floor and adjacent offices to house the Muskogee Police Department.[19]

Additional Developmental Context:

The 1931 Muskogee Municipal Building was identified in a 1998 Reconnaissance Level Survey of Muskogee as one of two government buildings in the study area that were deemed National Register-eligible. The survey did not suggest an area of significance for the Municipal Building, perhaps due to its "combination" of Classical Revival and Modern Movement/Art Deco styles. The other was the Beaux Arts-style Federal Building (1911); it was deemed eligible for Architecture. Three others were deemed worthy of further study and include the Tudor Revival-style Federal Townsite Survey Office (1889) and two local government buildings, both fire stations designed in Moderne/Streamline style (1940s). One other Classical Revival-style government building, the original Muskogee Public Library (1913) was identified for its Education significance, but it is a more purely Classical Revival building than is the Municipal Building. Similarly, the First Methodist Episcopal Church (Trinity United Methodist Church, 1911) is also more purely Classical Revival and was deemed worthy of further study for its Architectural significance.[20] Because of the existence of these comparables, the Muskogee Municipal Building is not being nominated for Architectural Significance.

[18] Ibid., 1965, p. x and 1966, p. xv.
[19] Ibid., 1965-67; information and present floor plan for arena area, provided by Robert Atchley, Building Maintenance Supervisor, Muskogee Municipal Building, 8 May 2013.
[20] Bays, Brad, et al. "Reconnaissance Level Survey of a Portion of Muskogee, Project No. 40-97-12040.013." Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, 1998, p. 28.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Bays, Brad, et al. "Reconnaissance Level Survey of a Portion of Muskogee, Project No. 40-97-12040.013." Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, 1998.

"City Hall & Municipal Building, Muskogee Oklahoma, May 1928, Comm. No. 873," Original Plans, multiple sheets (not all as built).

Foreman, Grant. *Muskogee: The Biography of an Oklahoma Town* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943).

Information and present floor plan for arena area, provided by Robert Atchley, Building Maintenance Supervisor, Muskogee Municipal Building, 8 May 2013.

Kingfisher Memorial Hall, NR06000487, National Register Nomination, State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City.

Muskogee Daily Phoenix, 1927-1931.

R. L. Polk's City Directory of Muskogee, Oklahoma, 1932-1965 (Dallas and other: R. L. Polk Company, var. dates).

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Muskogee, Oklahoma, 1907, 1912, and 1912/1951.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

N/A

____ 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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property __Less than 1 (one) 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: 35.748260 Longitude: -95.371593
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.)

All of Lot 1, Block 53, Muskogee Original Town, as recorded by Muskogee County Clerk Deed Records and County Assessor's records.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary comprises the original city lot 1 of block 53 upon which the building was erected in 1930-31. The south wall of the building falls on the south line of Lot 1.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Dianna Everett, Consultant to City of Muskogee Planning Office
organization: _____
street & number: 2510 Countrywood Lane
city or town: Edmond state: Oklahoma zip code: 73012
e-mail weaver25@cox.net
telephone: 405/348-4679
date: June 10, 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: Muskogee Municipal Building

City or Vicinity: Muskogee

County: Muskogee State: Oklahoma

Photographer: Dianna Everett

Date Photographed: May 7-8, 2013

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

1 of _4__.

Photo 0001; East elevation; camera facing West

Photo 0002; North (main) elevation; camera facing South

Photo 0003; West elevation, south end, showing secondary entrance; and South elevation; camera facing East

Photo 0004; West elevation, north end, camera facing East

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.

Muskogee Municipal Building
Muskogee, Muskogee County, Oklahoma
Data Source: Google Earth
Date Retrieved March 11, 2013
Date Copy May 1, 2013

MUSKOGEE MUNICIPAL BUILDING
HELP SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL
United Way
CARING FOR WHAT MATTERS IN OUR COMMUNITY
ONE WAY

MUSKOGEE
POLICE
DEPARTMENT

MUSKOGEE POLICE
Safe Place