

CITY OF OKLAHOMA CITY INTENSIVE LEVEL SURVEY OF DOWNTOWN: PHASE 4

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URS Project Number 25338480

July 2012

Abstract

The City of Oklahoma City requested URS-Dallas office to perform an intensive level architectural and historical resources investigation for the purposes of conducting the fourth phase of a citywide multi-phase historic resources survey. The phased survey is part of a project to identify and develop a comprehensive inventory of historic resources in Oklahoma City by conducting the survey in accordance with *National Register Bulletin No. 24: Guideline for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning* and *National Register Bulletin No. 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

The project includes the identification and evaluation of properties for individual significance or as contributing structures to a historic district under the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility criteria. This report presents a description of the project, the methodologies for the records and archival research, the intensive field survey, historic contexts, and database development of the survey areas that have been identified by the City of Oklahoma City. The report also presents the results of the intensive level survey, historic context of the survey area, discusses potential NRHP boundaries for the survey area, and provides recommendations for future work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

URS would like to acknowledge those who contributed to all aspects of this research and survey effort. Site forms and database development were created by Leann Wheeler and Deborah Dobson-Brown of URS-Dallas. Kasey Cox and Shelley Hartsfield, URS-Dallas office, created maps. The archival research effort was conducted by Kate Singleton of URS-Dallas. Database analysis was conducted Kate Singleton of the URS Dallas office.

URS would also like to acknowledge and thank those who provided historic information and guidance on research: Catherine Montgomery, the City of Oklahoma City, as well as, Lynda Schwan and Allison Marshaus of the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma State Historical Society.

The Phase 4 Intensive Level Survey has been funded through the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office receives Federal funding to conduct surveys and other preservation related activities. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally funded programs. If you feel you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: the Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20240.

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The City of Oklahoma City (City) requested URS Corporation-Dallas (URS) to perform an intensive level building survey in order to complete the fourth phase of a building survey of the Downtown Business District and Downtown Transition Districts.

The intent is that the City's entire Downtown Business District (DBD) and Downtown Transition Districts (DTD-1 and DTD-2) zoning districts will eventually be surveyed. The DBD and DTDs contain approximately 1,700 buildings and are bounded on the north by the half block north of Park Place, by I-235 on the east, by the Oklahoma River on the south, and by Classen Boulevard on the west. Phase 3 of the survey is included in this area.

The current survey is Phase 4 of the larger survey effort. Phase 4 is an irregularly shaped area generally bounded on the north by old Interstate Highway 40, on the west by South Classen Boulevard from Interstate Highway 40 on the north end to the railroad tracks on the south end, then east for about one block to South Shartel Avenue, then south on South Shartel Avenue to Southwest 12th Street, then east to about South Dewey Avenue, then south to a point about half way between Southwest 13th Street and Southwest 14th Street, then east to South Walker Avenue, then south to the north bank of the Oklahoma River, on the south by the north bank of the Oklahoma River, and on the east by South Shields Boulevard.

The purpose of the survey is to provide a cultural resources management and preservation planning tool. In order to provide a useful planning tool, resources were identified, recorded, photographed, and evaluated as individual properties and potential districts in the project area that, on the basis of age, integrity and significance:

- meet the eligibility criteria for listing in the NRHP,
- warrant further study to determine eligibility for listing in the NRHP, or
- warrant no further study to exclude them from consideration for nomination to the NRHP.

The results of the survey will provide a basis for nominating eligible properties to the National Register and/or the City's local historic designation program. The survey will also provide information for properties located within the boundaries of the City's design review districts.

This report includes the **Objectives and Methods** in Chapter 2, followed by a **Historic Context** in Chapter 3, **Survey Results** in Chapter 4, and finally the **Summary and Recommendations** in Chapter 5. Each resource has been plotted on an aerial map and was thoroughly documented with the State of Oklahoma Historic Resource Form, as well as a minimum of two black and white photographs. Black and white digital photographs and a photo index are also included with this submission.

Survey

This is an intensive level survey that locates, identifies, and documents buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts in the survey area as defined by the City. The survey includes field work to identify resources, a review of archival resources for information about individual buildings to establish significance, and develop the historic context. A database of the field information has been created and can be modified over the years as new data is collected and modifications to the individual historic resources occur. The data includes all properties within the survey area. Once all data was collected, resources were evaluated for NRHP eligibility as an individual property or contributing to a historic district.

The survey was conducted April 9 through April 13, 2012 by Kate Singleton, architectural historian meeting the Secretary of Interior's qualifications. Each resource within the study area was investigated.

At this level of investigation, the following details regarding the resources were observed and recorded:

- resource number, as assigned by URS;
- address or location;
- historic and current name, if any;
- construction date;
- architect or builder, if known;
- style;
- historic and current use;
- current historic designations, if any;
- property type and subtype;
- if the resource is contained within a potential historic district;
- architectural features and details of the resource, and
- condition of the resource.

Since it is recognized that the observation of the condition of a resource has the potential to be subjective, the terms used to describe the condition within the text (excellent, good, fair, and poor) are defined as follows. **“Excellent”** condition indicates that the resource is perfectly maintained, and maintenance is clearly performed. **“Good”** condition indicates that the resource is very well maintained and very little visible deterioration considering its age and maintenance of the resource is consistently performed. **“Fair”** condition denotes the resource and its defining features remain intact and display the original intent of the builder or architect,

but the resource is in need of maintenance. “**Poor**” condition indicates that the resource displays little structural integrity, is badly in need of maintenance, and the defining features as intended by the builder or architect are not present. Those resources classified as being in “**Ruins**” indicate that the resource has completely or partially collapsed.

Certain details regarding the resources evaluated during the reconnaissance survey were verified after fieldwork was complete. These details were found in the online records of the Oklahoma County Appraisal District. For each resource evaluated, the collection of the information included:

- legal description and neighborhood or subdivision;
- construction date and any dates of alterations.

For properties without a construction date listed in the appraisal district records, a date was approximated according to the construction methods, materials, and style of the resource. In some cases the appraisal district records showed dates of construction reflecting modifications to the structure. In these cases the date of construction was also based on the construction methods, materials, and style of the resource.

NRHP eligibility recommendations and integrity evaluations of each resource were also made during the survey. These recommendations and assessments were based on the professional judgment of the architectural historians visiting the resource and according to the criteria described below.

Field location mapping was conducted to indicate the contributing and non-contributing resources on aerial maps. The field data was analyzed using data collected during the record search and archival research phases in order to place the resources within their historic context and theme. The context or theme, a particular time, place, and course of events determined the significance of the district to local, state, or national history.

Records Search and Research

Concurrent to fieldwork, research was gathered for the study area. Previous documentation included the *Reconnaissance Level Survey of a Portion of Central Oklahoma City* (1992); *Reconnaissance Survey of Portions of Oklahoma City, Northeast, Northwest, and South* (1994); *Reconnaissance Level Survey of Modern Architecture in Oklahoma City* (2009); *Downtown Oklahoma City Intensive Survey Phase 1* (2009), *Oklahoma City Intensive Survey Phase II*,

Oklahoma Intensive Survey Phase III and thematic surveys of industrial buildings and structures, WPA art and school buildings. As part of the research process the *Determinations of Eligibility in Oklahoma* dated January 1, 2011 was also reviewed. Pertinent National Register Nominations of individual properties and historic districts in the survey areas and in close proximity were reviewed. A search for properties in various federal, state, and local registers included the NRHP, the Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory, and the City of Oklahoma City. Research was conducted using aerial maps, available historic maps, including Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, newspapers, city records and archival records. All this information was included within the historic context of the neighborhoods or the survey forms.

Evaluation of Significance and Integrity

The data includes all identified resources located within the study area as defined by the City. All data is provided in a resource table in Appendix A and resource location is identified on maps in Appendix B.

Application of the Four NRHP Criteria of Significance

All resources identified by the application of archival and field research were evaluated by applying the four NRHP criteria of eligibility. The four criteria are defined in the Secretary of the Interior guidelines published under the authority of the National Historic Preservation Act. To be considered eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, a resource must meet at least one of the four criteria. The Secretary of the Interior guidelines state that:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

(a) that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; or

(b) that are associated with the lives of persons significant in the city or the state's past; or

(c) that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

(d) that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history [36 CFR § 60.4].

Evaluation of the Seven Aspects of Integrity

The seven aspects of integrity defined by the National Park Service for use in assessing National Register eligibility were applied to the evaluation of the integrity of historic-age resources. These seven aspects are integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The level of integrity required for NRHP eligibility is different for each of the four NRHP Criteria of Significance. If a resource is being assessed for significance because of its association with an event, then integrity of setting, feeling, and association are more important. If being assessed for significance as an example of design, then integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship are more important. These criteria have been discussed at length in documents including *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (National Park Service 1997) which gives a full explanation of how the criteria are applied.

Property Types

The property types in the survey area consist of single and multi-family residential, commercial, industrial and manufacturing, institutional and religious. For the most part, the houses are simple one story National Folk, Folk Victorian and craftsman houses that speak to the socio-economic status of the people who first bought property in the survey area. The industrial, commercial and manufacturing buildings are also modest without much ornamentation.

Domestic Structures

In describing domestic architectural styles, *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Lee and Virginia McAlester was used. The domestic single-family dwelling and domestic auxiliary buildings (detached garages, garage apartments, or workshops) in the survey area include those exhibiting the Revival styles, Ranch, Craftsman, National Folk, Minimal Traditional, Prairie, Victorian and Folk Victorian. Typically, domestic structures are considered eligible for inclusion in the NRHP based on their architectural design (Criterion C). Domestic structures are less commonly associated with a significant event (Criterion A) or person (Criterion B), and even less so for their potential to provide information in the future (Criterion D). Because of the importance of their architectural design, they must retain most of their architectural features.

Multiple family residences in the form of duplexes are found in the survey area. They are most commonly Craftsman and National Folk with various types of Revival or Victorian ornamentation. As with single family residential structures, multiple family buildings in the project area are also typically eligible for their architectural design. They must retain most of their architectural features to be considered for eligibility.

Folk Era (1880-1930)

Early Folk houses refer to ordinary buildings, which provide basic means of shelter. Construction methods, techniques, and materials were adapted to the region and culture. Few modifications were made to the style from the 17th century until the widespread development of the railroad. Inexpensive building materials from lumber mills were shipped by rail to local lumber yards. This led to a shift in building techniques from logs and heavy timber to light, inexpensive sawn lumber.

National Folk

The National Folk style was another style that was largely the result of the proliferation of railroads. While folk forms persisted throughout this era, materials and construction techniques were influenced by the newly available materials. Gable front and gable-front-and-wing forms remained typical, but balloon framing and more decorative detailing influenced by higher style Queen Anne houses became commonly used. The resources located at 723 Southwest 5th Street, 618 Southwest 5th Street, 614 Southwest 6th Street, 527 Southwest 10th Street and 423 Southwest 12th Street are considered National Folk style houses. Although often considered a separate category, Shotgun houses are a sub-genre of National Folk. There are a few shotgun type houses in the survey area including 427 Southwest 4th Street.

Victorian Era (1860-1900)

The reign of Britain's Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1901 make up the span of the Victorian era. In America, however, the styles during the last decades of her reign are what are referred to as "Victorian". Rapid industrialization and the development of the railroad led to the popularity in the Victorian styles, which are loosely based on medieval prototypes. Victorian styles include Second Empire, Stick, Queen Anne, Shingle, Richardsonian Romanesque, and Folk Victorian.

Queen Anne (1880-1910)

The Queen Anne style is characterized by a steeply pitched roof of irregular shape, patterned shingles, front facing gable and asymmetrical façade. A variety of wall textures is achieved through the use of patterned wood shapes. This can often be seen in the gable detailing. Extensive one story porches are common, often wrapping the front façade. Some of the Folk Victorian houses such as 516 Southwest 5th Street have Queen Anne ornamentation but are very simple houses.

Folk Victorian

Like National Folk forms on which they are based, Folk Victorian was made possible by the railroads. The railroads provided local lumber yards with pre-cut detailing from mills in larger cities. Many local builders simply added the newly available detailing to the folk houses they were constructing. Homeowners often updated their simply folk style homes with new Victorian porches and detailing. This detailing included spindle work detailing on the porch and in the gables, brackets and decorative shingles. Examples of Folk Victorian are 539 Southwest 10th Street, 721 Southwest 5th Street, 511 South Lee Avenue and 516 Southwest 5th Street.

Eclectic Era (1900–1940)

The Eclectic era encompasses a variety of architectural styles made popular at various times within the early twentieth century.

Tudor Revival (1890–1940)

The 1920s and 1930s saw the height of the popularity of the Tudor style, often built as small picturesque cottages with a steep side-gabled roof, prominent cross gables, decorative half-timber framing, tall and narrow windows, and massive decorative and often whimsical chimneys. Front entries were often located under their own tiny steep gable, and the door invariably had an arched top.

Mission (1890-1920)

The Mission style spread across the southwest states by 1900. Characteristics of the Mission style include Mission shaped dormers and roof parapets, either on the main roof of the porch roof. Rolled tile is a common roofing material for this style. Wide overhanging eaves, porch roofs supported by large square piers and smooth stucco wall surfaces are also typical.

Prairie (1900-1920)

The Prairie style originated in Chicago among a creative group of architects that included Frank Lloyd Wright. The majority of the style was built between 1905 and 1915 and quickly faded from fashion after World War I. Prairie is one of the few indigenous American styles and is characterized by a low-pitched roof, usually hipped, with overhanging eaves; eaves, cornices and façades detailing emphasized horizontal lines; and massive, square porch supports. The resource constructed in the Prairie style is 623 South Dewey Avenue.

Craftsman (1905-1930)

The most common residential structures of the first half of the twentieth century are of the Craftsman Bungalow style, distinguished by their solid simplistic design. Most Craftsman structures are wood frame covered in narrow clapboard siding or brick veneer with wide porches, have low roof angles, exposed rafter tails, eave brackets, and massive tapered wood porch columns on brick piers. In some cases, the piers are cast concrete block that have a rusticated stone appearance. Bungalow is a simple, detached dwelling. Resources constructed in the Craftsman style include 510 southwest 5th Street, 728 Southwest 5th Street, 811 Southwest 6th Street, 618 Southwest 6th Street, 525 Southwest 10th Street and 530 Southwest 10th Street.

Modern Movement (1935-present)

Domestic building construction was severely curtailed during World War II as most building materials and labor were diverted to the war effort. At the end of the war, an emphasis was placed on the development of new modern houses. This resulted from the emergence of the United States as the dominant world power. Post-war stylistic developments included Minimal Traditional and Ranch style houses. The ranch style houses include 521 Southwest 10th Street, 533 Southwest 10th Street and 612 Southwest 10th Street.

Modifications of Residential Structures

Later modernization of the residential structures often includes the application of brick or stone veneers; replacement or covering of wood siding with aluminum or vinyl; porch enclosures; and the removal or replacement of wooden porch floors with concrete decks. The replacement of original wood sash windows with aluminum or vinyl windows is common. Additions have been made to some of the residences, usually the ones now used as commercial structures. In many

cases, only one or two changes in the building materials, or minor changes in the form of the building have been made and the architectural integrity is not greatly impacted.

Government, Institutional, Commercial and Industrial Resources

Richard Longstreth's *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* is primarily used to describe commercial building forms. Government, commercial, and industrial resources are considered eligible for inclusion in the NRHP based on association with a significant event or broad patterns of history (Criterion A) and their architectural design (Criterion C). These resources comprise the majority of buildings in the survey area.

Typically, the commercial and industrial structures in the survey area are modest low rise buildings. Some of these structures are often representatives of other building forms common to their period of design, but other resources are purely utilitarian in nature, having no recognizable architectural style. There are many pre-engineered metal buildings in the area. They are situated in the industrial areas and often on the edges of the residential areas.

Industrial Buildings

The area has many industrial buildings that have had various uses over the years. Several other buildings in this area have brick facades and barrel roofs to accommodate manufacturing and industrial uses. These are included with Commercial Building because they often have the form of a commercial building such as a one part commercial, yet may lack the full plate glass display windows. Additionally, these buildings may have been used for industrial or manufacturing uses but they often had a show room or customer area in the front on the first floor of the structure.

One-Part Commercial Block (ca. 1850–ca. 1950)

The one-part commercial block is characterized by having only a single story, with a simple box-like form, often decorated by elements popular during the period in which it was built. The one-part commercial block was developed during the mid-nineteenth century and was often located along streetcar lines. Most of these buildings were used as retail stores where narrow lots restricted the amount of available street frontage. One-part commercial blocks were constructed as individual units or as rows. In some cases, the façade is characterized only by an expanse of plate glass and an entry topped by a parapet or cornice. Examples from the early twentieth century are usually more substantial than their predecessors, with masonry

construction, greater expanses of plate glass, and a more unified appearance. Decorative elements were usually concentrated at the roofline and often display Art Moderne, Art Deco, or Modern styles. After World War II, one-part commercial block buildings often lacked the stylistic influences that previously dominated the form. Examples of resources constructed in the one-part commercial block style include the 819 Southwest 3rd Street, 1107 South Robinson and 1319 South Robinson. Buildings that are commercial and display stylistic influences include 817 South 6th Street, the Moderne style Cain's Truck Lines, built in 1939 and 700 South Walker which has Art Deco elements. Other low rise buildings including A & A Auto Salvage, 1300-1328 South Robinson Avenue, are simple yet handsome structures that have ornamentation including pilasters that define the building bays and decorative brick window surrounds and parapet caps.

Two-Part Commercial Block (prevalent ca. 1850–ca. 1950)

The two-part commercial block is the most common type of small commercial buildings in the United States. Typically limited to two to four stories, the building is generally horizontal in focus, with two distinct zones usually separating different functions by floors. These structures were prevalent during the late nineteenth century and were often constructed along streetcar lines. More extensive plate glass windows were used on the lower storefront floors. By the late nineteenth century, a return to utility and uniformity was achieved. After the Victorian era buildings became plainer, and by the 1920s and 1930s, stylistic influences from the Art Moderne, Art Deco, and Modern periods were introduced. During the 1940s, the designs became further reserved, and commercial buildings became more utilitarian in nature. Examples of two-part commercial block are Oklahoma Operating Company at 821 Southwest 3rd Street, 726 Southwest 3rd Street, the C.C. Cooke Building at 512 Southwest 3rd Street, the International Harvester Building at 530 South Broadway Avenue and the E.T. Leek Building at 712 South Broadway Avenue. These buildings all reflect their more industrial use often with garage door bays and fewer plate glass display windows.

Commercial and Industrial Styles

Among commercial and industrial buildings in survey area, stylistic influence is secondary to the form and utility of the resource. Generally utilitarian in design, a few distinct architectural styles influenced these resources. Most of the buildings in the survey area are handsome but modest in design.

Eclectic Building Styles

The Eclectic period encompasses a variety of architectural styles made popular at various times within the early twentieth century. The Eclectic movement draws inspiration from a variety of architectural tradition including Ancient Classical, Medieval, Renaissance Classical, or Modern.

Mission (1890-1920)

The Mission style spread across the southwest states by 1900. Characteristics of the Mission style include Mission shaped dormers and roof parapets, either on the main roof of the porch roof. Rolled tile is a common roofing material for this style. Wide overhanging eaves, porch roofs supported by large square piers and smooth stucco wall surfaces are also typical. Union Station is an excellent example of the Mission style used for a large scale building. This handsome building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Modern Movement (1920s-1960s)

This term includes many buildings that express modernism but do not have any other definition due to their simplicity and minimalism. This includes Moderne, Art Deco, International Style and Brutalism, New Formalism and Post Modern styles.

Art Deco (1920-1940)

Inspired by the 1925 Paris Exposition des Art Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes, the Art Deco style was popular between 1920 and 1940. Identifying features for the Art Deco style are smooth wall surfaces, zigzags, chevrons, and other stylized and geometric motifs. These occur as decorative elements of the façades. Towers and other vertical projections above the roof line give a vertical emphasis. The commercial building at 700 South Walker has Art Deco elements including Art Deco-styled pilasters and decorative cast concrete elements.

Moderne (1920-1940)

Similar to Art Deco, the Moderne style features elements associated with trains and ships of the period and forms related to the International Style that began in Europe during the 1920s. Identifying features for the Moderne style are asymmetrical facades, smooth wall surfaces (usually of stucco), flat roofs, horizontal grooves or lines in walls and horizontal balustrades.

These elements give the building a horizontal emphasis. Cain's Truck Lines, at 817 South 6th Street, exhibits the Moderne style was constructed built in 1939.

International Style (1925-Present)

The International Style was developed during the years between World War I and II by European architects including Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. This style was seen in the United States in the 1930s. The base of this design revolution was the use of a structural skeleton, usually steel, that could be covered with a thin, non-structural skin. The International Style is characterized by a flat roof without a ledge, windows set flush with the wall plane, smooth wall surfaces with little or no ornamentation. The Voss Trucking building at 900 Southwest 2nd Street was designed in the International Style by Gaylord Noftsgger. Mr. Noftsgger was also the architect on the Villa Theater and the Farmers Public Market in Oklahoma City as well as many other buildings in Oklahoma.

Mid-Century Modern

As the International Style became more accepted, architects began to move forward or react to its pure functionality. The architects that were the most influential in the contemporary modernist movement were Eero Saarinen, Alvar Aalto and Oscar Niemeyer. Another stylistic reaction was "New or Neo- Formalism". "New Formalism" blended elements of classicism with modernist designs. These characteristics of classicism include symmetry, use of columns and colonnades or arcades, and use of high-end materials (such as marble or granite), yet works in this vein also characteristically use the flat roofs common with the International Style. An example of this is the Salvation Army buildings at 311 Southwest 5th Street, constructed in 1950 and 1960 respectively. The building uses stone and cast concrete for the simple ornamentation and delineation of the structure.

Churches, Institutional and Romantic Building Styles

The few churches and schools in the survey area are modest and utilitarian in style and design. Even the handsome Little Flower Catholic Church is a subdued version of Gothic Revival. The Little Flower School, the Wesley Community House and Assembly of God (now Stryker ME Church) are relatively unornamented buildings.

The Romantic Movement (1820-1880) originated and grew in popularity in the decades before 1860. Gothic Revival was the more complex style to build and was less common than Greek and

Italian Revival styles. Through the early 1900s, Gothic Revival was the popular style for university campuses and churches.

Gothic Revival (1840-1900s)

Gothic Revival came to America in the late 1800s and early 1900s, although; it never gained widespread popularity. Gothic Revival style is usually seen in country mansions and churches and occasionally public buildings and prisons. Identifying features of the Gothic Revival style are pointed arches, towers, crenellations, steep gabled roofs, lacy bargeboards, verandas, clustered columns, foliated ornaments, bay and oriel windows, and tracery and leaded stained glass. The Little Flower Catholic Church is a modest example of the use of the Gothic Revival style.

Italian Renaissance (1890-1935)

Italian Renaissance grew out of the revival that began with the Villard Houses of McKim, Mead and White. Other architects copied the style for their clients since it was a departure from the Victorian and Gothic houses of the late 1800s. It is characterized by low pitched hipped roofs with ceramic tiles, smaller upper story windows, entrance area accented by classical columns or pilasters, large first story windows and arches above the doors. The Riverside School on Southwest 10th Street is a lovely example of Italian Renaissance. However, it began as a Classical Revival style building when constructed in 1909. Originally, it was a two story building but because of the growth in the student population the building had to be expanded and this is when the change to Italian Renaissance was made. The front portico entrance is from the 1909 time period.

The other church and institutional buildings in the survey area are relatively simple buildings in eclectic and modern styles. This, in all probability, is due to the socio-economic status of their parishioners and the families in the area. The Assembly of God Church, 1200 South Walker Avenue, constructed in 1935 is a craftsman design with classical and craftsman detailing. The Wesley Community House at 431 Southwest 11th Street, constructed in 1940, looks almost Chicago School because of its design and red brick exterior. The Little Flower School is a relatively plain one story brick structure but it has Mission ornamentation as seen by the roof line and the inset cast concrete decorative feature at each end of the building. The Indian Church of the Nazarene, 615 South Lee Avenue, was constructed in 1940, and is a very simple rectangular building with nor ornamentation or steeple. The former St. Marks Methodist

Church (now Agape Ministries) at 504 South Dewey Avenue, constructed in 1945, is a very simple brick church with metal casement windows and a small steeple. The Carter B. Woodson School, 300 Southwest 13th Street, was constructed in 1948 for the African-Americans who lived in the neighborhood. It is a modern but utilitarian design much in keeping with the schools built throughout Oklahoma and the United States to accommodate a burgeoning student population in the post war years. Lastly, there is the Bohemian Hall at 515 Southwest 6th Street that was constructed in 1909 for the Bohemian or Czech population that was moving into Oklahoma City. This frame building is relatively simple and was used as a meeting hall for the local Czech organization. They also rented the hall out for use by other groups and for political events.

Modifications of Commercial and Industrial Structures

Later modifications to commercial and institutional buildings include removal of original windows and replacement with ones of different sizes and materials; additions, reconfiguration and replacement of front entrances; covering original openings including windows and doors; and application of non-original materials on facades.

The National Park Service defines historic context as “a broad pattern of historical development in a community or region that may be represented by its historic resources”. To that end, it is important to understand the diversity of the survey area and therefore the development history and patterns. The unifying theme is the growth and development of the city into a regional population, transportation and commercial center. It is important to understand the association between local, state and national history and events and the historic resources. Understanding these historic associations will aid in evaluating eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places and state and local historic designations. Recognizing the changes in development patterns that occurred in the survey area will help the city to make future planning decisions for protection of these resources and redevelopment of these districts.

It is important to note that historic contexts are not comprehensive, in-depth histories of a community. They serve the purpose of providing a framework and background for evaluating identified historic resources within the survey area. Developing historic contexts involves reviewing local history of the community as well as histories of the region and state to understand the patterns in the growth and development of the area. These development patterns are often reflected in the remaining historic resources within the survey area and the community at large.

The development of historic contexts identifies the patterns of history that impacted the growth of the city. In turn, this helps to identify buildings and resources that represent the evolution of the patterns of growth and development of the city as well as the changes in styles and building forms. The historic contexts that follow look at the development patterns, themes, architectural styles and building types within the survey area. Specific data results are recorded in the “Survey Results” and attendant sections. Since the survey area includes diverse property types, the context will address those property types and attendant development patterns. The following context pertains to the area surveyed. There have been other surveys, both intensive and reconnaissance, that have provided excellent context statements that more completely address the overall history of the city including the following documents. These include:

- WPA Structures Thematic Survey Phase III, W. David Baird, Oklahoma State University, 1987

- Reconnaissance Level Survey of Oklahoma County Industrial Resources, Department of History, Oklahoma State University, 1991
- Reconnaissance Level Survey of a Portion Central of Oklahoma City, Robison and Boeck Architects, 1992
- Reconnaissance Survey of Portions of Oklahoma City: Northeast, Northwest and South, Oklahoma City Planning Department, 1994
- Riverside Historic District Report, Parsons Brinckerhoff, Report for ODOT as Mitigation for MOA, 2001
- Reconnaissance Level Survey of Modern Architecture in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, 2009
- Downtown Oklahoma City Intensive Survey Phase 1, Sally Schwenk and Associates, 2009
- Downtown Oklahoma City Intensive Survey Phases 2 and 3, URS, 2010-2011.

The current effort, Phase 4, is a continuation of an ongoing survey endeavor. As stated above, previous context statements address the themes of growth and development that are also relevant to this phase of the survey.

Phase 4 is an irregularly shaped area generally bounded on the north by old Interstate Highway 40, on the west by South Classen Boulevard from Interstate Highway 40 on the north end to the railroad tracks on the south end, then east for about one block to South Shartel Avenue, then south on South Shartel Avenue to Southwest 12th Street, then east to about South Dewey Avenue, then south to a point about half way between Southwest 13th Street and Southwest 14th Street, then east to South Walker Avenue, then south to the north bank of the Oklahoma River, on the south by the north bank of the Oklahoma River, and on the east by South Shields Boulevard.

Oklahoma City

Oklahoma City was initially called Oklahoma Station and was a stage and cattle drive stop. The Atkinson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad won approval to build a railroad through the Indian Territory in 1884 and the city began to grow when it became a railroad stop in 1887. The site of what is now Oklahoma City proved to be an area located in the Cross Timbers that provided

lumber for building the tracks and crossings for the Canadian Rivers.¹ The land run occurred on April 22, 1889, bringing people and money into the new town. Oklahoma City quickly became transportation and commercial hubs, as well as a population center.

In 1924, oil was discovered near the city; and in 1928, it was discovered within the city limits. The Mid-Continent Oil Field was one of the largest producing fields in the United States during the late 1920s through the 1930s. The influx of oil money provided new wealth and opportunity and helped to stave off the effects of the Great Depression. However, the city did not escape completely unscathed. Between the Great Depression and the drought conditions that precipitated the Dust Bowls of 1935-1936, Oklahoma City saw an influx of people from the poorer rural area looking for jobs, shelter and food.

The city began to recover economically with the establishment of Midwest Air Depot (later Tinker Air Force Base) in 1941. The air depot, located in the southeast area of the City, was an economic engine in and of itself. Nearly fifteen thousand jobs were created at the depot and over twenty thousand jobs at the nearby Douglas Plane Plant. With the advent of World War II, the Douglas Plant manufactured a variety of planes for the war effort. This plant, the depot, and other war-related industries helped to pull Oklahoma City out of the Depression and move it forward into the future.

Oklahoma City continued to grow due to the war-related industries. In the post-World War II era, those industries, as well as the oil and gas industries, contributed greatly to the local employment and economic base. More roads were built and suburbs developed as reflected in the City's zoning. The City nearly doubled in size through annexation of land to the south and north. As the suburbs grew, the business community began to leave not only downtown but also mid-town. In response to this, local business leaders established the Oklahoma City Urban Action Foundation which then formed the Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority (OCURA). The OCURA was able to use eminent domain to acquire "blighted" buildings and sites. In the early 1960s, OCURA hired noted architect I.M. Pei to develop a master plan for the city. The resulting plan called for clearing approximately 528 acres in the downtown area. Due to funding

¹ Larry Johnson. *What Was Here Before? Oklahoma Before the Run*. Published on Oklahoma Images, the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Library website, accessed September 11, 2010.

and other issues, the plan was not fully realized. Subsequent urban renewal efforts continued in the downtown area and mid-town leaving large vacant areas as parking lots and possible development sites. In the 1970s, Oklahoma City was one of the largest cities in total land mass in the country. Oklahoma experienced the ups and downs of the petroleum industry from the 1970s through the 1990s but continued to grow and gain population and wealth.

South Oklahoma City

On April 22, 1889, South Oklahoma City was established as a separate municipality. South Oklahoma City encompassed the area south of Reno Avenue. The town was surveyed on April 23, 1889 and since there were no disputes regarding the survey, the vote passed on April 27th. G. W. Patrick was elected mayor; W.T. Bodine, recorder; L.P. Ross, city attorney; N.C. Helburn, city marshal; John Cochran, city treasurer, and J. P. McKinney, S.E. Steele, E.W. Sweeney, E.S. Hughes and W.L. Killebrew, councilmen. This group immediately passed a controversial ordinance that included occupation taxes and payment for lot certificates. The issue of paying occupation taxes and lot certificates was proving volatile to Oklahoma City as well. Charges of corruption forced the mayor to resign after a month in office and Cochran, the treasurer disappeared. Citizens of South Oklahoma City demanded a city charter which was quickly drafted and adopted. In July of 1889, another election for mayor and council members was held. However, charges against this mayor soon arose and he was about to be impeached when he resigned. In April, 1890, another election was held and Green was elected as mayor.²

During this same time period, 1889-1890, a canal was constructed to provide water to one of the electric plants in the city. The canal was to be six miles and have a depth of 32 feet. It was constructed by the Oklahoma Ditch and Power Company. Charles Price was the president of the company and C. P. Walker was the secretary. On December 9, 1889, Captain Couch dug the first shovel of dirt. The canal was completed in the spring and provided power to Jones' flour mill for

² Angelo Scott. *The Story of Oklahoma*. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Times-Journal Publishing Company, 1939, pp. 76-78.

a very brief time—a few days. The canal had been dug through sand and the water was being absorbed into the sand. The buildings at 821 Southwest 3rd Street are on the site of the canal.³

South Oklahoma City was annexed by Oklahoma City in the early 1900s and became the South Oklahoma Addition. John Shields, Donald Pryor, J. B. Wheeler and others, acquired property and began full-scale development of the southern section of the city. Anton Classen also owned property to the south of the river. In turn, the street car company began to extend lines into this area.

Transportation and Residential and Commercial Development

Streetcar Development

Transportation, especially within the community, became an important issue for the further growth of the fledgling city. In discussing street car lines as a transportation and development tool, it is important to focus specifically on Anton Classen, John Shartel, and the Oklahoma Railway Company. Their development of the streetcar lines encouraged growth in of all areas of the city. Developers in the southern part of the city touted the streetcar lines as an amenity for their neighborhoods.

Oklahoma City was still relatively compact at the turn of the 20th century. The city had developed residential areas within walking distance of downtown. The lots in these areas were relatively small and there was no area for the newly prosperous middle and upper classes to show their wealth. The population of the city had grown from 4,000 in 1897 to 11,000 in 1901 and 14,000 by 1903 when the street cars began operation. The city continued to annex more land to meet the demand for more developable land for businesses and residences. There were twenty-two housing additions annexed into the city between 1907 and 1908.⁴

Anton Classen arrived in Oklahoma during the land run of 1889, eventually moving to Oklahoma City in 1897. Classen purchased land to the northwest of downtown just as the country was coming out of the Panic of 1893 and beginning to prosper again. He also purchased property in

³ Angelo Scott, pp. 77-78. Plaque on 821 SW 3rd Street, sponsored by the 89ers.

⁴ Cynthia Savage, *Seiber Grocery and Apartment Hotel National Register Nomination*, September 2005, Section 8, page 22.

South Oklahoma City. Other property in downtown area was owned by John Shartel, John Gault, and other early community builders. Many of the early community leaders also purchased property in South Oklahoma City. People like Henry Overholser, John Shields and Anton Classen belonged to the same social clubs and lead the residential development of the city.⁵

As with many other western and southwestern cities, the street car lines were the key to the development of the residential areas outside of downtown. They were built by the developers of the land that the street cars served. These men understood that by owning and managing the transportation system, they could control the growth and development of the city as well as ensure success of their real estate ventures. Interestingly, these businessmen usually owned the companies that also constructed the lines and the companies that provided power to the system. The street cars aided in the growth of a city's infrastructure, including street grading, gas lines, housing development, and jobs.

The first street car franchise was awarded in December 1901 to the Metropolitan Railway Company owned in part by John Shartel, although no construction of lines had begun. Another franchise was granted in late December to Harold Barry. In 1902, Anton Classen purchased this franchise. He then turned the franchise over to John Shartel with an agreement that the line would first be built out to the northwest where Classen had real estate holdings. Additionally, Shartel agreed to continue using the Metropolitan Construction Company to construct the lines, which Classen had part ownership of the construction company. Classen and Shartel then formed a partnership that would last until 1922.

The initial street car lines were built from Main Street up Broadway to Northwest 13th Street. Charles Colcord, a wealthy businessman and early settler, built his house at 421 Northwest 13th Street in 1903, right along the trolley line. The line then proceeded west along 13th Street and connected with a line that came up Walker Avenue from downtown. John Shartel had purchased the land in the Florence Addition starting in 1899. The line went north on Walker to 13th Street. There was a line across Main Street and Reno Avenue and one on Classen Boulevard/Western Avenue to Belle Isle. A review of the Sanborn Fire Insurance map for 1906 (pages 28, 29, 38, 39) shows houses sparsely scattered throughout the area. The 1922 Sanborn

⁵ The Oklahoman, "*Shriners Come*", November 24, 1904, p. 5.

Fire Insurance map has several pages dedicated to the area (pages 11, 12, 22, and 23) showing more houses and development along, and adjacent to, the street car lines. Clearly, the development of the street car lines made these areas more desirable neighborhoods. This was reflected in the large homes and garden apartments that were built in close proximity to them.

In 1904, Metropolitan Railway Company transferred ownership to the Oklahoma City Railway Company. By 1906, the street car lines had carried 3,538,114 passengers and logged 873,000 passenger miles.⁶ Between 1907 and 1910, housing construction rates doubled and expanded passed 13th Street.

Development of the street car lines continued as did consolidation of other lines. Later lines were built out to Epworth University, a Methodist college built on land donated by Anton Classen that is north of the survey area. Again, Classen understood that a college would generate ridership as well as housing for professors and students. In 1907, the street car company reorganized and became known as the Oklahoma Railway Company (ORC). The line continued to expand into other neighborhoods, northeast to the fairgrounds, southwest to Delmar Gardens and Wheeler Park, and south into Stockyards City which was just beginning to be developed. Wheeler Park, which had been given to the City in 1903 by Mr. J. B. Wheeler, was a popular destination for families.⁷ By 1906, the streetcar line ran down South Walker Boulevard giving access to the amenities at Wheeler Park. Access to the street car in the southern part of the city included the South Walker Boulevard (Avenue) line, the one along Reno Avenue, the Broadway line and the line on Choctaw (Southwest 5th Street) between South Walker and Broadway Avenues. This loop provided ample access to the residential areas being developed at the time. In 1908, the company built a power plant at Belle Isle Addition (owned by Classen) and developed the power plant lake into a recreation park for the city. With the addition of these lines, citizens were able to navigate the city by using the street car lines to go from their homes to work and recreation.

⁶ Kim Bender, *Oklahoma City's First Transit System*, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 72, No. 2, Summer 1994, p. 145

⁷ Luther B. Hill, "*James Wheeler*", *History of the State of Oklahoma*, Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago 1910, Volume 2, p. 9.

The streetcar to the southwest was an important tool for real estate developers like John Shields. He, David Kuhlman and others developed South Oklahoma Addition, Riverside and South Riverside. These additions were platted in the early 1900s and billed as “the best medium priced location for a home in Oklahoma City”.⁸ An article notes that there are two street car lines being built to South Oklahoma City.⁹ Maps show the line went south on Walker Avenue (Boulevard), crossing the river. The line also went south on Broadway Avenue until Southwest 10th Street then went west and joined at Walker Avenue.¹⁰ In an advertisement for Shields’ South Oklahoma Addition in 1909, it notes that the street car line was complete at the time the subdivision opened.¹¹ A newspaper ad in 1910 denotes the opening of the Moore Interurban line and that the South Oklahoma Addition, just two miles south of Grand Avenue (Sheridan) with 3,130 lots, is an opportunity for prospective property owners.¹²

By 1916, the majority of street car track had been laid and ridership peaked at 17.5 million in 1919. Ridership began to taper off in the early 1920s.¹³ The glory days of the street car lines had begun to fade and the automobile was beginning its rise as the primary mode of transportation for most families. Broadway saw construction of what would be termed “Automobile Alley” during this time. On the south end of Robinson, there was a proliferation of auto-related businesses including repair shops and salvage yards. In the mid-1920s the ORC, never a profitable business, went into receivership. It continued operating through the Great Depression and World War II, providing reliable transportation around the city. The street car lines’ physical impact can be seen in the wide streets such as Northwest 13th Street, Main Street, Walker Avenue and Broadway Avenue.

Highway Development

From 1941 to 1967, the initial highway system through Oklahoma City was developed. This included the I-40 Crosstown Highway that currently dissects the survey area. The Federal

⁸ The Oklahoman, Advertisement, “*For Inspection...South Oklahoma Addition*”, July 14, 1908, p. 11.

⁹ The Oklahoman, “*A Second Line*”, September 29, 1905, p. 7.

¹⁰ George A. Ogle and Company, Oklahoma Section 4 Map, p. 87, 1907.

¹¹ The Oklahoman, Advertisement, “*Shields’ South Oklahoma Addition*”, April 22, 1909, pp.38-39.

¹² The Oklahoman, Advertisement, “*Southward Lies Opportunity*”, April 22, 1910, p. 97.

¹³ Cynthia Savage, p.22.

Highway Act of 1944 was developed from recommendations of the Interregional Highway Committee under Franklin D. Roosevelt. This legislation called for the development of a national system of interstate highways that would include up to 40,000 miles of road. The federal government would match 50/50 the money committed by a state and/or city to participate. Cities were also required to pay for 1/3 the cost to acquire right-of-way. By the mid-1940s Oklahoma City was considering where and if to put highways through the city limits. The north/south highway that would link Oklahoma City and Norman was discussed and met with strong opposition. Oklahoma City hired Harlan Bartholomew of Bartholomew and Associates, a St. Louis Planning and landscape architecture firm, to assist in developing a plan for the highways and to advise the City Council. Bartholomew had developed a comprehensive plan that was adopted by the City in 1946. The Bartholomew Plan had both a north/south highway and an east/west highway included. An opposition plan was developed; it was a loop around the city with access points. This plan argued that an east/west highway would re-create the barriers of the railroad tracks that had been removed in the 1930s. As a compromise, in April of 1946, the City submitted both the Bartholomew Plan and the opposition plan to the federal government. Both plans were promptly rejected; the highway department said only one plan could be submitted. In May of 1946, the Oklahoma City Council voted to submit the Bartholomew Plan to the highway department.¹⁴ The crosstown I-40 highway was constructed in the mid-1960s and dissected the south and north portions of Oklahoma City. The highway construction hastened the change of the area from residential to commercial and industrial and destroyed numerous houses and businesses.

City Planning

The City Beautiful Movement and the influence of architect and planners of the Chicago School effected how residential areas in many cities, including Oklahoma City, were developed. These movements placed a great deal of emphasis on the placement of parks and boulevards in residential areas.

The beautification of cities was seen as an antidote for the overcrowding from immigration, the impact of the industrial revolution and the migration of poor African Americans and whites into

¹⁴ <http://dougdawg.blogspot.com/2010/01/when-there-was-no-crosstown.html>

the urban centers. The City Beautiful Movement was meant to cure the ills of urban cities including poverty and immoral behavior through the development of parks, the use of Classical architectural styles and by the charitable deeds of the wealthy. Many cities established Civic Improvement Leagues often at the behest of well-to-do women. In Oklahoma City, it was no different. Mrs. M. G. Addington was the first president of the League and Mrs. John W. Shartel was vice president. The goals of the Civic Improvement League were to beautify the city and improve sanitary conditions.¹⁵

Oklahoma City established their Civic Improvement League in 1903 whose purpose was beautification and the improvement of local sanitary conditions. Although Oklahoma City began somewhat later than many cities, the movement lasted well into the 1930s. The City implemented zoning and planning as well as infrastructure improvements including sewers, paving, and street lights.¹⁶ It was in 1903 that J.B. Wheeler deeded 43 acres to the city for a park in the southern part of the city.¹⁷ The other large park, Delmar Park, was a private garden and amusement park developed in 1902 at Southwest 3rd Street, the river and South Western Avenue. However, there were no plans for a downtown park.

In 1920, Classen encouraged the City to hire well known landscape architect and planner George Kessler to develop their first comprehensive plan. Classen was familiar with Kessler through his earlier work in Oklahoma City and other cities. Kessler died in 1923 but major parts of the Oklahoma City plan became the basis for the city's zoning ordinance. In 1930, Hare and Hare of Kansas City, were hired to complete Kessler's Plan. Their final report contained historical data, demographics, street plans, a civic center plan, a parks plan, zoning ordinance, and subdivision regulations. This was the first comprehensive plan for Oklahoma City.¹⁸ They also designed the Civic Center plan with landscaping and building placement.

Also in 1930, a zoning ordinance and map were adopted that impacted and changed the development patterns in the survey area. The zoning map indicated that the areas to the south of the C.R.I & P Railroad and between the Frisco and A.T. & S.F. Railroad would be industrial and

¹⁵ The Oklahoman, "A Civic League", March 8, 1903, p. 2.

¹⁶ Sally Schwenk, *Downtown Oklahoma City Intensive Survey, Phase I*, City of Oklahoma, September 2009, p.39.

¹⁷ The Oklahoman, "Wheeler, Oldest City Park Expecting 200,000 Visitors", June 25, 1933, p.16.

¹⁸ City of Oklahoma City website. <http://www.okc.gov/planning/history/index.html#TEXT>

business. This is interesting since these areas had previously been platted as residential by developers like John Shields. The corrected 1922-1949 Sanborn maps on pages 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 65, 67 and 68 show a strong residential component for the area south of Southwest 2nd Street to the railroad tracks but industrial and commercial uses have encroached, especially close to the tracks. Additionally, some of the lots in the area were never built on due to persistent flooding. Later city plans include the 1949 Bartholomew Plan which included a new zoning ordinance and street and parks plans. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, urban renewal became an important component for planning across the country. Oklahoma City hired I.M. Pei to develop their program for revitalization of downtown.

Neighborhood Development

It is important to understand the development patterns of the neighborhoods in the survey area and who lived in these areas. The north side of town included the downtown and the adjacent neighborhoods. Some of these neighborhoods were where people like Classen and Overholser lived. But to the south, between the railroad tracks and the river, were the middle and working classes and immigrants. It is important to understand that these areas had a variety of ethnic groups including Czech, African American, and Mexican. These groups did not necessarily live side by side, but they were often poor.

Edwards Courthouse Addition, Westover Addition, Offield Addition and Orndale Addition were geared towards middle and working class families. The development of these areas can be documented through the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. According to the 1896 map, the area shown is from South Hudson Avenue (west) to South Robinson Avenue (east) and from Frisco (Southwest 6th Street) to about what is now Southwest 8th Street. This area has irregular lots sizes that vary from 25 feet wide to 50 feet wide. The area is moderately populated with houses of varying sizes. There is also industrial and commercial development including the Oklahoma Gas and Electric Plant, two lumber yards, Jones Milling Company and the Jordan Foundry.¹⁹ Riverside, South Riverside, and South Oklahoma Additions had not been platted at this time. By 1901, the areas south and west of this are beginning to be mapped. The South Oklahoma addition is shown with the lots numbered but with fewer homes than the areas directly to the

¹⁹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1896, pp. 8, 13, 14.

north.²⁰ The 1904 maps show from Missouri Avenue to the railroad on the east and from Reno Avenue south to the railroad tracks. The lots are irregular and some areas are more built out than others. The Washington School is shown as well as the industrial and commercial development adjacent to the tracks.²¹ Interestingly, Riverside, South Riverside, and Wheeler Additions are shown on the index map but are not shown on the individual map pages. It is interesting to note that J. B. Wheeler joined with Classen and J.M. Owen in 1898 to start the Oklahoma Building and Loan Association. Owning the Building and Loan Association, gave them the ability to lend money to prospective home owners in the subdivisions owned by Classen and Wheeler. It also gave Classen a line of credit to finance the streetcar lines.²² Wheeler also organized the Bank of Oklahoma City. By 1906, these additions are shown on the individual map pages but with very few houses—eight houses in six blocks.²³

The Orndale Addition was platted in 1898, five years after the Wheeler Park townsite.²⁴ Other additions quickly followed including Riverside (1901), South Riverside (1903), and South Park (1902). John Shields' South Park was to be a town, just as Wheeler was. The area was populated by clerks, skilled workers and businessmen.²⁵ These people would have probably worked at the commercial and industrial businesses near their residences, often walking to work.

Many of the men who led the development of these additions had come to Oklahoma City in 1889 during the land run. J. B. Wheeler had come to Oklahoma in 1889 from Michigan where he had been a banker. He served on the original survey committee for Oklahoma City in the days after the land run. He started the Bank of Oklahoma City with his son, James, and Eugene Wallace. The name of the bank was changed to American National Bank and Wheeler became president. Wheeler also served as a member of the city's Park Board for several years.²⁶ He was

²⁰ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1901, pp.6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16.

²¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1904, pp. 9, 10, 18, 20, 29, 30.

²² Kim Bender, p.143.

²³ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1906, pp. pp. 71, 72, 73, 74, 79, 80, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88.

²⁴ Plat Records of Oklahoma City, Book 1, p. 35.

²⁵ Jennings, Gottfried and Cheak, Oklahoma City 1890 to 1950, Platted, Parked and Populated. Oklahoma City, 1982, p.61.

²⁶ The Oklahoman, "*These Were Men of Vision*", April 22, 1964, p.78.

instrumental in the development of the southern part of Oklahoma City, donating the land for Wheeler Park and developing the Wheeler Addition adjacent to the Park.

The land for Wheeler Park was part of the original Wheeler township site and was offered to the city in 1902 at the urging of Wheeler's daughter.²⁷ However, the City Council turned down the offer. A new mayor, C.G. Jones, came into office in 1903 and he accepted Wheeler's offer of the park.²⁸ The park was a 43-acre tract and Wheeler stipulated that the city spend \$2,000 a year making improvements over the next 5 years. He also stipulated that it must be called "Wheeler Park" in perpetuity and that no alcohol be sold or consumed there. In 1903, the state legislature passed a law that allowed cities over 10,000 in population to establish park commissions. It was at this time that improvements to Wheeler Park were begun in earnest. Wheeler turned his attention to developing what had been Wheeler town site into Wheeler's Addition. The area was bounded by Wheeler Park on the west, Walker Avenue on the east and the railroad tracks on the north. This addition was opened in 1903 and was advertised as being a "10 minute walk from the business center" and "one block from the car line".²⁹ When he died in 1906, the development of the addition stopped for approximately 2 years. In 1908, advertisements for the addition appeared in the Oklahoman noting that it had been off the market "due to estate issues".³⁰ Development of the area soon began again. Unfortunately, it was prone to flooding despite the construction of an earthen embankment designed to protect the park and neighborhood.³¹ The area flooded several times beginning in 1908 and again in 1923.

Another developer in the area was John Shields. He had come to Oklahoma with his father, George J. Shields, and the rest of his family in 1889. He worked with his father in real estate development. Shields also developed Shields' Heights and Shields' South Oklahoma City Addition.³² He filed the plat for South Park Addition in 1902; it was 260 acres and was part of the

²⁷ Luther B. Hill, *"James Wheeler"*, History of the State of Oklahoma, Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago 1910, Volume 2, p. 9.

²⁸ The Oklahoman, *"Wheeler, Oldest City Park Expecting 200,000 Visitors"*, June 25, 1933, p.16.

²⁹ The Oklahoman, Advertisement, *"Wheeler Addition"*, June 3, 1904, p.8.

³⁰ The Oklahoman, *"Wheeler Addition"*, October 10, 1908, p.14.

³¹ The Oklahoman, *"Great Levee near Completion"*, May 17, 1905, p. 7.

³² The Oklahoman, *"Shields' South Oklahoma City Addition"*, April 22, 1909, p.38-39.

Lawrence farm.³³ Shields helped to raise the money to extend Robinson Avenue south from the Frisco tracks to the edge of Capitol Hill. He and the business owners along Robinson thought that paving the street would enhance their property values and bring more businesses to the area.³⁴ In subsequent years the rest of the vacant land between downtown and the river was platted into housing additions. These additions included Donald Pryor's Elm Grove Addition (1904), east of the South Park Addition and Edward's Courthouse Addition (1906).

The neighborhoods were mainly white, however near the railroad tracks, on the less desirable land, African Americans lived. The 1906 Sanborn maps (page 81) shows "negro shanties" near W. Chickasaw Avenue (Southwest 4th Street) and W. Texas (Southwest 5th Street) between Santa Fe and Broadway. The Choctaw School on West Choctaw (Southwest 7th Street) at Robinson is noted as being "colored" on the 1922 Sanborn Map, page 68. Directly behind the school on West Frisco (Southwest 6th) is the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church (colored) as denoted on the Sanborn Map. Across the street on West Choctaw is the Church of Holiness, also an African American Church, and on West Frisco near Broadway is the Bethlehem Baptist Church. Another African American neighborhood in the survey area is located between South Walker and South Robinson Avenue from Southwest 12th Street to the river. This area is seen on the 1922 Sanborn map on pages 69, 71 and 94. It denotes the Bethlehem Baptist Church (Colored) at 228 Southwest 13th Street. There was another church at the corner of South Walker Avenue and Southwest 13th Street. Also in the area, the Carter Woodson School at Southwest 13th and South Harvey Avenue was built as a response to the "separate but equal" laws in Oklahoma and the United States.

This area was also one of the neighborhoods where Bohemians or Czechs settled in Oklahoma City. In 1906, it was estimated that there were 2,000 Czech families in Oklahoma.³⁵ To meet the needs of their growing community, the Czechs in Oklahoma City decided to build a hall. The first hall was at 3800 South Portland.³⁶ In 1909, the Bohemian Hall at 515 West Frisco (Southwest 6th Street) was constructed and there were five Bohemian clubs.³⁷ The Czech community lived in

³³ Hill, "George Shields", p. 47.

³⁴ The Oklahoman, "Raised \$1,300 for Capital Hill Road", January 12, 1907, p. 8.

³⁵ Karel D. Becha, *Czechs in Oklahoma*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980, p.21.

³⁶ The Oklahoman, "The Bohemian Club Will Erect a Hall", January 30, 1906, p.8.

³⁷ The Oklahoman, "Receiver Asked for Bohemian Hall", July 19, 1923, p. 5.

the neighborhood adjacent to the hall, in the area north of the Frisco tracks. Wesley Skala, who had an orchestra that played at the Bohemian Hall, lived at 530 West Frisco (Southwest 6th Street). His home is still at this location. It was later occupied by Frank Cernoeks who ran a shoe repair shop in the small building in front of the house.

The other ethnic group that was prominent in the survey area was the Mexicans. Historic events lead to the growth of the Mexican population in Oklahoma City. In 1914, three Spanish priests had come to Oklahoma City to establish a mission. Like many other Mexicans, they had fled Pancho Villa's revolution. Many of these people had come to work on the railroads, in the coal mines or agriculture and ranching. In 1910, there were 379 Mexican-born residents in Oklahoma City and by 1920 there were 788.³⁸ The number continued to climb until the Great Depression when approximately two-thirds of the Mexicans living in the state left.³⁹ However, after the Depression, the number began to rise again. The Mexican community was located in the Riverside area due to the proximity of employment, mainly railroad and meat packing jobs. Newspaper articles indicated that the Mexican community in Oklahoma City was tight knit and celebrated national holidays together. Interestingly, they often held their Cinco de Mayo and other celebrations at the Bohemian Hall at 515 West Frisco Street.⁴⁰ At one celebration, over 1,000 members of the Mexican community were expected.⁴¹

One of the few institutions that remained a constant both in Mexico and the United States was the Catholic Church. The Little Flower Catholic Church became the spiritual center for the Mexican community in Oklahoma City. More information about the church is below.

³⁸ Michael M. Smith, *Mexicans in Oklahoma*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980, p.25.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p.30.

⁴⁰ *The Oklahoman*, "Mexicans in the City Observe May 5th", April 30, 1939, p.27.

⁴¹ *The Oklahoman*, "Mexicans Join to Celebrate Liberty", September 16, 1931.

Churches and Religious Institutions

The Church of the Little Flower and Shrine of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel was the center of the Mexican community in Oklahoma City. As the Mexican population in the city grew, the Bishop realized that a church and mission were needed to minister to this group of immigrants. A chapel was built to serve the community and a school, community center and print shop were established as well as a free clinic. By the mid-1920s, the chapel was too small to serve the growing Mexican population. In 1926, the new church was designed and constructed. The building was designed by architects Vernon and Reid and constructed by Reinhart and Donovan. Originally, the design of the building was to be much grander. However, the Klu Klux Klan threatened the Catholic diocese and to avoid problems with them, the plans for the church were scaled back.⁴² A new school and clinic were added later.

Other extant churches in the area served the populations in the neighborhoods include the Indian Church of the Nazarene, 615 South Lee Avenue, constructed in 1940 and serves the American Indian population in that area. The Assembly of God Church, 1200 South Walker Avenue, constructed in 1935, is across from Little Flower. The Wesley Community House at 431 Southwest 11th Street, constructed in 1940, is across the street from Little Flower and next to Riverside School. The former St. Marks Methodist Church (now Agape Ministries) at 504 South Dewey Avenue, constructed in 1945, served the neighborhood.

Riverside School was designed by G.W. Van Meter and constructed in 1909 to serve the surrounding Riverside neighborhood. The school was originally constructed as a two story building but floors were added later on. Oklahoma City was seeing tremendous growth and the schools were overwhelmed. There were 10,000 school children in 1910. The school board had passed a bond program the previous year and started construction on the new schools, however, the next year they had to pass another bond issue to cover expanding some of the buildings they has just had built, including Riverside School. The building was expanded and the design was done by Layton, Hicks and Forsyth.⁴³

⁴² Larry Johnson, *“Church of the Little Flower and the Shrine Our Lady of Mount Carmel”*, Published on Oklahoma Images, the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Library website, accessed May 4, 2012.

⁴³ The Oklahoman, *“Growth Bane of Existence of the Board of Education,”* April 22, 1910, pp.7-8.

The Carter B. Woodson School, designed by Sorey, Hill, and Sorey, was constructed in 1948 to serve as an elementary school for African Americans in the neighborhood. The school board approved \$10,400 for the 10-lot site at Southwest 13th Street and South Harvey Street.⁴⁴ Dr. Woodson served as the director for the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and was the first African American born to slaves to receive a doctorate degree.⁴⁵ The school is a reminder of the segregated education system in Oklahoma City. The “separate but equal” doctrine had been established by the Supreme Court ruling in 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The decision gave whites a way to legally segregate blacks. The next year, the 1897 Oklahoma Territorial Legislature banned the practice of racial mixing in the schools. Segregation in most aspects of life began to take hold. The State Constitution did not denote complete segregation because it was feared that President Theodore Roosevelt would veto it. Once it had passed however, the first legislature wrote segregation into law under Senate Bill Number One after defining all people with any degree of African ancestry as black. Interracial marriages and miscegenation were both banned and became felonies. The legislature also banned interracial schools at all levels. Legislators segregated everything from trains, public transportation and hospitals to housing to cemeteries to restaurants. Changes to the Jim Crow laws began in earnest after World War II when the U.S. Supreme Court intervened after the NAACP brought a number of suits. In the 1948 *Sipel v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma* suit, the Court ruled that African American student Ada Lois Sipel was entitled to a legal education in a state school. The 1950 case, *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for a Higher Education*, the Court ruled that the 14th Amendment had been violated when the school segregated African American student George McLaurin on campus. Soon after, the *Brown v. Board of Education* case desegregated schools across the country although it took cities and states many years to complete the process of full integration.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ The Oklahoman, “*Board Approves Fund for Negro School*”, September 17, 1948, p. 7.

⁴⁵ The Daily Oklahoman, “*Leader Cites Negroes’ Role in U.S. History*”, October 25, 1947, p.25.

⁴⁶ James Smallwood, “*Segregation*”, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/S/SE006.html>, accessed August 15, 2012.

Industrial/Railroad Related Development

The Five Civilized Tribes were forced to allow railroads to cross Indian lands as part of the Reconstruction Treaties of 1866. The railroads were a major force of development in the southwest and the west. The railroads had pushed for the opening of the Oklahoma Territory due to of the lucrative cattle industry. They enabled the transportation of goods, especially agricultural, to markets such as Kansas City and Chicago. In turn, products and manufactured goods were brought back by rail. Obviously, the railroads also brought people into the new towns, especially during the land runs. An example of this is the prefabricated buildings that Henry Overholser brought by train to Oklahoma City and had assembled as some of the first downtown buildings.

Oklahoma City worked hard to obtain other rail lines and connections, eclipsing Guthrie as the commercial, population, and transportation center of the state. The major railroads that came through Oklahoma City were: the Atkinson, Topeka and Santa Fe (1887); Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific (part of which was the Choctaw Coal and Railway Company, 1894); the St. Louis and San Francisco (1895), and Missouri, Kansas and Texas (1902). The businessmen and “boosters” for the city did not fully understand the impact that these at-grade tracks would have on the traffic patterns of the city. As rail lines became busier, automobile traffic trying to move north and south, as well as east and west was often hindered. Starting in the early 1900s, and continuing until the late 1920s, the city worked to consolidate the Frisco and Rock Island depots into a Union Station and remove the tracks. A large bond program was passed in 1927 that enabled the city to finally deal with the at grade tracks and the issue of a Union Station. Construction of Union Station was begun in 1930 followed by the construction of the railroad underpasses at South Walker and South Robinson Avenues. Subsequently, in 1931, the new elevated track for the Santa Fe line was begun and finally completed in 1933.⁴⁷

The first railroad company that built east/west tracks traversing the downtown was the Choctaw Coal and Railway Company in 1891. Its successor was the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad that acquired ownership of the railroad in 1894. In the next few years, the Choctaw, Oklahoma

⁴⁷ <http://dougdawg.blogspot.com/2007/08/okc-trains-part-2.html>, accessed September 15, 2010.

and Gulf expanded east of Oklahoma City to McAlester and to the west from El Reno to Weatherford, Texas. The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific (known as Rock Island) acquired controlling interest in the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad in 1904.

Early industrial development occurred in downtown Oklahoma City adjacent to the railroad lines. By 1900 there were 36 manufacturers in the city and by 1907, the year of statehood, 150 companies were in the city. After World War I, the industrial areas continued to follow a growth pattern along the railroad tracks reaching north to 13th Street, west to Walker Avenue, and east to Oklahoma Avenue. The other industrial area centered along Classen Boulevard, West Main Street, West Reno Avenue and West California Avenue. To the south, the industries clustered along the Santa Fe tracks and Broadway and South Robinson and the CRI & P tracks and Southwest 2nd and Southwest 3rd Streets. The railroad tracks from CRI & P and SL & SF crossed the area and provided transportation for the goods assembled and manufactured here.

Between 1911 and 1928, there was a push to remove the Rock Island tracks from downtown Oklahoma City. They were removed in 1930. The City purchased back its right-of-way and developed this into the civic space which is now Couch Drive. The new "Union Station" was built on South Harvey Avenue.

Industries developed along the rail lines on the east, west north and south side of the survey area. The Rock Island line which dissected the north and south sides of the City and manufacturing companies and warehouses are constructed along the line.

Industrial and commercial uses located next to these rail lines including lumber yards, foundries, mills and similar industries. According to the 1922 Sanborn Map, between the Santa Fe Rail tracks, Southwest 5th Street, Broadway and Southwest 7th Street, there was Banner Ice Company, Oklahoma Spring Bed Manufacturing (712 South Broadway Avenue), Magnolia Petroleum, Capital Steel and Iron and Plansifter Milling Company. At Southwest 9th Street and South Robinson Avenue, Oklahoma Gas and Electric had one of their main power stations which was later expanded to South Broadway between Southwest 3rd and 4th Streets. The International Harvester buildings are located at Southwest 5th Street and South Broadway Avenue with a rail siding that comes down the alley behind the building.

Impact of the 1923 Floods

Oklahoma City was inundated with floods twice in 1923. The first flood occurred in late May and early June of that year. The waters cut off Packingtown and Capitol Hill from the rest of the city. The flood crest passed over the city dam. Photographs in the newspaper show Wheeler Park and much of that area under water.⁴⁸ In mid-October another flood devastated the city with a 25 foot surge of water.⁴⁹ The October floods lead to the evacuation of 15,000 residents. Many of these evacuees were middle and low income people that lost their homes and had no way to rebuild. South Harvey Street was flooded as was Wheeler Park, again. The zoo was located at Wheeler Park and with the floods, most of the animals died. This precipitated moving of the zoo north away from the river. Wheeler Park was never rebuilt to its previous state and it was not until the 1930s that the City would clean up the park and install new playground equipment⁵⁰. The force of the water damaged the Walker Street Bridge and the Robinson Street Bridge as well as heavily damaging the streetcar tracks.

Many were dissuaded from buying lots or homes in the area south of the Frisco tracks in the Wheeler, Riverside, South Park, and South Riverside Additions due to the massive flooding in 1923. Those who had the money to relocate, did so. As a result, these subdivisions were never completely built out. The 1922-1950 corrected Sanborn Maps (page 71) show that the area between Southwest 11th Street, Southwest 14th Street, South Harvey, and South Robinson is approximately half vacant. The area from Southwest 11th Street to Southwest 14th Street and South Robinson to the Railroad track is about one third vacant and much of what is there is industrial, not residential according the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (page 72). At the time the corrections were done in to the 1950 Sanborn Maps (page 94), only the area around Little Flower Church and Riverside School was cohesive with few empty lots. Over the years, commercial encroachment has continued to occur in these areas disrupting the residential areas.

⁴⁸ The Daily Oklahoman, *"Will This Ever Happen Again?"*, June 16, 1923, p.1.

⁴⁹ The Daily Oklahoman, *"25 Foot Flood Rushes on City"*, October 16, 1923, p. 1.

⁵⁰ The Oklahoman, *"Wheeler Park Will Open Again Today"*, July 15, 1932, p. 12.

Oklahoma City Intensive Level Survey of Downtown Phase 4 is an irregularly shaped area generally bounded on the north by old Interstate Highway 40, on the west by South Classen Boulevard from Interstate Highway 40 on the north end to the railroad tracks on the south end, then east for about one block to South Shartel Avenue, then south on South Shartel Avenue to Southwest 12th Street, then east to about South Dewey Avenue, then south to a point about half way between Southwest 13th Street and Southwest 14th Street, then east to South Walker Avenue, then south to the north bank of the Oklahoma River, on the south by the north bank of the Oklahoma River, and on the east by South Shields Boulevard.

The survey included 339 properties. Due to the amount of demolition that has taken place, it is difficult to assemble cohesive groups of buildings for historic districts. However, of these five (5) districts have been recommended as eligible for listing on the NRHP, twenty-six (26) individual properties are recommended as eligible and 128 properties are not eligible. In the survey area, one individual resource, Union Station, was previously listed in the NRHP and one considered eligible by the State Historic Preservation Officer, Riverside School. A discussion of these sites is listed in the sections below.⁵¹

It is important to note that a portion of the survey area was subject to an environmental assessment when I-40 was rerouted to the south and a Memorandum of Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Officer.⁵² That report and previous reports have noted the importance of various neighborhoods and individual properties within this survey area.

Additionally, it should be noted that physical changes have been made to many of the buildings over the years. In many cases they are minor, such as a new door. Many of the houses had their original wood siding covered with asbestos siding which was popular from the 1940s through the 1950s. The addition of this siding is part of the evolution of the houses and showed a certain level of prosperity obtained by the owners. Therefore, houses that have asbestos siding as well as their original windows and other elements are considered contributing to a district or individually eligible.

⁵¹ See Appendix A; Table 1 for resource listing.

⁵² Parsons Brinckerhoff, *"Riverside Historic District"*, Report for ODOT as Mitigation for MOA, 2001.

Classen Industrial District

The industrial district relates to the development of the railroads and their impact on the growth and development of Oklahoma City. This area is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A Commerce, Transportation and Industry and Criterion C Architecture. The period of significance is from 1898 to 1955. This industrial area developed along the adjacent railroad tracks that provided access to the materials needed for manufacturing and transportation of their goods to other markets. Development of the area began in the 1890s due to the trains and the buildings in the area were all completed by 1955, hence the dates of significance.

The Five Civilized Tribes were forced to allow railroads to cross Indian lands as part of the Reconstruction Treaties of 1866. The railroads were a major force of development in the southwest and the west. The railroads had pushed for the opening of the Oklahoma Territory because of the lucrative cattle industry. They enabled the transportation of goods, especially agricultural, to markets such as Kansas City and Chicago. In turn, products and manufactured goods were brought back by rail. Obviously, the railroads also brought people into the fledgling towns, especially during the land runs. An example of this is the prefabricated buildings that Henry Overholser brought by train to Oklahoma City and had assembled as some of the first downtown buildings.

Oklahoma City worked hard to obtain other rail lines and connections, eclipsing Guthrie as the commercial, population, and transportation center of the state. The major railroads that came through Oklahoma City were: the Atkinson, Topeka and Santa Fe (1887); Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific (part of which was the Choctaw Coal and Railway Company, 1894); the St. Louis and San Francisco (1895), and Missouri, Kansas and Texas (1902). The businessmen and “boosters” for the city did not fully understand the impact that these at-grade tracks would have on the traffic patterns of the city. As rail lines became busier, automobile traffic trying to move north and south, as well as east and west, was often stymied. Starting in the early 1900s and continuing until the late 1920s, the city worked to consolidate the Frisco and Rock Island depots

⁵³ See Appendix A; Table 1 for resource listing.

into a Union Station and remove the tracks. Subsequently, in 1931, the new elevated track for the Santa Fe line was begun and finally completed in 1933.⁵⁴

The industrial development in this area began before statehood. As stated above by 1901, there were several industrial buildings located near the railroad tracks.⁵⁵

The Classen Industrial District centers on Classen, Southwest 2nd Street and Southwest 3rd Street. There are twelve properties in the district, nine contributing and three non-contributing. This district includes the Voss Trucking Company Building designed by local architect Gaylord Noftsyer in 1939. Other buildings include the Oklahoma Operating Company buildings, 716 and 726 Southwest 3rd Street. These buildings represent the industrial nature of the railroad areas.

South Oklahoma/Orndale Additions Residential Historic District

The South Oklahoma/Orndale Additions Historic District encompasses part of each of these historic subdivisions. This area is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A Social History and Ethnic History and Criterion C Architecture. The period of significance is from 1898 to 1955. Land in the area was purchased for development in the late 1890s. By 1955 the development of the area was complete and there was no new development until the 1970s and 1980s. The proposed district has 76 properties, 59 of which are contributing and 17 that are non-contributing. The district includes Southwest 5th and 6th Streets and South Shartel, South Lee and South Dewey Avenues. This residential area represents some of the early development that occurred in the southern part of Oklahoma City. These areas were developed by men who were early businessmen including John Shields. Orndale was platted in 1898 and included from South Shartel Avenue to South Walker Avenue, from the railroad track on the south to Southwest 4th Street on the north (approximate boundaries). South Oklahoma platted after the turn of the century and included the area to the west of South Walker Avenue to Santa Fe tracks on the west, West Reno on the north and the Frisco tracks on the south (approximate boundaries). As stated before, South Oklahoma City Addition, developed by John Shields, was advertised as a middle income neighborhood that was on the streetcar line. This is an area where many Czech families lived when they first moved to Oklahoma City. The Bohemian Hall is

⁵⁴ <http://dougdawg.blogspot.com/2007/08/okc-trains-part-2.html>, accessed September 15, 2010.

⁵⁵ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1901, Index Page.

in this proposed historic district. The houses in the area are predominately National Folk, Folk Victorian and Craftsman. Houses include 618 Southwest 5th Street which is National Folk Style that has battered Columns and Classical elements. Also in this area is the home of Wesley Skala, who had an orchestra that played at the Bohemian Hall, and lived at 530 West Frisco (Southwest 6th Street). His home is still at this location. It was later occupied by Frank Cernoeks who ran a shoe repair shop in the small building in front of the house. This area has also been populated by Native Americans, African Americans and Hispanics who have lived the area for a number of years.

The neighborhood did see some intrusion on the edges from commercial/industrial uses including the Cain's Truck Lines Building at 817 Southwest 6th Street, constructed in 1939. The building is interesting for its Moderne styling used for a small scale industrial building.

Little Flower Church/Riverside School Historic District

This district includes the historic Riverside School; the Little Flower Church Complex; the Assembly of God Church, 1200 South Walker Avenue, constructed in 1935; the Wesley Community House at 431 Southwest 11th Street, constructed in 1940, and the some of the surrounding neighborhood. This area is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A Social History and Ethnic History and Criterion C Architecture. The period of significance is from 1900 to 1965. Development of the area was begun in the early 1900s and by 1965, development in the area had stopped. Some sporadic development occurred in the 1970s. More development occurred in the 1990s, although this was more industrial in nature. In subsequent years, new homes have been constructed. The proposed district consists of 54 properties, 31 of which are contributing and 23 that are non-contributing. The residential area is centered on Southwest 10th and 11th Streets. This area developed as a middle and lower class neighborhood. Many of the Mexicans that worked in the meat packing industry and on the railroads lived in this neighborhood. The houses are predominately National Folk, Folk Victorian and Craftsman. The house at 525 Southwest 10th Street is a Craftsman constructed in 1925. There is a Folk Victorian, constructed in 1905, located at 539 Southwest 10th Street. It is one of the earliest houses in the area. There are a few ranch style houses, including one at 530 Southwest 10th Street. Riverside School and Little Flower Catholic Church represent the rapid growth of this area. The Church of the Little Flower and Shrine of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel was the center of the Mexican community in Oklahoma City. By the mid-1920s, the original chapel was too small to serve the

growing Mexican population. In 1926, the new church was designed and constructed. The building was designed by architects Vernon and Reid and constructed by Reinhart and Donovan. Originally, the design of the building was to be much grander. However, the Klu Klux Klan threatened the Catholic diocese and to avoid problems with them, the plans for the church were scaled back.⁵⁶ A new school and clinic were added later. Riverside School was designed by G.W. Van Meter and constructed in 1909 to serve the surrounding Riverside neighborhood. The school was originally constructed as a two story building but floors were added later on. Oklahoma City was seeing tremendous growth and the schools were overwhelmed. There were 10,000 school children in 1910. The school board had passed a bond program the previous year and started construction on the new schools, however, the next year they had to pass another bond issue to cover expanding some of the buildings they had just had built, including Riverside School. The building was expanded and the design was done by Layton, Hicks and Forsyth.⁵⁷

It would be possible to delineate a small district with Riverside School, the Little Flower Church complex, the Wesley Community building and the Assembly of God Church. However, the residential neighborhood adds context to these buildings.

Broadway Industrial Historic District

The proposed Broadway Industrial Historic District is adjacent to the Frisco Railroad tracks and includes a portion of South Broadway between Southwest 5th Street and Southwest 7th Street. This area is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A Commerce and Industry and Criterion C Architecture. The period of significance is 1900, when development began to 1955. By 1955, most of the industrial development related to the railroad had been constructed. The district includes fifteen (16) buildings, ten (10) are contributing and six (6) are non-contributing. The buildings, some large, are industrial in design with little ornamentation. This area developed because of its proximity to the railroad tracks. This district includes the International Harvester Buildings at 530 South Broadway Avenue and 5 Southwest 5th Street built in 1913 and 1938, respectively. Other buildings include the Oklahoma Spring Bed Manufacturing Company (E.T.

⁵⁶ Larry Johnson, *Church of the Little Flower and the Shrine Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, Published on Oklahoma Images, the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Library website, accessed May 4, 2012.

⁵⁷ The Oklahoman, *"Growth Bane of Existence of the Board of Education,"* April 22, 1910, pp.7-8.

Leek Building) at 712 South Broadway Avenue that was built in 1913 and the former Post Office Annex at 17 Southwest 6th Street, built in 1953. The E. T. Leek Building was originally the Spring Bed Manufacturing Building. American Springs and Mattress from Cedar Rapids helped to incorporate the company with A.M. Sorey as Secretary. Sorey had come to Oklahoma City in 1908 and later became the president of the firm.⁵⁸ Sorey lobbied City Council to allow oil drilling on the block where the Oklahoma Spring Bed Manufacturing was located. He indicated that oil wells were located across the railroad track from his building and there was plenty of space on his block to locate wells.⁵⁹ These buildings represent the industrial and commercial development of Oklahoma City.

Hub Cap Alley Historic District

The proposed Hub Cap Alley Historic District developed from the early 1900s until the late 1950s. The proposed district is centered on South Robinson Avenue between Southwest 10th and Southwest 14th Streets. This area is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A Commerce and Industry and Criterion C Architecture. The period of significance is from 1900 to 1965. The majority of the area had been developed by 1965. Once again, the proximity to the rail line made this area desirable for commercial and industrial uses. However, another reason is the importance of Robinson as a thoroughfare in and out of Oklahoma City. A new bridge was constructed across the river at South Robinson Avenue as part of the 1927 bond program. The businesses and buildings along Robinson were mainly automotive related; these uses dating back to around 1915 through present day. There are 26 buildings included in the proposed district, 21 are contributing and 5 are non-contributing. The buildings located at 1112 and 1113 South Robinson Avenue were both constructed in 1915 and used as a feed store and tire service respectively.⁶⁰ The 1922-1949 Sanborn Maps indicates that all the buildings in the 1105-1125 block of South Robinson Avenue had auto related uses in them. The complex known as A & A Salvage was constructed in 1940 and is complex of buildings that have always been a salvage

⁵⁸ The Oklahoman, "A. M. Sorey", August 4, 1961, p. 9.

⁵⁹ The Oklahoman, "Council Will Get More Oil Pleas Today", February 25, 1936, p. 7.

⁶⁰ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1922, p.69 (uncorrected).

yard including an area behind the main building to dismantle the cars. The business and buildings that comprise V & H Mufflers (1414 South Robinson Avenue) have been there since 1952. The Massey Building at 1319 South Robinson Avenue built in 1930 and added onto in 1936 started out as a tire store. It still retains its automotive use. Much like Automobile Alley on North Broadway, Hub Cap Alley denoted the change from horses to cars, and what that change brought. However, Hub Cap Alley was not the glamorous part of automobiles like Automobile Alley with its sturdy and handsome auto display rooms and dealerships. Hub Cap Alley denoted the second hand nature of the automobile business, the somewhat less glamorous side. Predominate uses during this time were garages, auto salvage, auto repair shops and tire stores. Many of these uses continue today.

Individual Properties Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places⁶¹

There are twenty-six (26) individual buildings that may be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Like other areas in Oklahoma City, the area surveyed and these neighborhoods included have suffered from extensive demolition, intrusion by industrial uses or, because of repeated flooding, were never fully developed to begin with. The buildings that may be individually eligible are commercial structures and modest residential structures that are eligible under Criteria A Social History and Ethnic History or Criteria A Commerce/Industry and Criteria C Architecture.

Commercial buildings include 726 Southwest 3rd Street, a handsome two story red brick building with cast concrete accents, and the C.C. Cooke Building, a two story and one story tan brick building with cast concrete accents, are representative of the typical commercial buildings that were constructed in the early 20th century. The Brackett's Billards building at 700 S. Walker, constructed in 1935, has Art Deco accents incorporated in the design of this utilitarian commercial building.

The Salvation Army buildings (slated for demolition) at 311 Southwest 5th Street have been previously identified in the Reconnaissance Level Survey of Modern Architecture in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office conducted in 2009 as significant.

⁶¹ See Appendix A; Table 3 for resource listing.

Carter B. Woodson Elementary School (formerly Choctaw School), 300 Southwest 13th Street, was constructed in 1948 and named for the first African American born to slaves that received a Doctorate. Woodson was also known as the “father of Negro education”. He was the national executive director of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.⁶² The building is a wood frame structure built to accommodate 140 students. The school was in use until the mid-1950s, when the U.S. Supreme Court’s Brown V. Board of Education decision in 1954 desegregated schools across the country. The school represents the segregation that occurred in Oklahoma City. It is now owned by the Oklahoma Community Foundation. It remains very intact. The rest of the block is the Manuel Perez Park that is named for World War II Medal of Honor recipient Manuel Perez, Jr. who was born in Oklahoma City.

The houses are in these areas that denote the rich ethnic heritage of Oklahoma City. The typical houses include 423 Southwest 5th Street, a Craftsman with brackets and battered columns; 423 Southwest 12th Street, a modest National Folk house; 426 Southwest 12th with its original 6 over 1 windows, and its twin at 424 Southwest 12th Street.

Resources Surveyed that Do Not Meet Eligibility Requirements or Do Not Require Additional Surveys

Although a resource may be 50 years old or older, it may lack integrity or significance, making the resource not eligible for listing on the NRHP. An extensive amount of demolition has taken place in the survey area due to urban renewal, the condition of the structures and areas where buildings were not constructed, making it difficult to justify a resource’s eligibility for individual significance or to assemble cohesive groups of buildings for historic districts. The buildings not eligible for the National Register due to lack of integrity, significance, context or age are listed in Appendix A; Table 1.

New construction has occurred in some of the residential areas. Some of the construction is new homes that do have a similar scale to the extant homes. However, historic homes were torn down to provide lots for this new construction. There are several manufactured metal buildings

⁶² The Daily Oklahoman, “Carter Woodson”, October 25, 1947, p.7

that have been erected for industrial use. Obviously, these are non-contributing structures and intrude in several of the proposed districts.

Summary and Recommendations

5

The City of Oklahoma City requested URS-Dallas office to perform an intensive level architectural and historical resources investigation for the purposes of conducting the fourth phase of a citywide multi-phase historic resources survey. The project includes the identification and evaluation of properties for individual significance or as contributing structures to a historic district under the National Register of Historic Places eligibility criteria. This report presents a description of the project, the methodologies for the records research and the archival research, the intensive field survey, historic context, and database development of the survey areas that have been identified by the City of Oklahoma City. The report also presents the results of the intensive level survey; historic context of the survey area; discusses potential National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) boundaries for the survey area; and provides recommendations for future work.

Oklahoma City Intensive Level Survey of Downtown Phase 4 is an irregularly shaped area generally bounded on the north by old Interstate Highway 40, on the west by South Classen Boulevard from Interstate Highway 40 on the north end to the railroad tracks on the south end, then east for about one block to South Shartel Avenue, then south on South Shartel Avenue to Southwest 12th Street, then east to about South Dewey Avenue, then south to a point about half way between Southwest 13th Street and Southwest 14th Street, then east to South Walker Avenue, then south to the north bank of the Oklahoma River, on the south by the north bank of the Oklahoma River, and on the east by South Shields Boulevard.

The survey included 339 properties. Due to the amount of demolition that has taken place, it is difficult to assemble cohesive groups of buildings for historic districts. However, of these five (5) small districts have been recommended as eligible for listing on the NRHP, twenty-six (2) individual properties are recommended as eligible and 128 properties are not eligible. In the

survey area, there is one individual resource, Union Station, which was previously listed in the NRHP and one considered eligible by the State Historic Preservation Officer, Riverside School.⁶³

An extensive amount of demolition has taken place in the survey area due to urban renewal and for future development. Intrusive structures such as manufactured metal buildings have been constructed in the commercial and industrial areas as well as adjacent to and in the neighborhoods. Additionally, new low income infill housing has been built in some of the neighborhoods. As a result, it has been difficult to assemble cohesive groups of buildings for historic districts. Therefore, the proposed historic districts should be carefully considered and more research should be done to expand the recommendations. As the survey progresses to other phases and concludes, these recommendations should be reviewed to see if other resources should be added to the suggested thematic nominations. This may include adding the Little Flower Church to a Thematic Nomination of Churches. A Thematic Nomination of Schools may be a possible and include Riverside and Woodson. It is important to continue survey and evaluate the residential areas that remain in the inner city area to see if there are cohesive districts that represent the earliest development patterns and residential history of the City. These “pockets” of residential structures may be candidates for a thematic nomination of the early residential styles and patterns. These neighborhoods are also remnants of the ethnic areas that contributed to the growth and development of Oklahoma City.

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) recognizes the significance of buildings, sites and structures on a local, state and national level. It is a tool for recognition. However, listing in the NRHP does not protect a building from inappropriate alterations or demolition. The City of Oklahoma City historic preservation program should locally designate the buildings and districts that are listed in this report. Local designation of the Carter B. Woodson School because of its importance to education and the African American community should be considered. The City can show their commitment to the local program by such a designation. In the past, the City has not locally designated commercial buildings. As a result, significant structures important to the City’s and State’s history have been lost. Local designation can protect buildings and districts from inappropriate alterations and demolition. Through local designation, the residential and commercial structures which represent early development patterns in the City can be saved.

⁶³ See Appendix A; Table 1 for resource listing.

Local designation can offer new life and uses for the commercial and residential districts and individual structures.

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Appendix A: Historic Resource Tables

Appendix B: Maps