

# **SURVEY REPORT**

## **RECONNAISSANCE-LEVEL SURVEY OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN OKLAHOMA CITY**

**Prepared by**

**Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office**

**2009**

## **Acknowledgements**

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**Abstract**

This report represents the findings of the reconnaissance level survey of Mid-Century Modern buildings in Oklahoma City. The survey was conducted to develop an inventory and evaluate these buildings for their potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. This report provides an analysis of the findings of the significant Modern resources in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The survey was conducted between February 2009 and September 2009. A total of 191 buildings were surveyed; many more were evaluated for their potential significance. Of the buildings surveyed 67 were determined to be individually eligible for the National Register.

## **Introduction**

The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) provided the funding for this reconnaissance-level survey of Mid-Century Modern Architecture in Oklahoma City as an effort to be proactive in evaluating Post World War II Architecture. This survey project was created as a team effort by the Oklahoma SHPO staff: project guidance and oversight came from Lynda Schwan; Cynthia Savage and Allison Marshaus conducted all fieldwork including photography and the gathering of UTM points; Cynthia Savage and Glen Roberson provided research; Roberson drafted the historic context. This report is to guide preservation professionals and staff members in evaluating Modern Architecture.

The survey focused specifically on buildings with dates of construction between 1946 and 1971. Extending the survey through 1971 allowed for a comprehensive approach to the architectural styles present in Oklahoma City. The area of Oklahoma City surveyed is bound by I-44 to the north and west, I-35 to the east, and I-240 to the south. This area was selected for its potential to yield a variety of Modern Architectural styles.

## **Research Design**

This survey was created to explore Mid-Century Modern Architecture as it begins to reach fifty years of age. As Mid-Century Modern Architecture ages it gains in historical relevance and the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office has taken a progressive approach by conducting this survey.

As with any serious inquiry into the past and the forces at work in shaping the development of the world in which we live, including an examination of the historic resources, requires a systematic effort to assure (1) conformity to national standards and requirements within the framework of the National Register of Historic Places, (2) consistency of evaluation, (3) awareness of historical concepts and contexts appropriate to understanding social change, and (4) professional historical research techniques. In any survey, and especially with a survey that includes a multitude of potential resources in a large geographic area it is import to develop a systematic approach. A systematic approach can help achieve a uniform analysis of architecturally significant commercial and public buildings dating from 1946-1971.

Archival research, using primary and secondary sources, developed a historic context for the survey area and helped to establish dates of construction for individual properties. Research occurred concurrently with the field survey and data review. This approach allowed the team to merge the field and research

data to create a strong and understandable relationship between Oklahoma City's history and its built environment.

## **Project Objectives**

The current survey has a variety of uses, but the core objectives shaped the kinds of information gathered and the interpretation of that information for a cultural resources management-planning tool.

- To identify through a reconnaissance-level survey those individual properties in the project area that, on the basis of design and integrity, are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and areas that Warrant Further Study.
- To record and photograph those individual properties in the project area that, on the basis of design and integrity, are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
- To identify and annotate all reference material necessary for completing National Register nominations for properties located in the study area.
- To develop a historic context for future evaluation of Mid-Century Modern Architecture.

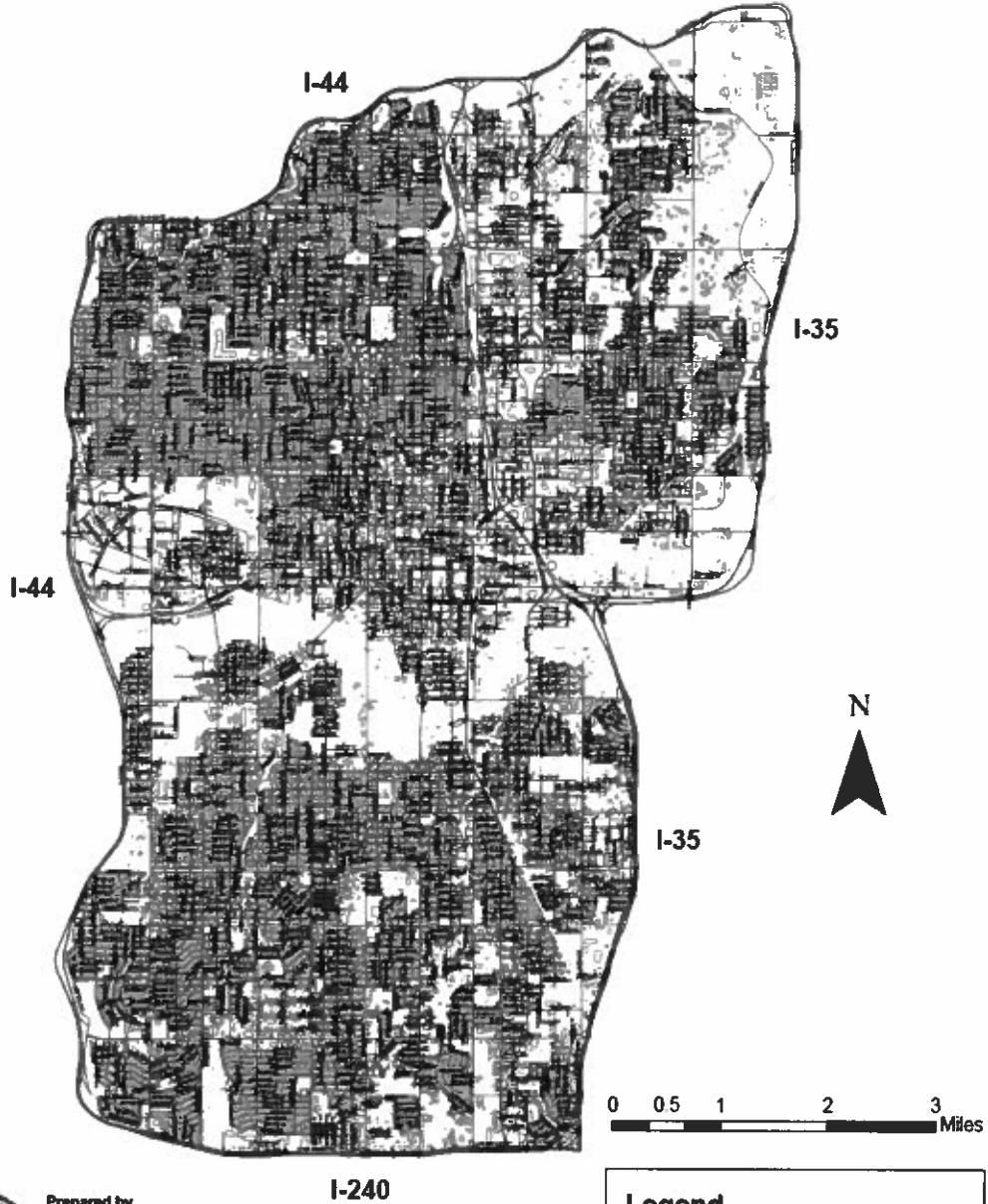


## **Area Surveyed**

The area surveyed includes a section of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma bound by Interstate 44 to the North and West, Interstate 35 to the East, and Interstate 240 to the South, with the exception of the core of Downtown Oklahoma City. The core of Downtown Oklahoma City was included in a concurrent Intensive level survey completed by the Oklahoma City Planning Department.

The modern architecture survey area was selected for the definable boundaries and the potential for variety in the types of structures and styles. Three buildings were surveyed out side of these boundaries because they were identified as excellent examples of Modern Architecture: Belle Isle Library and Lutheran Church of Our Savior for their Exaggerated Modern style and St. Patrick's Catholic Church for its Brutalism style.

# Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Reconnaissance Level Survey



Prepared by  
The City of  
**OKLAHOMA CITY**  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
Comprehensive Planning  
and Urban Design Division  
2/17/2009 bd

## Legend

- Survey Boundary
- Structures (98,840 as of 2004)

## **Methodology**

This reconnaissance level survey of Mid-Century Modern Architecture in Oklahoma City began with a list of buildings created by the Oklahoma City Planning Department.<sup>1</sup> With this list the survey team began fieldwork, and over the course of the survey, the resources were refined based on findings. In addition to the list, the survey team used the Oklahoma City City Directories, the Oklahoma County Assessors Records, and The Daily Oklahoman. These archival resources were also used to determine dates of construction for the buildings. In some instances exact dates could not be determined; in those cases, approximate dates are noted.

All educational and public buildings constructed between 1946 and 1971 were documented. The survey also included potentially eligible office type commercial buildings over two stories. Smaller one-story structures exhibiting excellent integrity built in the time period were surveyed.

Due to time constraints and complexity these areas were determined to warrant further study:

- The Oklahoma State Fair Grounds
- Oklahoma University Medical Complex
- Saint Anthony's Hospital
- The Santa Fe Industrial Area.

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<sup>1</sup> John Calhoun's List from Oklahoma City planning department.

- Oklahoma City University
- City Parks
  - Lincoln Park
  - Will Rogers Park
  - Woodson Park

(See Appendix A for maps.)

#### Determining National Register Eligibility:

The National Register requirements for eligibility most often used are: the resource must be at fifty years old; the resource retains architectural integrity; and it meets one of the four criteria resources are evaluated for their historical significance. In this survey one criteria was primarily relevant, Criteria C for resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. Many of the resources in the survey were evaluated with Criteria Consideration G for resources that have achieved significance within the last fifty years.

The survey team used this basis for assessment while conducting fieldwork documenting buildings considered potentially eligible. After fieldwork was completed, all buildings were reassessed and determinations were refined to reflect each building's significance in the overall survey area.

## Survey Results

The Mid-Century Modern Architecture Survey of Oklahoma City examined approximately twelve hundred properties located within the survey area. Of the 191 properties evaluated, 68 were determined potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The resources surveyed illustrate the array of commercial and public property types and architectural styles constructed in the survey area Oklahoma City during the 25-year period beginning in 1946 and ending in 1971. Variations in the character and types of resources present provide information about the historic patterns of development that occurred in Oklahoma City.

**Figure 1: Original Function**

Business	22
Clinic/ Medical Business	12
Financial Institution	8
Fire Station	11
Government Office	10
Library	2
Organizational	11
Post Office	8
Professional	41
Religious Facility	47
School	17
Single Family Residence	1
Sport Facility	1

Drawn from the National Register subcategories for function and use, the survey team identified different categories of historic building functions for the surveyed properties. While the functions of some buildings have changed from their original use, this analysis original building function. As the was based on the

survey area incorporates a large portion of a major city that has grown and evolved over time, the variety of functional property types is extensive but not unexpected. There is architectural diversity within each of these functional categories, reflecting the span of construction from 1946 to 1971.

### **Schools**

The majority of schools surveyed were determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria C for their architectural significance for their Post World War II construction and Criteria A for their significance in Education. Only one school, Southeast High School was determined to be ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places due to extensive alterations.

### **Religious Resources**

Churches eligibility was based on Criteria C for their architectural significance and meeting Criteria Consideration A, in which a religious properties primary significance is derived from the architectural or artistic distinction. Churches determined eligible exhibited high levels of integrity and were representative of their styles. Churches constructed between 1946 and 1971 in Oklahoma City were built in a wide variety of styles ranging from traditional revival styles to the expressive styles of Modern Architecture.

### **Government Offices**

Each government office's significance was evaluated under Criteria C for their architectural significance. Ten government offices were found: three were determined eligible, one will require reevaluation once the building reaches 50 year of age, and another warrants further study to determine eligibility.

### **Post Offices**

Post Office eligibility was based on Criteria C for their architectural significance. Three were determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and two more will need to be reevaluated once the building reaches 50 years of age. All of these potentially eligible Post Offices have retained a high degree of integrity and have retained the building components of a post office; such as loading docks, signage, and flagpoles.

### **Fire Stations**

Fire Stations were determined eligible based on their architectural significance under Criteria C. Three Fire Stations were determined to have retained enough integrity to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places each was designed by the architecture firm of Sorey, Hill, Sorey. These buildings are no longer used for their original purposes as fire stations, two are vacant or used for storage and the third is used as a business and residence.

## **Libraries**

Two Libraries were found during the survey and were evaluated under Criteria C for architectural significance. Only one was determined eligible, the Belle Isle Library. It was designed and constructed in the Exaggerated Modern style by Turnbull & Mills Inc in 1963 and retains a high level of integrity.

## **Businesses**

The survey team found twenty-two businesses in the survey area. Only one has been determined eligible. Two more will need to be reevaluated once the building reaches fifty years of age. The eligible business has retained a high level of integrity and was constructed with petrified wood. Petrified wood was not found on any other structure in the survey area making it an unusual building material.

## **Professional**

Forty-one professional buildings were found in the survey area. Twelve buildings located within the survey area are considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because they retain a high degree of integrity. Professional buildings constructed in this time period possess a variety of atypical styles.



### **Financial Institutions**

Eight financial institutions were found; only one was determined eligible. It is the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association located at 3301 South Western. This example of Modern Movement architecture retains a high level of integrity. The details of this building and signage set it apart from the seven other buildings that have extensive alterations.

### **Sport Facility**

Holiday Bowl and Car Wash was the only sport facility found in the survey area it was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria C for its Exaggerated Modern Style.

### **Medical Businesses and Clinics**

Buildings constructed for medical purposes were evaluated for their Architectural Significance under Criteria C. Twelve buildings were found; five were determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for their exceptional architectural styles. One more is potentially eligible once it reaches fifty years of age.

## **Architectural Styles**

The architectural styles identified in the survey area and assigned to the properties follow the terminology and classifications accepted by the National Register of Historic Places program. Due to the nature of the survey additional terms were utilized to define Modern Buildings.<sup>2</sup>

**Brutalism-** This style is characterized by a heavy mass and scale; typically they have highly sculptural blocky shapes. Concrete is the most typical building material though; brick and stucco are occasionally utilized. Only one building of this style is considered eligible for the National Register it is St. Patrick's Catholic Church.

**Contemporary-** Buildings constructed in the contemporary style were built in the late 1970's –1980's. Smooth surface, geometric forms and detailing characterize this style.

**Exaggerated Modern-** Buildings constructed in the Exaggerated Modern style have an excessive quality. Features like dynamic rooflines, curvaceous geometric shapes, and large sheet glass windows define this style. The materials used for these buildings vary widely from plywood to stone. This style was utilized in both commercial and public structures.

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<sup>2</sup> Developed with input from the National Park Service

**Gothic Revival-** Seven buildings were found in this style and four are eligible. All of the Gothic Revival buildings found through this survey were Religious Facilities. This style has an emphasis on height, often with steep pitched gable roofs and stained glass windows. The level of detail ranges from simple to very elaborate designs.

**Miesan-** Buildings constructed in this style have a strong emphasis on rectangular forms and straight lines. Typical materials are metal and glass. One building of this style was located although it is not eligible due to alterations. Because these buildings have minimal features even minor changes such as color can make the building ineligible.

**Mission/Spanish Revival-** Buildings constructed in this style have low pitch roofs, buff colored brick or stucco, and arched windows.

**Mixed-** Buildings that encompass three or more architectural styles. Two buildings were located with mixed styles, neither are eligible.

**Modern Movement-** The majority of structures surveyed were of the Modern Movement style. This term encompasses many structures that express modernism but lack further definition because the Modern Movement put such a strong emphasis on simplicity and minimalism. Characteristically these are small buildings one or two stories high, have flat roofs, fixed windows, and minimal

detailing. Materials used for construction are brick, concrete, metal, wood, stone, and synthetics.

**Moderne-**Examples of this style featured cubic and cylindrical forms with a horizontal emphasis, smooth surfaces, curving shapes and minimum ornamentation. These buildings have smooth or buff brick walls and curved corners that define their architectural style.

**Neo-Expressionism-** Buildings constructed in the Neo-Expressionism style may have these features: distorted shapes, fragmented lines, and massive sculpted shapes. They were typically constructed using concrete or brick.

**New Formalism-**Buildings constructed in this style embrace Classical precedents such as building proportion, scale, and classical columns. New Formalism was typically designed on the larger urban scale and used symmetry and grand axis to achieve monumentality. The materials utilized for this style are concrete, brick, and metal.

**Populuxe-** Buildings constructed of this style have canopies that rise at sharp angles, visual fronts, and large sheet glass windows. Materials used for construction include steel, glass, concrete, and plastics.

**Post Modern-** Buildings constructed in the Post Modern Style embrace portions of Classical design. They have decorative elements, which is avoided in most

modern architecture. These elements are often enlarged or exaggerated from their typical scale.

**Figure 2: Architectural Styles**

<b>ARCHITECTURAL STYLE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>ELIGIBLE</b>
Brutalism	5	1
Contemporary	1	0
Exaggerated Modern	8	6
Gothic Revival	7	4
Miesian	1	0
Mission/Spanish Revival	2	0
Mixed	1	0
Modern Movement	138	48
Moderne	3	1
Neo-Expressionisms	3	1
New Formalism	8	4
No Distinctive Style	8	0
Populuxe	1	0
Post Modern	5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>67</b>

## **National Register Evaluation**

All properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places must retain sufficient architectural integrity to convey the period of time for which they are significant. Integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity. There are seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Not all aspects need to be present but the building needs to retain enough to convey an overall sense of the past. Each building found in the survey was evaluated for National Register eligibility. In addition, since many of these buildings were constructed in the last fifty years they must also meet Criteria Consideration G for exceptional significance.

## **Historic Context**

Oklahoma City was first settled in 1889, and by the time that Oklahoma was admitted to the Union in 1907, the City was the population center and commercial hub of the new state, as well as the State capital. The community had become a major regional commercial center, railway hub and had several large meat packing plants. Oil was discovered in the city proper in 1928, and the influx of oil money within the community greatly accelerated the city's growth and the construction of many high-rise and significant buildings in the city core.

During World War II, the City saw an influx of population, 25% above the previous decade, along with an increase in the number of retail and wholesale businesses.<sup>3</sup> With the installation of Tinker Air Force Base in 1941 and Midwest City Douglas Aircraft Company Plant in 1942, a war-based economy surfaced in Oklahoma City. By the end of the war, Oklahoma's economy successfully combined war-industry and oil-industry to create a growing Oklahoma City. These production, manufacturing and military giants, along with the side industries that supported them, provided many new jobs for both blue and white collar residents.

As the population and territory expanded at the end of WWII, so too did the use of automobiles and trucks on Oklahoma City roads. With improved roads and plenty of gas available after WWII, trucks began to haul goods greater distances. To meet the demands for needed transportation routes, the City built or expanded Grand Boulevard,

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<sup>3</sup> Harland Bartholomew & Associates. *The Comprehensive City Plan*.

Sheilds Boulevard, 39<sup>th</sup> Street Expressway and Classen Boulevard. The Federal government also played a crucial role in supplying needed transportation routes. With the signing of the Federal Interstate Highway Act in 1956, Interstate Highways 35, 40 and 44 were planned and eventually constructed through and around Oklahoma City. The Southwest 74<sup>th</sup> Street Expressway, begun in 1961, tied Interstate 35 with the planned H.W. Bailey Turnpike. Companies that might have once built near rail lines now built in suburbia and trucked their goods wherever needed.

By the wars end, Oklahoma City leaders had a new development agenda. Mayors Robert Hefner (1939-1947) and Allen Street (1947-1959) presided over municipal administrations that pursued urban redevelopment and aggressive annexation. The city government of the time articulated outright capitalism. Edward Gaylord, the owner of the Daily Oklahoman, the major newspaper in Oklahoma City, challenged the City, through editorials, to seek expansion both in land and population. In a Chamber of Commerce meeting in 1946, Gaylord challenged the City to increase the population from 236,000 to 300,000 by 1950.<sup>4</sup> While Gaylord's call might seem fanciful to some in the audience, the comprehensive plan that the City adopted in 1949 showed population growth running at 25% increase in rate over the depression era.

*The Comprehensive City Plan* of 1949 (here after called the Bartholomew Plan) noted two conflicting issues for Oklahoma City: chaotic development or residential subdivisions and a shortage of adequate housing. The Bartholomew Plan recommended new ordinances, regulations and land use patterns for residential subdivisions as well

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<sup>4</sup> Roy Stewart, *Born Grown: An Oklahoma City History*, (Oklahoma City: Fidelity Bank, 1974), 262.



as schools, parks, multi-family dwellings and streets.<sup>5</sup> Oklahoma City successfully achieved the acquisition of the Federal Aviation Administration Center and the construction of Lake Hefner and Overholser but accomplished little more from the Bartholomew Plan. The recommendations for new ordinances, regulations and land use patterns remained just that, a recommendation.

From 1949 to 1959, Oklahoma City annexed so much surrounding land that it almost doubled in size. At the end of WWII, the general boundaries of the City were: Pennsylvania on the west, Grand Boulevard to the south, Kelly Street to the east and Eubank Street to the north. By the end of 1959, the City moved south to the outskirts of Moore and north to within five miles of Edmond.<sup>6</sup> From this expansion came new commercial centers and the encompassing of existing residential areas such as The Village and Quail Creek. This expansion only accelerated movement out of the downtown into the growing community.

The first major shopping facility located outside the downtown of Oklahoma City came as a Sears Roebuck on Northwest 23<sup>rd</sup> and Pennsylvania. Eventually, the suburbanization of the City reached a point where strip malls began to appear. The first was Penn Square at the corner of Northwest Expressway and Pennsylvania Avenue in 1959. It was followed by the largest Montgomery Ward retail store in the nation, and in 1963, the first enclosed mall, Shepherd Plaza at Northwest 23<sup>rd</sup> and Pennsylvania. Downtown retailers began to join the suburban flight. Owners of restaurants, movie

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<sup>5</sup> Harland Bartholomew & Associates, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Map of Central City, City of Oklahoma City Planning Department, file "Maps and Ordinances".

theaters, office supplies, and clothing stores began to abandon the downtown and join the malls. In 1964 the biggest blow came to the downtown core, John A. Brown, the largest clothing store located in the downtown, closed its doors and moved north.

Population pressures to the outer-limits of Oklahoma City are reflected in the zoning maps from 1948 to 1970. In 1948, little north of Northeast 50<sup>th</sup> Street was zoned except for the light industry and commerce area along Santa Fe and the area between Santa Fe and Lincoln for single-family housing. Everything north of 50<sup>th</sup> Street in 1949 was zoned agriculture. South of Main Street, between Broadway and Lincoln, land was zoned heavy industry. The zoning continued south to the present day Interstate 240 with pockets of commerce and multiple dwellings zones throughout the area. North of the State Capitol, along Lincoln to 36<sup>th</sup> Street, small businesses and multi- and single family dwellings lined the street. City officials rezoned heavy industry and agricultural areas in all directions to commerce or single-family housing at breakneck speed. 1956 saw the expansion of Lincoln Avenue from two lanes to six-lanes north to Northeast Expressway for one million dollars.<sup>7</sup>

The expansion outward of the City and the increase in population necessitated an increase in public facilities to support the continued growth. All entities of government, from local, State to Federal, played a role in the City's expansion. Local government played a critical role in the location selection and construction of new schools. During the survey period in Oklahoma City multiple high schools and elementary schools were constructed along with two libraries. Fire Station construction was also necessitated by

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<sup>7</sup> "Lincoln Expansion Completed," *Daily Oklahoman*, June 15, 1956.

the construction of new residential areas; eight new facilities were constructed between 1947 and 1955 with an additional three constructed between 1956 and 1970. Though the expansion of police stations lagged behind the fire stations, a 40,000 square foot new police headquarters at 701 Colcord was completed in July of 1965.<sup>8</sup>

With the location of the State Capitol moved from Guthrie to Oklahoma City in 1910, State government has a looming presence in the City. Lincoln Boulevard and the surrounding streets became identified as the area for state government due to the placement of the State Capitol at Lincoln Boulevard, 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets. Multiple planning documents were prepared regarding the development of the area around the Capitol for State Offices. Many of the plans were executed with a result of eight eligible buildings constructed during the survey period. While the Federal government presence in the survey area is limited; it included the planning for new post offices, numbering four eligible buildings in the survey area.

The mass exodus left downtown buildings empty and civic leaders worried about what was happening to the City core. To stop the decay of the downtown, civic leaders founded the Oklahoma City Urban Action Foundation in 1961. Later the Foundation helped form the Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority (OCURA). In 1959, Oklahoma passed state enabling legislation establishing Urban Renewal Authorities. Eminent domain was used throughout the City to acquire sites defined as "blighted." OCURA planned and developed the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center south of the

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<sup>8</sup> *Oklahoma City Police Department*, 1990 Oklahoma City: OKC Police Association, 1991 Oklahoma Room, Downtown Metropolitan Library System.

State Capitol complex as well as the Central Downtown District.

Oklahoma City still had reason to be optimistic about its future. OCURA hired I.M. Pei, an internationally known architect and urban planner, to create a long-range plan to revitalize the decaying downtown. The resulting master plan, announced in 1961, called for radical reconstruction of the center of the City. It called for clearing 528 acres downtown and construction of a new central core. The Pei Plan was divided into five elements of development: a business/financial office area; a garden based on Copenhagen's famed Tivoli Gardens; a convention center; a residential area; and, a downtown shopping area.<sup>9</sup> While carrying out the downtown renewal program, OCURA was also planning two additional projects: the creation of University Medical Center and the John F. Kennedy Housing Redevelopment Project.<sup>10</sup>

The OCURA combination of private and public funds built many new buildings in Oklahoma City. The face of the City began to change, as buildings with large footprints replaced the density of small buildings; large parking lots constructed as part of the construction plan for the commuters from suburbia and new streets appeared on the landscape.

In the 1970s and 1980s, overproduction of oil in other parts of the world affected Oklahoma City. Oil prices declined nearly 50% when reduced demand accompanied the

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<sup>9</sup> Steve Lackmeyer, *OKC: second time around : a renaissance story* (Oklahoma City, Okla. : Full Circle Press), c 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Gruen Associates, Inc., *Central City Plan for Oklahoma City* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority, 1975), 2.

continued over-production of oil. The result was a “bust” in the market.<sup>11</sup>

By the early years of the 1970s, the American West had become per capita, the most urbanized section of the United States. A higher percentage of its population lived in communities of 20,000 or more; Oklahoma City had developed into a city of 600,000 people, doubling its population at the end of World War II. As its population grew, so too did its geography. As of 1970, civic leaders still boasted that Oklahoma City was the largest city in the United States in total land area. With that expansion came new schools, fire stations, and a new city plan focusing on explosive growth while attempting to renew its downtown core. Many of the buildings pre-1945 are gone and thousands of acres of farmland non-extant. They are replaced with retail stores, office buildings, shopping malls and residential developments. What had been the built history of the past is now the built history of the future.

Oklahoma City, between 1945 and 1971, experienced unprecedented growth and opportunity. The period is marked by a tremendous building boom. It is also marked by the shift to “modern” times as new technology changed how Oklahomans lived. Buildings were built and equipped with modern conveniences such as electric appliances. New industry developed to manufacture a wide variety of new goods. New shopping centers with new retail businesses were constructed to meet the growing desires of Oklahomans to spend their new-found wealth. New schools were built to educate the growing number of children as a result of the “baby boom” following the

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<sup>11</sup> “Oklahoma Oil and Gas Briefing Newsletter” (Oklahoma Department of Commerce January 23, 2006), 2.

war. New churches were building in the growing neighborhoods. "New" was seen as "good" and wherever possible, new buildings were constructed to meet the need to the new Oklahoma City.

### Commercial

Commercial architecture following the war embraced the bold new concepts of postwar period. Commerce flourished as Americans became more consumer minded. Commercial resources of the postwar period include office buildings, banks, specialty and department stores, restaurants, automobile showrooms and dealerships, and motels.

Immediately following the war, new commercial buildings were generally located in the established commercial centers, such as downtowns, and consisted of freestanding buildings that followed the Modern stylistic trend and were constructed with modern materials. By the end of the 1950s, however, new commercial construction was usually located in the new suburbs and expanding subdivisions at the edges of towns and cities.

Shopping centers were developed, often at the crossroads of new highways and major roadways leading to new suburbs and subdivisions. The switch to self-service shopping, coupled with more personal money for spending and an increased use of automobiles, led developers of shopping complexes to focus their designs on maximizing the number of shoppers. Layout of the shopping center was key, parking was critical and signage

was important, but architectural style was nearly irrelevant.<sup>12</sup> Even so, most shopping center of the period fit within the Modern style. Only a handful of shopping center existed prior to World War II; by 1958 the number had grown to 2900. Initially, these shopping centers were small strip malls; but the small malls soon gave way to large shopping centers. Enclosed malls date from 1956 when the Southdale Center opened in Edina, Minnesota.<sup>13</sup> Penn Square at the corner of Northwest Expressway and Pennsylvania Avenue in 1959; and, in 1963, the first enclosed mall, Shepherd Plaza at Northwest 23<sup>rd</sup> and Pennsylvania are local examples.

With the increased use of the automobile and the construction of new highways and access roads, came the development of new roadside services, including restaurants and motels. The roadside restaurant came into its own during the postwar period in the form of the drive-in restaurants.<sup>14</sup> Drive-ins, which existed in small numbers prior to World War II, experienced a huge boom during the post war years in large part due to the increased number of automobiles and the expanding suburbs.

By 1950, drive-in restaurants as a building type tended to have common characteristics – most notably a canopy under which parked cars could be protected from rain or sun. While some chains were not concerned with a consistent image of the buildings selling their product, most franchise chains “sought distinctive architectural decoration to

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<sup>12</sup> Geoffrey Baker and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers: Design and Operation*, (NY: Reinhold Publishing Co, 1951), 10.

<sup>13</sup> John Palen, *The Suburbs*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1995), 193-194.

<sup>14</sup> John A. Jackel, “Roadside Restaurants and Place-Produce-Packaging” in *Fast Food, Stock Cars, and Rock ‘n’ Roll* (NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1995), 105.

stimulate customer recognition through brand consciousness and brand loyalty.”<sup>15</sup> Designers employed a wide array of elements called “Exaggerated Modern” in their effort to create a unique image. In 1959, the first Sonic restaurants began to appear in the Oklahoma. Started as the “Top Hat,” the first restaurant was located in Shawnee in 1953. By 1959, the name changed from “Top Hat” to “Sonic.”<sup>16</sup> While no historic Sonics were identified in the survey area, drive-in restaurants are an important part of Oklahoma history.

Another roadside service that saw great changes following World War II was the motel. The modern motel grew out of cottage courts, which were arranged around a courtyard in the 1920s, to a line of cottages linked to form a continuous façade in the early to mid-1940s. These cottage courts evolved into motor courts by the late 1940s, where the room units were totally integrated under a single roofline; often in a one-story building. The word “motel” came into fashion by the 1950s and motel construction experienced rapid growth in wake of increased auto ownership, the new highway programs, and a 1954 Tax Code that made motel construction and ownership highly favorable. The small, one-story motels of the early to mid-1950s evolved into larger, multi-story facilities in the late 1950s and 1960s. They often offered amenities such as a full-service restaurant and a cocktail lounge.<sup>17</sup> Lincoln Plaza in the survey area is an excellent example of this property type.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Sonic-Corp-Company-History.html> (09/02/2009).

<sup>17</sup> John A. Jackel, “Motel by the Roadside: America’s Room for the Night” in *Fast Food, Stock Cars, and Rock ‘n’ Roll* (NY: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1995), 171-183.



In Oklahoma City, there are several examples of commercial resources from the Post-World War II period, most of which followed the national trends in architecture. Office buildings, banks, specialty and department stores, restaurants, and motels were constructed in the City.

### Government Resources

Government resources include buildings associated with the operation of city, state and national government such as the State Capitol, office buildings, fire stations, post offices, and public works. Buildings of these types were constructed throughout the City during the postwar period and, as with commercial buildings, their architecture moved from traditional to the modern and they were constructed with materials used during that time period. In Oklahoma City this includes the construction of post offices, State office buildings, and fire stations.

### Educational Resources

The years between 1945 and 1960 saw thousands of new education facilities constructed throughout the country. Colleges and universities built new classrooms, labs, libraries, dormitories and family housing to accommodate the huge numbers of veterans who chose to take advantage of the GI Bill to further their educations after the war. Permanent buildings on many campuses utilized the new architectural styles and materials, although there are some examples around the country where traditional styles were used to keep with campus plans. Oklahoma City University was identified in the survey as warranting further study.

By the early 1950s, the baby boom produced an increased need for new elementary and junior/middle schools throughout the nation. New thoughts on building design in the late 1940s resulted in schools that were modern and sleek; unlike the boxy traditional schools of the past. Elementary schools, especially those in new suburbs and new subdivisions, were often single-story buildings with wings and gymnasiums/auditoriums surrounded by substantial land to be used for playgrounds and athletic fields. There was an extensive use of aluminum windows, glass block, and other new materials. Junior high/middle schools were also modern and used the new materials available for construction. In Oklahoma City, many new educational buildings were constructed between 1945 and 1971 including elementary, high schools and public libraries.

### Religious Resources

Many churches were built throughout the City from 1945 to 1971. The new optimism that swept the country was carried into the churches and religious communities. As the population grew, so did the size of many congregations, in some cases resulting in the need for larger facilities. Many chose to share their new-found wealth with their churches and soon new buildings were constructed.

Religious buildings are a resource type that did not automatically embrace the modern architectural styles. It was not uncommon for churches during this period to employ traditional styles, most frequently Gothic Revival. Some churches of this period were actually designed in a transitional style that included traditional elements, such as

Gothic-arched openings, but in a sleek stripped down form with little applied ornamentation. Other churches boldly embraced the new styles. In Oklahoma City, many new churches were constructed. Stylistically, they range from traditional to Modern and include examples of that “transitional” style. Most made use of the modern materials available at the time.

### Recreational and Cultural Resources

Better wages and shorter work weeks, along with technological advances that automated many chores in the household, meant an increase in leisure time and the financial ability to enjoy it. From 1945 to 1971, Oklahoma City saw the creation of many new recreational and cultural resources.

Outdoor recreation facilities grew in numbers as the American public found more time to enjoy the outdoors. Baseball fields were built, parks were developed and swimming pools were installed. Because of the complexity of the park system in Oklahoma City, it was determined that future survey work would be needed for evaluation of eligibility based on complexity and time constraints.

Indoor recreation also grew in importance. One type of indoor recreation that experienced exponential growth in this period was that of bowling. During the war, the military installed more than bowling lanes on military bases as a form of recreation for soldiers. For many, this was their first exposure to the sport. After the war, many veterans wanted to continue to bowl and to accommodate the activity, bowling alleys

were constructed. New technology, such as automated pinspotters, advanced the sport, as well as the televised tournaments seen in living rooms throughout the country. The Professional Bowling Association was started in 1958.<sup>18</sup> The architecture of bowling alleys was not unlike that of other commercial enterprises of the period. Buildings were Modern in design and constructed of modern building materials.

A special study of theaters in Oklahoma was completed in 2005. This included the identification of movie theaters in Oklahoma City. In the evaluation, it identified five theaters constructed during this study period that warranted further study. This special study did not identify separate performance theaters. The current survey identified one example associated with First Christian Church on 36<sup>th</sup> Street. Buildings were Modern in design and constructed of modern building materials.

### Industrial Resources

The postwar period found an increase in industrial resources as several industries expanded operations and new industries were begun. As was typical prior to the war, many industrial buildings were utilitarian in nature. The Modern architecture of the post war period, however, lent itself to the nature of industrial architecture and a number of companies built plants that displayed elements of these styles. The use of new construction materials and techniques, however, was a given as industrial buildings were optimal environments for materials such as aluminum, steel and glass block. The industrial area along Santa Fe was not evaluated based on complexity and limited time.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.pba.com/>, 09/02/2009.

## Healthcare Resources

Healthcare following World War II saw changes in America. Prior to the war, healthcare in urban areas was primarily provided by individual physicians, small specialty clinics and hospitals. Following the war, a number of changes took place that changed how healthcare was provided.

The first major change was technology. This included new instruments and machines that could be used to improve illness diagnosis and treatment but also included new drugs, such as penicillin. The second major change was the introduction of healthcare insurance, which by the 1960s had become the standard way of conducting the financial end of healthcare business. In response to the new ways of providing healthcare, existing facilities were often modernized and new facilities were constructed. In keeping with the theme of modernization, the architecture of new facilities was usually Modern in style and made use of modern materials of the period. While the Modern survey in Oklahoma City did not evaluate the hospital complexes due to complexity and time constraints, it did find doctor's offices and other medical facilities throughout the survey area which were evaluated.

### Social Organizations and Social Movement Resources

Americans during the postwar period continued their interest in social organizations and social welfare movements. As a result, new facilities were constructed to house their various activities. In Oklahoma City this includes the construction of YWCA and YMCA facilities. The architecture of new facilities was usually Modern in style and made use of modern materials of the period.

## **Project Recommendations**

At the end of the survey each building received a recommendation for National Register status based on its age, integrity, and known association with the historic context. Possible eligible recommendations include: Individually Eligible; Potentially eligible reevaluate when the building reaches fifty years of age; warrants further study; and Not Eligible. The qualifications for these categories follow below. The survey results suggest that a Multiple Property Submission (MPS) could assist in the preservation and protection of historic resources.

The recommendations presented in this report should not be viewed as the final determinations. When and if individual buildings are formally nominated to the National Register, the integrity of each nominated resource should be re-examined. Future alterations may impact integrity to the point that buildings become ineligible for listing. Likewise preparation of a National Register Nomination will require additional research of the property history and exploration of areas of significance that exceed those required for this survey.

## **Individually Eligible Resources**

The survey identified sixty-seven buildings that appear to meet at least one of the four National Register Criteria for Evaluation and retain sufficient architectural integrity and historical associations to qualify them for similar status. See Appendix B for a list of these buildings.

### **Potentially Eligible Resources**

The survey identified twelve buildings that retain sufficient integrity however they are less than fifty years of age and do not possess a level of significance to meet Criteria Consideration G for exceptional significance. Our recommendation is that these buildings be reevaluated when they reach fifty years of age.

### **Warrant Further Study**

The survey identified nine buildings that require further study to determine their eligibility. These buildings had questions regarding integrity and significance that were beyond the scope of this survey and will require additional research to make an accurate assessment.

### **Not Eligible**

This survey identified 103 buildings that were determined to be ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places. These buildings lack critical elements of integrity.



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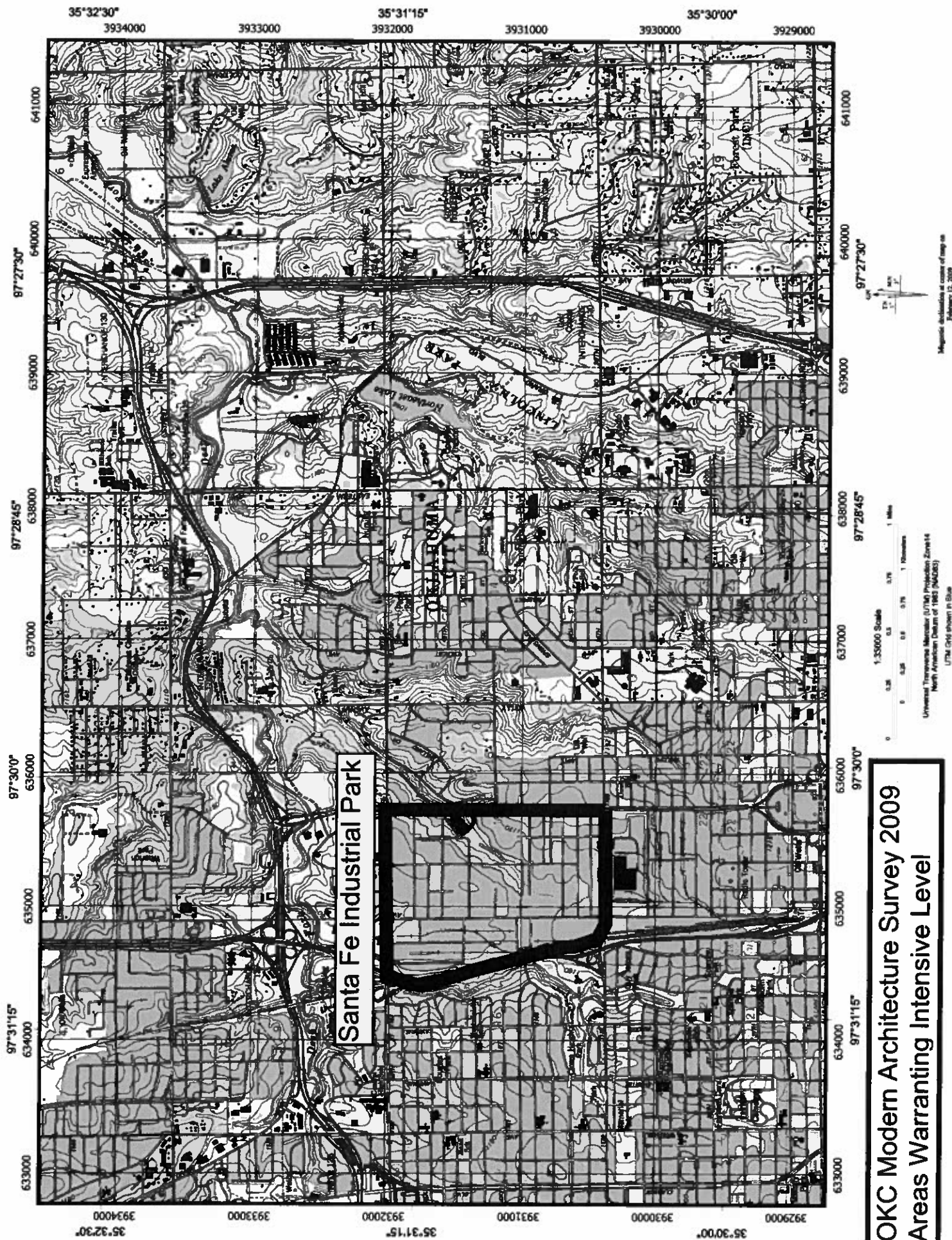
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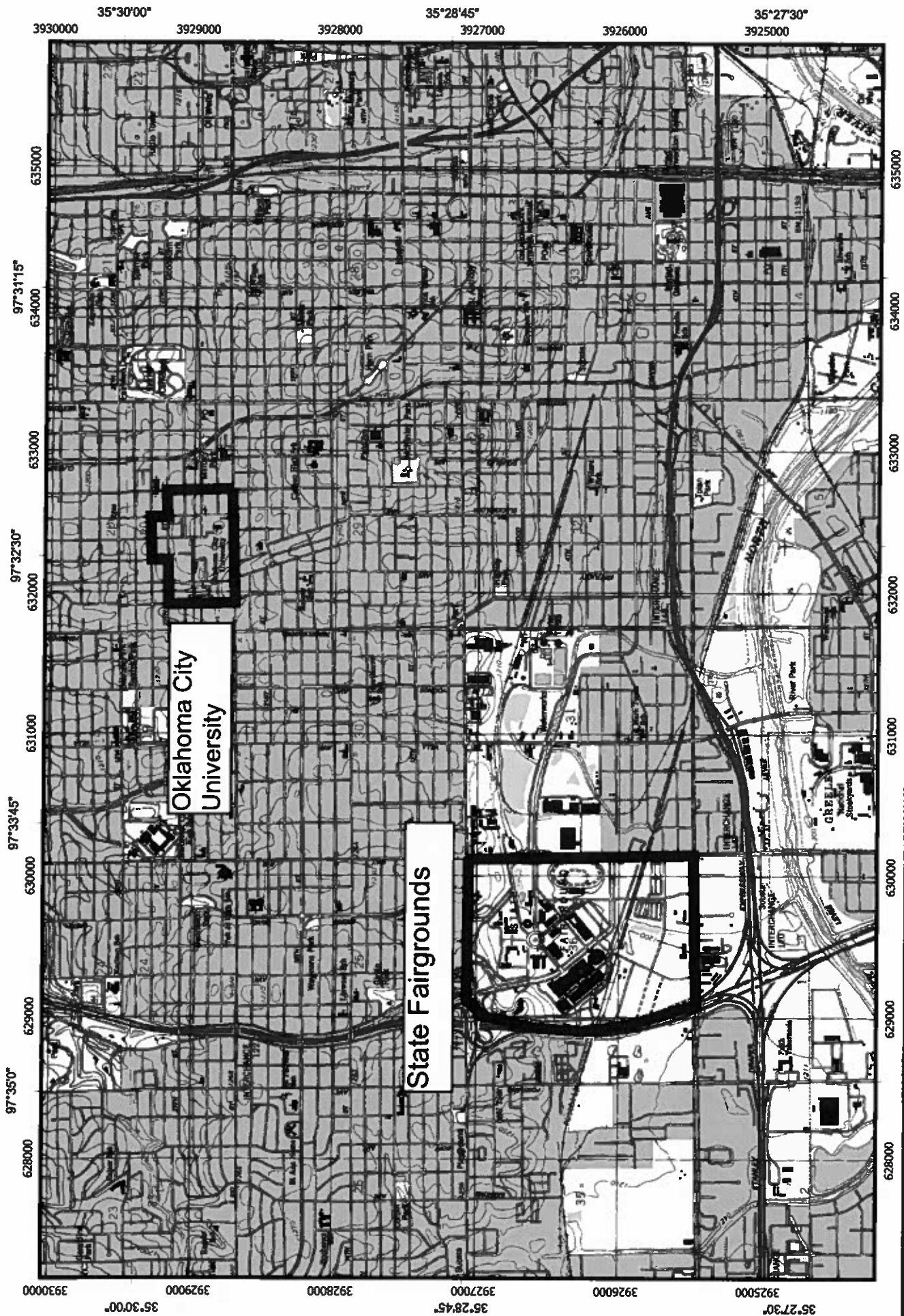
**APPENDIX A**  
**Areas that warrant further study**



OKC Modern Architecture Survey 2009  
Areas Warranting Intensive Level

Magnetic declination at corner of map on  
February 12, 2009

Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Projection Zone 14  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)  
UTM Grid shown in Blue

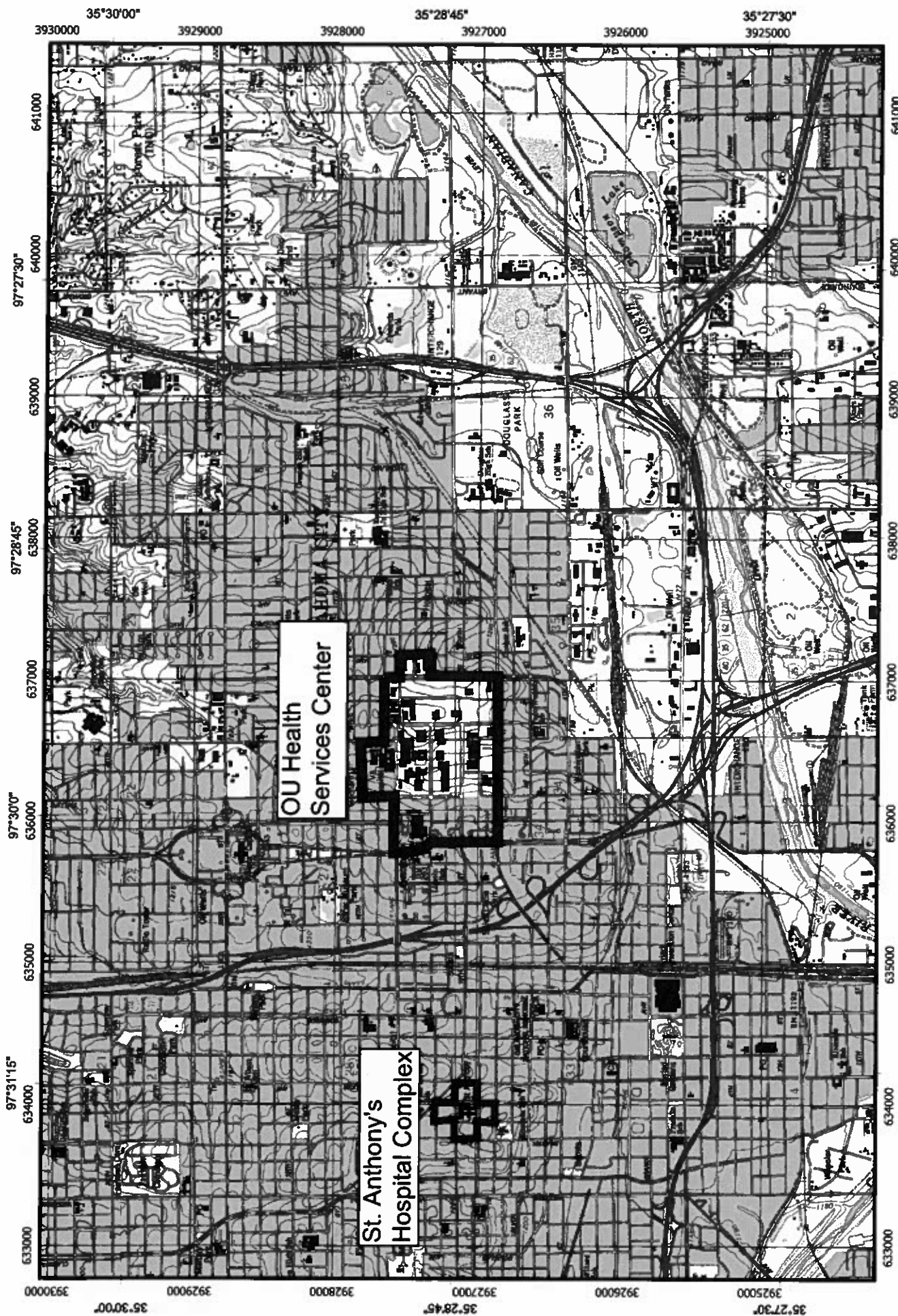


# OKC Modern Architecture Survey 2009 Areas Warranting Intensive Level Survey

1:35000 Scale  
0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles  
Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Projection Zone 14  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)  
UTM Grid shown in Blue

Magnetic declination at center of map on  
February 12, 2009

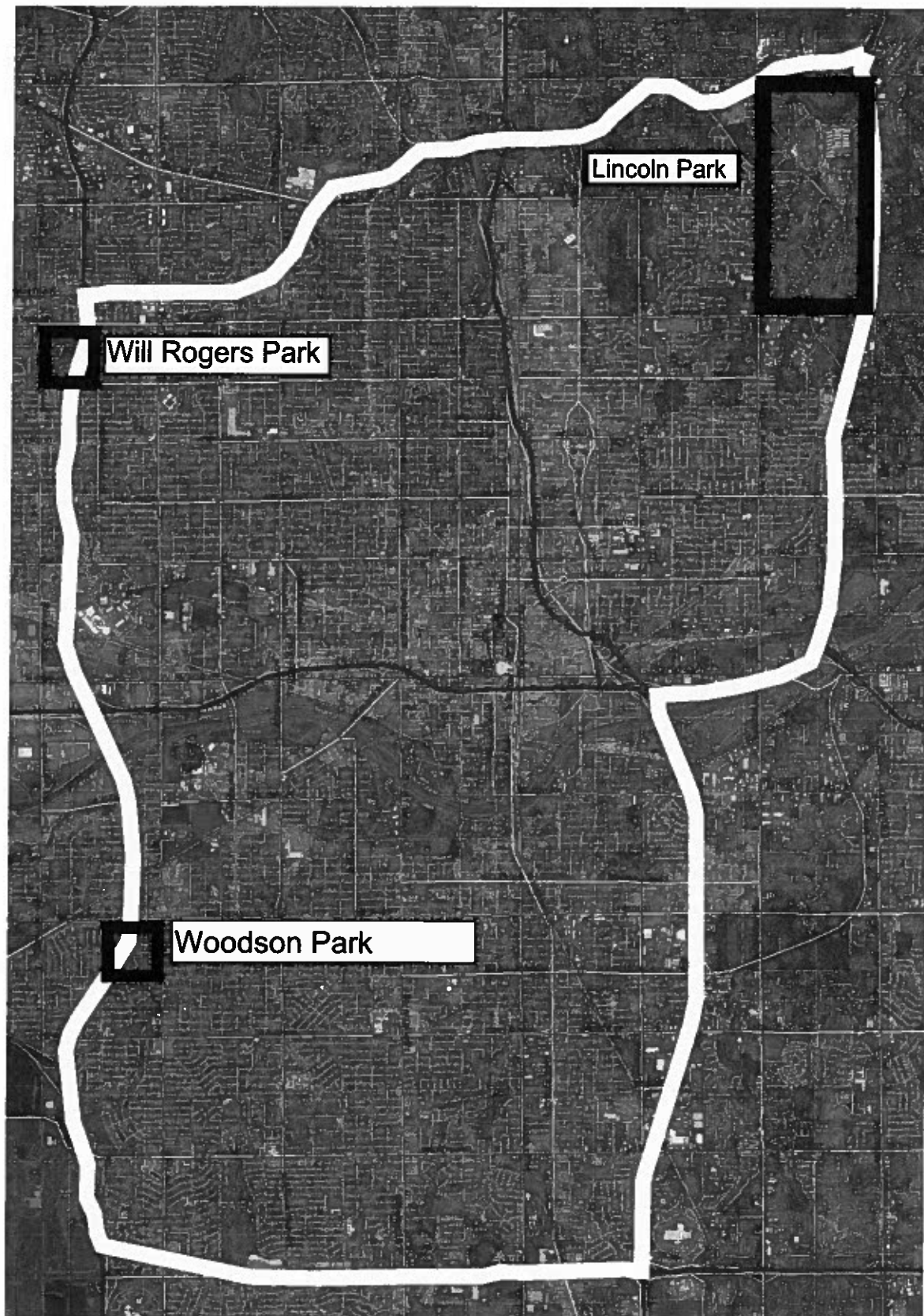




# OKC Modern Architecture Survey 2009 Areas Warranting Intensive Level Survey

Magnetic declination at center of map on  
February 11, 2009

Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Projection Zone 14  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)  
UTM Grid shown in Blue



## **APPENDIX B**



### **Individually Eligible Structures**

1. 2000 Classen Center-2000 North Classen Boulevard
2. 2519 NW 23rd Street
3. 4100 North Lincoln Boulevard
4. 415 NW 11th Street
5. 416 NE 46th Street
6. 4501 North Classen Boulevard
7. 701 NW 13th Street
8. 801 NW 23rd Street
9. Allied Steel Construction Company- 2211 NW 1st Terrace
10. Arthur Elementary School- 5100 South Independence Avenue
11. Ashbury United Methodist Church- 1320 SW 38th Street
12. Baptist Temple- 2433 NW 30th Street
13. Belle Isle Branch Library-5501 North Villa Avenue
14. Bettes Building- 1501 North Classen Boulevard
15. Cathedral de Adoration- 1345 SW 29th Street
16. Christ United Methodist Church- 1006 NE 17th Street
17. Church of the Living God- 625 North Kelham Avenue
18. Church of the Redeemer- 2108 North Martin Luther King
19. Colcord Center- 421 NW 46th Street
20. Coolidge Elementary School-5212 South Villa Avenue
21. Crown Heights Baptist Church- 4802 North Western Avenue
22. Doctors Building- 400 NW 13th Street
23. Eastern Branch USPO-1301 Martin Luther King Boulevard

24. Edwards Elementary School- 1123 NE Grand Boulevard
25. Emanuel Synagogue- 900 NW 47th Street
26. Faith Lutheran Church- 2512 South Shartel Avenue
27. Fillmore Elementary School- 5200 South Blackwelder Avenue
28. Finley Building- 128 NE 2nd Street
29. Fire Station #13- 1635 SW 29th Street
30. Fire Station #16-3416 South Robinson
31. Fire Station #3- 1111 North Hudson Avenue
32. First Christian Church- 3700 North Walker Avenue
33. First Presbyterian Church- 1001 NW 25th Street
34. Forty Forty Building- 4040 North Lincoln Boulevard
35. Frates Building- 720 NW 50th Street
36. Hayes Elementary School- 6900 South Byers Avenue
37. Hillcrest Elementary School- 6421 South Miller Boulevard
38. Hillcrest United Methodist Church- 5801 South Pennsylvania Avenue
39. Holiday Bowl and Car Wash- 44 SE 44th Street
40. Holy Temple Baptist Church- 1540 NE 50th Street
41. Home Federal Savings and Loan- 3301 South Western Avenue
42. Interstate Oil and Gas Company- 900 NE 23rd Street
43. Jefferson Junior High School- 6800 South Blackwelder Avenue
44. Madison Elementary School- 3117 North Independence Avenue
45. Martin Luther King Station USPO-1930 NE 24th Street
46. Moon Elementary School- 1901 NE 13th Street

47. Northwest Classen High School- 2801 NW 27th Street
48. OK Department of Wildlife Conservation- 1801 North Lincoln Boulevard
49. Oklahoma Bar Association- 1901 North Lincoln Boulevard
50. Oklahoma Pharmacists Association- 45 NE 52nd Street
51. Parmelee Elementary School- 6700 South Hudson Avenue
52. Pasture Medical Building-1111 North Lee Avenue
53. Polk Elementary School- 3806 North Prospect Avenue
54. Prairie Queen Elementary School- 6609 South Blackwelder Avenue
55. Rancho Village Baptist Church- 1411 SW 38th Street
56. Rancho Village Elementary School- 1401 South Johnston Drive
57. Roosevelt Junior High School- 3233 SW 44th Street
58. Salvation Army Welfare Center- 330 SW 4th Street
59. Sequoyah Memorial Office Building- 2400 North Lincoln Boulevard
60. South Walker Church of Christ- 5217 South Walker Avenue
61. Southwest Station USPO-5701 South Agnew Avenue
62. St. Luke' Methodist Church- 222 NW 15th Street
63. St. Patrick's Catholic Church- 2121 North Portland Avenue
64. Thirteen Thirty Building- 1330 North Classen
65. UCO Church- 2501 North Blackwelder Avenue
66. Webster Junior High School- 6707 South Santa Fe Avenue
67. Will Rogers Memorial Office Building- 2401 North Lincoln Boulevard

### **Potentially Eligible at 50 years**

1. 4115 North Classen Boulevard
2. 4335 North Classen Boulevard
3. 4401 North Classen Boulevard
4. 4409 North Classen Boulevard
5. 4509 North Classen Boulevard
6. Northgate Office Park- 4020-4028 North Lincoln Boulevard
7. Northwest Station USPO-1117 NW 24<sup>th</sup> Street
8. Oklahoma County Welfare Building- 2409 North Kelley Avenue
9. Physicians and Surgeons Building- 1211 North Shartel
10. United State Post Office- 320 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Street
11. YMCA McFarland Branch- 1701 North Martin Luther King Boulevard
12. YMCA South Penn Branch- 5309 South Pennsylvania Avenue

### **Warrant Further Study**

1. 1212-1214 North Hudson Avenue
2. 215 NE 23<sup>rd</sup> Street
3. 4400 North Lincoln Boulevard
4. Cameron Building- 2901-2915 North Classen Boulevard
5. Classen Terrace- 1411 North Classen
6. Corporation Commission Laboratory- 130 NE 23<sup>rd</sup> Street
7. Fire Station #4- 1245 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
8. Frew Building- 528 NW 12<sup>th</sup> Street
9. Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance- 2501 North Stiles Avenue