

# Preservation Oklahoma NEWS

*The joint publication of the State Historic Preservation Office and Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.*

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## Sacred Spaces

Ponca City's Houses of Worship  
Plus

Amending National Register Nominations  
Nominate for our 2024 Most Endangered List



*Preservation Oklahoma News*, the newsletter of Oklahoma's historic preservation community, is published quarterly as a joint project of Preservation Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office.

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**On the Cover:**

Built in 1923, the First Christian Church is part of the Downtown Ponca City Historic District (NRHP 2011). Photo: Chantry Banks

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# Notes from the Road

After doing quite a bit of traveling this summer, I am happy to see the fall temperatures arriving! It has been a few great months for historic preservation across the state.

Our 2023 Most Endangered Places list kicked off with an event at Oklahoma City's iconic First National Center. Guests enjoyed appetizers, cocktails, and were the first to see the eleven properties on the list. Advocacy for these sites has begun and several have received incredible amounts of attention, most notably Quanah Parker's Star House in Cache and Capitol Hill High School in Oklahoma City.



*Snapping a photo of Marshall County Courthouse, Madill.*

In July, Representative Stephanie Bice asked for a tour of a few historic tax credit projects in Oklahoma City. We were able to visit the Uptown Building and the recently restored Pachyderm Building at the Oklahoma City Zoo. We had a wonderful visit and Representative Bice remains supportive of the Historic Tax Credit program. I thank Lynda Ozan for joining us on that trip.

I also had the opportunity to take a tour of Herb Greene's "Prairie House" in Norman. What an incredible home! If you have the opportunity to tour it, don't miss it! Assessments are happening and plans of action are being discussed on how best to preserve the home.

I headed up to Noble and Kay Counties at the end of July for research and to check in on a few sites. My first stop was to see the Schultz-Neal Stone Barn (NRHP 2020) in person for the first time, and it is stunning! It is currently for sale, if owning a massive stone barn is a dream of yours.

Newkirk was another stop that day. Downtown Newkirk was placed on the 2022 Most Endangered Places list due to a couple of buildings in precarious shape. Unfortunately, the Mason Stanley building is in worse shape than a year ago, but there are reasons to be optimistic. The rest of downtown is looking great and new businesses are moving in and sprucing up and rehabbing several structures. It is encouraging to see business owners and the Newkirk Main Street organization working to improve the historic district.

Osage County was on my radar in August. I stopped in Ralston to check in on the Ralston Opera House (MEP 2018, NRHP 1987). Ralston's Main Street was used as a filming location for "Killers of the Flower Moon," and the opera house now has painted windows reflecting that shoot. It is hard to tell what shape the building is in.

I was given a wonderful tour of Fairfax and the Tall Chief Theatre (MEP 2022). Organizers are working tirelessly to get the roof repaired. Funds are still being raised for the theatre and the bank building next door. Fairfax also received the Hollywood treatment during "Killers of the Flower Moon." City leaders anticipate the arrival of many tourists to the area once the film has been released. Work is also being done at the Tallchief Mansion (MEP 2004, 2021) on the edge of town.

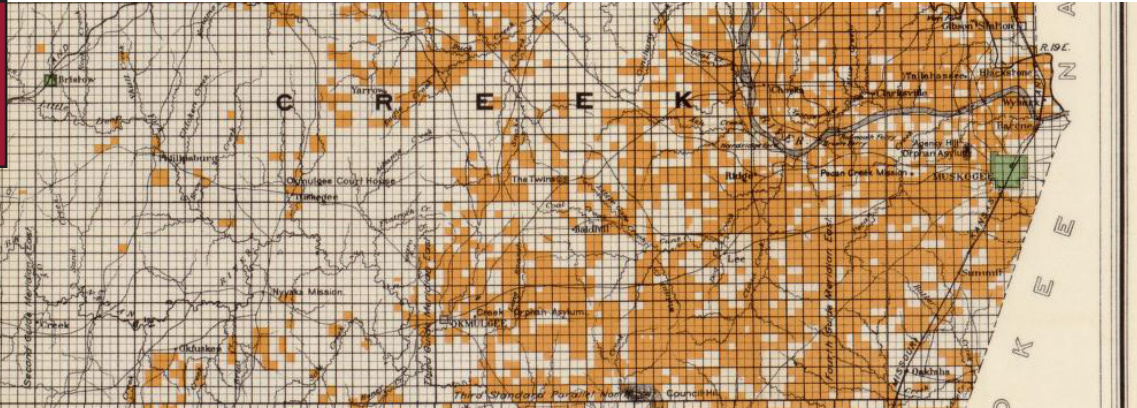
This issue of Preservation Oklahoma News features a lot of great information about the National Register of Historic Places. Look for a story on amending listings in the register and the five new Oklahoma properties added to the National Register so far in 2023!

We also conclude our year of exploring houses of worship across the state. We finish with the eclectic sacred spaces of Ponca City. Have a wonderful fall and get out and explore!

*Chantry*

**Welcome**

## EVENTS



Muskogee (Creek) allotment map. Courtesy Library of Congress

## SHPO Virtual Events

The SHPO hosts many virtual events throughout the year. Some of its many events have included training on federally mandated programs, research interests, history programming, and themed-based lectures.

### Workshops

During the month of November, the SHPO will host their Section 106, National Register of Historic Places, and Tax Credits workshops. New topics for 2023 include: Best Practices for NRHP nominations, Archaeological Investigations and Site Evaluations, and a Tax Credit Case Study. Be sure to sign up so you do not miss these new sessions.

### Lunch and Learns

Held at least once a month, these sessions focus on a variety of topics including research techniques, rehabilitation projects, and advocacy. The last Lunch and Learn for 2023 will be held on October 6, 2023 and will focus on how to research allotments in Oklahoma.

### Webinars

For 2023, our webinar series theme was Hidden Oklahoma: An Archaeology Webinar Series. Attendance throughout the year was very high. For 2024, the topic will be focusing on architecture. Watch OKSHPO's social media and website for speaker announcements.

Don't worry if you missed a topic of interest, you can always view the presentation on the OKSHPO YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/@okshpo](https://www.youtube.com/@okshpo)

Keep checking back on the OKSHPO calendar of events page for new opportunities so you don't miss the chance to register to attend: [www.okhistory.org/shpo/events](https://www.okhistory.org/shpo/events).

## UPDATES

## Amending National Register Nominations

The National Register of Historic Places serves many functions. In addition to providing a property with recognition or financial incentives for preservation, the National Register serves as a planning tool to guide federal, state, and local governments. As such, the information provided in a National Register nomination—including the property's historic name, physical characteristics, historic significance, and boundaries—should be up to date.

National Register nominations can be updated through amendments. Recently, the National Park Service provided updated guidance on amending National Register nominations. Amendments can be placed in two categories: Technical amendments, which correct mistakes in the nomination or provide new information about the property's physical characteristics, including updated maps or photographs; and Substantive amendments, which add a new area or level of significance, change the period of significance, or change the property's boundary. While technical amendments can be submitted directly to the National Park Service by OK/SHPO, substantive amendments must be reviewed by the local historic preservation commission (if the property is within the boundaries of a Certified Local Government) and the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Review Committee prior to submission to the Park Service.

Let's take a brief tour of some properties in Oklahoma that have recently had their National Register nominations amended to provide more accurate information. (Continued on next page)





Chickasaw Hall, Tishomingo, Johnston County. Over 2,000 students lived in Chickasaw Hall between 1918 and 1972. Photo: OK/SHPO.



Mine Rescue Station, McAlester, Pittsburg County. The Mine Rescue Station was at the center of federal efforts to enforce mine safety standards in Oklahoma for over one hundred years. Photo: OK/SHPO.



Frank and Jane Phillips Home, Bartlesville, Washington County. Photo: OK/SHPO.

Located on the campus of Murray State College in Tishomingo, Chickasaw Hall was originally listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1981 as Bessie Poe Hall for its significant associations with Education and Politics/Government. The 1981 nomination was recently amended to change the property's historic name to Chickasaw Hall, as it was known prior to its acquisition by the State of Oklahoma in 1939. The nomination also added Ethnic Heritage-Native American as an area of significance to acknowledge the building's historic associations with the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations. Last, the period of significance was revised to extend from 1918, when the building was constructed, to 1972, when it ceased functioning as a dormitory.

The Mine Rescue Station at 509 South 3rd Street in McAlester, constructed in 1910, was listed in the National Register in 1980 for its association with the development of the coal mining industry in southeastern Oklahoma. A recent amendment to the nomination provided an updated property description and added Politics/Government as an area of significance to acknowledge the building's association with the federal Bureau of Mines, the agency tasked with enforcing mine safety. The amendment further clarified that the property is significant at the statewide level, as it embodied federal efforts to improve mine safety throughout Oklahoma.

The Frank and Jane Phillips Home in Bartlesville was listed in the National Register in 1975 as the Frank Phillips Home for its association with Frank Phillips, the cofounder of Phillips Petroleum Company. In 2008, the nomination was amended to acknowledge that Frank's wife, Jane Phillips (née Gibson), was the sole owner of the property from the time it was purchased until her death, at which time the property was transferred to her granddaughter. In addition to updating the historic name of the property, the amendment provided a more detailed property description and additional context on Frank Phillips' career as an oil man. Lastly, the amendment provided additional information to include Architecture as an area of significance, as the house is an excellent local example of the Neoclassical style.

National Register nominations for historic districts can also be amended. These amendments could include increasing or decreasing the district's boundaries or changing the status of a specific building. For example, the National Register nomination for the Ardmore Historic Commercial District, listed in 1983, was amended in 2004 to clarify the district's boundaries and provide an updated description of contributing and noncontributing buildings. (Continued on Next Page)





The Ledbetter-Frensley Building, 5-7 West Main Street, Ardmore, Carter County. The recent removal of a non-historic metal slipcover revealed that the building retained much of its historic features. Photo: OK/SHPO.



Although currently covered by a non-historic metal roof, interior investigations of the Anderson Building in the Sapulpa Downtown Historic District revealed the historic roof structure with monitors remained intact. Photo: OK/SHPO.

Similarly, a 2019 amendment to the Enid Downtown Historic District nomination, listed in 2007, expanded the district's boundaries to include additional resources significant to Enid's commercial development.

District nominations are often amended as part of a historic preservation tax incentive project. These amendments often change the status of a specific building from noncontributing (meaning it does not contribute to a district's significance) to contributing. For example, the Ledbetter-Frensley Building at 5-7 West Main Street in Ardmore was originally identified as a noncontributing resource to the Ardmore Commercial Historic District because a c. 1967 aluminum slipcover obscured much of the historic façade. Removal of the slipcover as part of a tax credit project revealed that the façade retained much of its historic features, meriting a change in the building's status to contributing to Ardmore's commercial district.

Similarly, the Anderson Building at 117 East Hobson Avenue in Sapulpa was originally identified as a non-contributing resource to the Sapulpa Downtown Historic District because a non-historic metal roof was presumed to have replaced the building's historic roof structure. However, interior investigations revealed that the building's historic, wood-frame roof structure remained intact. Therefore, an amendment to the district nomination was prepared to change the building's status to contributing. A planned rehabilitation project will involve removing the building's non-historic metal roof and restoring the historic roof.

Amending nominations is an essential and necessary part of the National Register process. Amendments provide our office and the National Park Service with accurate information about a property's significance and physical characteristics. Just as important, amendments provide a fuller, more comprehensive and diverse history of the buildings, structures objects, sites, and districts significant to Oklahoma history. This work cannot proceed without your help. If preparing a National Register nomination from scratch seems like a daunting task, consider preparing an amendment for a property that's already listed. Further, please contact the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office if you are aware of a National Register nomination that needs updating.

## EVENT

### Breakfast with Santa Returns!

Save the date for Breakfast with Santa at the Henry and Anna Overholser Mansion. The jolly guy joins us on Saturday, December 9, for breakfast, games, crafts, and the chance to let him know you've been good all year long.

The mansion will be decorated from top to bottom and there are plenty of spots for photos while you are here. Get your list ready for Santa and we'll see you in December!

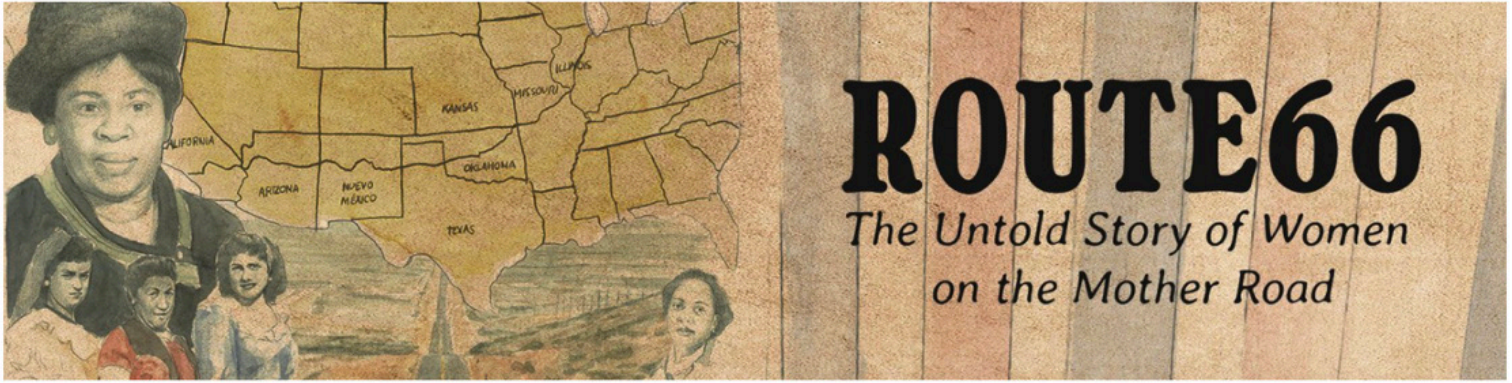
POK News Page 6



Santa and friends at last year's Breakfast with Santa. Photo: Chantry Banks



## EVENT



Join Katrina Parks, Preservation Oklahoma, and The Threatt Filling Station Foundation for a special event for students and Girl Scouts.

The documentary film series *"Route 66: The Untold Story of Women on the Mother Road"* explores how women overcame segregation and gender discrimination to build fulfilling lives for themselves and generations to come on America's most beloved road. This special event geared towards students and Girl Scouts grades 7-10 focuses on how Black travelers and entrepreneurs navigated segregation on Route 66 and also examines how other racialized groups survived challenges on the Mother Road.

The Threatt Family who are restoring the Threat Filling Station in Luther, Oklahoma (the only filling station known to have been owned and operated by African Americans during segregation), will participate in a panel discussion. Activities to engage students with this important history using primary sources are also planned. This presentation is made possible with support from Preservation Oklahoma, Oklahoma Route 66 Association, and the Preserve Route 66 Grant Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It is free and open to the public. Registration in advance is encouraged. For more information about the Route 66 Women project, visit [www.route66women.com](http://www.route66women.com).

The event takes place on November 4 at 2pm. Join us at the Carriage House of the Henry and Anna Overholser Mansion, 405 NW 15th St., Oklahoma City.

Admission is free, but please register by emailing [katrinaparks@mac.com](mailto:katrinaparks@mac.com).

## POK Partners for Day of Volunteering

Preservation Oklahoma had the opportunity to partner with the Abandoned Atlas Foundation and Abandoned Oklahoma for a day of volunteering on September 16.

Volunteers gathered at the Bruce Goff designed Riverside Studio (NRHP 1999) to assist members of Tulsa Spotlight Theatre. For decades, for the former music studio has served as the home for "The Drunkard," America's longest running play.

During the day, closets were organized, floors and carpets were swept, windows cleaned, and we were able to get a better sense of the condition of the iconic building.

If your historic site is in need of volunteer help, please let us know. More volunteer days are being planned for 2024.



Riverside Studio (Tulsa Spotlight Theatre), Tulsa. Photo: Chantry Banks

## VOLUNTEER





First Presbyterian Church, Ponca City. Photo: Chantry Banks

## Sacred Spaces: Exploring Ponca City's Houses of Worship

Ponca City was born on September 16, 1893, during the Cherokee Outlet Opening and was incorporated on December 19 that same year. After residents convinced the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe station agent from Cross, Oklahoma, to relocate to Ponca City, the town's population increased significantly.

The town saw a boom in the early 20th century after E.W. Marland moved to the area and struck oil. Opulent buildings sprung up all over the city, from civic structures to incredible mansions. Churches also began to build grand houses of worship. This trend of magnificent churches peaked in the 1950s, fueled by a booming post-World War II economy. In this issue we'll explore a variety of styles of churches in or near the downtown core of the city.

At the corner where E. Grand Avenue meets Highway 77 sits an icon of Ponca City: First Presbyterian Church. Designed by architects Charles and John Shaver (with assistance from local architect and congregation member William Brown), the church was completed in 1955 and is a Modern Movement interpretation of the Late Gothic Revival style.

The most prominent feature is the tower on the southwest corner of the building. It is nearly twice

the height of the main sanctuary space. The building is clad with Arkansas harmony ledgerstone. The interior features long, narrow, and low-ceiling hallways that open to soaring spaces, including a large sanctuary. A massive stained-glass window designates the altar area with tall, narrow stained-glass windows run along the north and south walls. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2019.



Grace Episcopal Church, Ponca City. Photo: Chantry Banks



Grace Episcopal Church can be found just across the street from First Presbyterian and is more modest in scope. It features the same Arkansas harmony ledgerstone, but the similarities are few. It was built in 1952 and was designed by John Duncan Forsyth. Grace Episcopal resembles a traditional Gothic-style English parish church. *(Photo on previous page.)*

The humble entrance (with red-painted doors) opens up to soaring ceilings, slate floors, hand-carved pews, and a large rood (old Saxon for cross) at the altar's front.

The interior walls of the church are quite stark, with little ornamentation. Here, the stained-glass windows are standouts. Most were designed by J. Wippel and Co. and feature biblical scenes as well as the church's arrival in Oklahoma. Later additions match the original design of the church but have made it ineligible for listing in the National Register.



Temple Emanuel, Ponca City. Photo: Chantry Banks

Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2019 is Temple Emanuel, Ponca City's only synagogue. Emanuel was designed by G. Harold Kanady and built in 1964. It was formally dedicated on the first night of Chanukah that year and thanks to successful fundraising efforts, it was paid in full by Passover 1967.

Jewish families from Ponca City and the surrounding area had been worshipping for decades without a permanent home. Temple Emanuel would be their first. It features a two-story tall parabolic brick structure that houses the sanctuary and is the visual anchor of the building. The ten commandments are featured on the east and west façades. The curving lines of the structure suggest that those inside the building were being cupped in God's hands. Of all the sacred spaces in Ponca City, Temple Emanuel might be one of the most modern and has been relatively unaltered since 1964.

Another church designed by John Duncan Forsyth is the First Church of Christ Scientist, now called Pioneer Bible Church. It can be found just north of the central business district and was added to the



First Church of Christ Scientist, Ponca City. Photo: Chantry Banks

National Register in 2015. The building is distinctive for Ponca City; it was designed in the Colonial Revival style. It features walls of rough-cut limestone and is a rectangular one-story structure. A small cupola can be found on the west end of the building and the main entrance is at the southwest corner. Arched windows allow light into the sanctuary, and there is a large arched window over the entry doors. The few alterations made have not significantly changed the building's appearance.

The final church we will explore is the First Christian Church, built in 1923 (pictured on the cover of this issue). It is a contributing structure to the Downtown Ponca City Historic District (NRHP 2011).

Designed by Van Slyke and Woodruff, it is built in the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style, a style you will see throughout Ponca City, including the nearby municipal building and public library.

The façade is quite ornate with decorative parapets, porticos, and a domed bell tower. It is clad in buff brick and features a red tile roof. In 1995, new copper shingles were installed on the dome. Significant alterations have occurred on the north end of the building and the interior. The sanctuary, while modified multiple times throughout the decades, retains its two-story height and original balcony. Original stained glass remains throughout the church.

Ponca City has so much to offer, including incredible museums and other cultural attractions. The many churches of the city are worth exploring. To see more photos of the churches and others in the area, visit [www.preservationok.org/pokextras](http://www.preservationok.org/pokextras).





Meade and Eudora Gill House, Ponca City, Kay County. Photo: OK/SHPO.

## The National Register in Oklahoma: The Year in Review (2023 Edition)

The past year has seen five new properties added to the National Register of Historic Places, the nation's catalog of buildings, structures, sites, objects and districts significant in our past. Listing a property in the National Register can provide a property with recognition, limited protection and, in some cases, financial incentives for preservation. A facet of a national historic preservation program established by the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Register serves as a guide for government officials and community members to protect the nation's cultural resources and plan for the future.

Nominations for two historic residences in Ponca City were funded in part by the community's participation in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. The Meade and Eudora Gill House (seen above) at 418 North 2nd Street, built circa 1926, is an excellent local example of an American Foursquare residence designed in the Prairie School architectural style. Foursquare houses could adopt several architectural styles and were a popular choice among middle-class Oklahomans for their simple shape and floor plan. The Gill House displays several features associated with the Prairie School style, including a low-pitched roof, boxed eaves, symmetrical fenestration, and centered porch with square porch supports. The house's quality materials and craftsmanship displayed the Gill's status as important entrepreneurs in the community.

The John and Helen Cleary House at 45 Hillcrest Drive represents a former oil executive's desire for a simpler midcentury home. John and Helen Cleary were longtime residents of Ponca City, with John having worked for Marland Oil. In 1951, the Cleary's commissioned Tulsa architect Robert Buchner to design a 2,000 square foot, Contemporary-style home. Buchner's design was a stark contrast to the Cleary's former residence:



John and Helen Cleary House, Ponca City, Kay County. Photo: OK/SHPO.

the prominent "House of Seven Gables" at 13 Hillcrest Drive, which is also listed in the National Register. Buchner's asymmetrical design includes a distinct roofline with parallel gable fronts and multicolored bands of ribbon windows comprised of a combination of plywood panels and tinted glass. The house was built into a sloped lot, providing the Clearys with an unassuming yet comfortable place to live out their remaining years.



Once known as the “Little Ocean,” the Alva Municipal Swimming Pool and Bathhouse is a significant public recreational facility sponsored by the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA). Established under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal, the WPA attempted to mitigate the hardships of the Great Depression by sponsoring construction projects to improve community amenities. Alva’s facility features an Art Moderne-style bathhouse, a 500,000 gallon swimming pool capable of accommodating up to 1,000 swimmers, a wading pool, and a gazebo all constructed of formed or poured concrete. After eight decades since it opened in 1940, the pool and bathhouse remain an important landmark symbolizing the importance of the WPA to Alva’s development.



Alva Municipal Swimming Pool and Bathhouse, Alva, Woods County. Photo: OK/SHPO.

A National Register nomination for the Claud Collier Chevrolet & Buick Company in Atoka was prepared as part of a historic tax credit project. Constructed in 1949, the property is an excellent local example of a post-World War II auto showroom and dealership. Whereas early showrooms were located in Commercial-style buildings in or near downtown, Collier’s dealership incorporated several elements considered to be best practices among the postwar auto industry. These include the property’s prominent location on a corner lot, curved showroom windows, an attached service department, and an elevated exterior car lot. Such features enable the property to harken back to the golden age of automobiles.



Claud Collier Chevrolet & Buick Company, Atoka, Atoka County. Photo: OK/SHPO.

A nomination for St. Ann’s Home for the Aged in Oklahoma City was also prepared as part of a historic tax credit project. Constructed in 1950 by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City-Tulsa, St. Ann’s met Oklahoma City’s growing need for senior housing at a time when no such formal homes existed. The star-shaped building was designed by Charles Lester Monnot, Sr., and welcomed seniors of all ages and faiths. It provided dormitory-style accommodations, dining hall, chapel, and infirmary for over forty years. The facility closed in 1991, by which time the diocese constructed a new nursing home and assisted living center instead of significantly renovating the building to meet new state regulations.



St. Ann’s Home for the Aged, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County. Photo: OK/SHPO.

Together, these properties represent the growing diversity of architecture and history that merits recognition through the National Register of Historic Places. The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office is responsible for identifying, evaluating, and nominating properties for this special designation. Such work cannot succeed without the help of the public. If you are aware of a property that you think merits listing in the National Register and are interested in preparing a nomination, please contact our office.



# Most Endangered Places 2024

It is time to compile Oklahoma's Most Endangered Historic Places List for 2024, and we need your input.

Help us identify Oklahoma's threatened historic resources. While the listing does not ensure the protection of a site or guarantee funding, the designation has been a powerful tool to help local organizations raise the awareness of their endangered places. Please complete the nomination form and return it by March 1, 2024, to Preservation Oklahoma. The Selection Committee will announce the 2024 Oklahoma's Most Endangered Historic Places List in July 2024.

1) Nomination Submitted by:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

2) Endangered Place/Property Nominated:

Name of Endangered Place \_\_\_\_\_

Address/Location \_\_\_\_\_

Current Owner \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

3) Is the current property owner aware of this nomination? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

4) The nominated endangered place... (choose one)

\_\_\_\_\_ is a National Historic Landmark, or contributes to a National Historic Landmark District

\_\_\_\_\_ is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or contributes to a National Register district

\_\_\_\_\_ is individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the State Historic Preservation Office, or contributes to a district determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the State Historic Preservation Office

\_\_\_\_\_ is none of the above.

5) The nominated endangered place's current condition is best described as:

\_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor

6) Other than funding for restoration/rehabilitation, what service could be provided that would assist you in preserving this endangered place (please attach additional page if necessary).

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7) In 150 words or less, explain why you believe this endangered place should be placed on Oklahoma's Most Endangered Historic Places List for 2024 (please attach additional page if necessary).

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8) Please include at least two color photographs showing the current condition of the nominated place.

Please return this completed form to:

Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.

405 NW 15<sup>th</sup> Street

Oklahoma City, OK 73103

Nomination form is also available online at [www.preservationok.org](http://www.preservationok.org).

Please call 405-525-5325 or email [director@preservationok.org](mailto:director@preservationok.org) with questions.

