

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Altus Junior College Library

Other names/site number: Dr. Morris Foster Library; Dr. Morris Foster Building

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 221 North Park Lane

City or town: Altus State: OK County: Jackson

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐
Public – Local ☒
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
District ☐
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION; library

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL; civic

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7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

BRICK, CONCRETE, CERAMIC TILE, GLASS

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The Altus Junior College (AJC) Library was constructed in 1968-1969 on the northeast corner of what was previously part of Altus City Park (now called Hightower Park), across the street from the original and present Altus High School campus. A striking example of the Neo-Expressionism subtype of the Modern Movement architectural style, the AJC Library was designed by local architect William A. Appleby and associate architect Joe L. Milton, who was an AJC graduate. The brick, concrete and ceramic tile building is distinctively triangular in shape with only three sides, consisting of two straight sides on the north and east and a curved back wall forming the southwest elevation. The technical front of the building is the apex of the triangle, including the open-air courtyard, circular ceramic tile-clad bathrooms and a glass-enclosed lobby. In addition to the exterior and interior of the building utilizing a combination of geometric shapes, the Neo-Expressionist style is highlighted by the unusual, built-up, flat, double layer roof that features upward turning stucco-clad curves on the ends. The distinctive roof cantilevers over the open-air courtyard that encircles the glass-enclosed lobby with two separate front entries on the straight sides of the pie-shaped building. The sweeping upward curves on the roof provide the building with a defining wave-inspired sculptural feel that hallmarks the library and sets it apart from the other late 1960s buildings constructed under authority of the local school district for the AJC and designed by William A. Appleby and Joe L. Milton. The windows throughout the building are fixed with the library specifically designed to be air

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conditioned, thus allowing the academic library to provide services year-round and at all times of the day and evening until the junior college moved to its new campus in 1976 and the Altus High School took over the building for its library. In 2016-2017, the former school library was converted to a senior activity center, which necessitated a kitchen addition with bathrooms on the back of the building; modifying the interior study rooms into offices; modernization of some interior finishes including the non-brick walls and flooring; and, comprehensive replacement of the designed landscape around the building with concrete to allow parking near the building, including multiple physical disability parking spaces immediately adjacent to both sides of the building's covered courtyard. The conversion of the AJC Library to the senior activity center saved the building from being demolished and allowed it to flourish again as the local hub for the baby boomer generation that it was originally constructed to accommodate. The AJC Library's overall integrity of design and setting have been diminished by the replacement of the surrounding designed landscape with the paved parking lot. Also further reducing the broader AJC Library's integrity of setting is the circa 2018 demolition of two of the total four 1960s AJC buildings, as well as the substantial post-1975 modifications to facilities in Hightower Park. Despite the lack of setting, the AJC Library retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association, including both the exterior and interior of the building.

Narrative Description

ALTUS JUNIOR COLLEGE LIBRARY SETTING

The AJC Library building is located on the southwest corner of North Park Lane and East Cypress Street on the east side of Altus (photograph 1). As a public district junior college until 1970, the AJC Library was built by the local school district on land granted to the Altus Independent School District by the city of Altus in 1967. The library was built on the northeast corner of the then nearly forty-year-old Hightower Park, which originally encompassed a rectangular area corresponding to four city blocks. While the AJC Library was integrated into the existing park landscape through the retention of multiple existing trees, a specific designed landscape for the building that echoed the Neo-Expressionist style of the building was developed that included two sets of double curved sidewalks similar to an upside down ogee arch on the north and a triangle on the east that connected to partial sidewalks along the perimeter of the property (see AJC Campus Map in 2012, continuation sheet 1). On the northeast side of the property, the two sets of sidewalks both ended at North Park Lane in line with the AJC Administration Building across the street. The 1970 *Bulldog Yearbook* for the Altus Senior High School includes a photograph of the AJC Library with its original green setting from the approximate location of the AJC Administration Building.¹ The landscape much as originally designed remained in place through 2014 as depicted on *Google Earth*.²

¹ *Bulldog Yearbook*, Altus Senior High School, Altus, Oklahoma, 1970. Available *E-Yearbook* and copyrighted Digital Data Online, Inc., 2005-2023.

² Google Earth Pro, Historical Imagery View of the AJC Library in Altus, Oklahoma, imagery date March 8, 2014, accessed September 9, 2023.

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The municipal Hightower Park was established in 1929 on the east side of the new Hightower Park addition to Altus, a restricted residential addition then being developed.³ Based on the 1964 aerial, the municipal swimming pool constructed in 1932-1933 as an unspecified relief project for local unemployed and the tennis courts constructed in 1936 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) remained in place when the AJC Library was constructed in 1968-1969.⁴ The WPA-built barbecue pit in the northeast corner of the park, the current location of the library building, also appears to have been in place in the mid-1960s but was demolished when the library was erected. About twelve years after completion of the AJC Library, the pool and tennis courts were replaced by the existing Linda Wiginton Aquatic Center on the southeast side of the park. The 1981 center includes a large outside pool and building, as well as associated non-historic parking in the park.

Although not specifically mentioned in the 1936 newspaper article about the improvements to be accomplished by the WPA, a park element likely constructed by the WPA are the low, stone, perimeter walls that extend the length of the park property on the north, west, south and east sides. To accommodate the library, the boundary walls were modified to exclude the school property. As part of the 2017 work to the library, the west portion of the park wall to the south of the library was removed to allow access to the aquatic center's double parking lot to south of the library. Because the boundary walls demarcate the park property and the south wall has lost integrity due to the 2017 modifications, the low stone walls to the east and south of the library building are excluded from the boundaries of this nomination.

Another facility in Hightower Park that predated the AJC Library was the Rotary Community Center Building. A converted World War II (WWII) barracks from the Altus Air Force Base, the community building was moved to Hightower Park in 1959.⁵ The rectangular building with rear additions was centrally located on the north side of Hightower Park, to the west of the AJC Library. In about 2016, the Rotary Community Center Building was demolished and the building site sodded over, although multiple openings in the park's north stone perimeter wall remain as evidence of the building's existence.

Across East Cypress Street to the north of the AJC Library, the early Altus High School campus was also a four-block area that featured the 1930 high school building on the northwest side and the WPA-built 1940-1941 Hightower Memorial Stadium covering nearly all of the east side. Although the original high school building and stadium remain standing, albeit with multiple additions and modernizations, the Altus High School campus has since expanded to both the north and east. While many of the high school buildings constructed in the 1950s and 1960s are still extant, recent bond activities have resulted in substantial updates that are not necessarily

³ Advertisement for Hightower Park Addition, *The Altus (Oklahoma) Times-Democrat*, March 24, 1929, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/906322904>.

⁴ 1964 Aerial, Jackson County, Oklahoma, available *OHADP: The Oklahoma Historical Aerial Digital Project*, https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/occ/documents/og/ohadp/jackson/ss_jackson_1964/CTZ-6EE-1851.jpg. Full page advertisement, *The Altus (Oklahoma) Times-Democrat*, May 31, 1933, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/906777799>. See also "Improvement of City Park Due to Start," *The Altus Times-Democrat*, July 5, 1936, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/906795283>.

⁵ "Short Stories," *The Altus Times-Democrat*, November 1, 1959, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/903149509>.

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consistent with the original Mid-Century Modern appearance of the buildings. This includes the circular cafeteria located on the southwest edge of the original high school campus and west of the AJC Library on East Cypress Street. The cafeteria was also designed by William A. Appleby Jr. and Joe Milton and was built as a reported “cooperative” project between AJC and the high school in 1966. The cafeteria was constructed in the same location as the first, separate, late 1940s, AJC building, which like the Rotary Community Center Building was a WWII barracks moved from Altus Air Force Base.

By 1970, the AJC Library was one of four buildings that composed an AJC “campus” separate from the Altus High School campus (see AJC Campus Map in 2012, continuation sheet 1). Directly east of the library, across North Park Lane, was the AJC administration building. The AJC administration/classroom building was completed in 1964-1965 by adding to the existing Park Lane Church of Christ building constructed in 1955-1956. About half a block north, and separated by private property, the AJC campus continued with the U-shaped laboratory/classroom building constructed in 1968-1969. Both the AJC administration and laboratory buildings were demolished after 2017 with the former administration building site now a paved surface parking lot and the former laboratory building site now grassed over. North of the former AJC laboratory building site, there remains a commodious paved parking lot developed in 1969-1970 to serve the laboratory and the fourth and final AJC building. On the north side of the parking lot and on the east side of North Park Lane across from the north end of Hightower Memorial Stadium stands the metal, rectangular, AJC vocational-technical building erected in 1969-1970. The vocational-technical building has been modified for continued use, including the removal of the porch covering on the west elevation. The parking lot and vocational-technical building remain in use by the Altus High School with the school’s post-1972 bus barn and tennis courts in the block to the north.

ALTUS JUNIOR COLLEGE LIBRARY DESCRIPTION

The AJC Library is a one-story, three-sided, light-colored brick building with glass and ceramic tile walls and a concrete foundation, covered courtyard and a multi-layer flat roof (photographs 1-4). The outside edges of the double layer roof curve upward on both layers. The curves of the roof, along with the entire underside of the roof, are white stucco with a dark brown metal coping. The bottom layer of the roof covers the enclosed lobby and the open-air courtyard, while the upper layer of roof covers the back (southwest) two-thirds of the building to the original curved back wall. With the 2017 rear addition covering about one-third of the curved southwest elevation, the upward flared roof line was altered to accommodate the flat-roofed addition that has sharp edges that do not flare upward. The addition does feature the dark metal coping along the roofline (photograph 12).

On the north side of the roof, there is a centrally located, brick, flat-topped, circular parapet set back from the edge of the upper roof that corresponds to the large interior fireplace (photographs 1-3 and 13-14). Centered on the upper portion of the brick parapet are non-original metal words which now read “Dr. Morris Foster/Building.” Named probably in the 1990s for a long-time superintendent of the Altus Public Schools, the last word previous to 2017 was “Library” instead

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of "Building." Barely visible in the center, above the words, is the top of the square chimney. There is not a corresponding half circular parapet on the east side of the roof.

From the corner of East Cypress Street and North Park Lane (photographs 1 and 2), the bottom layer of the roof sweeps to both sides with a notch in the center. Set back from the bottom layer, the upper layer has a larger half circular notch in the center with the north and east ends swoping to almost the same limits as the bottom layer. On the visible, short, brick walls supporting each side of the upper layer of roof, there are multi-pane, metal-framed clerestory windows flanking a circular brick wall (see photograph 3). On the north side, the visible clerestory windows flank the half circular fireplace projection with five panes on the east side and four panes on the west side (see photograph 13). On the east side, the visible clerestory windows are divided into four panes on the south side and five panes on the north side (see photograph 9). Not readily visible on the exterior, along the setback upper portion of the roof, there are also a series of metal-framed, fixed, single pane windows that are visible on the inside upper brick wall of the two main interior spaces (see photographs 20-21 and 25).

The bottom layer of the roof cantilevers over the open-air courtyard that surrounds the glass-enclosed lobby (photographs 4-8). Supporting the roof along the flat portion of the bottom layer is a series of sixteen rectangular concrete beams. Each concrete beam is sandwiched between two shorter, light-colored, gravel slabs. The relatively smoother finish of the concrete beams contrasts pleasantly with the lightly textured gravel slabs. Like the building, the courtyard is triangular in shape, coming to a point at the front northeast (center) of the building to align with the corner of the southwest block at the intersection of East Cypress Street and North Park Lane. The walks in the courtyard are a combination of alternating concrete and gravel. The comparatively smoother concrete walks tend to mark the pedestrian pathways. The connecting textured gravel paths blend with the outside materials on the rectangular concrete beams that support the cantilevered roof. At the front center point of the courtyard, there is a circular landscape bed that contains a low hedge and several small trees. To accommodate the vegetation, there is a triangular-shaped cut-out in the roof above, which allows light to shine on the aquamarine-colored, circular, ceramic tile that covers the original bathroom section of the library and, thus, creates a water-like background to the front landscape bed. To each side of the circular bathroom element, there is a smaller round landscape bed that contains a single tree (photograph 5). To allow growth, the original design of the bottom layer of the roof also has round cut-outs through which the trees are growing.

The circular aquamarine bathroom wall gives way on both sides of the courtyard to the full-glass lobby walls (photographs 6-8). Each lobby wall contains central, double, aluminum-framed, glazed slab doors. Above the doors is a full-width, aluminum-framed transom. To both sides of the doors are double sets of full-height, aluminum-framed, multi-pane, fixed windows. Each window is composed of three panes – a small upper pane corresponding to the height of the transom, a larger middle pane and a shorter bottom pane.

The two sets of glass lobby walls connect to matching, light-colored, brick walls on both sides (photographs 5-8). On the north side only, adjacent to the lobby glass wall, is an embedded Masonic plaque in the brick wall that was dedicated on January 19, 1969 (photograph 6). The

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brick walls are symmetrically divided into rectangular sections by full-height, aluminum-framed, fixed windows. Six of the windows are narrow with the corner window on each side being much wider. Each rectangular window flanks a rectangular concrete beam that is sandwiched between the light-colored gravel panels. In front of each beam, there is a silver, metal, canister light in the smooth ceiling of the bottom layer of roof.

The north and east walls proper continue to match with the bottom layer of the roof cantilevering over concrete walkways on both sides (photographs 9 and 13-14). Between the four outside, rectangular, concrete beams on both sides, there were three sections of decorative, metal, perforated panels. Each section of panels consisted of three pieces with the individual perforations being vertical rectangles. Originally, the height of the sections sloped with the middle section being the lowest, creating a half-circular effect. Evidently after the conversion to senior center, the middle section of perforated metal panel on each side of the building was removed to allow direct access from the new physical disability parking spots to the covered walkway.

As previously mentioned, the main brick walls on both the north and east sides of the building feature a center circular projection with only the north wall having a parapet extending above the roof (photograph 5, 7 and 14). Flanking the center projection on the inside of both walls are five full-height, aluminum-framed, fixed windows that correspond to the clerestory windows between the bottom and upper layers of roof. Each window is multi-paned with the upper pane matching the height of a door transom. The outside section on each wall on each side consists of three full-height windows with a single pedestrian door on the end. These windows are also aluminum-framed, as are the glazed slab doors. The multi-pane windows are divided with the upper pane at the same height as the transom.

The curved back wall forms the southwest elevation of the building (photographs 9-11). Located slightly off center to the north is the 2017 kitchen addition described in more detail below. The only non-street side of the building, the back wall evidently never included any windows. The visible original back wall consists of rectangular sections of brick wall separated by symmetrical concrete expansion joints. Originally, the building's air conditioning condensing units were located off about the center of the back wall, roughly where the addition sits now.

ALTUS JUNIOR COLLEGE LIBRARY 2017 KITCHEN ADDITION

The 2017 kitchen/bathroom addition is curved to align with the original southwest wall (photographs 9-12). The addition features a flat roof with dark brown metal coping. On the east side, the addition wall is divided into two off-set sections by a narrow brick wall. The wider section of wall is set east of the smaller section set back towards the west. The main east-facing portions of wall are a light-colored stucco with horizontal recessed bands dividing the wall into unequal thirds similar to the fixed windows on the north wall. The two narrow end sections of brick walls are a slightly darker brown brick than the original light-colored brick on the southwest elevation. On the backset stucco east side wall, there is a dark brown metal awning with a downspout on the south side.

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The visible, curved, southwest wall of the addition is all brick with no windows and is divided into two sections (photograph 10). The main section of back wall is separated into four segments by three symmetrical downspouts that do not extend the full height of the wall. Offset to the east is a smaller section of back wall that is also divided by a symmetrically spaced downspout. Also symmetrically distributed along the main back wall, at about the same height as the top of the downspouts, are four metal, dark brown, canister lights.

The north-facing side wall of the addition is inset with the back brick wall extending past both sections of side wall (photograph 12). The larger center portion of the north wall is recessed with a flat metal roof. An oversize, metal, pedestrian door is located on the east corner of the north wall. To the west of the door is a free-standing cooler on a concrete pad that takes up the remainder of the space under the flat roof. To the east of the door, the wall extends north to about equal with the cooler. Multiple panels providing electrical services to the building are on the far east section of the exterior wall. To the north is a narrow, rectangular concrete pad containing the building's emergency generator. West of the pad is a short concrete driveway with curbs. This driveway accesses a wide, north-south concrete drive extending from Cypress Street past the south side of the building.

ALTUS JUNIOR COLLEGE LIBRARY INTERIOR

The interior of the AJC Library retains much of its original configuration. The interior consisted of two large rooms, one originally identified as a reading room and the other as multipurpose. Dividing the two main interior spaces is a row of several small rooms, which were a combination of study rooms and offices. The notable changes to the configuration of space within the historic interior include conversion of the study rooms into offices and the removal of the moveable walls in the multipurpose room that allowed the room to be divided into two classrooms. The finishes in the main rooms have also been altered, with historical, copyrighted, interior photographs from the Western Oklahoma State College (WOSC) archives showing the smooth walls as having wood paneling and probably linoleum flooring.⁶

The double doors from the courtyard on both the north and east elevation open onto a spacious lobby (photographs 15-17). The lobby features a smooth ceiling with recessed canister lights and a modern faux wood floor. The walls of the lobby are a combination of glass on the exterior sides, a single central section of smooth wall on the west and ceramic tile on the east. Two brass construction plaques, one for the original 1968-1969 construction and the other for the 2017 modification, are centered on the light-colored, smooth west wall of the lobby, between two rectangular concrete and gravel beams. To each side of this center section is a double set of aluminum-framed, glazed slab doors with a full-width transom. The matching doors have full-height, aluminum-framed, undivided sidelights topped by square transoms. All of the transoms are fixed.

⁶ Altus, Digital Collections, *WOSC Archives*, available <https://collections.wosc.edu/islandora/object/islandora%3Aaltusok>.

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A set of original restrooms are opposite the double glass doors, off the east side of the lobby (photograph 17). The restrooms are located on each side of the circular, aquamarine, ceramic tile section of the building, with the men's restrooms wrapping around on the south and the women's restroom on the north (photograph 18). Centered between the restrooms is a mechanical room. The entries to the restrooms are recessed with sections of ceramic tile wall extending on both sides into the lobby space to provide some privacy.

The south interior lobby doors open into what is now the lunchroom for the Senior Activity Center (photographs 19-21). This room was historically the reading room, including the original library stacks. The floors in this room have also been modernized to a modern faux wood. The smooth, white ceiling retains its original geometric detailing, consisting of a pattern of recessed spheres separated by lower irregular-shaped sections. The recessed sphere sections of ceiling have multiple, large, round, recessed lights, while the irregular-shaped sections feature flush, rectangular, multi-light strips of lights. The walls on the north and east side of the room are brick. On the north side, the concrete and gravel beams flanked by single windows separate the brick sections of wall. The north interior wall is also divided near the top by a continuation of the flared upward section of the bottom layer of roof. On the east wall, which is curved outward, there is a larger expanse of brick wall that is flanked on both sides by the multiple-pane windows and single pedestrian door on the far side of the exterior east elevation. While not flared, the interior east wall of the reading room also features an interior continuation of the bottom layer of roof with the clerestory windows visible between the lower and upper roofs. The long curving south wall of the reading room is now a light blue smooth wall with a nonoriginal hallway to the new restrooms and a nonoriginal entry to the new industrial kitchen. On the west wall of the reading room, there were originally several small rooms that have been converted to offices and a breakroom. The private spaces all have wood slab doors of indeterminate age. Only one of the offices, on the north end, has a fixed window adjacent to the door. Along the upper west wall is a ledge that continues the decorative design from the north wall.

The multipurpose room on the north side of the building has a combination of faux wood flooring and carpet (photographs 22-25). The faux wood flooring creates a pathway on the south side of the room, adjacent to the two study rooms converted to offices. The offices have wood slab doors with half-height fixed windows to the west of the doors. The faux wood floor extends to an original set of bathrooms off the west edge of the multipurpose room. The carpet in the multipurpose room covers the rest of the room, except for a small area in front of the circular fireplace. The walls of the multipurpose match the color and finish patterns of the walls in the reading room. The ornamental ceiling of the multipurpose room also matches the geometric design of the reading room, including the pattern of the light fixtures.

The standout feature of the multipurpose room is the large circular fireplace set into the curved, north, brick wall with flanking full-height windows (photograph 24). The fireplace has a glazed rubble gravel face that is curved with a matching hearth set on a brick base. With a black, metal grate in the center, the firebox has an ellipse-shaped opening that extends the full-width of the fireplace. In front of the hearth is a half-circle section of tile separating the fireplace from the rest of the carpeted room. Non-historic fabric panels have been installed to the brick sides of the fireplace to dampen sound in the large room. Matching panels are scattered along the other walls.

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ALTUS JUNIOR COLLEGE LIBRARY ALTERATIONS

After AJC occupied its new campus in January 1976, the AJC Library continued in use as the Altus High School Library until the early 2010s. While minor updates were likely accomplished over the building's forty-year span as a high school library, the only identifiable exterior change during this period was the addition of the metal letters spelling the name of the building on the north brick parapet. Named for the 1972-1990 Altus School Superintendent, the signage as a whole is non-historic, having probably occurred after Dr. Morris's retirement in 1990.

As part of the 2017 conversion of the building from high school library to senior activity center, exterior alterations to the AJC Library include the change in signage from "Library" to "Building" on the north parapet; removal of the center section of perforated metal panels on the north and east elevations; replacement of the designed landscape around the building with paved parking; and the rear kitchen/bathroom addition.

The 2017 work to the interior of the AJC Library included installing new floor coverings throughout the building and refreshing the wall treatments, both of which had likely also been done previously. The conversion of the study rooms into offices is a change in function with minimal change in space configuration. The removal of the moveable walls in the multipurpose room may have occurred prior to conversion of the library to the senior center. The Midcentury Modern highlights of the interior, consisting of the distinctive ceiling design in both the reading and multipurpose rooms and the dominating fireplace in the multipurpose room, remain intact. Combined with the retention in general interior configuration of space, the interior of the AJC Library adds to the ability of the building to convey its historic significance.

Overall, the AJC Library retains its integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The 2017 addition has minimal impact on the integrity building, given its rear location, sympathetic materials and subtly different detailing. Most of the other exterior and interior alterations are relatively minor. The most impactful change is the installation of paved parking, which diminishes integrity of design and setting. In combination with the recent demolition of two of the four original AJC buildings and changes to facilities in Hightower Park, the paved parking results in a loss of integrity of setting for the building. Despite this loss, the AJC Library retains its ability to convey its educational significance as associated with President Lyndon Baines Johnson's Great Society of the 1960s.

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Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1967-1975

Significant Dates

1969 (construction completed)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Appleby, William A., Jr., AIA, Architect
Milton, Joe L., Associate Architect
Munger-Emmons Construction Company, General Contractor

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

The Altus Junior College (AJC) Library, located in Altus, Jackson County, Oklahoma, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A for its historic significance in the area of education for its association with President Lyndon Baines Johnson's Great Society. As a politician and former educator that came of age during the New Deal Era of the 1930s, Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) believed in the combined forces of education and "an activist government." Accordingly, LBJ's Great Society legislation emphasized opportunity through education as "the government's secret weapon in the fight against poverty and unemployment."⁷ Specifically, LBJ's Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963 and Higher Education Act of 1965 set the course for construction and development of the AJC Library from 1967 through 1975. The library building was constructed in 1968-1969 using a 1967 federal grant under the Higher Education Facilities Act. The Great Society legislation did not end at physical construction of library buildings but also provided federal support to address shortcomings in academic library collections. Influenced by Title II of the Higher Education Act, which focused directly on augmenting postsecondary library holdings, the AJC Library consistently expanded its catalog of books, magazines, and other media during the 1969-1975 period and, during the 1971-1972 school year, reorganized itself to become the "College Learning Resource Center." The period of significance for the AJC Library extends from 1967 to 1975 with a significant date of 1969 to mark the completion of the building. The period of significance begins with the 1967 conveyance of land, presentation of the building plan and the formal year of the Higher Education Facilities Act grant for the library construction. The period of significance continues through 1975, after which the academic library moved to the new college campus in a different location and the former AJC Library became the Altus High School Library. Although AJC was renamed Western Oklahoma State College (WOSC) effective August 1974, that name was only associated with the library building for a short sixteen-month period. Following the retirement of long-time school superintendent Dr. Morris Foster in 1990, the AJC Library building was formally designated the "Dr. Morris Foster Library." The property was renamed the "Dr. Morris Foster Building" in 2017 following its conversion to a senior activity center. "Altus Junior College Library" is the name used for this nomination because it was the name associated with the building for the longest time during the period when the building achieved its historic significance.

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

⁷ Christopher P. Loss, *Between Citizens and the State: The Politics of American Higher Education in the 20th Century*, (Princeton, New Jersey: University Press, 2012), 169-170.

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ALTUS COMMUNITY BACKGROUND:

Originating in 1891 as part of Old Greer County, Texas, the community of Altus was designated the temporary county seat of Jackson County at Oklahoma statehood in 1907. The following year, Altus won the county vote to serve as the permanent seat of Jackson County. As with most of western Oklahoma, agriculture formed the economic base that Altus and Jackson County relied on to stimulate growth and development. Development of oil fields in the first decades of the twentieth century also allowed the area to flourish. The twin economic forces of Oklahoma, oil and agriculture, remained a significant revenue source in the area to the present time. These, of course, have been augmented periodically, most notably by federal programs. In the 1930s, with devastating downturns in both agriculture and oil, the various New Deal programs of President Franklin Roosevelt assuaged residents during the trying times, including improvements at both the Altus City (Hightower) Park and Altus High School in the form of Hightower Stadium. This also included construction of the W.C. Austin Irrigation Project, the first such project sponsored in Oklahoma by the Bureau of Reclamation and one that took over a decade to bring to completion. In the 1940s, the location of an air base in Altus allowed Jackson County to emerge from the Great Depression on a strong upswing. Although closed following the end of World War II, the federal military installation was reactivated in the early 1950s. Altus Air Force Base remains a significant economic force in Jackson County to the present day.⁸

At Oklahoma statehood in 1907, Altus had a population of 1,927. More than doubling in the next three years, the number of citizens jumped to 4,821 in 1910. Experiencing a loss of nearly 300 residents, Altus' 1920 population fell to 4,522. The Roaring Twenties benefited Altus by almost doubling the population to reach 8,349 in 1930. Growth continued much more slowly in the 1930s, likely impaired by the trying economic times of the Great Depression, bringing the number of inhabitants to 8,593 in 1940. The war years of the 1940s, influenced by the temporary air base, brought Altus' 1950 population to 9,735. Undeniably influenced by the reactivation of the Altus Air Force Base in 1952, the number of citizens again surged in the 1950s with the number of citizens surpassing double digits for the first time to reach a total population of 21,225 in 1960. Peaking in 1970 at 23,302 residents, Altus' population then dropped slightly to 23,101 in 1980 and 21,910 in 1990.⁹

ALTUS JUNIOR COLLEGE BACKGROUND:

As part of a statewide trend in the 1920s and 1930s, Altus Junior College (AJC) formed in 1926 as a public district junior college. As a municipal junior college, AJC was a component of the local school district, established in 1891 as part of the founding of the Altus. Following the 1930 construction of a new \$240,000 high school building (the town's fourth), AJC moved to "the

⁸ Oklahoma Historic Preservation (OHP), *Final Survey Report: Reconnaissance of Certain Parts of the City of Altus*, (available Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: 1993), 91-93.

⁹ Frances Herron, "Altus," *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=AL013>.

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eastern edge of town” where it remained for the next forty-plus years. Offering a two-year program, the municipal junior college was accredited by the State Board of Education in 1931.¹⁰

AJC was the second public district junior college opened in Oklahoma, after Muskogee Junior College, which opened in 1920 as a one-year school and became a two-year school in 1928. By 1939, there were a total of twenty-one municipal junior colleges in Oklahoma. After 1940, the number of public district junior colleges in Oklahoma declined due to a combination of low enrollment and insufficient monetary support. By 1957, only six public district junior colleges remained, consisting of the schools at Altus, El Reno, Sayre, Poteau, Seminole and Muskogee.¹¹

The war years of the 1940s were especially hard for the municipal junior colleges with many young people diverted from higher education by wartime service and jobs. In 1944, just 18 students enrolled in AJC with many of them only taking classes part-time. The following year, the number of students increased to 25, a marked drop from the 300 that had enrolled previous to World War II.¹² However, the 1940s were not a total bust as the baby boom that following the end of the war resulted in unprecedented demand for the school some twenty years later.

The 1952 reactivation of Altus Air Force Base, and the subsequent change in commands from the Tactical Air Command to Strategic Air Command about 18 months later, brought about AJC’s “best two years in more than a decade,” as reported in both the 1954-1956 and the 1956-1958 biennial reports to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. While evening classes were popular with Air Force personnel, many airmen were also able to take day classes “through the cooperation of their superior officers.” By the school year ending in 1960, enrollment in AJC had swelled to 65 freshmen, 10 sophomores and 150 evening and special students, bringing the total enrollment to 225.¹³

¹⁰ A. L. Crable, State Superintendent, *Oklahoma Educational Directory 1939-1940*, Bulletin No. 108-P, (Oklahoma City: State Department of Education, 1939), 10. See also “AHS History,” *Altus Public Schools*, <https://ahs.altusps.com/about-us/ahs-history>; “Altus College Wins Credit,” *Wichita Falls (Texas) Record News*, July 6, 1931, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/775124368>.

¹¹ Linda D. Wilson, “Muskogee Junior College,” *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=MU021>. See also “State System Overview: A Guide To The History, Organization And Operation Of The State System, Part 2: History Of The State System,” *Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, <https://www.okhighered.org/state-system/overview/part2.shtml>; “Altus College Boosts Proposal,” *The Wichita Falls (Texas) Times*, February 17, 1957, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/780329980>.

¹² “Altus Enrollment In Schools Increases,” *Wichita Falls (Texas) Record News*, July 6, 1931, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/774936126>.

¹³ “Altus Junior College” in *Seventh Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1954), 49. See also Dean A. G. Steele, “Altus Junior College” in *Eighth Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1956), 43; Superintendent Clifford Peterson, “Altus Junior College” in *Ninth Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1958), 48; Peterson, “Altus Junior College” in *Tenth Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1960), 51.

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Between 1960-1962, AJC was reportedly the “fastest-growing college in the state,” with a 45.1 percent increase over the previous years. Of special note during this period was the eighteen months in which the twelve Atlas Missiles were being installed in the Altus area. AJC was able to offer the required courses for “junior executives with world-leading construction, engineering, architectural, chemical and structural firms.” Additionally, “when the \$167,000,000 missile installation program was completed in August, 1962, the college was used by space agencies across the nation for interviewing scientists and engineers.”¹⁴

By the end of the 1964 school year, sophomore enrollment at AJC had increased over 300 percent from the previous two years with an overall enrollment increase exceeding 25 percent. With establishment of the University of Oklahoma (OU) at Altus campus at Altus Air Force Base, AJC was able to correlate its courses to provide a foundation for attainment of OU’s bachelor’s degrees. AJC offered both twilight and evening courses, as well as the standard daytime classes. To accommodate the growing demand, AJC occupied in 1965 its new junior college building across North Park Lane to replace the “temporary” World War II-era barracks building that was south of the high school and site of the “cooperative” AJC and Altus High School’s new cafeteria, which was finished in 1966.¹⁵

Coincidentally in 1966, AJC became the only remaining junior college in southwest Oklahoma when Cameron College in Lawton was re-designated from a state-supported junior college to a four-year bachelor’s degree-granting state school. This educational gap caught the attention of the Altus Chamber of Commerce, who began advocating for expansion of AJC in January 1968. By July 1968, the chamber was considering a feasibility study of “establishing Altus Junior College as a state-supported institution.” Among the points that the chamber wanted studied was “the securing of land, buildings and equipment as an inducement for the state.”¹⁶

One year after the Altus Chamber of Commerce brought up the idea, State Representative Larry Derryberry of Altus announced that he had “co-authored a resolution stating a need for a state junior college in southwestern Oklahoma.” Derryberry, Speaker Pro Tempore of the House, noted that, with the conversion of Cameron College to a four-year school, the closest state-supported junior college to southwest Oklahoma was “300 miles away.” The resolution sought to have the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education study the “methods of establishing a junior college in the most practical and economical manner possible.” The resolution further “suggest(ed) that Altus Junior College be converted into a state school.”¹⁷

¹⁴ President Clifford Peterson, “Altus Junior College” in *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1962), 71-72.

¹⁵ Peterson, “Altus Junior College” in *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1964), 75-77; and, Peterson, “Altus Junior College in” *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1966), 85-86.

¹⁶ “Chamber To Study AJC Expansion,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, January 9, 1968, available *Google Newspaper Archive*. See also “State-Supported Junior College Study Considered,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, July 29, 1968, available *Google Newspaper Archive*.

¹⁷ “Derryberry Asks Conversion of Altus College,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, January 10, 1968, available *Google Newspaper Archive*.

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The Altus Chamber of Commerce was presented with the results of its special study at the end of February 1969, coinciding with the near completion of the AJC Library. While the study concluded that “Altus (met) all criteria requirements” for a state-supported junior college, the chairman of the special study committee, Waldo Oden, also told the board that “more effort needs to be made to see that the college is approved for Altus.” Oden, a local attorney, also commended State Senator Herschal Crow and Representative Derryberry “for their efforts in the State Legislature to establish a state junior college” in Altus. It was also noted at that time that “the Altus School Board recently approved a resolution that would provide the present facilities of Altus Junior College for the state supported college during the state school’s first year of operation.”¹⁸

At the end of April 1969, Altus School District Superintendent Clifford Peterson clarified for the local newspaper that he was not opposed to AJC becoming a state-supported school, contrary to rumors circulating the town. Peterson also specified that the AJC buildings constructed by the school district would only temporarily be used for the state-supported school with the buildings reverting to the district when the state-supported facilities were occupiable. Peterson explained that “making the college state-supported would not have any appreciable affect financially for the school district.” He noted that “at the rate the high school population is growing, the added college facilities to the high school will not hurt anything” and that the high school “could use everything we have.”¹⁹

Also, at the end of April 1969, the Oklahoma Senate considered a bill to make AJC part of the state system. The bill was returned to conference with the instructions that AJC only be made a state-supported school if it was “feasible.” To determine feasibility, the state regents were to have a study completed within three months. The revised bill passed the Senate during the morning hours of April 28, 1969, and was then quickly “given an overwhelming approval by the House” that same afternoon. The bill automatically appropriated \$65,000 to the school as long as the feasibility study to be completed in ninety days was favorable towards the action.²⁰

Despite the legislature’s mandated time frame, the feasibility study for transferring AJC to the state did not proceed as expected. By early July 1969, the scope of the feasibility study expanded to include junior colleges at El Reno, Sayre and Seminole as well as other communities that did not have junior colleges, and the timeline for the study’s completion was extended to November

¹⁸ “Camber Board hears College Feasibility Report,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, February 27, 1969, available *Google Newspaper Archive*.

¹⁹ “Senate Debates Altus Proposal,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, April 24, 1969, available *Google Newspaper Archive*.

²⁰ “Altus Junior College Bill Clears Committee,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, April 22, 1969, available *Google Newspaper Archive*. See also “Senate Debates Altus Proposal,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, April 24, 1969, available *Google Newspaper Archive*; “Senate to Take Another Try on Altus College,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, April 25, 1969, available *Google Newspaper Archive*; “Solons ‘Shuck’ Altus College Bill,” *Wichita Falls Record News*, April 25, 1969. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/775939874>; and, “Altus Junior College Bill Awaits Bartlett Signature,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, April 29, 1969, available *Google Newspaper Archive*.

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1969. As such, it was publicly announced that AJC's transition would not happen during the 1969-1970 school year.²¹

After 44 years as a municipal district junior college, Altus Junior College became a state-supported junior college on July 28, 1970. To secure the transition, the local community donated a 142-acre site on the north side of town for a new college campus. Following appointment of a local board of regents, a new college president was selected and assumed his duties on July 1, 1971. The regents, president "and various committees for the future growth of Altus Junior College" quickly began working on a master plan for the new campus with architectural expertise provided by the local firm of William Appleby and Associates. The "Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Altus Junior College" was adopted by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education in February 1972. In August 1974, the name of the school changed from AJC to Western Oklahoma State College (WOSC) in time for the opening of the 1974-1975 academic year. In January 1976, WOSC occupied its new campus buildings with the \$4.3 million campus being dedicated on May 20, 1976.²²

ALTUS JUNIOR COLLEGE LIBRARY EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Through about the mid-twentieth century, education in the United States was "primarily a State and local responsibility." During and after World War II, federal aid for education expanded significantly with the Lanham Act of 1941 and the Impact Aid laws of 1950 providing federal money to communities containing federal military installations, such as Altus with its adjacent air force base. On a postsecondary level, the 1944 "GI Bill" provided assistance allowing "nearly 8 million World War II veterans" to go to college. In response to escalating tensions during the Cold War, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958 to provide for college student loans; fellowships for graduate students; enhanced science, mathematics and foreign language instruction at the elementary and secondary levels; and greater vocational-technical training.²³

Going a step beyond the earlier federal legislation and less than one month after being sworn-in as President, Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ) signed the Higher Education Facilities Act on December 19, 1963. This postsecondary legislation provided federal grants and loans for

²¹ "Survey of Oklahoma Junior Colleges Scheduled," *The Altus Times-Democrat*, July 1, 1969, available *Google Newspaper Archive*. See also "Regents' Action on College is Delayed," *The Altus Times-Democrat*, August 28, 1969, available *Google Newspaper Archive*.

²² President Clifford Peterson, "Altus Junior College" in *Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, Part 1, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1970), 33-34. President W.C. Burris, "Altus Junior College," in *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, Part 1 and 2, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1971 and 1972), 35-36 and 36-38; Burris, "Altus Junior College" in *Seventeenth Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, Part 1 and 2, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1973 and 1974), 33-34 and 39-40; Burris, "Western Oklahoma State College" in *Eighteenth Biennial Report of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, Part 1 and 2, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, 1975 and 1976), 55-57 and 50-52.

²³ "The Federal Role in Education," *U.S. Department of Education*, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/fed/role.html>.

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improvement or construction of college buildings at both public and private schools. The Higher Education Facilities Act provided key funding just as the first of the baby boomer generation was reaching college age. The Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963 was followed by passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Among other provisions, the Higher Education Act of 1965 included Title II, which was aimed specifically at academic libraries, and Title VII, which amended the Higher Education Facilities Act concerning eligibility and funding caps. Both of these acts were critical to a postsecondary education construction boom that was so prevalent “that between the late 1960s and early 1970s, one college a week was opening in the United States.”²⁴

With enrollment at AJC continuing to climb to 463 students by the end of the 1966 school year, AJC initiated its second major construction project to construct an “ultra-modern college library.” The land for the new building consisted of the northeast corner of the Hightower Park with the transfer from the city to the local board occurring in 1967. The plans for the library were approved by the school board at its August 1967 board meeting. The 8,500 square foot, triangular building was located “on a site recently granted the college by the city of Altus.” As described in 1967, the “core of the building will be the library stacks, check-out desks, reference areas and periodical rooms.” The building was also to include a multipurpose room that could be divided into two classrooms via moveable walls. With a lobby to “be architecturally similar to that of the Los Angeles Music Center and the Lincoln Center in New York,” the building was to have “an exterior of brick, smoked glass and masonry” that embodied the “latest styling.”²⁵

The AJC Library was designed by the local architectural firm of William A. Appleby and Associates. Born and raised in Norman, Oklahoma, William Alexander Appleby Jr. received his Bachelor of Science degree in architectural engineering from the University of Oklahoma (OU) in 1943. While at OU, Appleby participated in the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) and joined the U.S. Navy Reserves from December 1941 through March 1955. Appleby served on active duty from May 1943 to September 1947, including stationing on Omaha Beach during the Normandy invasion. Returning to Oklahoma in 1947, Appleby worked for the architectural and engineering firm of Collins and Flood, with offices in McAlester and Ardmore, for seven years.²⁶

In 1954, Appleby opened his own architectural office in Altus in the Badger-Henry Building. William A. Appleby and Associates quickly became the go-to architectural firm for the Altus Independent School District. From the 1950s through the 1980s, Appleby’s firm designed elementary, junior high and high school buildings for the district, as well as all four of the 1960s AJC buildings. Following conversion of AJC to WOSC, Appleby was the architect for the state-supported college campus. Appleby and Associates was also prolific in designing buildings in

²⁴ Stephen G. Pelletier, “History’s Lessons: The Meaning of the Higher Education Act,” *Public Purpose*, (Fall 2015, available <https://www.aascu.org/MAP/PublicPurpose/2015/Fall/HEA50.pdf>), 3 and 5.

²⁵ “Trustees OK Library Plans, Sewing Course,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, August 22, 1967, available *Google News Archive*. See also “Altus Jr. College to Build Library,” *Wichita Falls Times*, September 3, 1967, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/780842907>.

²⁶ Obituary for William A. Appleby Jr., *Tribute Archive*, <https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/2898716/William-A-Appleby-Jr>.

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the Altus community, including the 1983 public library in downtown Altus. The firm also worked in several nearby communities. including designing the 1963-1964 Library-Administration Building for Cameron College in Lawton, the underground school in Duke and the city hospital in Mangum.²⁷

Joe L. Milton was a long-time associate in Appleby's architectural firm. Born and raised in Altus, Milton graduated from AJC before receiving his Bachelor of Architecture with a minor in landscape architecture from OU. Milton served in the U.S. Air Force from 1951 and 1954 prior to returning to Altus and joining Appleby's firm. Nicknamed "Round Joe" for his circular building designs, Milton was also acclaimed for his love of landscaping. As with the AJC Library, Milton was actively involved in many of the Appleby and Associates buildings of note. After the closure of William A. Appleby and Associates in the 1980s, Milton joined the firm of Glenn Biggs and Associates.²⁸

The Altus Board of Education accepted the low bid for construction of the AJC Library in early January 1968. The low bid of \$223,250 was submitted by Munger-Emmons Construction Company of Enid. School superintendent Petersen and architect W. A. Appleby Jr. quickly "conferred...with the tentative contractors" with plans to forward the contract and final plans to "the Dallas regional office of the housing (sic) and Urban Development division." Approval of the contract and plans by the federal agency was necessary "because the library structure (was) federally financed through higher education legislation."²⁹

Three months after the library construction bids were opened, the work order for the library was issued. Munger-Emmons would have eight months from March 4, 1968, to complete the fully air-conditioned building. Superintendent Peterson hoped that the building would be completed by the end of the first (fall) semester of the 1968-1969 school year.³⁰

Due to "prolonged bad weather" in the spring of 1968, the library construction was about 45-days behind by early November 1968. However, as reported by the local newspaper two weeks later, the contractors still "hope[d] to have the unusual structure ready for use by the time Altus Junior College students return from the Christmas vacation." At the same time, the newspaper noted, "In order to keep the park-like atmosphere around the building, only two trees were removed" during construction of the library. Although exterior work on the building was

²⁷ "Architect Opens Office at Altus," *Wichita (Falls) Daily Times*, August 15, 1954, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/774374035>. See also "William A. Appleby Jr." in *American Architects Directory*, 3rd ed., (New York, New York; R. R. Bowker Company, 1970), 34; and, various articles *The Altus Times-Democrat*, *Wichita Falls Times* and *Wichita Falls Record News*, 1954-1983.

²⁸ Obituary for Joe Lynn Milton, *Lowell-Tims Funeral Home & Crematory*, <https://www.lowell-tims.com/obituaries/Joe-Lynn-Milton?obId=3140648#/obituaryInfo>.

²⁹ "Altus College Library Bid Accepted; Peterson Re-elected," *The Altus Times-Democrat*, January 3, 1968, available *Google News Archive*.

³⁰ "Work Order Issued for AJC Library," *The Altus Times-Democrat*, March 4, 1968, available *Google News Archive*.

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completed before classes resumed for the Spring 1969 semester, the interior of library was not ready for use as previously anticipated.³¹

Near the end of February 1969, the library passed its federal inspection. However, there was still a delay in turning the library over to AJC. The delay was attributed to “shipment damage to a folding wall and three interior doors for which replacements have not arrived.” According to Altus school superintendent Peterson, “Public buildings cannot be accepted until all facets meet specification standards.”³²

After months of anticipation, the open house for the AJC Library was held on March 4, 1969. Actual use of the building by students, however, was delayed for almost a month to allow “some last minute repairs to be made.” While the new library was open to the public, only AJC students had check-out privileges. Initially operating as a closed stack library with students selecting books from the card index and the librarian retrieving the book from the shelf, plans were for the library to transition to open stacks, allowing the students to remove books from the shelves themselves and proceed to check-out. At the open house, the library contained about 8,000 books with a reported 8,000 more books then on-order. The AJC Library was anticipated to be open the summer of 1969 on a “limited basis.”³³

The AJC Library, along with the nearly completed AJC laboratory/classroom building, was formally dedicated on July 20, 1969, coinciding with the Altus High School alumni reunion. The dedication program was specifically set for an hour to avoid conflicting with the telecasts about the U.S. moon landing. During the dedication, the multipurpose (north) room was dedicated as the A.G. Steele Room and the main reading (south) room as the Emily B. Smith Room. Emily B. Smith was the administrative dean for the college from 1933 to 1944. During World War II, Dean Smith was also “one of the few women in the United States to become a fully certified ground school instructor,” with AJC being a pre-flight training center for both civilians and Navy personnel. A.G. Steele was college president and superintendent of schools from 1933-1948 and full-time dean from 1948-1961.³⁴

In addition to several other programs for postsecondary schools, the Higher Education Act of 1965 provided funds to improve library collections. Title II of the act was intended to “assist and encourage ... institutions in the acquisition for library purposes of books, periodicals, documents, magnetic tapes, phonograph records, audiovisual materials, and other related library materials (including necessary binding).” When the AJC Library opened in its new building for

³¹ “School Board Defers Action on Proposal,” November 5, 1968, *The Altus Times-Democrat*, available *Google News Archive*. See also “New Library Taking Shape,” November 17, 1968, *The Altus Times-Democrat*, available *Google News Archive*; “Altus Schools to Reopen Thursday Morning,” December 31, 1968, *The Altus Times-Democrat*, available *Google News Archive*; “Exterior Work Completed,” January 6, 1969, *The Altus Times-Democrat*, available *Google News Archive*.

³² “AJC Vocation Building Plans Nearing Completion,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, February 21, 1969, available *Google News Archive*.

³³ “AJC Library Open House Set Tonight,” March 4, 1969, *The Altus Times-Democrat*, available *Google News Archive*. See also Photograph Caption, March 17, 1969, *The Altus Times-Democrat*, available *Google News Archive*.

³⁴ “AJC Library Dedication Set Sunday,” July 17, 1969, *The Altus Times-Democrat*, available *Google News Archive*. See also “Dedication Ceremonies Set at AJC Today,” *The Altus Times-Democrat*, available *Google News Archive*.

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the 1969-1970 academic year, the stacks contained about 8,000 items. By the end of the 1972 academic year, the number of books and periodicals in the library had grown to 12,000. Additionally, a major reorganization of the “college library services” had resulted “in the development of the College Learning Resources Center.” With the library books and journals forming the “nucleus” of the Learning Resources Center, the library also “added new audio-visual materials and equipment including film strips, records, films, tapes and other media.” The following 1972-1973 school year again saw an increase in “the numbers of periodical subscriptions and the number of printed volumes” with the “film supplies ...also updated.” Academic year 1973-1974 continued the development of the AJC Library collection with “14,513 books catalogued, over 100 periodicals received, and a rapidly expanding audio-visual aid collection.” During the final year of junior college occupation of the AJC Library, the library holdings grew to 16,430 volumes with 1,984 new books purchased. New audio-visual equipment and materials, as well as additional periodicals, were also purchased. To improve service to both faculty and students, the “traditional library and audiovisual services were coordinated into a [unified program].”³⁵

On a broad level, “American college and university libraries have always reflected the fortunes of their respective institutions, sharing in their poverty and their prosperity, and reflecting in varying degrees the character and tendencies of their curricula and instructional methods.” With demand escalating due to the baby boomers coming of college age and enabled by LBJ’s higher education acts, “the construction of academic library facilities ...had a high priority with academic administrators” in the mid- to late-1960s. In addition to the AJC Library, an estimated “605 separate library buildings throughout the nation” were built during the period using monies provided by the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963.³⁶

Under the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, AJC received a federal grant of \$66,943 for construction of the library/classroom building in 1967. This was not the only federal grant AJC received pursuant to the Higher Education Facilities Act. In 1965, the junior college was granted \$44,044 for “an academic complex,” that saw the repurposing of a former church building into the now-destroyed administration/classroom building. In 1968, the school received two grants, one in the amount of \$37,760 for construction of the now-demolished laboratory/classroom building and \$47,151 for the technical-vocational building. The following year, AJC received a supplemental grant of \$14,626 for the laboratory/classroom building. Notably, all of the federal grants were given prior to AJC becoming a state-supported school and matched with funds provided by the local school district; thus, the buildings were the property of the Altus

³⁵ Title II, Higher Education Act of 1965, Public Law 89-329, 79 Statute 1224 (1965). See also Burris, *Sixteenth Biennial Report*, Part 2, 37; Burris, *Seventeenth Biennial Report*, Part 1 and 2, 34 (Part 1) and 40 (Part 2); Burris, *Eighteenth Biennial Report*, Part 1, 56.

³⁶ Plummer Alston Jones Jr, “The History and Development of Libraries in American Higher Education,” *College & Research Libraries News*, 50:7 (July 1989), 561-564, <https://crln.acrl.org/index.php/crlnews/article/view/21163/26178>. See also Theodore Samore, “Federal Legislation and Programs To Assist Academic Libraries,” *ALA Bulletin* 60:2 (1966): 156, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25697351>.

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Independent School District. The 1967 grant for the AJC Library was the largest amount received by the school district by almost \$15,000.³⁷

Although any monetary grants received by AJC under Title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965 were not recorded by the Oklahoma State Regents, the mere existence of Title II in the act was widely deemed to “encourage all academic libraries.” The five-year program authorized by the act was aimed specifically at aiding “institutions of higher education (to) acquire library materials needed for their expanded responsibilities in research, teaching, and student use.” With 70 percent of four-year colleges “and over 90 per cent (sic) of the collections in two-year institutions” failing to meet library standards, the assistance provided by Title II helped academic libraries “make rapid progress in overcoming their deficiencies.”³⁸

As “a multi-faceted product of LBJ’s Great Society,” the Higher Education Act of 1965 “significantly altered the relationship between the federal government and higher education, boosting the visibility and importance of the national government in higher education matters to a decidedly higher plateau.” While the act still restricted federal aid “to specific, defined purposes,” the legislation “symbolized the federal government’s broad-based commitment to higher education.” With each title of the act having a specific focus, the particular importance of academic libraries as part of the higher education experience was captured in Title II.³⁹

Although not specifically addressed in the legislation, academic libraries were explicitly highlighted in LBJ’s remarks upon signing the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963. Among the touted benefits of the legislation, increasing “the quality of library facilities in our own colleges and universities” was number five of thirteen. The first benefit of the act, of course, was helping “to provide college classrooms for several hundred thousand more students who will nearly double college enrollment” during the mid-1960s through mid-1970s. Construction of the AJC Library also met the primary goal of the act through inclusion of the moveable walls which allowed the multipurpose room to be divided for use as classrooms.⁴⁰

The construction and continued growth of the AJC Library from 1967 to 1975 reflected the influence and importance of federal legislation on academic libraries, including at the junior college level during the period. As representation of the educational contribution of LBJ’s Great Society to academic libraries on the local level, the AJC Library merits recognition for its historic educational significance to the community of Altus.

³⁷ “Federal Grant for Colleges Ok’d,” *The Daily Oklahoman*, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), June 15, 1965. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/451817666>. See also Burris, *Seventeenth Biennial Report*, Part 1, 85-89. The *Biennial Report* incorrectly identifies the 1965 grant as for a science/math building but the dollar amount matches the information in *The Daily Oklahoman* article.

³⁸ Samore, “Federal Legislation and Programs To Assist Academic Libraries,” 157.

³⁹ Jack H. Schuster, “Out Of The Frying Pan: The Politics of Education in a New Era.” *California Journal of Teacher Education* 9:1 (1982): 9, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23474411>.

⁴⁰ Lyndon B. Johnson, “Remarks Upon Signing the Higher Education Facilities Act,” *The American Presidency Project*, (December 16, 1963), <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-upon-signing-the-higher-education-facilities-act>.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
 - ☐ Other State agency
 - ☐ Federal agency
 - ☐ Local government
 - ☐ University
 - ☐ Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.24 Acres MOL

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.639495 Longitude: -99.317066

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

Beginning at the southwest corner of the intersection of North Park Lane and East Cypress Street, proceed 236' south along the west curb of North Park Lane to a point southeast of the south edge of the south drive, then proceed 230' east in a straight line to a point southwest of the library garage bin area, then proceed 236' north in a straight line to the north curb on East Cypress Street, then proceed 232' west in a straight line to the point of beginning. Altus unplatted consisting of partial of SE/4 of Section 17, Township 2 North, Range 20 West.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

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The boundary is slightly larger than the legal description for 221 North Park Lane recorded at the Jackson County Clerk's Office (see Location Map, continuation sheet 2). The legal recorded boundary consists of 200' by 200' square. However, this is not sufficient to encompass the land on the front two street sides of the building, which historically was part of the designed landscape and is now paved parking. Only a portion of the drive/parking on the west side of the building is included in the boundaries because that area does not contribute to the understanding of the building because it lacks integrity. On the south side of the library, the boundary excludes the modified park perimeter wall and the non-historic, non-associated parking area built for the aquatic center in the early 1980s. The library building is owned by the Altus Independent School District with the area outside of that owned by the City of Altus. Since 2015, the City of Altus has leased the building from the school district subject to a twenty-year agreement signed May 5, 2015.

Form Prepared By

name/title: Cynthia Savage, Architectural Historian, for
organization: Western Trail Historical Society/Oklahoma City Foundation for Architecture
street & number: 346 County Road 1230
city or town: Pocasset state: OK zip code: 73079
e-mail: archconsulting.savage@yahoo.com
telephone: _____
date: January 2023; rev. September 2023

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs

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

Altus Junior College Library

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Photo Log

Name of Property: **Altus Junior College Library**

City or Vicinity: **Altus**

County: **Jackson**

State: **OK**

Photographer: **Cynthia Savage**

Date Photographed: **November 15, 2022**

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

Photo 0001: Front of Building, including North elevation (right) and East elevation (left), camera facing southwest.

Photo 0002: Front of Building, including North elevation (right) and East elevation (left), camera facing southwest.

Photo 0003: Front of Building, including North elevation (right) and East elevation (left), camera facing southwest.

Photo 0004: Front of Building, including North elevation (right) and East elevation (left), camera facing southwest.

Photo 0005: Front Courtyard, camera facing southwest.

Photo 0006: North side Courtyard/Entry, camera facing southwest.

Photo 0007: East side Courtyard, camera facing southwest.

Photo 0008: East side Courtyard/Entry, camera facing northwest.

Photo 0009: East elevation (right) and portion 2017 addition (left), camera facing northwest.

Photo 0010: Southwest elevation (center) including 2017 addition, camera facing northeast.

Photo 0011: Southwest elevation (right), camera facing northeast.

Photo 0012: 2017 addition on south elevation, camera facing southeast.

Photo 0013: North elevation (left) and southwest elevation/2017 addition (right), camera facing southeast.

Photo 0014: North elevation, camera facing southeast.

Photo 0015: Interior, Lobby, camera facing northwest.

Photo 0016: Interior, Lobby, camera facing west.

Photo 0017: Interior, Lobby towards Bathrooms, camera facing east.

Photo 0018: Interior, Women's Bathrooms, camera facing southwest.

Photo 0019: Interior, Reading (South) Room, camera facing southeast.

Photo 0020: Interior, Reading (South) Room, camera facing northeast.

Photo 0021: Interior, Reading (South) Room, camera facing northwest.

Photo 0022: Interior, Multipurpose (North) Room, camera facing west.

Photo 0023: Interior, Multipurpose (North) Room, camera facing northwest.

Photo 0024: Interior, Multipurpose (North) Room, Fireplace detail, camera facing northeast.

Photo 0025: Interior, Multipurpose (North) Room, camera facing southeast.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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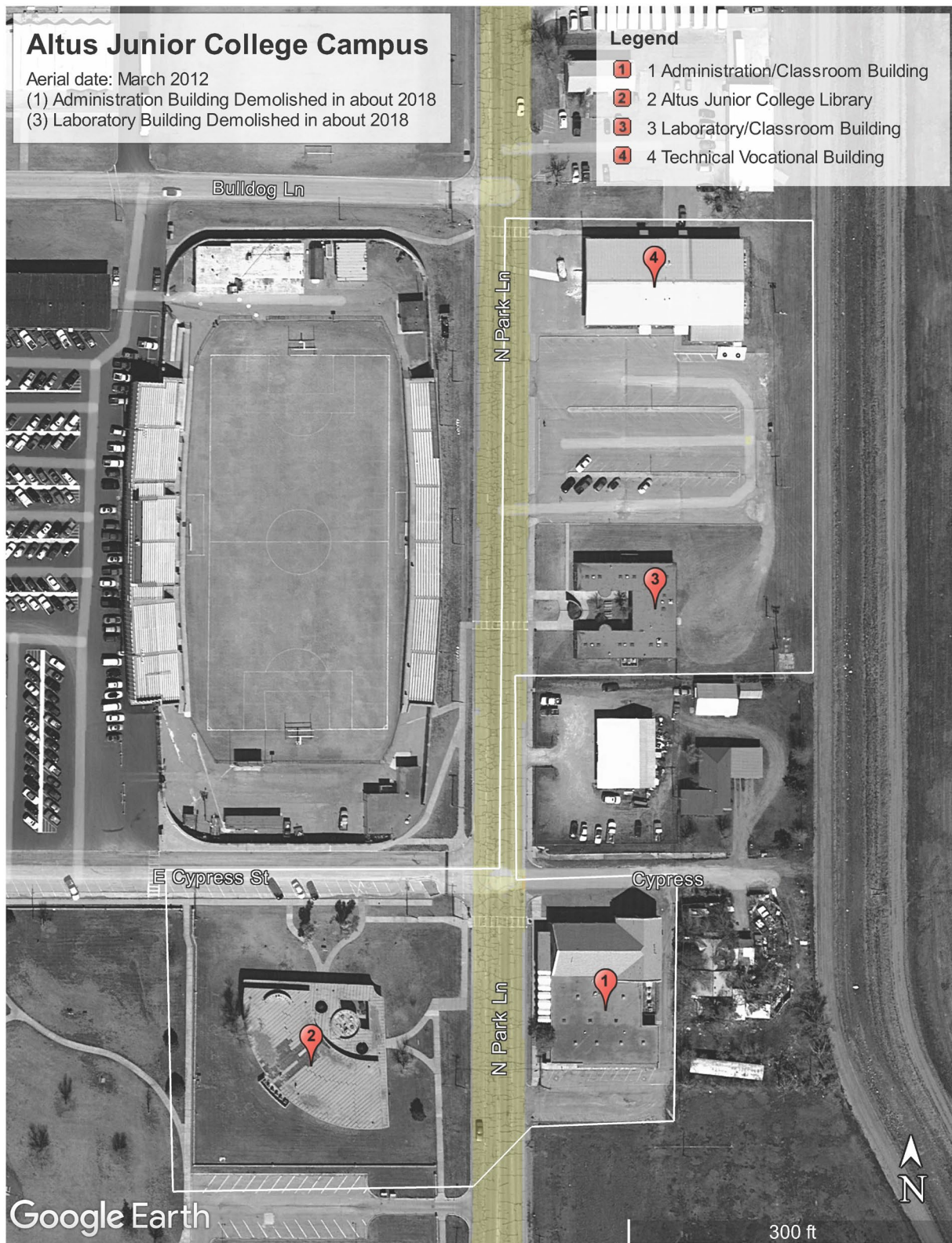
County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number AJC Campus Map in 2012

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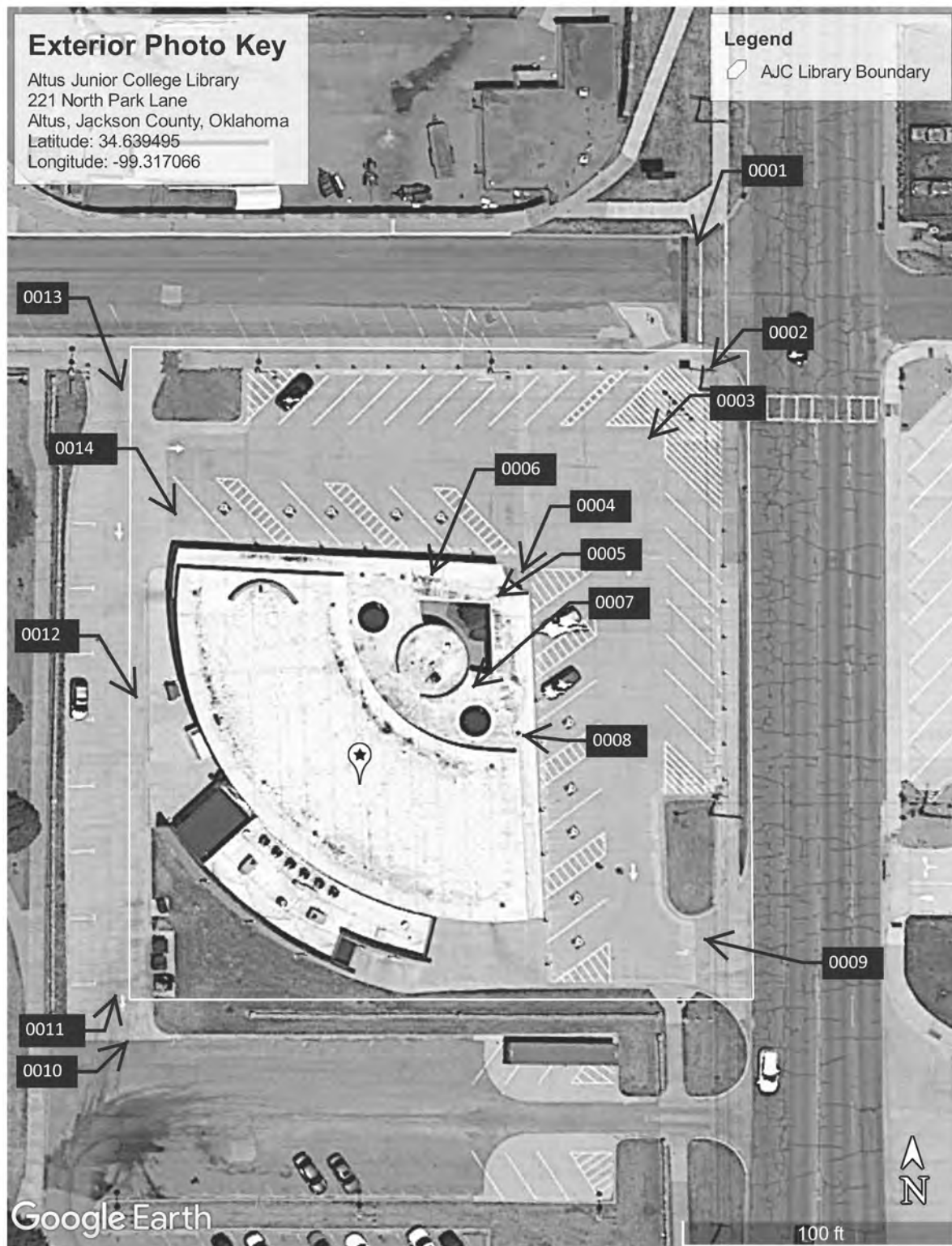
Jackson County, Oklahoma

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N/A

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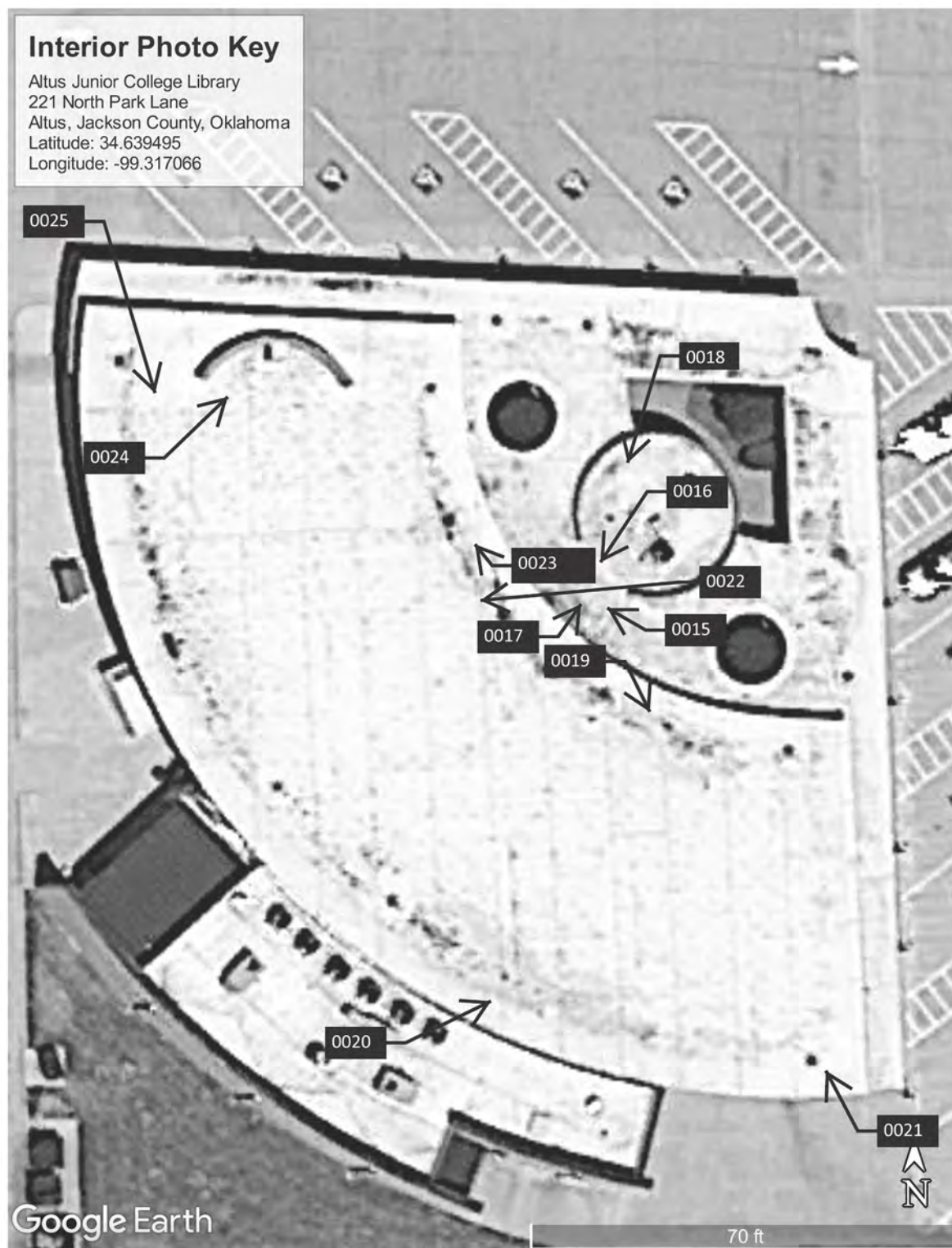
Jackson County, Oklahoma

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