

56-1595



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: The Church Studio

Other names/site number: Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, First United Brethren Church of Christ, First Church of God

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: 304 South Trenton Avenue

City or town: Tulsa State: OK County: Tulsa

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this 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 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 local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

| | |
|---|--|
|  <hr/> Signature of certifying official/Title: | <u>July 21, 2010</u> <hr/> Date |
| <hr/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government | |
| <p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p> <hr/> Signature of commenting official: | |
| <hr/> Date | |
| Title : | State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government |

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

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

9/8/2017
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

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Professional

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Music facility

RELIGION: Religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Gothic Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: OTHER: Permastone

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

The Church Studio, located at 304 S. Trenton Avenue, in Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma, anchors the southwest corner of the intersection of S. Trenton Avenue and E. Third Street in the Pearl District, a neighborhood located approximately one mile east of Tulsa's Central Business District and comprised of mixed residential, commercial, and light industrial buildings. The primary entrance faces east towards S. Trenton Avenue. The building sits on terrain elevated slightly above the grass lots to the south and west, and concrete pedestrian sidewalks line the north and east sides of the parcel. The two-story Gothic Revival-style building was constructed as the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church in 1919; it functioned as a church until 1972, when the interior was converted into a recording studio. The two-story rectangular-plan building sits on a raised basement with a brick foundation, and has a flat roof concealed by a castellated parapet. A prominent square tower contains the building's primary entrance and defines the northeast corner of the building. Originally, the exterior was clad with brick. Cementitious simulated stone (permastone¹) scored in a random ashlar pattern was applied directly to the brick exterior ca. 1957 on the north and east elevations and part of the south and west elevations. The building retains some of its

¹ The use of the term "permastone" in this document refers to a cementitious simulated stone applied directly to the brick cladding, then scored and molded to replicate quarry-faced stone blocks. "Perma-Stone" was patented in 1929, but "permastone" has become a common generic term to describe any cementitious material manipulated to simulate stone and applied to exterior walls. Paul K. Williams, "The Faux Stone Follies," *Old House Journal*, May/June 2003, 66.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

historic wood-frame one-over-one double-hung windows with figured glass, while other windows have been replaced with fixed single-light wood-frame sash. The windows corresponding to the interior recording studio were boarded with plywood during the conversion to preserve acoustics. The building's first floor contains the recording studio, comprised of a live recording room in the former sanctuary, an isolation booth, and an audio control room. The second story contains an observation room overlooking the live recording room and a small office. The largely unfinished basement contains a kitchen, lounge, and storage space. The Church Studio retains integrity and conveys its significance as a recording studio for Leon Russell's Shelter Records from 1972 to 1976. The historic configuration of the recording studio has been maintained, and there have been no additions to the building or significant alterations since the period of significance.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Church Studio, located at 304 S. Trenton Avenue, in Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma, occupies Lots 1 and 2, Block 5 of the Midway Addition, platted in 1909 (Section 6, Township 19, Range 13). (*Figure 1*) The building anchors the southwest corner of the intersection of S. Trenton Avenue and E. Third Street at the northeast corner of the wide, rectangular block bounded by E. Third Street on the north, S. Trenton Avenue on the east, E. Fourth Street on the south, and S. Rockford Avenue on the west. A gravel alley bisects the block east-west. (*Figure 2*) The north side of the building sits back approximately ten feet from E. Third, and the east (primary) façade sits back slightly further from Trenton Avenue. E. Third is a popular east-west vehicular thoroughfare in the city; a portion of E. Third between Peoria and Utica avenues was re-named Leon Russell Road in 2010. There is a blue street sign bearing the honorary name at the corner of E. Third and Trenton. A grass lawn surrounds the building and the terrain is elevated slightly above the surrounding area. Concrete pedestrian sidewalks line the north and east sides of the parcel. A short concrete retaining wall abuts the sidewalk on the east side of the parcel; the wall's northern terminus is at the concrete steps leading to the building's entrance, and its southern terminus is at a small set of three concrete steps, just south of the building. These steps led to a dwelling, once located south of the church but demolished sometime in the 1980s or 90s. The parcel south of the church is now a grassy lot with a few deciduous trees and a Y-shaped concrete walkway. A chain link fence and three small deciduous trees demarcate the west edge of the parcel.

The blocks immediately surrounding the Church Studio are characterized by a mixture of early twentieth century residences and light industrial buildings. Constructed with two stories on a raised basement, the Church Studio is taller than the nearby buildings. A one-story concrete block restaurant with twenty-first century alterations is located across E. Third to the north, and a one-story storage building is located across S. Trenton to the east. (*Photo 6*) South and west of the building is a series of one-story bungalows from the early twentieth century.

The east-west MKT rail line is located about 0.2 miles south of the church, while Interstate 244 is about two blocks north. The building is within a neighborhood locally known as the Pearl District, loosely bounded by Interstate 244 to the north, Utica Avenue to the east, Eleventh Street to the south, and

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

Cherokee Expressway to the west. The mixed residential and light industrial uses in the Pearl District have been a characteristic of the neighborhood throughout the twentieth century.² Tulsa's Central Business District is about one mile to the west, and the University of Tulsa campus is about 1.3 miles to the east. (*Figure 3*)

Exterior

The Church Studio is two stories tall with a raised basement, brick foundation, and a flat modified bitumen roof concealed by a castellated parapet with concrete copings. (*Photo 1*) The rectangular building was originally constructed in brick ca. 1915 in the Gothic Revival style. The north and east elevations, the eastern half of the south elevation, and most of the west elevation were covered with permastone ca. 1957. The permastone was applied directly to the brick exterior, scored in a random ashlar pattern, and molded to resemble quarry-faced stone blocks. The flat-arch window lintels in the permastone-clad areas of the exterior are articulated with permastone voussoirs and keystone. Most windows have concrete sills. A water table encircles the building directly above the basement level. The concealed foundation is brick. The entrance on the east façade is set within a prominent square tower that rises above the primary mass of the building.

The east façade, entirely clad with permastone, is divided into three irregular bays and contains the primary entrance. (*Photo 2*) From south to north, the south bay is one story and sits back slightly from the primary mass of the building. The basement level contains two centered rectangular window openings boarded with vertical painted wood planks.³ The first story contains two centered replacement wood-frame single-light fixed windows with concrete sills. The central bay is two stories tall and one bay deep, and contains three centered window openings boarded with vertical painted wood planks at the basement level.⁴ The first story has three centered replacement wood-frame single-light fixed windows with concrete sills. The second story contains three centered wood-frame double-hung one-over-one windows with figured glass. The parapet of the bay features a centered peak with a squared-off tip. A limestone cornerstone engraved with "The Church of the United Brethren in Christ. 1928" is set in the wall above the water table at the northeast corner of the bay. The north side of the central bay contains a wood-frame double-hung one-over-one window at the first floor. Vertical wood planks infill the window opening on the second floor.⁵ The north bay is set back from the central bay within a prominent square tower and contains the primary entrance at the first floor. A steep set of concrete steps⁶ with metal handrails lead to the entrance, comprised of paired solid slab wood doors with peeling wood veneer and metal strap hinges.⁷ A canvas awning shelters the entrance doors. Paired wood-frame double-hung one-over-one windows with metal screen storm windows fill the second story opening above the entrance. Concrete diamond-shaped finials line the parapet of the tower.

² City of Tulsa, "The 6th Street Infill Plan: Reinventing the Pearl District," last modified January 5, 2006, <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/COTLegacy/documents/6thStreetEntire.pdf>.

³ These windows are not visible from the interior of the basement and it is unknown if they are extant.

⁴ These windows are visible from the interior of the basement and are comprised of double-hung one-over-one sash with figured glass.

⁵ This window is not extant.

⁶ The concrete steps appear to date to the period of significance (1972-1976), while the metal handrail is a modern replacement.

⁷ The doors appear to post-date the period of significance.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

Permastone clads the four-bay north elevation. (*Photos 1, 5*) From east to west, the east bay is part of the square tower and contains a window opening infilled with plywood and a one-story entrance vestibule at the basement level. The vestibule is clad with quarry-faced stone in a random course ashlar pattern⁸ and has paired wood slab doors with metal strap hinges. The first story of the east bay was originally open, but was likely infilled when the permastone cladding was added. It contains two wood-frame double-hung one-over-one windows and permastone infill with a continuous concrete sill. The second story contains two sets of paired wood-frame double-hung one-over-one windows with figured glass. The windows in the first and second floors of bays 2-4 are boarded with plywood, corresponding to the recording studio.⁹ The basement level windows of bays-2-4 are also boarded with plywood.¹⁰ Bays 2 and 4 contain a single window opening at the basement, first, and second levels. Bay 3 projects outward slightly from the primary mass of the building and contains three window openings at each level. The parapet of bay 3 is peaked with a squared-off tip.

The west elevation is mostly devoid of fenestration and is clad with permastone with the exception of the southern section. (*Photos 4-5*) The north end of the west elevation contains a single boarded window opening at the basement level.¹¹ A one-story, one-bay-deep wing with a castellated parapet extends from the center of the elevation. The north side of the wing contains a single-leaf wood composite door in the basement level and a window opening boarded with plywood in the first level.¹² The west side of the wing has two boarded window openings at the basement level.¹³ The south side of the wing was not clad with permastone and retains red brick cladding in a running bond. The south side of the wing contains a boarded window opening with a flat concrete lintel at the basement level and a boarded window opening with concrete lintel and sill at the first level.¹⁴ The top half of the south end of the west elevation is clad with permastone while the remainder is brick. A boarded window opening with a concrete lintel is at the basement level.¹⁵

The south elevation is organized into five bays. (*Photos 3-4*) From west to east, bays 1-3 have red brick cladding in a running bond, and bays 4-5 have permastone. All windows in bays 1-3 have concrete sills and flat concrete lintels. The basement level of bay 1 contains a boarded window opening¹⁶, the first story contains a boarded window opening with a metal awning¹⁷, and the second story contains a wood-frame double-hung one-over-one window. A metal gutter is secured to the wall next to the windows. Bay 2

⁸ This cladding is true stone, in contrast to the permastone cladding. This vestibule was re-constructed in the 1980s after an automobile accident damaged the original vestibule. The replacement vestibule matches the original in placement and size, with the natural stone closely mirroring the permastone cladding.

⁹ These windows are not visible from the interior of the building due to the interior wall cladding necessary to create the recording studio.

¹⁰ These windows are partially concealed by wood panels placed on the interior of the basement. The visible portions of the windows suggest they are double-hung one-over-one sash with figured glass.

¹¹ This window is boarded on the interior of the basement and is not visible.

¹² The boarded window opening on the first level is not visible from the interior, as it corresponds to the isolation booth wall, which is concealed with necessary cladding.

¹³ These windows are visible from the interior and are comprised of double-hung one-over-one sash with figured glass.

¹⁴ The window at the basement level is visible from the interior and is comprised of a double-hung one-over-one sash with figured glass. The window at the first level corresponds to the isolation booth and is not visible from the interior.

¹⁵ This window is not visible from the interior.

¹⁶ This window is visible on the interior and is comprised of a double-hung one-over-one sash with figured glass.

¹⁷ This window corresponds to the isolation booth and is not visible on the interior.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

contains three centered window openings in each level. The openings on the basement and second story levels are boarded with plywood, while the window openings on the first level have been infilled with brick.¹⁸ Bay 3 contains a single window opening at each level; these openings have been covered by an HVAC duct and a metal gutter is affixed to the wall.¹⁹ A one-story, one-bay-deep wing with a castellated parapet extends out from bays 4-5. The west side of the wing has brick cladding and two boarded window openings with concrete lintels in the basement level. The first story has wood-frame single-light fixed windows with concrete sills and lintels. The south side of the wing is clad with permastone. Bay 4 of the wing contains two boarded windows at the basement level, while bay 5 has a single-leaf wood slab entry door with a boarded transom accessed via a set of recessed concrete steps and boarded window. Bays 4 and 5 each contain a wood-frame single-light fixed window and a wood-frame double-hung one-over-one window with a fixed transom in the first level. Above the wing, the second level of bays 4 and 5 each contain two wood-frame double-hung one-over-one windows with figured glass in the upper sash.

Interior

The interior of the Church Studio reflects the building's conversion into a recording studio in 1972. Many of the interior finishes exhibit the aesthetics of the 1970s and the soundproofing requirements fundamental to recording studio design. The first floor is approximately 3,706 square feet and is accessed via the double-leaf entry doors on the east façade, which open into a foyer. (*Figure 4, Photo 7*) The foyer has carpet tiles covering concrete floors, plaster walls, wood trim around doorways and windows, and a dropped lay-in ceiling. A triangular restroom located off the foyer has cowhide patterned wallpaper, vinyl tile flooring, and avocado green porcelain fixtures. (*Photo 14*) The live recording room is to the west of the foyer and occupies the majority of the first floor. The current hardwood plank flooring was installed directly over an earlier hardwood floor by the Tulsa Indian Council in the 1980s, which used the room for dance and theater. The room is the church's former sanctuary, and has forty-foot-high ceilings. (*Photo 8*) The lower portion of the east wall of the live recording room has vertical pine cladding and a rectangular viewing pane, which provided a visual connection between the live recording room and the audio control room to the east. (*Photo 9*) Another rectangular viewing pane is set in the wall above at the second story. The upper walls and the ceiling of the live recording room retain spray-on acoustical insulation dating to its use by Shelter Records. (*Photo 10*) The bottom portion of the north, south, and west walls are covered with wood-enframed felt panels and vertical wood planks that achieved the desired acoustics for the live recording room. Another viewing pane in the west wall of the live recording room looks into an isolation booth used by electric piano and guitar performers. (*Photo 11*) A wood-framed entry into the isolation booth pierces the wall north of the viewing pane. The floors of the isolation booth are plywood and loosely-applied felt and cloth panels cover the walls and ceiling.

The audio control room on the first floor is located east of the live recording room and south of the foyer. The viewing pane in the west wall between the audio control room and the live recording room communicate its former function, although the recording equipment has been removed. (*Photo 12*) The floors are hardwood and wood panels cover the ceiling. Wood paneling frames the viewing pane on the

¹⁸ The basement level windows in this bay are partially visible on the interior and are comprised of double-hung one-over-one sash with figured glass. The first and second level windows in this bay correspond to the recording studio and are not visible on the interior.

¹⁹ These windows are not visible from the interior.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

west wall. The north wall has wood paneling and exposed brick in a seven-course common bond. The east wall is exposed brick, with segmented arch brick lintels above the windows. The south wall is comprised of exposed brick and drywall. A viewing pane set in the drywall looks into another small room that was used for tape storage by Shelter Records. The tape room has hardwood floors, wood trim around the windows, and exposed brick walls. (*Photo 13*)

The second floor is 967 square feet and is accessed via a flight of wood stairs at the northeast corner of the building. (*Figure 5*) A double-loaded hall leads to a small office in the northern portion of the floorplan, corresponding to the building's square tower. It has exposed brick and drywall walls, hardwood floors, wood window trim and floor molding, and dropped ceiling tiles. (*Photo 15*) The larger south room has a viewing pane in the west wall that overlooks the live recording room. (*Photo 16*) The west wall has rough cedar plank siding laid on a bias that appears to date to the Shelter Records period. Some of the walls are plaster while others are drywall, and the floors are hardwood. There is wood trim around the windows and wood floor molding. The ceiling is covered by a dropped metal grid with lay-in acoustical tiles. A flight of wood stairs leads to a small attic space in the square tower. The attic has rough wood plank floors, exposed brick walls, and exposed wood rafters. The north and east sides of the tower originally contained paired Gothic arched windows with brick lintels. The window openings are visible from the interior of the attic tower, although it appears the windows themselves have been removed; the openings were concealed when the permastone cladding was installed.

The basement level of the building is 3,706 square feet and is accessed via a flight of stairs with vinyl tile covering the treads. (*Figure 6*) When the building was a church, the basement functioned as fellowship space with a kitchen. During and after the period of significance, it was used primarily for storage. Restrooms are located near the stairs; they have concrete floors, painted plaster walls, and 1960s fixtures. A large open room occupies the south and east portion of the space; the floors are concrete, the walls are a combination of drywall and exposed brick, and the ceiling is partially covered by a dropped grid with tiles. (*Photo 17*) A kitchen to the south of this room has concrete floors, a pass-through serving counter, dropped-tile ceiling, and wood kitchen cabinetry dating to the 1960s. (*Photo 18*) The remaining space is one large open room, currently used for storage. It has exposed brick walls, plaster ceilings, and concrete floors. A baptismal pool, once located in the altar of the former sanctuary, was covered over when the building was converted into a recording studio; the basin of the baptismal pool is visible in the southwest end of the basement ceiling.

Integrity

The Church Studio retains integrity from its period of significance, 1972 to 1976, and distinctly communicates its significant function as a recording studio for Shelter Records, operated by internationally renowned musician Leon Russell. The character-defining features that allow the building to convey its significance include the configuration of the recording suite, composed of the live recording room in the former sanctuary, an isolation booth, and an audio control room. While the recording equipment is no longer in the building, the layout retains key design features and materials that identify its historic function. Significant function-specific features include the boarded up windows and acoustical insulation on the walls and ceiling which created a distinct acoustical sound for recordings; and viewing

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

panels between the control room, the live recording room, and the isolation booth, which allowed sound engineers and producers to maintain a visual link with performers. Historic materials that date to the period of significance include the acoustic insulation, historic wood floors in the control rooms, control room viewing panes, cedar plank wall cladding around the viewing pane overlooking the live recording room, some historic wood-frame double-hung one-over-one windows throughout the building, wood floor moldings and window trim, bathroom fixtures, and the exterior permastone cladding. The building's design and layout from the period of significance is retained, and there have been no additions to the building since its construction circa 1915. The exterior permastone cladding, added to the building ca. 1957, was present throughout the period of significance. Workmanship is evident in the design choices made by Russell and Shelter Records engineers during the conversion of the church into a recording studio. The location and setting of the recording studio are preserved as well. The dwelling at 312 S. Trenton Avenue, which sat to the south of the Church Studio and housed the administrative offices, was demolished sometime between the late 1980s and the early 1990s. The loss of this building does not negate the integrity of the Church Studio as the recording activities all took place in 304 S. Trenton Avenue. The retention of clearly defined spaces for live recording and audio control activities communicates the feeling of the recording studio; the forty-foot-high ceilings in the former sanctuary, which contributed to the acoustics of the live recording room, are also retained. The Church Studio retains its aspect of association; the important functions that occurred inside the building from 1972-1976 can still be discerned in its features today.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- 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.

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

PERFORMING ARTS

ENTERTAINMENT

Period of Significance

1972-1976

Significant Dates

1972

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Leon Russell

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

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 Church Studio at 304 S. Trenton Avenue in Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for exceptional significance at the local level under Criteria A and B in the areas of Performing Arts and Entertainment. Constructed in 1915 as the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, the building was purchased by writer, musician, and producer Leon Russell in March 1972 and converted into a recording studio for his record label Shelter Records. Russell, who passed away in November 2016, was a renowned musician recognized for his key role in the development of the Tulsa Sound, a musical genre identified by a distinct blend of country, rhythm and blues, and rock and roll. Russell was born in Lawton, Oklahoma, in 1942. His family nurtured his musical acumen from a young age; when he was just four years old he began taking classical piano lessons, which he would continue for ten years. Russell's family moved to Tulsa when he was fourteen. As a teenager in the 1950s he found inspiration in the clubs of Tulsa and with musically-talented peers at Will Rogers High School. Rock and roll was escalating in popularity among youth at the time; simultaneously, Russell was foremost among a core group of young Tulsa musicians who experimented with combining the new rock and roll sound with other genres that were already well-established in Oklahoma's musical legacy, namely country and rhythm and blues. Music historian Hugh Foley described the first wave of the Tulsa Sound that emerged from this experimentation as recognizably rock and roll, but fused with "a heady dose of R&B [and] the twangy blues of Elvis Presley."²⁰ In the late 1950s, at age seventeen, Russell moved to Los Angeles, California, to further his musical ambitions. In the ensuing decade, he cemented his reputation as a talented musician, songwriter, producer, and performer.

In 1970, Russell moved back to Tulsa, and in 1972 he established Shelter Records in The Church Studio with British producer Denny Cordell. This event heralded an exceptionally significant new era of the Tulsa Sound in the city's musical legacy and marked an important chapter of Russell's musical career. Having achieved rock stardom, Russell's reputation acted as a magnet, drawing both aspiring musicians and musical legends to Tulsa to record at The Church Studio. As a result, The Church Studio was at the center of a musical crossroads in which ambitious rockers crossed paths with notable legends. It was not uncommon for Tulsa citizens to speak of seeing George Harrison, Eric Clapton, or Bob Dylan traversing the church steps for a jam session with Russell.²¹ Artists that signed and recorded with Shelter Records during The Church Studio era include Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Phoebe Snow, Freddie King, J.J. Cale, Dwight Twilley, Phil Seymour and the GAP Band.²² The musical talent flowing through the doors of The Church Studio revitalized Tulsa's performing arts scene and kindled a second era of the Tulsa Sound, characterized by a more relaxed tempo from the distinct rhythm first developed in the 1950s. The matured Tulsa Sound of the 1970s still evoked a blend of blues and rock 'n' roll, but also featured a languid tempo intertwined with raspy, relaxed vocals and blues-driven guitar solos. The exceptional

²⁰ Hugh W. Foley, Jr., *Oklahoma Music Guide II: Biographies, Big Hits & Annual Events* (Stillwater, Oklahoma: New Forums Press, 2013), 707.

²¹ John Wooley, "Goin' Back to Tulsa One More Time," in *Another Hot Oklahoma Night: A Rock & Roll Story*, ed. Oklahoma Historical Society (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2009), 65; Lindsey Neal Kuykendall, "The Making of Leon Russell Road," *This Land Press*, May 9, 2012, <http://thislandpress.com/2012/05/09/the-making-of-leon-russell-road/>.

²² John Wooley, *From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt: The Colors of Oklahoma Music* (Tulsa: Hawk Publishing Group, 2006), 82.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

importance of the Tulsa Sound to Oklahoma's musical history is broadly recognized by scholarly resources and music historians.

The period of significance begins in 1972, when Leon Russell converted the former church at 304 South Trenton Avenue into a recording studio for his label Shelter Records, and ends in 1976, when the recording studio closed and Leon Russell severed his ties with Shelter Records to create a new label, Paradise. The Church Studio has achieved its exceptional local significance within the past fifty years, and meets the standards for National Register eligibility established by Criteria Consideration G. The historical perspective necessary to gain an understanding of the development of the Tulsa Sound and Leon Russell's musical legacy has been established, and Russell's entire productive career can be evaluated, since he passed away at age 74 on November 13, 2016. Music historians from Steve Todoroff of the Tulsa Area Music Archives to John Wooley, the first author to be inducted into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame, have compiled and analyzed primary and secondary sources regarding Tulsa's musical history and Leon Russell's career. Within the context of the Tulsa Sound musical genre, The Church Studio played an exceptionally significant role from 1972 to 1976 in the development of the second wave of the Tulsa Sound. Under the purview of Leon Russell, who by that time had achieved rock and roll fame through his collaborations and endeavors in California, The Church Studio was a crossroads for aspiring and established musicians practicing in and passing through Tulsa. The building's location just east of downtown in the historic Pearl District placed it at the epicenter of Tulsa's thriving musical scene, nurtured by Russell in the 1970s. Several notable artists recorded at The Church Studio for Russell's Shelter Records label, including J.J. Cale and The GAP Band. The advancement of the Tulsa Sound in the 1970s and Russell's influence via his presence in Tulsa are inextricably linked. Under Criterion B, The Church Studio is also exceptionally significant at the local level as a hallmark of Leon Russell's musical ambitions in the city of Tulsa. During the 1970s Russell maintained a home studio in Tulsa (now demolished) and a studio at Grand Lake of the Cherokees, about sixty miles northeast of Tulsa. The Church Studio retains integrity and stands as an excellent representation of Russell's influence on Tulsa's musical history during the period of significance, 1972-1976.

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

THE MUSICAL LEGACY OF LEON RUSSELL, 1942-2016

The First Wave of the Tulsa Sound

Leon Russell was born Claude Russell Bridges in Lawton, Oklahoma, on April 2, 1942.²³ From the young age of four, he received classical piano lessons, which he continued for ten years until the family moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma.²⁴ Russell's musical ability was nurtured in Tulsa, as he began playing in local clubs when he was only fourteen and collaborating with fellow musically-inclined peers. At Will Rogers High

²³ David Fricke, "Remembering Leon Russell, Rock's Behind-the-Scenes Mad Dog," *Rolling Stone Magazine*, November 22, 2016, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/david-fricke-on-leon-russell-behind-the-scenes-mastermind-w451994>.

²⁴ Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 682; Jon Pareles, "Leon Russell, Hit Maker and Musicians' Musician, Dies at 74" *The New York Times*, November 13, 2016, <http://nyti.ms/2eufZGw>.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

School, Russell played baritone horn in the marching band and learned trumpet.²⁵ Outside of high school, Russell and other budding teenage musicians would visit the music clubs of Tulsa for entertainment. Most of these clubs were technically illegal operations, serving alcohol although Oklahoma was a dry state. Russell recalled, "...there were a lot of clubs where people could go and drink twenty-four hours a day. The police didn't pay any attention... It was kind of a wide-open town. When something like that happens, when people don't get caught up in that political morality, it creates kind of a hotbed of musical experience."²⁶ The "musical experience" that reverberated through Tulsa's nightclubs in the 1950s was reflective of the city's African American heritage. Many of the clubs frequented by Russell and other musically-inclined youth were located in the Greenwood Avenue neighborhood of north Tulsa; this neighborhood was once known as the city's "Black Wall Street" and later was the site of the 1921 Tulsa race riots. After the riots, the area was reinvented as a place to see and hear live music, much of which was rooted in the rhythm and blues and jazz genres. These genres would have a tremendous influence on the musical experimentations of Tulsa's young circle of emerging musicians, which included Russell, Johnny (J.J.) Cale, Jack Dunham, Jimmy Markham, Chuck Blackwell, and David Gates, among others.²⁷ (Figure 7) These musicians played together casually and formed various bands, incorporating the emerging rock and roll sound with a strong dose of rhythm and blues and a dash of country twang. The result was a distinct, local musical style, dubbed the "Tulsa Sound."²⁸ The young Tulsa Sound architects mixed and mingled in various ways, which contributed to the sound's development. (Figure 8) Russell played with Gates and Blackwell in a band called The Accents, backing for rock star Chuck Berry at one point, and played piano for Gene Crose and the Rockets.²⁹ Cale would also play for Gene Crose, and later joined Benny Ketchum and the Western Playboys, the house band for Cain's Ballroom.³⁰ In the latter half of the 1950s, Tulsa's young rock and roll acts were in high demand, playing gigs in different types of venues around the city. These included teenage sock hops in high school auditoriums, college parties at sorority and fraternity houses, and in the clubs that helped inspire their musical endeavors.³¹ After graduating from Will Rogers High School, Russell and his band The Starlighters, featuring a rotating lineup of Tulsa musicians J.J. Cale, Carl Radle, and Tommy Crook, went on tour with Jerry Lee Lewis for two months.³² This taste of the musician's lifestyle led Russell to move to California.

Russell's Rise to Stardom

After graduating from Will Rogers High School in 1959, seventeen-year-old Leon Russell departed Tulsa for Los Angeles, California, to pursue the path of a career musician.³³ Many other engineers of the Tulsa

²⁵ Pareles, "Leon Russell, Hit Maker and Musicians' Musician."

²⁶ Wooley, *From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt*, 67.

²⁷ Wooley, "Goin' Back to Tulsa One More Time," 61; William W. Savage, Jr., *Singing Cowboys And All That Jazz: A Short History of Popular Music in Oklahoma* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 125.

²⁸ Wooley, *From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt*, 68.

²⁹ Wooley, "Goin' Back to Tulsa One More Time," 61; Savage, *Singing Cowboys And All That Jazz*, 125.

³⁰ Wooley, *From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt*, 69.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

³² "Memory Lane," *Leon Russell Records*, accessed November 30, 2016, http://www.leonrussellrecords.com/memory_lane.shtml; Matt O'Meilha, "Leon's Lair," *This Land Press*, April 11, 2012, <http://thislandpress.com/2012/04/11/leons-lair/>.

³³ "Memory Lane."

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

Sound did the same, including David Gates, Jack Dunham, Carl Radle, and Jimmy Karstein. Bill Pair, a singer, guitarist, and fellow Will Rogers High graduate who also moved to California in 1959, said “Our style went over real good out there-basically, that Tulsa Sound. We didn’t have any problems drawing crowds.”³⁴ Pair also recalled getting a gig at a beer bar with Russell in those early California days. Unlike Tulsa, the Los Angeles clubs were more regulated; until he turned twenty-one, Russell had to borrow identification and musician’s union cards to play club gigs. One of these borrowed IDs had the name “Leonal” which inspired him to start using the name “Leon Russell.”³⁵

After he turned twenty-one, Russell shifted away from the clubs and transitioned into studio work, performing with other musicians in recording sessions, arranging music, producing tracks, and writing songs. Russell was incorporated into an elite group of studio musicians called the “Wrecking Crew” and his behind-the-scenes influence contributed much to the musical landscape of rock and roll, blues, pop, and soul during the 1960s and early 1970s.³⁶ (Figure 9) The Wrecking Crew, also called Phil Spector’s “Wall of Sound”, was considered the “first call” when a producer required additional musicians for a recording session, and Russell’s keyboard and piano skills in particular were in high demand.³⁷ Russell’s playing can be heard on hits such as The Crystals’ “Da Doo Ron Ron” (1963) and many other Spector-produced recordings; Bobby Pickett’s “Monster Mash” (1962); Herb Alpert’s “A Taste of Honey” (1965); The Byrds’ version of “Mr. Tambourine Man” (1965); The Beach Boys’ “Help Me, Ronda” (1965) and their album *Pet Sounds* (1965); and The Rolling Stones’ “Live with Me” (1969).³⁸ In 1965, Russell supervised the musical production of the track “This Diamond Ring” by Gary Lewis & The Playboys, which reached number one on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart.³⁹ As a songwriter, many of the tunes penned by Russell went on to become hits for other artists. These included “Superstar”, co-written with Bonnie Bramlett in 1969 and released by the Carpenters in 1971; “Delta Lady” written by Russell and recorded by Joe Cocker in 1969; and “This Masquerade” written by Russell in 1972 and popularized by George Benson in 1976.⁴⁰

In the summer of 1965, Russell built a studio in his house at 7709 Skyhill Drive in the Hollywood Hills, which was run by fellow Tulsan J.J. Cale.⁴¹ Here, Russell experimented with his own recording career and released the album *Asylum Choir* with Marc Benno in late 1968, which was critically well-received but did not sell well.⁴² In 1969, Russell and Benno recorded again; the resulting album *Asylum Choir II*,

³⁴ Wooley, “Goin’ Back to Tulsa One More Time,” 63.

³⁵ Steve Todoroff, telephone conversation, December 13, 2016.

³⁶ Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 682; Don Randi and Karen Nishimura, *You’ve Heard These Hands: From the Wall of Sound to the Wrecking Crew and Other Incredible Stories* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Books, 2015), np.

³⁷ Randi and Nishimura, *You’ve Heard These Hands*, np.

³⁸ Other well-known artists Leon Russell played sessions for included Glen Campbell, Sam Cooke, Bobby Darin, Delaney & Bonnie and Friends, Jackie DeShannon, Jimmy Durante, Bob Dylan, Aretha Franklin, The Monkees, Paul Revere & The Raiders, The Ronettes, Frank Sinatra, and The Ventures. Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 682; “Memory Lane.”; Steve Todoroff, telephone conversation, December 13, 2016.

³⁹ Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 682.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*; Pareles, “Leon Russell, Hit Maker and Musicians’ Musician.”

⁴¹ Russell purchased the house early in 1964. Bobby Keys, *Every Night’s a Saturday Night: The Rock ‘n’ Roll Life of Legendary Sax Man Bobby Keys* (Berkeley, California: Counterpoint, 2012), 60; Ben Fong-Torres, “Leon Russell: The Rolling Stone Interview,” *Rolling Stone Magazine*, December 10, 1970, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/the-rolling-stone-interview-leon-russell-19701210>; Steve Todoroff, telephone conversation, December 13, 2016.

⁴² Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 683; Steve Todoroff, telephone conversation, December 13, 2016.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

featuring Russell's signature piano-driven, country-flavored blues-rock, was not released until 1972.⁴³ It was in 1969 that Russell started the Shelter Records label with British producer Denny Cordell. In an interview with *Rolling Stone* in 1970 Russell said, "We don't aspire to be Columbia Records; we just like our music... we're mainly interested in helping people develop themselves in the way that they want to do it."⁴⁴

While Russell's many collaborations in California in the 1960s solidified his reputation within the circles of the music industry, it is perhaps his collaboration with English singer Joe Cocker in 1970 that catapulted his artistry directly into the minds and hearts of the public. Cocker and Russell's immensely popular Mad Dogs and Englishmen Tour featured a forty-three-piece ensemble, including several Tulsans.⁴⁵ In an amazing feat, the seven-week tour, consisting of forty-eight nights in fifty-two cities, was arranged in the eleventh hour by Russell at the request of Cocker, who was exhausted from his own grueling promotional road work.⁴⁶ As musical director of the tour and lead guitarist and pianist, Russell assembled the cast of musicians, organized rehearsals, and played with the troupe. Onstage, his flamboyant top hat and cascading grey hair added a visual impact to his musical ability, and "Leon Russell" became synonymous with rock stardom. (*Figure 10*) Russell co-produced the resulting double album *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, which reached the number two spot on the *Billboard* pop albums chart, and achieved further popularity through the 1971 documentary film about the tour.

Russell did not release his first solo album until 1970, but by this time he was a prolific musician, having performed on hundreds of recordings. Russell's self-titled debut album, released on his Shelter Records label, began with the track "A Song For You." This track, written by Russell, would eventually become one of his most well-known songs. In 1971, Russell released the album *Leon Russell and the Shelter People* on Shelter Records, which peaked at number seventeen on the *Billboard* album charts and featured George Harrison as a guest artist.⁴⁷ Likely as a result of this collaboration, Russell was part of a group of musicians assembled by George Harrison for his benefit concert in New York City later that year called the Concert for Bangladesh. Russell played bass, keyboards, and provided vocals for the concert with fellow musicians including Bob Dylan, George Harrison, Eric Clapton, Ravi Shankar, Ringo Starr, and Billy Preston.⁴⁸ (*Figure 11*)

Shelter Records, The Church Studio, and the Second Wave of the Tulsa Sound (1972-1976)

With his rock-star reputation and musical artistry firmly established in the public eye and the West Coast recording industry, Leon Russell had the freedom of choice. Russell's decision to return to Tulsa and open a recording studio for his Shelter Records label in 1972 would prove to be exceptionally significant

⁴³ Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 683.

⁴⁴ Fong-Torres, "Leon Russell: The Rolling Stone Interview."

⁴⁵ Wooley, "Goin' Back to Tulsa One More Time," 64.

⁴⁶ Michael C. Bailey, "The Colossal Triumph of Joe Cocker's Mad Dogs & Englishmen," *All About Jazz*, October 21, 2006, <https://www.allaboutjazz.com/the-colossal-triumph-of-joe-cockers-mad-dogs-and-englishmen-joe-cocker-by-c-michael-bailey.php>.

⁴⁷ Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 683; Pareles, "Leon Russell, Hit Maker and Musicians' Musician."

⁴⁸ "About the Concert," *The George Harrison fund for UNICEF*, accessed December 1, 2016, <http://theconcertforbangladesh.com/theconcert/>.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

to the musical legacy of the city and mark an important phase in his musical career.⁴⁹ At The Church Studio, Russell continued to jointly operate the Shelter Records label with British producer Denny Cordell. Cordell had established his career in the recording industry in England, producing artists such as Procol Harum, the Moody Blues, T. Rex, and Joe Cocker, before moving to Los Angeles, California in 1970.⁵⁰ Russell and Cordell met in Los Angeles while collaborating on an album for the rock-soul duo Delaney & Bonnie. Their working partnership continued on the *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* tour. Cordell said, “At that point, Leon and I decided to form a label together to handle his product and other artists as they came along. Since Leon was from Oklahoma, and several of our other artists are now from that state, we decided to keep facilities there.”⁵¹

In March 1972, Russell purchased the former church building at 304 S. Trenton Avenue in Tulsa and turned it into a recording studio for Shelter Records. Dubbed “The Church Studio,” it operated under the purview of Russell and Cordell from 1972 to 1976. During this time, Russell’s reputation and connections drew both established rock stars and aspiring musicians to Tulsa. As a regional hub of the rock and roll music scene, The Church Studio was an important local landmark; music historian John Wooley noted that “all sorts of acts, from the famous to the obscure, the international to the local, stepped inside those soundproofed rooms and let their music fly.”⁵² Tulsa now had a rock star living and working in town, and Russell’s presence drew other big names such as Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, and George Harrison to The Church Studio, giving the building a revered status among locals.⁵³

To passers-by, the building at 304 Trenton still looked like a church on the exterior, with permastone walls and a prominent castellated tower at the corner. On the inside, however, the former house of worship had been transformed into a sanctuary of sound. With great acoustics created by the forty-foot-high ceilings, the sanctuary was converted into the live recording room.⁵⁴ (*Figure 12*) The audio control room east of the live recording room, where the engineers mixed and mastered tracks, was outfitted with 8-track and 16-track mixing boards.⁵⁵ Shelter Records also promoted live video filming during recording sessions. In a 1973 interview, Cordell explained, “We hope the video will add an extra dimension to all we do... we will be taping sessions, coming up with formats and possibly come up with a TV show and a record at the same time.”⁵⁶ The administrative office of Shelter Records was located in a dwelling at 312 S. Trenton Avenue, directly south of The Church Studio.⁵⁷ The label also purchased houses on the block for visiting artists, producers, engineers, and other guests to use while not in the recording studio.⁵⁸

⁴⁹ Russell moved to Tulsa in 1970, but did not open The Church Studio until 1972. Steve Todoroff, telephone conversation, December 13, 2016.

⁵⁰ Bob Kirsch, “Three-Year Old Shelter Has Two Home Bases,” *Billboard Magazine*, November 10, 1973.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Wooley, “Goin’ Back to Tulsa One More Time,” 65.

⁵³ Ibid.; Kuykendall, “The Making of Leon Russell Road.”

⁵⁴ Kirsch, “Three-Year Old Shelter.”

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ This house was demolished sometime after Shelter Records vacated the property; an aerial image of the block from 1993 (obtained from historicaerials.com) appears to show the house gone by that time.

⁵⁸ Kirsch, “Three-Year Old Shelter.”

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

Shelter Records maintained offices and studios in both Los Angeles and Tulsa. While the Los Angeles location kept the label in touch with major players in the West Coast recording industry, The Church Studio in Tulsa operated as a relaxed, home-grown recording studio in which musicians could decompress from the fast lane while mingling with peers and receiving more-personalized attention.⁵⁹ (Figure 13) Artists on the Shelter label were encouraged to support each other's projects by assisting as songwriters, producers, and co-performers. Through this philosophy, The Church Studio was an incubator for talent and encouraged collaboration. From 1972 to 1975, many artists signed with the Shelter label and recorded at The Church Studio. An advertisement for Shelter Records in the November 10, 1973 issue of *Billboard Magazine* listed over forty artists who had "done their number at Shelter's Tulsa studios." The roster included Russell, J.J. Cale, Mary McCreary, Freddie King, El Roacho, The GAP Band, Phoebe Snow, Clarence McDonald, Lee Montgomery, Maxine Sellers, and Gus Hardin.⁶⁰ (Figure 14) The GAP Band, comprised of brothers Ronnie, Charlie, and Robert Wilson from Tulsa, recorded their debut album *Magicians Holiday* at The Church Studio in 1974; the back of the album features an image of the building.⁶¹ (Figure 15) Tulsans Dwight Twilley and Phil Seymour, performing as the Dwight Twilley Band, signed with Shelter Records in 1974 and recorded the single "I'm on Fire" at The Church Studio. "I'm on Fire" peaked at number sixteen on the pop charts in 1975.⁶² Perhaps one of the best-known acts to record with Shelter Records in Tulsa was Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. In 1974 Petty's band was called Mudcrutch. While they were distributing demo tapes in Los Angeles, one landed in the hands of Denny Cordell. Cordell called Petty and encouraged him to come by The Church Studio in Tulsa to discuss a potential record deal. Petty and his band played for Cordell at The Church Studio, and were immediately offered a contract with Shelter Records. Although Petty had already received a record deal offer from London Records, he recalled, "Shelter was this label run by a couple of renegades, artists, guys who were actually out there finding music and cutting records. We didn't need to deliberate."⁶³

Russell's ability to draw national and international musicians to Tulsa led to the second wave of the Tulsa Sound. As The Church Studio became a primary location where recording artists could mingle and collaborate, a potent exchange of styles and ideas elicited the mature second wave of the Tulsa Sound of the 1970s. John Wooley, who in 2003 became the first author inducted into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame, wrote in the 2009 anthology *Another Hot Oklahoma Night: A Rock & Roll Story* that the public generally associates the "Tulsa Sound" with the 1970s-era music created by movers and shakers working and collaborating in the city at that time. This second wave of the Tulsa Sound, in contrast to its initial development in the late 1950s, is identified by an unhurried beat, strong infusion of blues and rock, blues-driven guitar solos, and raspy and relaxed vocal delivery. In 1979, journalist Ellis Widner described this era of the Tulsa Sound as a "delectable brew" with bits and pieces of country, rock, rhythm and blues, soul, and jazz handpicked and interpreted in a uniquely Tulsan way.⁶⁴ Eric Clapton may be one of the best-known musicians to popularize this sound, particularly with the singles "Cocaine" and "After

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Figure 14 provides a complete list of these recording artists.

⁶¹ Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 279.

⁶² Ibid., 712.

⁶³ Warren Zanes, *Petty: The Biography* (New York, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2015), 88-89.

⁶⁴ Wooley, "Goin' Back to Tulsa One More Time," 67.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

Midnight,” both written by guitarist J.J. Cale.⁶⁵ Clapton adopted this musical style after spending time in Tulsa during the 1970s and developing a musical kinship with Cale.⁶⁶ Inspired by the Tulsa Sound, Clapton assembled a recording and touring band comprised of bassist Carl Radle, drummer Jamie Oldaker, and keyboardist Dick Sims, all Tulsa musicians.⁶⁷

Leon Russell’s Shelter Records label and The Church Studio were drivers of a revitalized music scene in Tulsa.⁶⁸ Russell’s reputation and connections were a magnet for musical talent. In November 1973, *Billboard Magazine* proclaimed that “Oklahoma is more than OK” and noted that local music leadership, such as that exhibited by Leon Russell, played a significant role in lifting the local music scene.⁶⁹ Denny Cordell equated Tulsa’s music scene with Austin, Texas, noting that Tulsa had a number of small clubs that featured rock, R&B, country, and gospel artists.⁷⁰ Author John Wooley noted that Russell’s move back to Tulsa “catalyzed a heady period for the town’s music scene -- the clubs were full of backup singers, nationally known musicians, and members of British nobility, as well as the occasional superstar who’d blown into town to spend a few days hanging out with Russell and Cordell.”⁷¹ George Harrison, well-acquainted with Russell from their collaboration on the Concert for Bangladesh, played his first, and ultimately only, concert in Tulsa in 1974, and Eric Clapton played a near-sellout show in Tulsa in 1975.⁷²

While Russell was operating Shelter Records with Cordell, he was also busy furthering his solo career and experimenting with his musical output. On June 26, 1972, Russell released his third solo studio album, *Carney*, via Shelter Records. Russell and Denny Cordell produced the album, which peaked at the number two spot on the *Billboard* Hot 200 album chart, a position the album held for one month.⁷³ The album’s lead track “Tight Rope” reached number eleven on *Billboard’s* Hot 100 singles chart.⁷⁴ Speaking of *Carney*, Russell recalled, “My music was rather limited in its style up until about the time it was released. I started experimenting then with the crew to see if we couldn’t come up with something else...”⁷⁵ In 1972, Russell embarked on a nationwide tour with his Shelter entourage and was *Billboard Magazine’s* top grossing musical act for the year.⁷⁶ His show in Long Beach, California, in August 1972 was recorded and released as the triple album *Leon Live*, which reached the number nine spot on the *Billboard* pop album chart.⁷⁷ On August 31, 1973, Russell released *Hank Wilson’s Back* on the Shelter Records label. Russell used the moniker “Hank Wilson” as an homage to two country music icons who influenced him, Hank Williams and Hank Thompson. This country album presented a notable shift in Russell’s musical expression and reached the number fifteen spot on *Billboard’s* country album chart and

⁶⁵ Wooley, *From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt*, 79.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁶⁷ Wooley, “Goin’ Back to Tulsa One More Time,” 67.

⁶⁸ Wooley, *From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt*, 82.

⁶⁹ Bill Williams, “Oklahoma is more than OK,” *Billboard Magazine*, November 10, 1973.

⁷⁰ Kirsch, “Three-Year Old Shelter.”

⁷¹ Wooley, *From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt*, 82.

⁷² O’Meilia, “Leon’s Lair.”; Tom Carter, “Music’s Making It Big,” *Tulsa Sunday World* (Tulsa, OK), September 14, 1975.

⁷³ “Leon Russell, Biography,” *Rock & Roll Hall of Fame*, accessed December 2, 2016, <https://www.rockhall.com/inductees/leon-russell>.

⁷⁴ Fricke, “Remembering Leon Russell, Rock’s Behind-the-Scenes Mad Dog.”

⁷⁵ David A. Williams, “A Recording Studio and Offices for Shelter Records/Leon Russell,” unpublished, December 10, 1974.

⁷⁶ “Memory Lane.”; Steve Ripley, “A Farm Boy’s Recollection of Recording in Oklahoma,” in *Another Hot Oklahoma Night: A Rock & Roll Story*, ed. Oklahoma Historical Society (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2009), 82.

⁷⁷ “Memory Lane.”

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

the number twenty-eight spot on *Billboard's* Hot 200 album chart. Also in 1973, Russell won a Grammy award for his contributions to the album *The Concert for Bangladesh*. In 1974, Russell recorded the album *Stop all that Jazz* in part at The Church Studio and featuring the GAP Band; the album peaked at the number thirty-four spot on the charts.⁷⁸ That year, Russell backed the Shelter Records-signed singer Mary McCreary on her album *Jezebel*; McCreary and Russell married two years later.⁷⁹ *Will O' The Wisp*, released in 1975, was Russell's last album on the Shelter Records label. It reached the number thirty spot on *Billboard's* Hot 200 album chart and the single "Lady Blue" peaked at number fourteen on *Billboard's* Hot 100 singles chart.⁸⁰

As a musician with financial resources, Russell had the means to build two additional studios in Oklahoma during the 1970s. One was located in the basement of his house at 1151 E. 24th Street in Tulsa's Maple Ridge neighborhood. The house, built circa 1920 by Tulsa oilman Lionel Aaronson, was Russell's personal residence that he purchased in July 1972 and then remodeled.⁸¹ In 1977, Russell sold the residence, and in 1987, the house was torn down by a real estate developer. The property is now occupied by four new houses.⁸² Russell's other studio was located at a 7.5-acre parcel on the Grand Lake of the Cherokees, about sixty miles northeast of Tulsa near Disney, Oklahoma.⁸³ Russell purchased the property, formerly the site of Pappy Reeves' Floating Motel and Fishing Dock, in July 1972 and proceeded to add a studio and a house.⁸⁴ Russell sold the property in the late 1970s and removed the recording equipment from the studio at that time.⁸⁵ This property is extant and is currently owned by a private individual; its historic integrity is unknown. While the Grand Lake property was an important facet of Russell's musical endeavors during his time in Oklahoma in the 1970s, The Church Studio is distinct from Russell's two other 1970s-era Oklahoma properties as the recognized base for Shelter Records and the only extant property located in Tulsa.⁸⁶

The golden years of Shelter Records in Tulsa came to an end in 1976, when Russell broke ties with Cordell to start a new label, Paradise Records, and the pair closed the Tulsa outpost of Shelter.⁸⁷ Reflecting on that five-year period during which Leon Russell returned to his Tulsa roots and The Church Studio was a crossroads of budding musicians and notable rock legends, John Wooley observed "the magic of that time... will be forever associated with the term the Tulsa Sound. The time is gone, but the music lingers."⁸⁸

⁷⁸ Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 684.

⁷⁹ Irwin Stambler and Grelun Landon, *Country Music: The Encyclopedia* (New York, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 424.

⁸⁰ Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 684; "Memory Lane."

⁸¹ "Leon Russell Paid \$20,063 in Tulsa Property Taxes in 1973," *The Tulsa Tribune* (Tulsa, OK), 1973.

⁸² Matt O'Meilia, "Leon's Lair," *This Land Press*, April 11, 2012, <http://thislandpress.com/2012/04/11/leons-lair/>.

⁸³ Kirsch, "Three-Year Old Shelter"; Matt Gleason, "Spooky moments with a legend," *Tulsa World* (Tulsa, OK), November 1, 2009.

⁸⁴ Thomas Conner, "Leon Russell Sought Shelter in Tulsa Throughout the 70s, and His Sounds Still Resonate," *Tulsa World* (Tulsa, OK), December 19, 1997.

⁸⁵ Todoroff, Steve. Interview with John LeMay. Podcast audio. No date.

⁸⁶ Conner, "Leon Russell Sought Shelter in Tulsa..."

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*; Savage, *Singing Cowboys And All That Jazz*, 127; Stambler and Landon, *Country Music: The Encyclopedia*, 424;

"Action Line," *Tulsa World* (Tulsa, OK), April 25, 1976.

⁸⁸ Wooley, "Goin' Back to Tulsa One More Time," 67.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

After The Church Studio (1976-2016)

In 1976, Russell left Tulsa and moved back to Los Angeles, continuing to release records under his new Paradise label, including *Wedding Album*, featuring Russell and his wife Mary McCreary.⁸⁹ His next two albums, *Make Love to the Music* with Mary McCreary (1977) and the solo release *Americana* (1978) were not as commercially successful as his previous endeavors. Russell collaborated with Willie Nelson in 1979, releasing the duet album *One For The Road*, which hit the number twenty-five spot on the pop album charts.⁹⁰ In the 1980s, Russell's stardom waned as he retreated from the spotlight and relocated to Nashville, Tennessee. Of this period in his career, Russell reflected, "I knew that about show business. I was surprised by the success that I had. I was not surprised when it went away."⁹¹

While his fame fell from its peak in the 1970s, Russell continued releasing albums, touring, and playing music with fellow artists like New Grass Revival and Edgar Winter. Russell's contributions to the musical legacy of his home state were formally recognized in 2006 when he was inducted into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame.⁹² Russell achieved a return to the public spotlight in 2010, when he teamed up with Elton John and released *The Union*, which was critically well-received and debuted at number three on the *Billboard* 200 album chart, Russell's highest-charting album since *Carney* in 1972. John and Russell toured together in 2010, and the album's single "If It Wasn't For Bad" was nominated for a Grammy Award.⁹³ In 2011, Russell was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriter's Hall of Fame.⁹⁴ At the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony Elton John proclaimed Russell "The Master of Space and Time," a nod to a lyric in one of Russell's most popular tracks, "A Song For You."⁹⁵

One of Russell's last major concert appearances was with the Tedeschi Trucks Band in September 2015 at the Lockn' Festival in Arrington, Virginia, for a tribute set to the *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* tour.⁹⁶ Russell's final public performance was on July 10, 2016, in Nashville, Tennessee.⁹⁷ Later that month, Russell suffered a heart attack and his touring schedule was put on hold.⁹⁸ Russell passed away in his sleep at the age of 74 on November 13, 2016. Upon Russell's death, the mainstream media released an outpouring of articles celebrating his life and legacy. *Rolling Stone* magazine acknowledged Russell as a "renowned multi-instrumentalist and songwriter who collaborated with Bob Dylan, George Harrison, the Rolling Stones and Elton John over the course of 50 years in the music industry."⁹⁹ *The New York Times*

⁸⁹ Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 684; Savage, *Singing Cowboys And All That Jazz*, 127.

⁹⁰ Foley, *Oklahoma Music Guide II*, 684.

⁹¹ Fricke, "Remembering Leon Russell, Rock's Behind-the-Scenes Mad Dog."

⁹² "Leon Russell," *Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame*, accessed December 5, 2016, <http://omhof.com/inductee/leon-russell/>.

⁹³ "Memory Lane," *Leon Russell Records*, accessed November 30, 2016, http://www.leonrussellrecords.com/memory_lane.shtml

⁹⁴ Jan Bridges, "Leon Russell's Wife Releases Statement on Passing of Rock and Roll Legend," press release, November 13, 2016, <http://www.leonrussellrecords.com/news.shtml>.

⁹⁵ Pareles, "Leon Russell, Hit Maker and Musicians' Musician."

⁹⁶ Fricke, "Remembering Leon Russell, Rock's Behind-the-Scenes Mad Dog."

⁹⁷ Bridges, "Leon Russell's Wife Releases Statement."

⁹⁸ Oklahoma Historical Society, "Leon Russell, Legendary Entertainer, Recovering from Heart Attack," press release, July 19, 2016, <http://www.okhistory.org/about/pressrelease.php?id=434>.

⁹⁹ Daniel Kreps, "Leon Russell, Renowned Songwriter and Musician, Dead at 74," *Rolling Stone Magazine*, November 13, 2016, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/leon-russell-renowned-songwriter-and-musician-dead-at-74-w450174>.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

wrote, “Mr. Russell made a broad, sophisticated palette of American music sound down-home and natural” and NPR remembered Russell’s “unique ability to span country and gospel, blues and rock.”¹⁰⁰

PROPERTY HISTORY

The building at 304 S. Trenton Avenue in Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma, occupies Lots 1-2 of Block 5 in the Midway Addition, platted by Charles W. Grimes in May 1909.¹⁰¹ The trustees of the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church purchased Lot 1 in May 1912, and the congregation initially worshipped in a single-story wood frame church built here.¹⁰² As attendance grew, a larger house of worship was needed. In March 1915, the trustees purchased Lot 2, directly to the west.¹⁰³ The congregation embarked on a fundraising campaign to build a new church, which included a benefit concert, and in August 1915 secured a \$3,000 mortgage to erect a brick Gothic Revival style building.¹⁰⁴ (*Figures 16-17*) The Grace Methodist Episcopal Church congregation worshipped in the building until 1928, when they merged with the University United Methodist Church.¹⁰⁵ In October 1928, 304 S. Trenton Avenue was sold to the First United Brethren Church of Christ.¹⁰⁶ Evaluation of original Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and a circa 1957 image from the Tulsa Historical Society suggests that this congregation re-clad the building with permastone sometime in late 1957.¹⁰⁷ (*Figure 18*) The United Brethren, a German congregation, worshipped at 304 S. Trenton until selling the building in June 1961 to the First Church of God.¹⁰⁸ The First Church of God used the building for the next decade until it combined with the Darlington Avenue Church of God congregation and relocated.¹⁰⁹ In March 1972, prolific musician and native Tulsan Leon Russell purchased the vacant church building and converted it into a recording studio for his label with Denny Cordell, Shelter Records.¹¹⁰ Shelter Records operated in the building until 1976, when Russell severed ties with the label. From May 1978 to March 1983, Russell leased the building to the Tulsa Indian Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, who used it for dances, theater rehearsals, and plays.¹¹¹ In March 1983, Castle Music Incorporated, a Christian recording company run by Ben Ferrell, purchased

¹⁰⁰ Pareles, “Leon Russell, Hit Maker and Musicians’ Musician.”; Bill Chappell, “Leon Russell Dies; Southern Rock Legend Was 74,” *NPR*, November 13, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/11/13/501911289/leon-russell-dies-southern-rock-legend-was-74>.

¹⁰¹ “Abstract of Title to Lots One (1) and Two (2), Block Five (5), Midway Addition to the City of Tulsa, County of Tulsa, State of Oklahoma, according to the recorded Plat thereof.” J. Lacy Ballenger Abstract Company.

¹⁰² Warranty Deed, Book 125, Page 454, May 1, 1912, Register of Deeds of Tulsa County, State of Oklahoma; “Grace M. E. Church,” *The Morning Tulsa Daily World* (Tulsa, OK), July 12, 1914.

¹⁰³ Warranty Deed, Book 163, Page 30, March 1, 1915, Register of Deeds of Tulsa County, State of Oklahoma.

¹⁰⁴ “Grace M. E. Church Benefit Concert,” *The Morning Tulsa Daily World* (Tulsa, OK), May 30, 1915; Mortgage, Book 183, Page 288, August 2, 1915, Office of the County Clerk, Tulsa County, Oklahoma; “A City of Beautiful Churches, Built and Supported by God-Fearing Men and Women,” *The Morning Tulsa Daily World* (Tulsa, OK), May 18, 1915; Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Ltd, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Tulsa, Oklahoma*, New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1915, Sheet 39.

¹⁰⁵ Rev. Nathan Mattox, “Pastor’s Perspective,” *University United Methodist Church*, Volume 43, Issue 15, April 15, 2014.

¹⁰⁶ “Abstract of Title to Lots One (1) and Two (2), Block Five (5), Midway Addition to the City of Tulsa, County of Tulsa, State of Oklahoma, according to the recorded Plat thereof.” J. Lacy Ballenger Abstract Company.

¹⁰⁷ Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Ltd, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Tulsa, Oklahoma*, New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1915 corrected to 1957, Vol. 2, Sheet 222.

¹⁰⁸ Warranty Deed, Book 3157, Page 470, June 27, 1961, Office of the County Clerk, Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

¹⁰⁹ Beth Macklin, “Darlington, First Church of God Merger Planned,” *Tulsa World* (Tulsa, OK), February 4, 1971.

¹¹⁰ Warranty Deed, Book 4006, Page 559, March 1, 1972, Office of the County Clerk, Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

¹¹¹ Lease Agreement, Book 4328, Page 1276, May 16, 1978, Office of the County Clerk, Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

304 S. Trenton, although the Tulsa Indian Council continued to maintain office space in the building.¹¹² In the fall of 1987, musician and engineer Steve Ripley purchased the building and reopened The Church Studio. Ripley recalled that in late 1987, Leon Russell was in town to play a show and came by the Church Studio to record a few tracks.¹¹³ Operating again as a recording studio under Ripley's direction, the building once more saw many local musicians come through its doors. Ripley's own band, the Tractors, recorded in the studio; their 1994 debut album sold two million copies and earned two Grammy award nominations.¹¹⁴ In 2006 Ripley sold The Church Studio to Randy Miller, who in turn sold the building to Hickory House Properties in 2016.

CONCLUSION

The Church Studio at 304 S. Trenton Avenue in Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criteria A and B in the areas of PERFORMING ARTS and ENTERTAINMENT. The Church Studio attained exceptional local significance from 1972 to 1976 when it served as a recording studio for Shelter Records, owned and operated by prolific musician Leon Russell. The Church Studio meets the threshold for National Register eligibility under Criterion Consideration G as a property that has attained exceptional local significance within the past fifty years. Russell's profound influence on the landscape of American rock and roll and the proliferation of the Tulsa Sound has been documented by scholarly music historians. Furthermore, The Church Studio's important role in the flourishing of the Tulsa Sound in the 1970s is also recognized by scholars. Russell, who grew up in Tulsa and was part of a core group of musicians responsible for the first wave of the Tulsa Sound movement, was already a famous performer when he moved back to Tulsa from California and opened The Church Studio in 1972. From 1972 to 1976, Russell's fame and connections drew notable rock and roll legends and aspiring musicians to The Church Studio. Under Criterion A, The Church Studio is exceptionally significant as a landmark of Tulsa's musical history; during the Shelter Records era, many nationally and internationally famous artists signed with the label and recorded at the studio, including the GAP Band, Phoebe Snow, Dwight Twilley, Freddie King, and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. The second wave of the Tulsa Sound, a more relaxed fusion of blues with rock and roll, was kindled at The Church Studio as Russell drew friends to Tulsa to collaborate, such as guitarists Eric Clapton and J.J. Cale. While Russell had a private studio in the basement of his Maple Ridge home (now demolished) and at a property sixty miles northeast of Tulsa on Grand Lake (now a private residence), The Church Studio is the most visible representation of Russell's stamp of influence on Tulsa's musical legacy. In this light, The Church Studio is also exceptionally significant at the local level under Criterion B. Music historians, like Steve Todoroff of the Tulsa Area Music Archives and John Wooley, an Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame inductee, have recognized that Russell's signature style of piano playing and vocals had an indelible influence on the development of the Tulsa Sound. Russell's musical endeavors in Tulsa and profound impact on the city's musical legacy during the 1970s are embodied in The Church Studio. This impact was formally recognized by the City of Tulsa in 2010 when

¹¹² Warranty Deed, Book 4677, Page 371, March 11, 1983, Office of the County Clerk, Tulsa County, Oklahoma; Mike Easterling, "Feels Like Religion," *Urban Tulsa Weekly* Vol. 19, No. 23, November 12-18, 2009, 21.

¹¹³ Easterling, "Feels Like Religion."

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Third Street from Peoria to Utica Avenues was renamed “Leon Russell Road.” (*Figure 19*) This renamed stretch of Third Street passes directly by The Church Studio. In 1976, Russell severed ties with the Shelter Records label and ultimately left Tulsa. In 2016, Russell passed away in his sleep. The Church Studio retains integrity and continues to communicate its significant past as the recording studio for Leon Russell’s Shelter Records from 1972 to 1976.

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

“A City of Beautiful Churches, Built and Supported by God-Fearing Men and Women.” *The Morning Tulsa Daily World* (Tulsa, OK), May 18, 1915.

"About the Concert." *The George Harrison fund for UNICEF*. Accessed December 1, 2016.
<http://theconcertforbangladesh.com/theconcert/>.

“Abstract of Title to Lots One (1) and Two (2), Block Five (5), Midway Addition to the City of Tulsa, County of Tulsa, State of Oklahoma, according to the recorded Plat thereof.” J. Lacy Ballenger Abstract Company.

“Action Line.” *Tulsa World* (Tulsa, OK), April 25, 1976.

Bailey, C. Michael. "The Colossal Triumph of Joe Cocker's Mad Dogs & Englishmen." *All About Jazz*. Published October 21, 2006. <https://www.allaboutjazz.com/the-colossal-triumph-of-joe-cockers-mad-dogs-and-englishmen-joe-cocker-by-c-michael-bailey.php>.

Bridges, Jan. “Leon Russell’s Wife Releases Statement on Passing of Rock and Roll Legend.” Press release, November 13, 2016. <http://www.leonrussellrecords.com/news.shtml>.

Carter, Tom. “Music’s Making It Big.” *Tulsa Sunday World* (Tulsa, OK), September 14, 1975.

“Castle Purchases ex-Russell Studio.” *The Tulsa Tribune* (Tulsa, OK), January 10, 1983.

Chappell, Bill. “Leon Russell Dies; Southern Rock Legend Was 74.” *NPR*. November 13, 2016.
<http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/11/13/501911289/leon-russell-dies-southern-rock-legend-was-74>.

City of Tulsa. “The 6th Street Infill Plan: Reinventing the Pearl District.” January 5, 2006.
<https://www.cityoftulsa.org/COTLegacy/documents/6thStreetEntire.pdf>.

Conner, Thomas. “Leon Russell Sought Shelter in Tulsa Throughout the 70s, and His Sounds Still Resonate.” *Tulsa World* (Tulsa, OK), December 19, 1997.

“Continuation Abstract of Title to Lots One (1) and Two (2), Block Five (5), Midway Addition to the City of Tulsa, County of Tulsa, State of Oklahoma, according to the recorded Plat thereof, Since January 23rd, 1961.” Standard Abstract & Title Company.

Easterling, Mike. “Feels Like Religion.” *Urban Tulsa Weekly* Vol. 19, No. 23, November 12-18, 2009.
<http://oklahomarock.com/church-studio-graces-urban-tulsa-weekly-cover/>.

Foley, Hugh W., Jr. *Oklahoma Music Guide II: Biographies, Big Hits & Annual Events*. Stillwater, Oklahoma: New Forums Press, 2013.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

Fong-Torres, Ben. "Leon Russell: The Rolling Stone Interview." *Rolling Stone Magazine*. December 10, 1970. <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/the-rolling-stone-interview-leon-russell-19701210>.

Fricke, David. "Remembering Leon Russell, Rock's Behind-the-Scenes Mad Dog." *Rolling Stone Magazine*. November 22, 2016. <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/david-fricke-on-leon-russell-behind-the-scenes-mastermind-w451994>.

Gleason, Matt. "Spooky moments with a legend." *Tulsa World* (Tulsa, OK), November 1, 2009.

"Grace M. E. Church." *The Morning Tulsa Daily World* (Tulsa, OK), July 12, 1914.

"Grace M. E. Church Benefit Concert," *The Morning Tulsa Daily World* (Tulsa, OK), May 30, 1915.

Keys, Bobby. *Every Night's a Saturday Night: The Rock 'n' Roll Life of Legendary Sax Man Bobby Keys*. Berkeley, California: Counterpoint, 2012.

Kirsch, Bob. "Three-Year Old Shelter Has Two Home Bases." *Billboard Magazine*. November 10, 1973.

Kreps, Daniel. "Leon Russell, Renowned Songwriter and Musician, Dead at 74." *Rolling Stone Magazine*. November 13, 2016. <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/leon-russell-renowned-songwriter-and-musician-dead-at-74-w450174>.

Kuykendall, Lindsey Neal. "The Making of Leon Russell Road." *This Land Press*. May 9, 2012. <http://thislandpress.com/2012/05/09/the-making-of-leon-russell-road/>.

Lease Agreement, Book 4328, Page 1276, May 16, 1978, Office of the County Clerk, Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

"Leon Russell." *Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame*. Accessed December 5, 2016. <http://omhof.com/inductee/leon-russell/>.

"Leon Russell, Biography." *Rock & Roll Hall of Fame*. Accessed December 2, 2016. <https://www.rockhall.com/inductees/leon-russell>.

"Leon Russell Leaving Tulsa." *Tulsa World* (Tulsa, OK), March 13, 1977.

"Leon Russell Paid \$20,063 in Tulsa Property Taxes in 1973." *The Tulsa Tribune* (Tulsa, OK), 1973.

"Leon Russell Plans 21-City Tour of U.S." *Tulsa World* (Tulsa, OK), May 2, 1976.

Macklin, Beth. "Darlington, First Church of God Merger Planned." *Tulsa World* (Tulsa, OK), February 4, 1971.

Mattox, Nathan, Rev. "Pastor's Perspective." *University United Methodist Church*, Volume 43, Issue 15. April 15, 2014.

The Church Studio

Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK

County and State

"Memory Lane." *Leon Russell Records*. Accessed November 30, 2016.

http://www.leonrussellrecords.com/memory_lane.shtml.

Mortgage, Book 183, Page 288, August 2, 1915, Office of the County Clerk, Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

O'Meilia, Matt. "Leon's Lair." *This Land Press*. April 11, 2012.

<http://thislandpress.com/2012/04/11/leons-lair/>.

Oklahoma Historical Society. "Leon Russell, Legendary Entertainer, Recovering from Heart Attack."

Press release, July 19, 2016. <http://www.okhistory.org/about/pressrelease.php?id=434>.

Parales, Jon. "Leon Russell, Hit Maker and Musicians' Musician, Dies at 74." *The New York Times*.

November 13, 2016. <http://nyti.ms/2eufZGw>.

Randi, Don, and Karen Nishimura. *You've Heard These Hands: From the Wall of Sound to the Wrecking Crew and Other Incredible Stories*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Books, 2015.

Ripley, Steve, "A Farm Boy's Recollection of Recording in Oklahoma," in *Another Hot Oklahoma Night: A Rock & Roll Story*, edited by Oklahoma Historical Society, 75-84. Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2009.

Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Ltd. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Tulsa, Oklahoma*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1915, Sheet 39.

Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Ltd. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Tulsa, Oklahoma*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1915 corrected to 1923, Vol. 2, Sheet 222.

Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Ltd. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Tulsa, Oklahoma*. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1915 corrected to 1957, Vol. 2, Sheet 222.

Savage, William W., Jr. *Singing Cowboys And All That Jazz: A Short History of Popular Music in Oklahoma*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983.

Shelter Recording Co. November 1973. Advertisement. *Billboard Magazine*.

Stambler, Irwin, and Grelun Landon. *Country Music: The Encyclopedia*. New York, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Todoroff, Steve. Interview with John LeMay. Podcast audio. No date.

Todoroff, Steve. Telephone conversation with author. December 13, 2016.

Warranty Deed, Book 125, Page 454, May 1, 1912, Register of Deeds of Tulsa County, State of Oklahoma.

Warranty Deed, Book 163, Page 30, March 1, 1915, Register of Deeds of Tulsa County, State of Oklahoma.

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Warranty Deed, Book 3157, Page 470, June 27, 1961, Office of the County Clerk, Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

Warranty Deed, Book 4006, Page 559, March 1, 1972, Office of the County Clerk, Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

Warranty Deed, Book 4677, Page 371, March 11, 1983, Office of the County Clerk, Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

Williams, Bill. "Oklahoma is more than OK." *Billboard Magazine*. November 10, 1973.

Williams, David A. "A Recording Studio and Offices for Shelter Records/Leon Russell." Unpublished, December 10, 1974.

Wooley, John. *From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt: The Colors of Oklahoma Music*. Tulsa: Hawk Publishing Group, 2006.

Wooley, John, "Goin' Back to Tulsa One More Time," in *Another Hot Oklahoma Night: A Rock & Roll Story*, edited by Oklahoma Historical Society, 55-73. Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2009.

Zanes, Warren. *Petty: The Biography*. New York, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2015.
Agreement. Correspondence with Hurd-Scharlach Construction Co. Inc. November 7, 1958. Vertical File: Mutual Federal Savings and Loan. Box 1 folder19 Improvements and Maintenance. Oklahoma History Center.

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 (Part I approved by NPS)
 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

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.156495 | Longitude: -95.969665 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

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

Subdivision: MIDWAY ADDITION
Legal: Block 5, Lots 1 & 2
Section: 6 Township: 19N Range: 13E

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The proposed boundaries include the city parcel historically associated with the resource.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Rachel Nugent, National Register Coordinator and Rachel Barnhart, Historic Preservation Specialist
organization: Rosin Preservation, LLC.
street & number: 1712 Holmes Street
city or town: Kansas City state: MO zip code: 64108
e-mail rachelb@rosinpreservation.com
telephone: 816-472-4950
date: January 2017

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.)

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Photographs

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

Photo Log

Name of Property: The Church Studio

City or Vicinity: Tulsa

County: Tulsa County

State: Oklahoma

Photographer: Brad Finch, F-Stop Photography

Date Photographed: October 17, 2015

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

- 01 of 18: North and east elevations, view southwest.
- 02 of 18: East elevation, view west.
- 03 of 18: South elevation, view north.
- 04 of 18: West and south elevations, view northeast.
- 05 of 18: North and west elevations, view southeast.
- 06 of 18: North and east elevations and surrounding environment, view southwest.
- 07 of 18: First floor, foyer, view northeast.
- 08 of 18: First floor, recording studio, view southwest.
- 09 of 18: First floor, recording studio, view southeast.
- 10 of 18: First floor, recording studio, view northeast.
- 11 of 18: First floor, recording studio, view northwest.
- 12 of 18: First floor, audio control room, view northwest.
- 13 of 18: First floor, storage room, view northwest.
- 14 of 18: First floor, restroom, view west.
- 15 of 18: Second floor, office, view northeast.
- 16 of 18: Second floor, view northwest.
- 17 of 18: Basement, view southeast.
- 18 of 18: Basement, kitchen, view northeast.

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

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.

Figure Log:

Figure 1: National Register Boundary and Site Map. *Source: Microsoft Corporation, 2016*

Figure 2: Contextual Map. *Source: Microsoft Corporation, 2016*

Figure 3: Contextual Aerial. *Source: Google, 2016*

Figure 4: Photo Key, Exterior and 1st Floor. Not to scale. *Source: Lilly Architects, 2016*

Figure 5: Photo Key, Second Floor. Not to scale. *Source: Lilly Architects, 2016*

Figure 6: Photo Key, Basement. Not to scale. *Source: Lilly Architects, 2016*

Figure 7: Late 1950s image of (left to right) Chuck Blackwell, David Gates, Johnny Williams, and Leon Russell. *Source: John Wooley, From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt: The Colors of Oklahoma Music, pg. 73*

Figure 8: Circa 1959 image of the Upsetters with Jack Dunham and Jimmy Markham on vocals (right), Leon Russell on piano (center, right) and Chuck Blackwell on drums (left). *Source: Tulsa World Archives*

Figure 9: 1960s photograph of Leon Russell in studio with members of the “Wrecking Crew.” *Source: Bryan Thomas, “The Wrecking Crew: Prepare To Have Your Mind Revamped!”*

Figure 10: Joe Cocker (left) and Leon Russell (right) perform during the *Mad Dogs & Englishmen* show at the Fillmore East on March 27, 1970. *Source: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images*

Figure 11: George Harrison, Bob Dylan, and Leon Russell perform at the Concert for Bangladesh in Madison Square Garden in 1971. *Source: Bill Ray, Time and Life Pictures/Getty Images*

Figure 12: (Top) Circa 1972 image of The Church Studio’s sanctuary during conversion into a recording studio. (Bottom) Circa 1970s image of The Church Studio’s audio control room. *Source: Kirk Bressler, former studio manager and engineer at The Church Studio*

Figure 13: Circa 1970s images of recording sessions at The Church Studio. *Source: Walt Richmond via Mike Easterling, “Feels Like Religion,” Urban Tulsa Weekly Vol. 19, No. 23, November 12-18, 2009*

Figure 14: Shelter Records advertisement. *Source: Billboard Magazine, November 10, 1973*

Figure 15: The GAP Band’s 1974 album *Magicians Holiday*, rear cover. *Source: www.discogs.com*

Figure 16: Circa 1923 image of the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church. *Source: Richard Lloyd Jones, The Saturday Sermonette, Tulsa Tribune, April 7, 1923*

Figure 17: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1915, sheet 39. *Source: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Ltd*

Figure 18: Circa 1957 image of The Church Studio. *Source: Beryl Ford Collection, Tulsa Historical Society*

Figure 19: Leon Russell Road and The Church Studio. *Source: Rosin Preservation, 2016.*

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

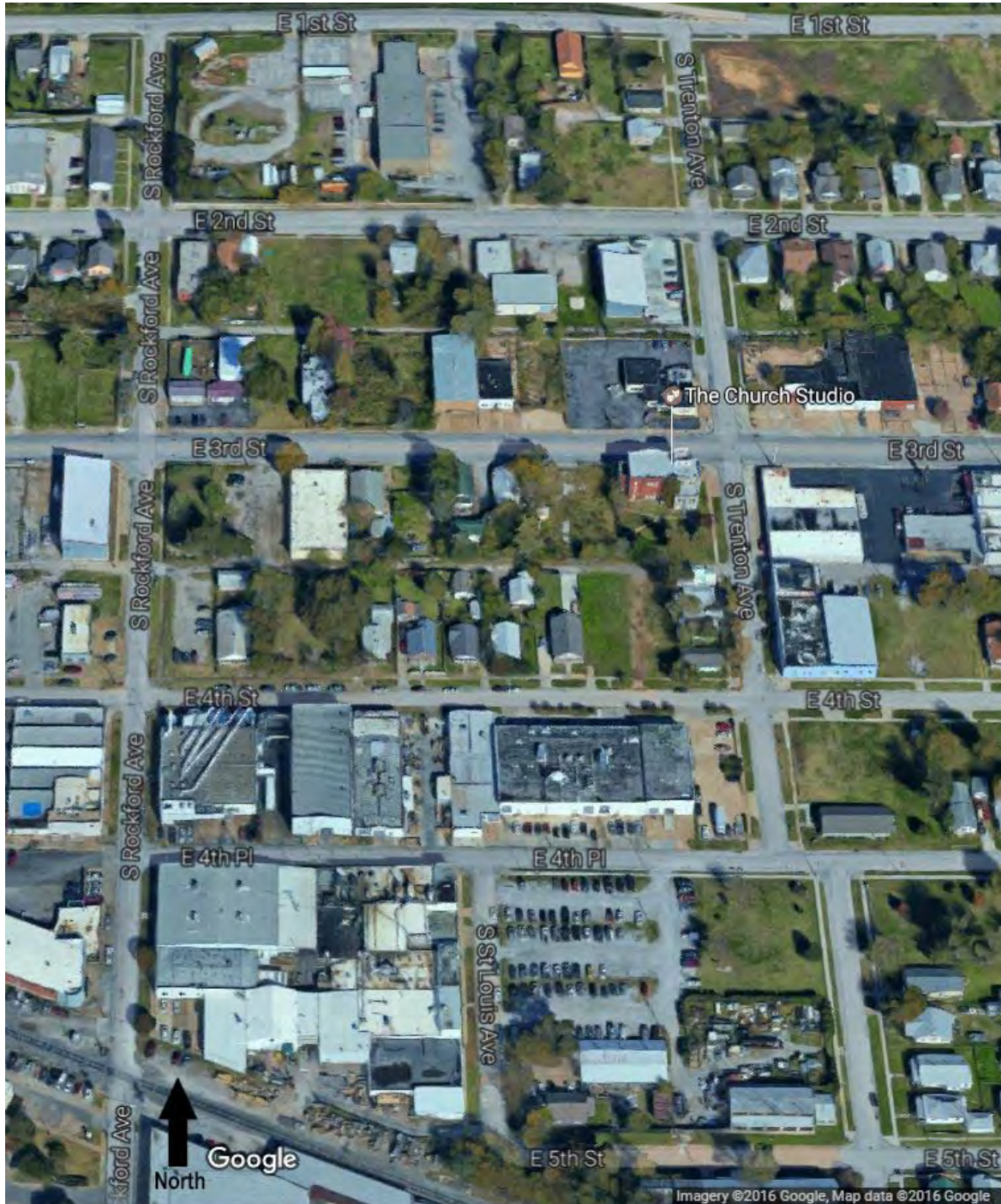
Figure 1: National Register Boundary and Site Map. *Source: Microsoft Corporation, 2016*
The Church Studio, 304 S. Trenton Avenue, Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma
N 36.156495, W -95.969665. WGS84 Datum.



The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 2: Contextual Aerial. *Source: Google, 2016*
The Church Studio, 304 S. Trenton Avenue, Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma
N 36.156495, W -95.969665. WGS84 Datum.



The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 3: Contextual Map. *Source: Microsoft Corporation, 2016*
The Church Studio, 304 S. Trenton Avenue, Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma
N 36.156495, W -95.969665. WGS84 Datum.

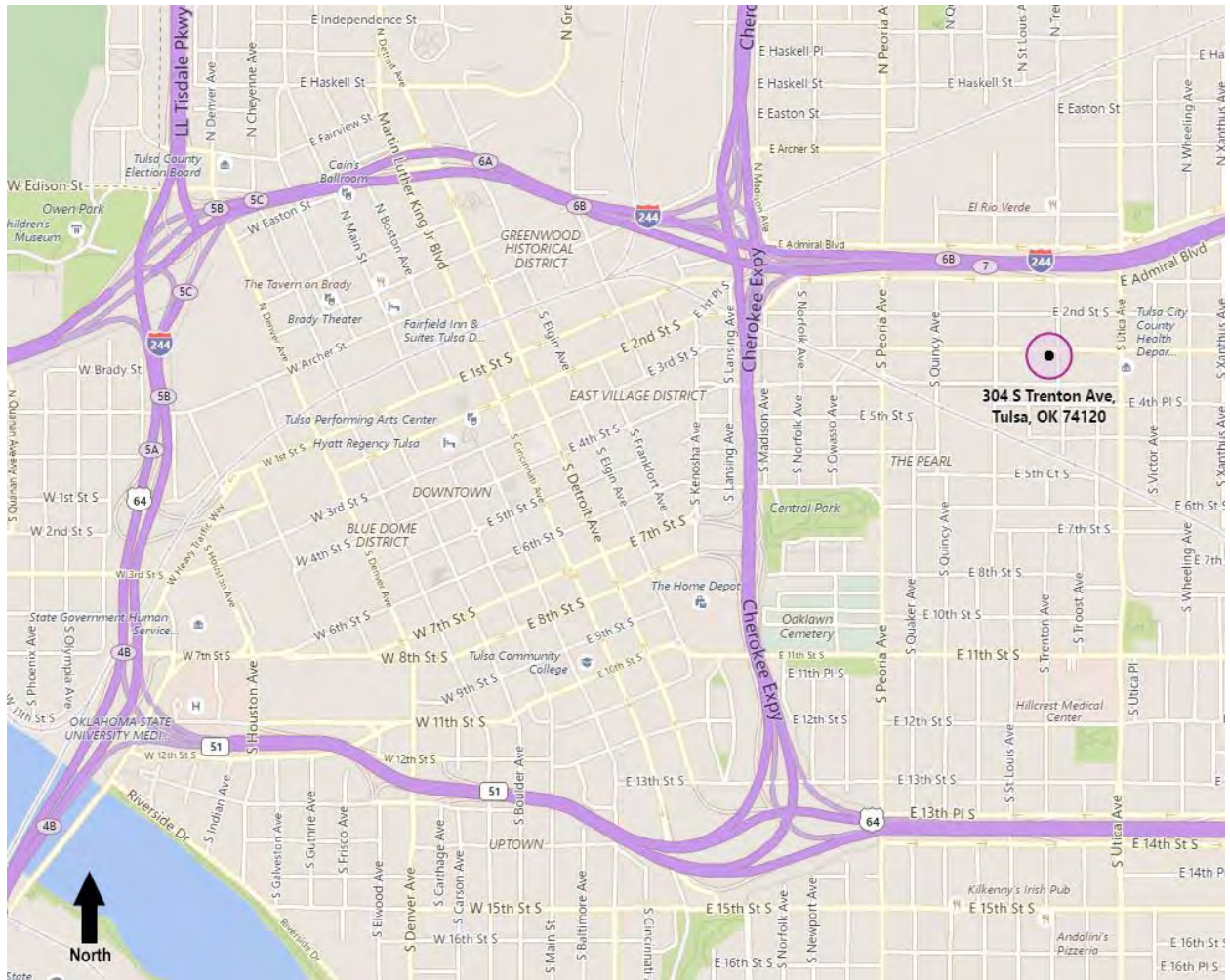


Figure 4: Photo Key, Exterior and 1st Floor. Not to scale. *Source: Lilly Architects, 2016*

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

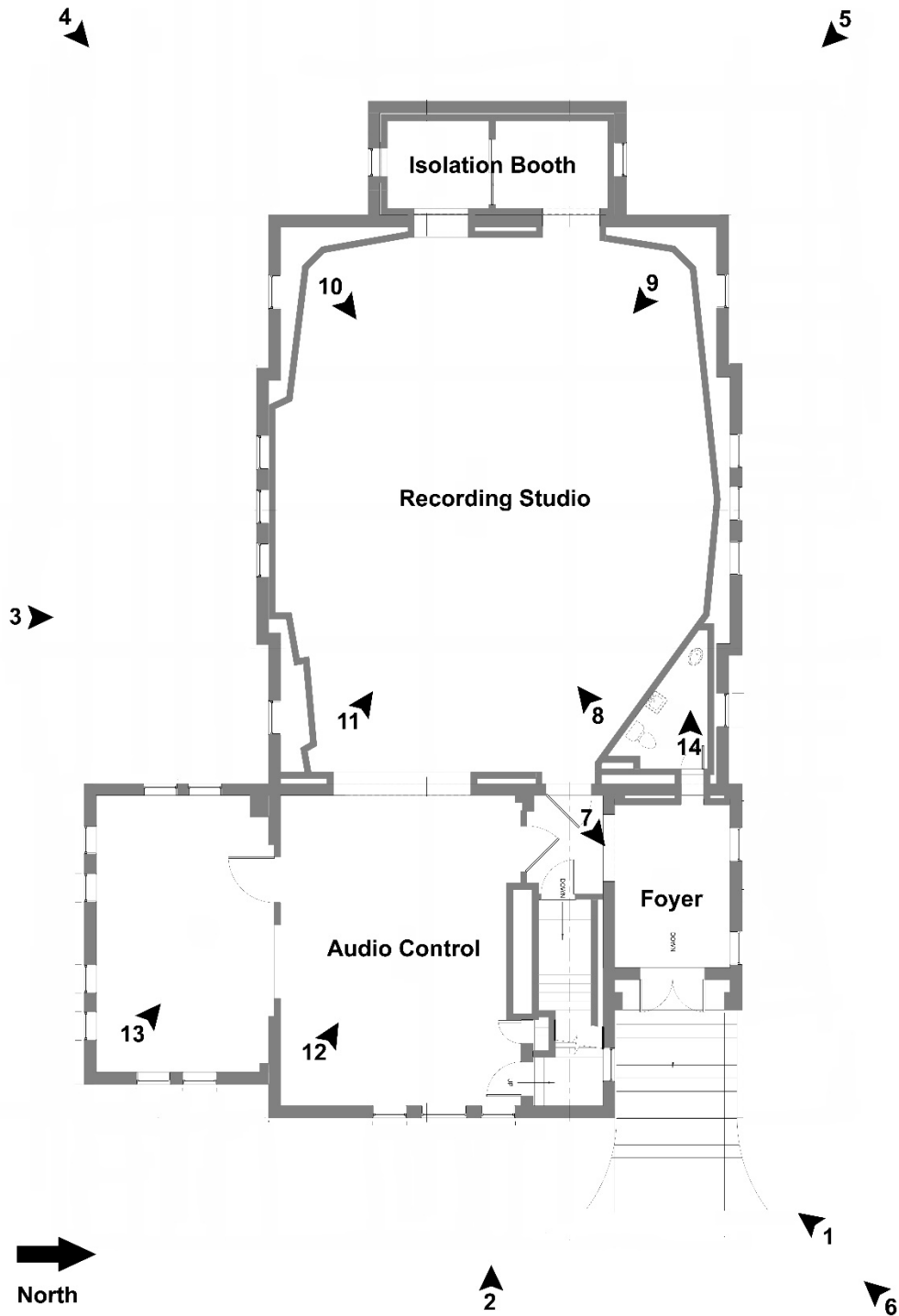


Figure 5: Photo Key, Second Floor. Not to scale. Source: Lilly Architects, 2016

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

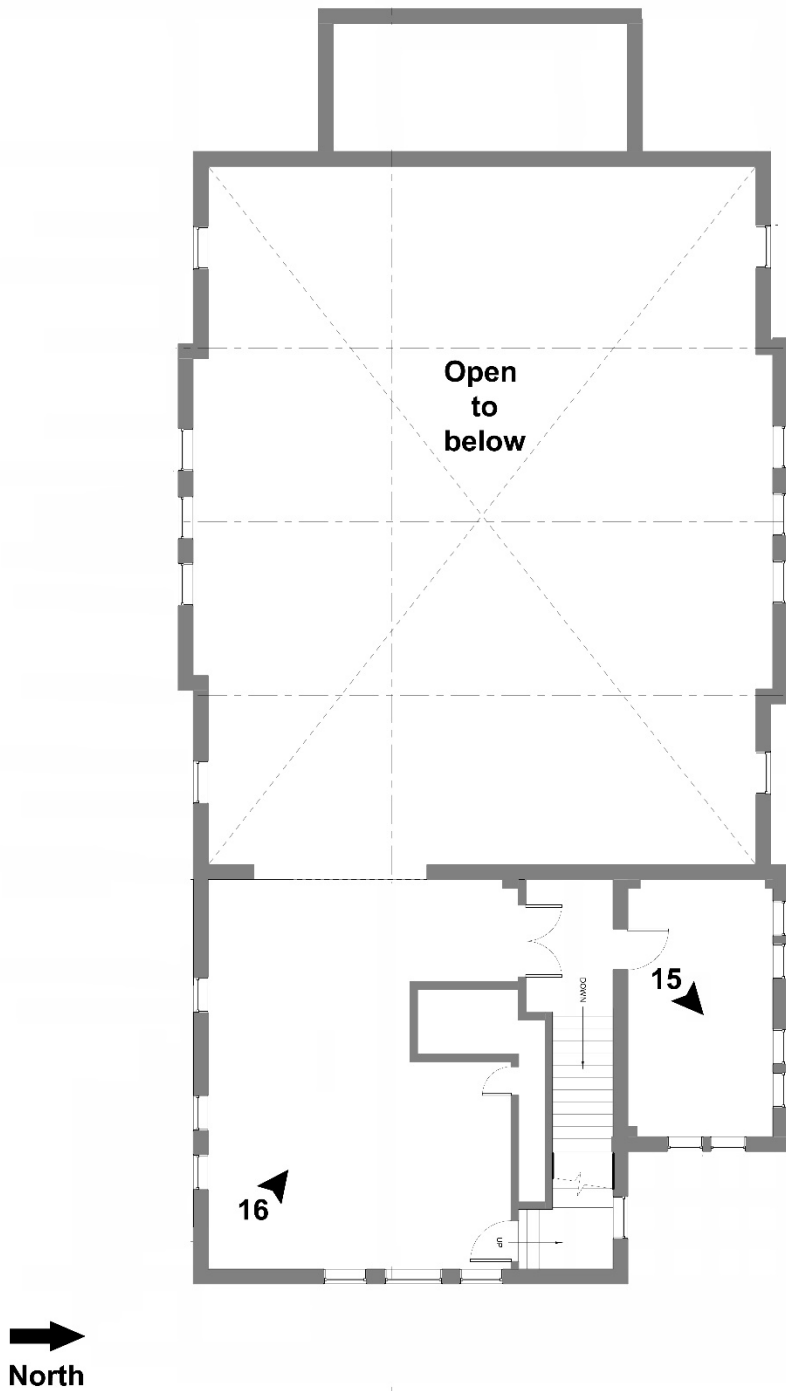
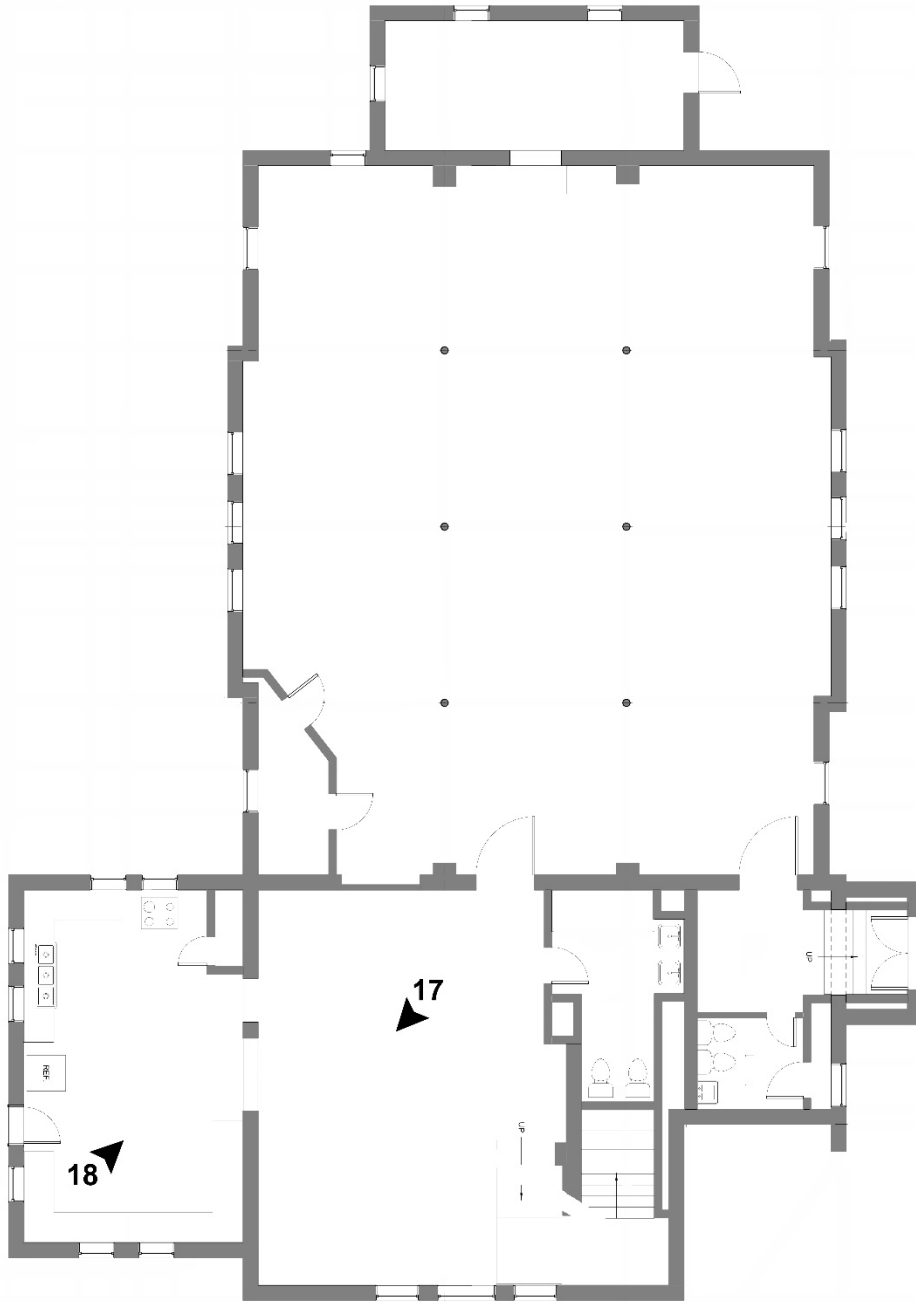


Figure 6: Photo Key, Basement. Not to scale. *Source: Lilly Architects, 2016*

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State



→
North

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 7: Late 1950s image of (left to right) Chuck Blackwell, David Gates, Johnny Williams, and Leon Russell. *Source: John Wooley, From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt: The Colors of Oklahoma Music, pg. 73*



The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 8: Circa 1959 image of the Upsetters with Jack Dunham and Jimmy Markham on vocals (right), Leon Russell on piano (center, right) and Chuck Blackwell on drums (left). *Source: Tulsa World Archives*



The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 9: 1960s photograph of Leon Russell in studio with members of the “Wrecking Crew.” *Source: Bryan Thomas. "The Wrecking Crew: Prepare To Have Your Mind Revamped!" Nightflight. Published March 14, 2015. <http://nightflight.com/the-wrecking-crew-prepare-to-have-your-mind-revamped>.*



The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 10: Joe Cocker (left) and Leon Russell (right) perform during the *Mad Dogs & Englishmen* show at the Fillmore East on March 27, 1970. *Source: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images*



The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 11: George Harrison, Bob Dylan, and Leon Russell perform at the Concert for Bangladesh in Madison Square Garden in 1971. *Source: Bill Ray, Time and Life Pictures/Getty Images*



The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 12: (Top) Circa 1972 image of The Church Studio's sanctuary during conversion into a recording studio. (Bottom) Circa 1970s image of The Church Studio's audio control room. *Source: Kirk Bressler, former studio manager and engineer at The Church Studio*



The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 13: Circa 1970s images of recording sessions at The Church Studio. *Source: Walt Richmond via Mike Easterling, "Feels Like Religion," Urban Tulsa Weekly Vol. 19, No. 23, November 12-18, 2009*



Drummer Chuck Blackwell, left, and an unidentified keyboardist converse during a Leon Russell recording session at the Church Studio in the 1970s.



Tom Russell, Jamie Oldaker, Muscle Shoals Studios guitarist Wayne Perkins and Jim Byfield relax in the Church Studios control room during a recording session in the 1970s.



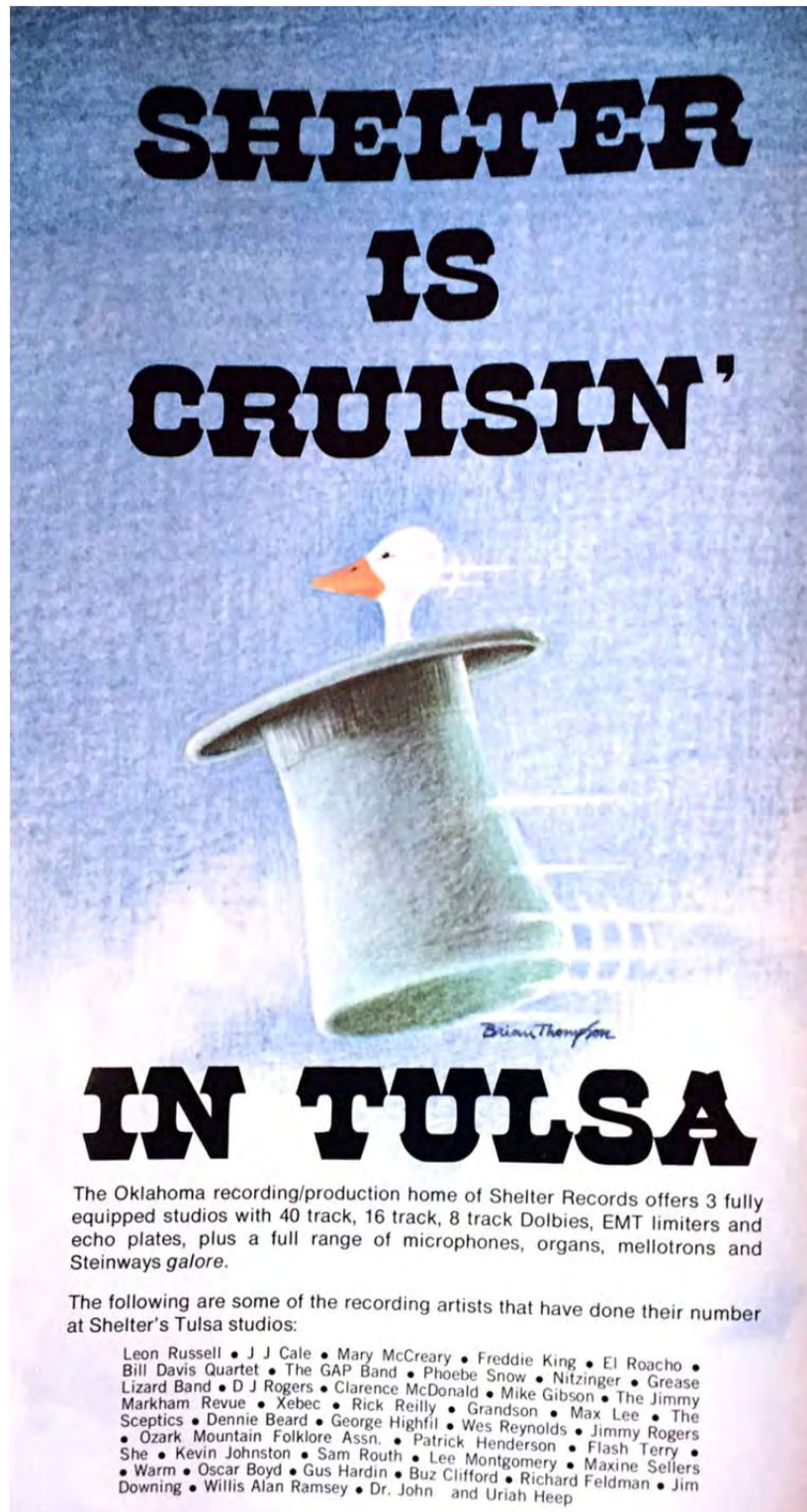
Carl Radle, left, Tom Russell and Peter Tosh are pictured in the Church Studios control room during a mixing session for Tosh's album on Shelter Records in the 1970s. Radle was a Tulsa native and bass player best known for his work with Eric Clapton, while Tosh went on to stardom.

Photos courtesy of Walt Richmond

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 14: Shelter Records advertisement. *Source: Billboard Magazine, November 10, 1973*



**SHELTER
IS
CRUISIN'**

Brian Thompson

IN TULSA

The Oklahoma recording/production home of Shelter Records offers 3 fully equipped studios with 40 track, 16 track, 8 track Dolbies, EMT limiters and echo plates, plus a full range of microphones, organs, mellotrons and Steinways galore.

The following are some of the recording artists that have done their number at Shelter's Tulsa studios:

Leon Russell • J J Cale • Mary McCreary • Freddie King • El Roacho • Bill Davis Quartet • The GAP Band • Phoebe Snow • Nitzinger • Grease Lizard Band • D J Rogers • Clarence McDonald • Mike Gibson • The Jimmy Markham Revue • Xebec • Rick Reilly • Grandson • Max Lee • The Sceptics • Dennie Beard • George Highfil • Wes Reynolds • Jimmy Rogers • Ozark Mountain Folklore Assn. • Patrick Henderson • Flash Terry • She • Kevin Johnston • Sam Routh • Lee Montgomery • Maxine Sellers • Warm • Oscar Boyd • Gus Hardin • Buz Clifford • Richard Feldman • Jim Downing • Willis Alan Ramsey • Dr. John and Uriah Heep

The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 15: The GAP Band's 1974 album *Magicians Holiday*, rear cover. Source: www.discogs.com



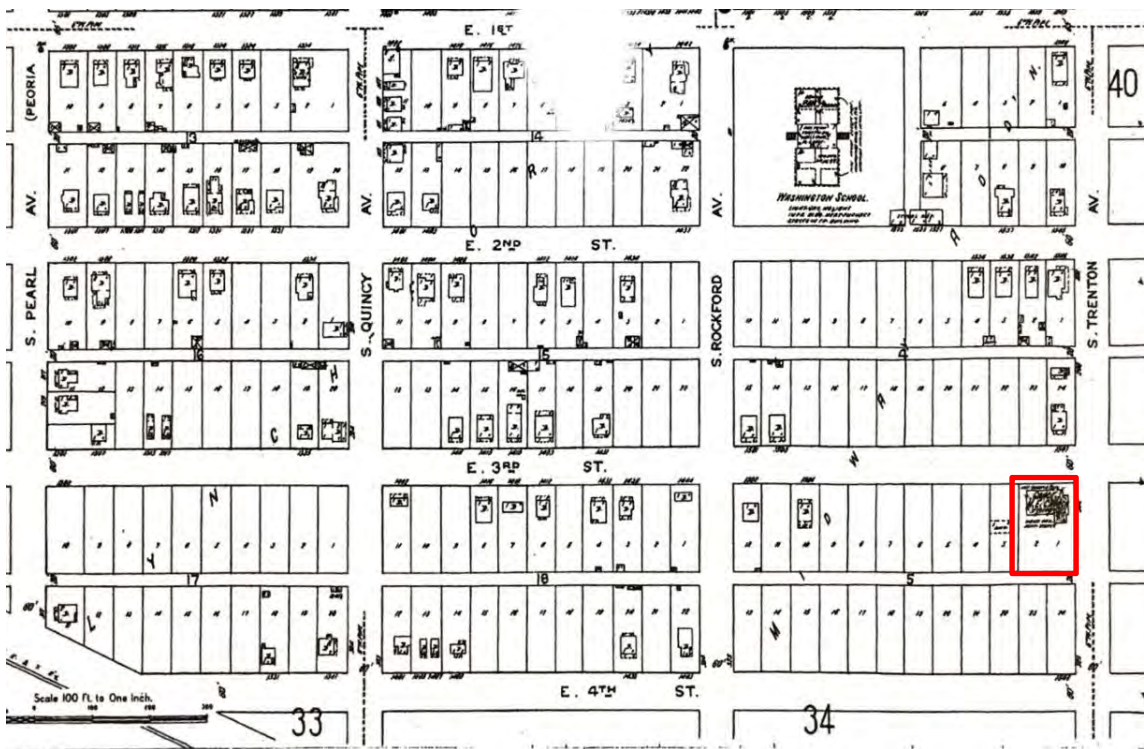
The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 16: Circa 1923 image of the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church. *Source: Richard Lloyd Jones, The Saturday Sermonette, Tulsa Tribune, April 7, 1923*



Figure 17: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1915, sheet 39. *Source: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, Ltd*



The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 18: Circa 1957 image of The Church Studio. *Source: Beryl Ford Collection, Tulsa Historical Society*



The Church Studio
Name of Property

Tulsa County, OK
County and State

Figure 19: Leon Russell Road and The Church Studio. *Source: Rosin Preservation, 2016.*













MAC'S ELECTRIC

Goodwill



3197
2500

2nd Street

<EXIT



FIRST CHURCH OF GOD
1961

FIRST CHURCH OF GOD

For Lease
255 S. Main Street
800-298-8888



CHURCH





















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Church Studio, The

Multiple Name:

State & County: OKLAHOMA, Tulsa

Date Received:
7/25/2017

Date of Pending List:
9/1/2017

Date of 16th Day:
9/18/2017

Date of 45th Day:
9/8/2017

Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100001595

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

Appeal

SHPO Request

Waiver

Resubmission

Other

PDIL

Landscape

National

Mobile Resource

TCP

CLG

Text/Data Issue

Photo

Map/Boundary

Period

Less than 50 years

Accept Return Reject 9/8/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The Church Studio is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criteria A and B in the areas of Performing Arts and Recreation/Entertainment. The Church Studio attained exceptional local significance from 1972 to 1976 when it served as a recording studio for Shelter Records, owned and operated by prolific music writer, musician, and producer Leon Russell. The Church Studio meets National Register Criterion Consideration G. Russell's profound influence on the landscape of American rock and roll and the proliferation of the *Tulsa Sound* has been well documented by music scholars and historians. From 1972 to 1976, native Oklahoman (Claude Russell Bridges) aka Leon Russell's fame and connections drew notable rock and roll legends and aspiring musicians to The Church Studio where the facility's informal (non-corporate) atmosphere served as an incubator for talent and professional collaborations. The Church Studio also represents an archetypical illustration of musicians and artists using smaller, independent recording studios in order to have more control over their music. The building's conversion from church to recording studio significantly impacted the building's interior spaces and character, creating new functional spaces and interrelated rooms, which now represent important character-defining elements of the nominated property. [The Church Studio retains integrity from its period of significance, 1972 to 1976, and distinctly communicates its significant function as a recording studio..." NR nomination, page 7.9]

Recommendation/ Criteria Accept NR Criteria A and B.

Reviewer Paul Lusignan

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229

Date 09/08/2017

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No



G.T. Bynum
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

July 6, 2017

Ms. Melvena Heisch
Oklahoma History Center
800 Nazih Drive
Oklahoma City, 73105-7917

Dear Ms. Heisch,

I write today in support of the Church Studio's listing on the National Register of historic Places and the Oklahoma Register of Historic Places.

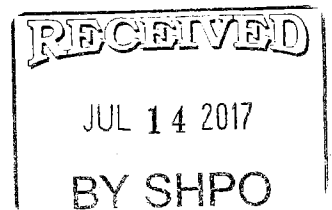
Beginning in the 1970s, musical talent from across the world wrote, produced, and recorded award winning songs in the Church Studio earning it the title of "The Birthplace of the Tulsa Sound." This elite recording studio has inspired musical pioneers for generations and continues that legacy today.

Please convey my support of this nomination to the review committee, as well as my thanks in advance for their consideration.

Best regards,

G.T. Bynum
Mayor

cc: Teresa Knox





Oklahoma Historical Society

Founded May 27, 1893

State Historic Preservation Office

Oklahoma History Center • 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive • Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7917
(405) 521-6249 • Fax (405) 522-0816 • www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm

July 24, 2017

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Park Service 2280, 8th floor
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20005



Dear Mr. Loether:

We are pleased to transmit six National Register of Historic Places nominations for Oklahoma properties. The nominations are for the following properties:

Babe's Package Store, 220 South 3rd, Enid, Garfield County
Eugene S. Briggs Auditorium, 2450 East Maine, Enid, Garfield County
Security National Bank Building, 201 West Broadway, Enid, Garfield County
Beaty School, CR North 3210 at Royal Oaks Road, Pauls Valley Vicinity, Garvin County
Saints Cyrils and Methodius Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church, 501 South Third, Hartshorne, Pittsburg County
The Church Studio, 304 South Trenton, Tulsa, Tulsa County

The member of the Historic Preservation Review Committee (state review board), professionally qualified in the fields of historic architecture was absent from the public meeting at which each of these nominations was considered and the recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer was formulated. However, the member possessing the requisite professional qualifications for evaluation of each nominated property was present and participated in the recommendation's formulation.

We look forward to the results of your review. If there may be any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either Lynda S. Ozan of my staff or myself.

Sincerely,

Melvena Heisch
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

MKH:lso

Enclosures