

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 09000978

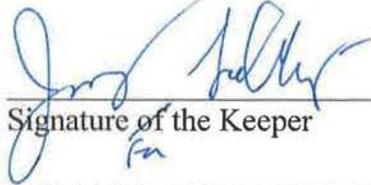
Date Listed: 3/8/2010

Property Name: Citizen's Bank Tower

County: Oklahoma

State: OK

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

6.6.2010  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 10: Geographic Data

The correct UTM points for this property are: Zone 14, 633260 Easting, 3928580 Northing

The lat/long coordinates are: 35.491922/-97.530919

\_\_\_\_\_  
The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

#### **DISTRIBUTION:**

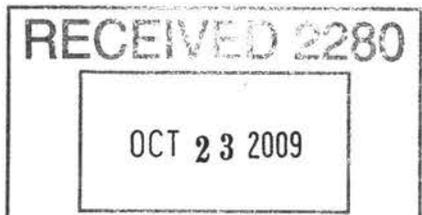
**National Register property file**

**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

**SHPO**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

978



# 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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Citizens Bank Tower  
other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 2200 North Classen Boulevard  not for publication  
city or town Oklahoma City  vicinity  
state Oklahoma code OK county Oklahoma code 109 zip code 73106

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

     national      statewide X local

[Signature] 10-20-09  
Signature of certifying official Date

Director - SHPO \_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 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] 3/8/2010  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
4	0	<b>Total</b>

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: office building, specialty store  
Transportation: road-related: parking garage

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: multiple dwelling  
Transportation: road-related: parking garage  
Commerce/Trade: specialty store

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement: Wrightian

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete  
walls: Concrete  
Metal: aluminum  
roof: Asphalt  
other: Glass

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### **Summary Paragraph**

The Citizens Tower is a complex of four interconnected buildings that are located on a suburban block approximately two miles north of Oklahoma City's central business district. It is bound on the west by Classen Boulevard, the south by Northwest 21<sup>st</sup> Street, the north by Northwest 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and on the east by North Western Avenue. The complex consists of a 20-story hexagonal tower rising from a recessed base; a triangular retail wing set at an angle to the tower and bordered by Classen and Northwest 21<sup>st</sup> Street; a broad three-level parking garage; and a utility building, a triangular form located between the main tower and the parking garage. The tower is the central feature of the site but all of the buildings date to the same timeframe and share a common style and building material.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### **Tower**

The tower is a hexagonal mid-twentieth century building with a narrow entrance base featuring public entrances on the north, southwest and southeast sides. The building's recessed base is comprised of painted concrete accented by polished white marble panels. There are three first floor entrances spaced between masonry cores that house the elevators and stairs. The doors are glass with aluminum framing. The two entrances facing obliquely onto Classen Boulevard have revolving doors; the third entrance, facing the parking garage, has outward swinging doors. A projecting fascia band above the first floor is faced with gold-anodized corrugated aluminum panels that serve as sun shades. The upper floors are faced with glass panels and dark anodized aluminum mullions. It has slightly tinted glass and spandrel glass panels. The reinforced concrete building rises 20 stories to a height of 287 feet and has two basement levels.

The building's structure is post-tensioned concrete. Its 39 feet hexagonal core has eighteen inch concrete walls from which tapered floor slabs cantilever. They have a thickness of two-and-one-half feet where they join the core and taper to six inches where they join the curtain wall, 30 feet from the core. At the vertical lines of every other angle in this hexagon, one of the wall surfaces slides past the other, extending out a few feet and then returning abruptly to form a V-shaped space on each floor. This gives the plan a pinwheel shape.

The hexagonal main shaft of the building has two distinct façade treatments. The four northern, eastern and western facing sides have a series of vertical louvers attached at approximately six-foot horizontal increments and rising up the full height of the building, terminating in clipped angles approximately three feet above the parapet. These panels are approximately four feet wide and divided into eight feet attached segments. They are approximately three inches thick and have gold-anodized corrugated aluminum surfaces. These louvers are set at a 60 degree angle to the actual façade, attaching at the window mullion line. A gold-anodized aluminum framework attaches and braces these louvers or sun shades via a perimeter box-like frame around each louver plus a series of web-like diagonal struts attached to a vertical member fixed to the adjacent window vertical mullion line. This establishes a rhythm of louvers spaced at every other vertical mullion line creating alternating ranks of shaded and un-shaded windows. From oblique views of the building, the louvers either disappear visually, as their edges line up with the vantage point, or they provide an appearance of a totally gold-colored façade, as the perspective changes. Some louvers, which had faded over the years, have been recently painted gold. Two of the six elevations that face generally southward have no louvers and provide a dramatically different image of the tower. These coincide with balconies and a highly sculpted crown that accentuates this distinct appearance.

**(See continuation sheets)**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Citizens Bank Tower

County and State Oklahoma, Oklahoma

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Section number 7 Page 1

The main mass continues unbroken until the 18<sup>th</sup> floor where the building steps back on the southern two sides to form a broad terrace on the 18<sup>th</sup> floor. A cantilevered balcony on the 19<sup>th</sup> floor projects partially over this terrace. It and the terrace are framed by fin-like concrete walls that rise up the full height of the building and merge with a concrete cap enclosing mechanical services in a penthouse. The terraced balcony and concrete walls form a highly distinctive visual crown to the building, when viewed from the south. From opposing perspectives, this crown is minimized by the elevation rise to the top and the extension of the louvers to create a crenellated profile against the skyline.

The tower's interior consists of a hexagonal service core that contains four hexagonal elevators plus an inner service and fire egress stairway made of metal. The stairs and elevators appear to be enclosed with poured concrete partitions. The first floor is devoted to a large lobby space and has a tall ceiling, white marble floor and walls, plus anodized aluminum trim. The upper floors have Y-shaped corridors extending from the elevator lobby, with the remaining core space devoted to storage, mechanical runs and small restrooms. The elevators themselves are highly distinctive; they have tall polished metal doors that open by retreating from an acute angle, reflecting their hexagonal form. Four elevators service the main area; only two extend above the 17<sup>th</sup> floor.

The former office floors extend off the main hexagonal service core. Each space has generous access to the perimeter windows which are continuous and unusually tall and low. The offices were built out to each tenant's needs and featured drop ceilings and a setback at the windows. At the 18<sup>th</sup> floor is a broad terrace created by a setback at the southern sides of the building. It features a large conference room space bordering the terrace.

The tower has an uppermost floor that contains mechanical equipment. It is rather small in area as it constitutes the core of the building. This top floor is faced with poured concrete. There are two lower levels to the tower. The first includes space under the plaza and is the largest floor of the tower. It has a series of corridors some which have marble paneled walls. An exterior stairway leads from the plaza down to the main entrance of the lower level which is also accessed from the parking garage. The lower level contains large storage areas plus spaces that have been adapted into a laundry, game room, fitness center, indoor pool and offices. Below this is a small subbasement that contains boilers, electrical panels and other building services.

### Retail Building

The one-story flat roof retail building is located at the south end of the property, accessed from the plaza. Its right-angle form has concrete walls on its south and east sides. The west facing angled elevation has a canopy covering a glazed glass storefront wall. The west elevation has dark-anodized aluminum framework and tinted glass windows and doors. The large open interior space has been divided through the years to house various tenants.

### Retail and Service Building

This one-story flat roof building is constructed of concrete and compliments the lines of the main retail building. This triangular concrete structure adjoins the parking garage on the east and the tower on its triangular face. The building has a lower parapet wall and a canopy that projects along its side facing the tower. It has retail units facing the tower with similar storefront panels. At its northern end is the main mechanical facility for the entire complex.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property Citizens Bank Tower

County and State Oklahoma, Oklahoma

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Section number 7

Page 2

**Parking Garage**

The parking garage is a three-level building that is located between Western, Northwest 21<sup>st</sup> and Northwest 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets. Its lowest deck is set below grade, the middle deck is at grade and the uppermost deck is an open area. The garage is constructed of poured reinforced concrete with low continuous deck walls that have broad openings and a structural column system set back from the perimeter to create an open cantilevered appearance. The garage ceilings are coffered concrete and the interior and exterior concrete walls have been painted.

**Alterations**

**Tower**

The most substantive alteration to the tower is the conversion from office space to residential apartments. The interior of the tower has been adapted to apartment units with four units on the principle floors and two penthouse units on the three uppermost levels. These units have large living/dining/kitchen spaces with separate bedrooms located at the perimeter. The main lobby and Y-shaped lobbies on each floor were left intact as was the 18<sup>th</sup> floor meeting room. The lower levels of the tower were reconfigured to provide amenities for the residents including a swimming pool, fitness center and service desk.

Prior to rehabilitation of the Citizens Bank Tower in 2007-08, the existing walls were drywall. The corridor walls and those around the stairs were poured concrete. The corridor walls on each floor had marble facing. Office walls were built to serve various tenant needs and were initially built out by each tenant. Those office walls were removed and rearranged by tenants over time. After rehabilitation in 2007-08 the existing corridor walls and stairwell walls were retained including the marble facing. New partitions were added in the conversion from office use to residential use in the individual units. Walls were constructed at a minimal level to preserve the openness and spaciousness. Walls were constructed to intersect with mullions to prevent interfering with existing window patterns. It is also important to note that the original octagonal elevators were repaired and maintained as part of the building renovation. The doors of the elevators are a special design that is no longer manufactured and special care is used to maintain the appearance and function. Finally, the main lobby of the building, an important focal point for the entire complex, was completely restored including the anodized gold ceiling, marble wall treatments and glass chandelier.

**Retail Buildings**

A new mechanical cooling unit was added along the north side of the smaller retail and utility building. The altered storefronts were removed and replaced with a storefront system consistent with the original appearance.

**Parking Garage**

The top floor of the parking garage was adapted for recreational/outdoor tenant needs. This included the construction of recreational courts.

The Citizens Bank Tower and its supplemental buildings are in excellent condition and maintain excellent integrity. The gold color of the aluminum louvers and fascia coordinate with the adjacent Citizens State Bank Building with its gold anodized aluminum geodesic dome.

**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.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- 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)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1965-1966  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1965, 1966  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Bozalis, Dickinson & Roloff:  
Robert Roloff, principal designer  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance is based on the buildings date of construction.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

Criteria Consideration G is applicable to this building as it was constructed from 1965 to 1966.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property Citizens Bank Tower

County and State Oklahoma, Oklahoma

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Section number 8 Page 3

**Statement of Significance**

The Citizen Bank Tower is an architecturally significant building in Oklahoma City with its hexagonal plan, slender profile, unusual sunscreens and rigorously sculpted crown. It is eligible under Criterion C as the only example of Wrightian architecture as applied to a large office building in Oklahoma City. It was among the first tall office buildings to be erected outside of downtown Oklahoma City, setting the standard for other distinctive large freestanding suburban skyscrapers. Designed by Robert Roloff of Bozalis, Dickinson and Roloff of Oklahoma City, Roloff considered it a tribute to Frank Lloyd Wright and his Price Tower constructed in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. The building was constructed from 1965 to 1966 and must meet Criteria Consideration G for exceptional significance. The Citizens Bank Tower aptly meets this requirement as a highly distinctive building with its unusual design, its progressive structural elements, its link to the Price Tower and its association with an architectural firm responsible for some of Oklahoma City's more distinctive early Modern buildings.

Oklahoma City was first settled in 1889, and by the time that Oklahoma was admitted to the Union in 1907, the City was the population center and commercial hub of the new state, as well as the State capital. The community had become a major regional commercial center, railway hub and had several large meat packing plants. Oil was discovered in the city proper in 1928, and the influx of oil money within the community greatly accelerated the city's growth and the construction of many high-rise and significant buildings in the city core. Even during the Great Depression some residents who had made money during this early oil boom escaped serious financial difficulties but the majority of Oklahomans did not.

As new businesses and industries moved into the downtown, the city necessarily expanded. In terms of geographical area, the city covered 15.6 square miles in 1910, 17.2 square miles by 1920, and by 1930 it had grown to 25.2 square miles.<sup>2</sup> Oklahoma City, between 1945 and 1971, experienced unprecedented growth and opportunity. The period is marked by a tremendous building boom and annexation. This period is also marked by the shift to modern times as new technology changed how Oklahomans lived. Starting in 1949, Oklahoma City annexed so much surrounding land that it almost doubled in size from its 1930s numbers. The growth was not strictly concentric, but had a northward pattern. From this expansion came new commercial centers and accelerated movement out of the downtown into the growing community. New schools were built to educate the growing number of children as a result of the population boom in Oklahoma City. New churches were building in the growing neighborhoods. New was seen as good and wherever possible, new buildings were constructed to meet the need of the new Oklahoma City.

Commerical architecture following WWII in Oklahoma City embraced bold new concepts. Commerical resources of the postwar period include office buildings, banks, specialty and department stores, restaurants, automobile showrooms and dealerships and motels. Immediately following WWII, new commercial buildings were generally located in the established commercial centers, such as downtowns and consisted of freestanding buildings that followed the Modern stylistic trend and were constructed with modern materials. By the end of the 1950s, however, new commerical construction was usually located in the new suburbs and expanding subdivisions at the edges of Oklahoma City. Architectural styles in commercial architecture from the postwar period include Brutalism, Exaggerated Modern, Gothic Revival, Modern, New Formalism, and Post Modern. Single examples of specific styles include Contemporary, Miesian, Populuxe and Wrightian which was identified as the Citizens Bank Tower.

<sup>2</sup> Workers of the Writers Program of the Works Project Administration, *Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), p. 182-183.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property Citizens Bank Tower

County and State Oklahoma, Oklahoma

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Section number 8

Page 4

In a recent modern architecture survey of Oklahoma City, with the boundaries identified as I-44 to the north and west, I-35 to the east and I-240 to the south, 224 buildings were identified as constructed between 1950 and 1971. The buildings in the survey were limited to publicly owned and commercial buildings. Of the buildings surveyed 48 were government sponsored buildings and 47 were religious facilities. From the total surveyed 72 were determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places of which four were identified as skyscrapers. All four skyscrapers were constructed between 1962 and 1966. Two of the skyscrapers were constructed in the downtown core as a residential building and a corporate office; a third was constructed in conjunction with a hospital; and the fourth skyscraper is the Citizens Bank Tower.

Plans for the construction of Citizens Bank Tower were announced on August 2, 1963 in the *Oklahoman*. While the complex was planned for the lot adjacent to the Citizens State Bank (NR #03000875), and was designed to relate in character to the bank, it was not affiliated with the bank.<sup>3</sup> The location of the tower was important; at the edge of an established neighborhood at the edge of downtown Oklahoma City; the crossroads of a busy commercial district outside of the downtown core of Oklahoma City; along the trolley line that had been in place since 1910; and adjacent to the gold dome Citizen State Bank.

The commission of the Citizens Bank Tower coincided with the International Style of architecture, a movement devoid of decoration. Early use of the International style can be seen throughout the downtown core of Oklahoma City in banking businesses. The International Style was not exclusive to banks and can be identified on multiple buildings in all of Oklahoma City. However, the Board of Directors for this project, who were some of the same men serving as the directors of the Citizens State Bank, wanted something different for the Citizens Bank Tower. Robert Roloff, the architect for the Tower, opted to emulate the design of the Price Tower (NR # 74001670), Frank Lloyd Wright's building in Bartlesville, Oklahoma by focusing on the geometry and the design concept of creating a total work of art. Wright's foundation in architectural design is credited to Louis Sullivan with a creative genius he applied to each building commission; changing the idiom of "form follows function" to "form and function are one."<sup>4</sup>

The Price Tower, constructed from 1953 to 1956, and designed by Frank Lloyd Wright was one of two completed designs for a high-rise buildings by Wright during his long career and was the only one that could be termed a skyscraper. Located in the urban landscape of Bartlesville, the Price Tower is situated within a dominant twentieth-century business trend that used tall buildings to shape American corporate identities. Price Tower, however, exemplified Wright's ideas on urban density and planning; he believed it was "as assertion of the American sense of itself."<sup>5</sup>

The Price Tower was his only design to incorporate commercial, retail and residential spaces in one high-rise building. It was one of a group of sixteen Wright buildings singled out in 1959 by the American Institute of Architects and the National Trust for Historic Preservation as his most important "to the nation...which ought to be preserved in their original form."<sup>6</sup> In this building, as with others from this period of his career, Wright sought to destroy "the box" by opening up walls and providing vistas between rooms and between indoor spaces and the outdoors by means of windows that flooded the rooms with natural light. He created this indoor/outdoor space by utilizing equilateral parallelograms for the floor plans and sunscreens at the corners of the building.

<sup>3</sup> *Oklahoman*., August 9, 1964, page 131

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cmgww.com/historic/flw/bio.html>, 8/24/2009

<sup>5</sup> This quote is thought to be from Frank Lloyd Wright's opening day remarks. It appears without a source in the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Price Tower.

<sup>6</sup> "Preserving Wright's Architecture," *New York Times*, April 19, 1959: X-17.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Citizens Bank Tower

County and State Oklahoma, Oklahoma

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Section number 8

Page 5

As Wright's only realized example to incorporate commercial, retail and living spaces, the Price Tower remains a unique symbol, readdressing the shape, materiality and function of a modern skyscraper during the mid-twentieth century. By creating a vertical street, Wright has freed land around the base and allowed the building to stand "in its own park casting its own shadow upon its own ground."<sup>7</sup>

Robert Roloff was making a name for himself, as did Wright, but it was specific to Oklahoma City as an architect with geometric designs; with buildings constructed prior to the Citizens Bank Tower, it was circular in form from the domed Citizens State Bank and the State Capitol Bank, flying saucer in design, both in Oklahoma City. Roloff designed many banks; upwards of 30 by the end of his career. According to Roloff, "buildings were problems you had to solve;" his largest problem with the Citizens Bank Tower was overcoming a Board of Directors that could not decide what they wanted.<sup>8</sup> An additional problem to overcome was a much smaller budget than what was provided to the Price Tower.

The Citizens Bank Tower was a clear move away from his circular designs. It has a hexagonal design on the exterior and non-geometric pattern on the interior. Roloff opened up the walls and provided vistas between rooms and between indoor spaces and the outdoors by the horizontal windows that flooded each room with natural light. The views of the Oklahoma City skyline was created with gold-tinted louvers, tinted glass and window frames. These design features broke up the framed panoramas but also reminded the tenant of being "inside" a building. All of these design elements are an emulation of Wright's design at Price Tower. While the Price Tower received criticism for small elevators and cramped hallways, Roloff created a larger more useful floor plan with spacious elevators and a broad Y-shaped lobby on each floor.<sup>9</sup>

The floors for the Citizens Bank Tower were built at a rate of one floor every week. The concrete was placed for the core and post-tensioned floors at the same time. The post-tension floors are 2 ½ feet thick where they join the core and taper to 6 inches 30 feet from the core. The reinforced concrete in the core is designed to support all vertical and horizontal forces.

According to Roloff, during construction of the structure, he received many telephone calls worried about the building collapsing due to the construction technique. One specifically from a local structural engineer who thought it looked like a record player with the records about to collapse on the turntable. He was questioning if Roloff really knew what he was doing. Not only did Roloff know about the technique, he smartly had employed the same structural engineer Wright used on the Price Tower. Roloff stated that the Citizen Bank Tower was not nearly as controversial in the community as the Citizens State Bank and that due to his unusual architectural designs he became known as an architect that would design anything.<sup>10</sup>

The first application of post-tensioning is believed to have been conceived by Eugene Freyssinet in 1933 for the foundation of a marine terminal in France. The technology was introduced to the United States in 1950 and used in bridge construction.<sup>11</sup> It's most common use in the United States was, and still is, in bridge construction, elevated slabs (parking structures and residential or commercial buildings), residential foundations, walls, and columns.

<sup>7</sup> Wright, "Toward All." PTAC Archives.

<sup>8</sup> Roloff interview with Lynda Schwan, December 29, 2009

<sup>9</sup> Roloff interview with McQuillan, May 11, 2007

<sup>10</sup> Roloff interview with Schwan, December 29, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> David Billington. The Tower and the Bridge: the new art of structural engineering. Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1983. Pg 203.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property Citizens Bank Tower

County and State Oklahoma, Oklahoma

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Section number 8 Page 6

The systems used to post-tension concrete consist of pre-stressing steel that is housed inside a duct or sheath, and allow the pre-stressing steel to be placed inside the typical job site formwork at the same time the rebar and other reinforcing is placed. Concrete is placed in a typical manner and allowed to reach a predetermined strength before the steel is tensioned. Since the pre-stressing steel is housed in the sheathing or duct, it will be free to move inside the concrete during the tensioning operation. As the steel is tensioned after concrete placement, the tensioning is done against the hardened concrete instead of relying on large steel bulkheads. Using the post-tensioning method of pre-stressing enables a builder to get all the advantages of pre-stressed concrete while still enabling the freedom to construct the member, in the case of the Citizens Bank Tower, the floor system, on the job site in almost any shape or configuration imaginable.<sup>12</sup>

Post-tensioning slabs results in thinner concrete sections and/or longer spans between supports. Designers commonly take advantage of this to produce buildings and structures with clear open spaces allowing more architectural freedom. Reducing the thickness of each structural floor in a building reduces the total weight of the structure and decreases the ceiling to floor height of each level. In below grade structures this can mean less excavation, and in above grade structures it can mean a reduced overall building height.<sup>13</sup> In the Citizens Bank Tower, it certainly allowed for the construction of two sub-basement levels. The installation of the post-tensioned floors in the Citizens Bank Tower was the first recorded use of this construction type in Oklahoma City.<sup>14</sup>

Roloff was not certain of the strength of the upper floors of the Tower; he knew it was safe and stable but uncertain of its reaction to extreme weight. When it was completed, and Sylvan Goldman, the inventor of the shopping cart, leased the penthouse, he was advised to keep his filing cabinets off of the far edges of the cantilever. Upon his passing in 1984, they found that not only had he placed file cabinets at the edge but he had put all of them, upwards of fifty, at the edge. Roloff was please to learn that the system was even stronger than he suspected.<sup>15</sup>

The site plan for the Citizen Bank Tower complex was very specific. According to Roloff, "we didn't want tobacco stands and all right in the tower, so we designed a separate flanking wing for that."<sup>16</sup> The complex was a pleasing monument to creating an engaging urban design; a low-scale shop wing set up in contrast to a spectacular tower. "The tower has its expression, the shops their function without destroying either," stated Roloff.<sup>17</sup> The Tower creates a visual impact on the Oklahoma City skyline giving one a sense of location and identification. Details that make the building distinctive include the gold-anodized sunscreens/louvers, hexagonal shape and its "crown."

The influence of the Citizens Bank Tower on Oklahoma City skyscraper design was significant. Most other buildings erected during this time were more conventional in form, location and use of materials. Most were located in downtown area and along suburban freeways; not in established residential and commercial neighborhoods like the Citizens Bank Tower. Many of the buildings were box-designed International style buildings while the Citizens Bank Tower was Wrightian in design and remains the only example of a Wrightian style skyscraper in Oklahoma City. The influence of the Tower complex is further seen by the occupants: insurance regional headquarters, physicians, architectural firms, oil company headquarters, attorneys and film studio district headquarters; many of which leased an entire floor. Prior to the

<sup>12</sup> <http://ptconcrete.com/ptconcrete/whatisintro.htm>, 8/31/2009

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Oklahoman, August 15, 1965, page 27.

<sup>15</sup> Roloff interview with Schwan, December 29, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Oklahoman, September 6, 1965, page 34

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property Citizens Bank Tower

County and State Oklahoma, Oklahoma

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Section number 8

Page 7

construction of the Citizens State Bank and Tower, the neighborhood was residential with a large public school on the same block. In an effort to take advantage of the residential aspect, Citizen State Bank purchased the property, demolished the school and constructed Citizens State Bank with drive through banking.<sup>18</sup> The Board of Directors felt that their clients also needed office space and started the process of constructing the Citizens Bank Tower.

At a time when most commercial enterprises were constructing their corporate offices, motels, restaurant, etc at the edges of the developing City where land was more plentiful for the expansive construction and parking facilities, the Citizens Bank Tower opted for a location that was shifting from residential to mixed-use where their clients lived and worked. The lot acquisition and the low rise landscape of the neighborhood allowed for a vertical expression that could make a dramatic impact.

From 1983-83 Roloff designed the Contemporary style, 22-story building in downtown Oklahoma City on Robinson Avenue. During the partnership of Bozalis Dickinson Roloff, from 1963 to 1971, Roloff designed the State Capitol Bank (flying saucer bank) and the Citizens Bank Tower. In the partnership of Bailey Bozalis Dickinson Roloff, from 1958-1962, Roloff designed three government office buildings which ranged from two to six stories in the Neo-expressionism and Post-modern styles and the Citizens State Bank (gold dome). In his partnership with Bailey and Bozalis, from 1948-1957, he designed one medical facility in Oklahoma City which is a three-story Modern building. Roloff was just one of multiple architects associated with these firms who was prolific during his practice and specifically focused on Modern architectural styles. The Citizen Bank Tower remains his most identifiable and minimally altered building from this period. Roloff believed "that you can build anything but you must let the structure be part of the advertising" which he achieved with the design of the Citizens Bank Tower.<sup>19</sup>

In conclusion, the Citizens Bank Tower merits recognition as an excellent local example of a Wrightian style office building in Oklahoma City. While the resource is less than fifty years old, it is an exceptional example of this style as the only example of Wrightian architecture as applied to commercial/skyscraper buildings in Oklahoma City. Within the context of local architecture, the Citizens Bank Tower was at the forefront of modern design and is therefore eligible under Criterion C as it retains sufficient integrity to merit recognition of its architectural significance. The Citizens Bank Tower is a distinctive building since its construction in 1965-66. Robert Roloff exhibited the relationship between the corporate identity and skyscrapers within his own expression of Modern architectural style.

<sup>18</sup> Oklahoman, September 5, 1956, page 1.

<sup>19</sup> Roloff interview with Schwan, December 29, 2009.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Citizens Bank Tower

County and State Oklahoma, Oklahoma

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Section number 9 Page 8

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Billington, David. *The Tower and the Bridge: the new art of structural engineering*. Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1983.

*The Daily Oklahoman*. September 5, 1956, p. 1; November 7, 1962, p. 39; August 2, 1963, pp. 1, 3; August 9, 1964, p. 74; September 25, 1964, p. 32; August 15, 1965, p. 27; October 3, 1965, p. 141.

Henderson, Arn, FAIA. "Resources Designed by Bruce Goff in Oklahoma National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form", n. d.

Oklahoma Main Street. 9/02/1982; 03/20/1984.

The Oklahoma Publishing Company. Connect Oklahoma, September 2, 1982.

Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office. "Reconnaissance-Level Survey of Modern Architecture in Oklahoma City," 2009.

Roloff, Robert. Telephone interview by Steven McQuillian, May 19, 2007.

Roloff, Robert. Telephone interview by Lynda Schwan, December 29, 2009.

Savage, Cynthia. "Citizens State Bank National Register of Historic Places Registration Form", December 2002.

Workers of the Writers Program of the Works Project Administration. *Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941.

Website:

<<http://www.cmgww.com/historic/flw/bio.html>> n.d. (August 24, 2009).

<<http://ptconcrete.com/ptconcrete/whatisintro.htm>> n.d. (August 31, 2009).

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Name of Property Citizens Bank Tower

County and State Oklahoma, Oklahoma

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Section number 9 Page 5

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Billington, David. *The Tower and the Bridge: the new art of structural engineering*. Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1983.

*The Daily Oklahoman*. November 7, 1962, p. 39; August 2, 1963, pp. 1, 3; August 9, 1964, p. 74; September 25, 1964, p. 32; August 15, 1965, p. 27; October 3, 1965, p. 141.

Henderson, Arn, FAIA. "Resources Designed by Bruce Goff in Oklahoma National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form", n. d.

Oklahoma Main Street. 9/02/1982; 03/20/1984.

The Oklahoma Publishing Company. Connect Oklahoma, September 2, 1982.

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Savage, Cynthia. "Citizens State Bank National Register of Historic Places Registration Form", December 2002.

Workers of the Writers Program of the Works Project Administration. *Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941.

**Website:**

<<http://www.cmgww.com/historic/flw/bio.html>> n.d. (August 24, 2009).

<<http://ptconcrete.com/ptconcrete/whatisintro.htm>> n.d. (August 31, 2009).

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

(See Continuation Sheet)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 2 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>14</u>	<u>433340</u>	<u>3828740</u>	3	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	4	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

A part of the northeast quarter of Section 29, Township 12 North, Range 3 West of the Indian Meridian, also being a part of University Addition to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, more particularly described as follows: All of Block 22, University Addition to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, recorded in Book 3 of Plats, Page 23A. Said tract on area of 89,999 square feet or 2.0661 acres, more or less.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries include all the land that has historically been associated with the Citizens Bank Tower.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Steven McQuillin/Edited by Lynda B. Schwan OKSHPO National Register Program Coordinator  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date May 2009  
street & number 31156 Detroit Rd telephone 440-899-1200  
city or town Westlake state Ohio zip code 44145  
e-mail SteveMcQuillin@aol.com

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Citizen Bank Tower  
**City or Vicinity:** Oklahoma City  
**County:** Oklahoma **State:** Oklahoma  
**Photographer:** Sara Werneke for Gardner Tanenbaum  
**Date Photographed:** June 2009

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

No.	Subject	Dir.
0001	Citizens Bank Tower	N
0002	Citizens Bank Tower	SE
0003	Citizens Bank Tower	SE
0004	Tower and Parking Garage	SW
0005	Citizens Bank Tower	SW
0006	Tower and Parking Garage	W
0007	Tower and Parking Garage	NW
0008	Tower and Retail	N
0009	Tower Entrance	N
0010	Tower Base, Garage Entrance and Retail	N
0011	Exterior Detail	
0012	Interior Meeting Room Detail	

Citizens Bank Tower  
Name of Property

Oklahoma, Oklahoma  
County and State

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**Property Owner:**

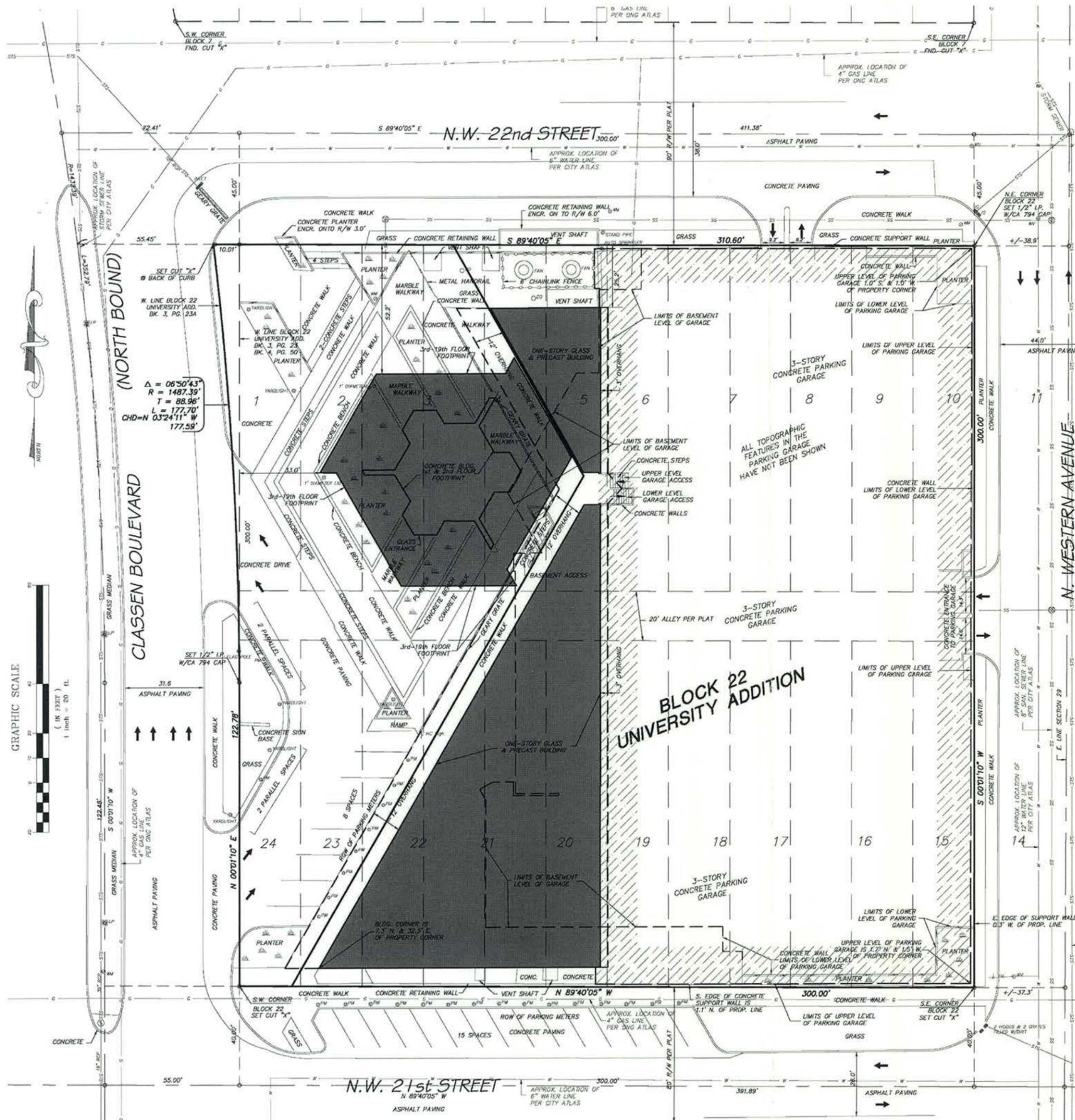
---

name Gardner Tanenbaum Group  
street & number 4228 N Santa Fe telephone 405-524-8484  
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73118

**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 18 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.

Citizens Bank Tower  
 2200 North Classen Boulevard  
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County,  
 Oklahoma

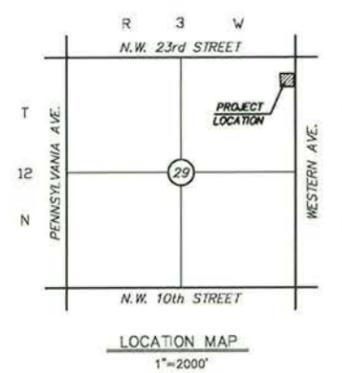


**LEGEND**

— BARB WIRE FENCE	— GUARD POST	— TRAFFIC SIGNAL LIGHT
— BUSH	— GUY WIRE	— TRAFFIC CONTROL BOX
— CHAIN LINK FENCE	— LIGHT POLE	— TRM. SEW. MAN.
— CLEAN GUT	— MAIL BOX	— STORAGE FEE
— DOWN SPOUT	— PIPELINE MARK	— TELEVISION POLE
— CONC. PEDESTAL	— PIPELINE VENT	— TELE. MANHOLE
— CONC. OVERHEAD	— POWER MANHOLE	— TEL. U.S. MARK.
— CONC. HYDRANT	— POWER POLE	— TREE
— FLAG POLE	— POUL BOX	— WATER VALVE
— GAS METER	— ROAD SIGN	— WATER METER
— GAS VALVE	— SAN. SEW. MAN.	— UTILITY POLE
— GATE	— IRON GRATE	— YARD LIGHT

**UNDERGROUND UTILITY LINES**

— F/D — POWER DUCT	— S/S — SANITARY SEWER
— TUG — TELEPHONE LINE	— W — WATER LINE
— U/E — PLUMBING LINE	





NOW LEASING  
OFFICE APARTMENTS  
621-1323

1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara Werneke / Gardner Tanenbaum
6. Camera is pointing north
7. 0001 of 12



NOW LEASING

CHASE

H  
HOTEL

1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara Werneke / Gardner Tanenbaum
6. Camera is pointing Southeast
7. 0002 of 12



**NOW  
LEASING**

**LUXURY  
APARTMENTS  
401-333-5535**

1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara Werneke / Gardner Tanenbaum
6. Camera is pointing Southeast
7. 0003 of 12

Oklahoma - Oklahoma County - Citizen's Bank Tower - 0003



1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara Werneke / Gardner Tanenbaum
6. Camera is Pointing Southwest
7. 0004 of 12

Oklahoma - Oklahoma County - Citizen's Bank Tower - 0004



1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara werneke / Gardner -Tanenbaum
6. Camera is pointing Southwest
7. 0005 of 12

Oklahoma - Oklahoma County - Citizen's Bank Tower - 0005



1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara Werneke / Gardner Tanenbaum
6. Camera is pointing West
7. 0006 of 12



1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara Werneke / Gardner Tanenbaum
6. Camera is pointing Northwest
7. 0007 of 12



1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara Werneke / Gardner Tanenbaum
6. Camera is pointing North
7. 0008 of 12



1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara Werneke / Gardner Tanenbaum
6. Camera is Pointing North (Main Entrance to tower)
7. 0009 of 12



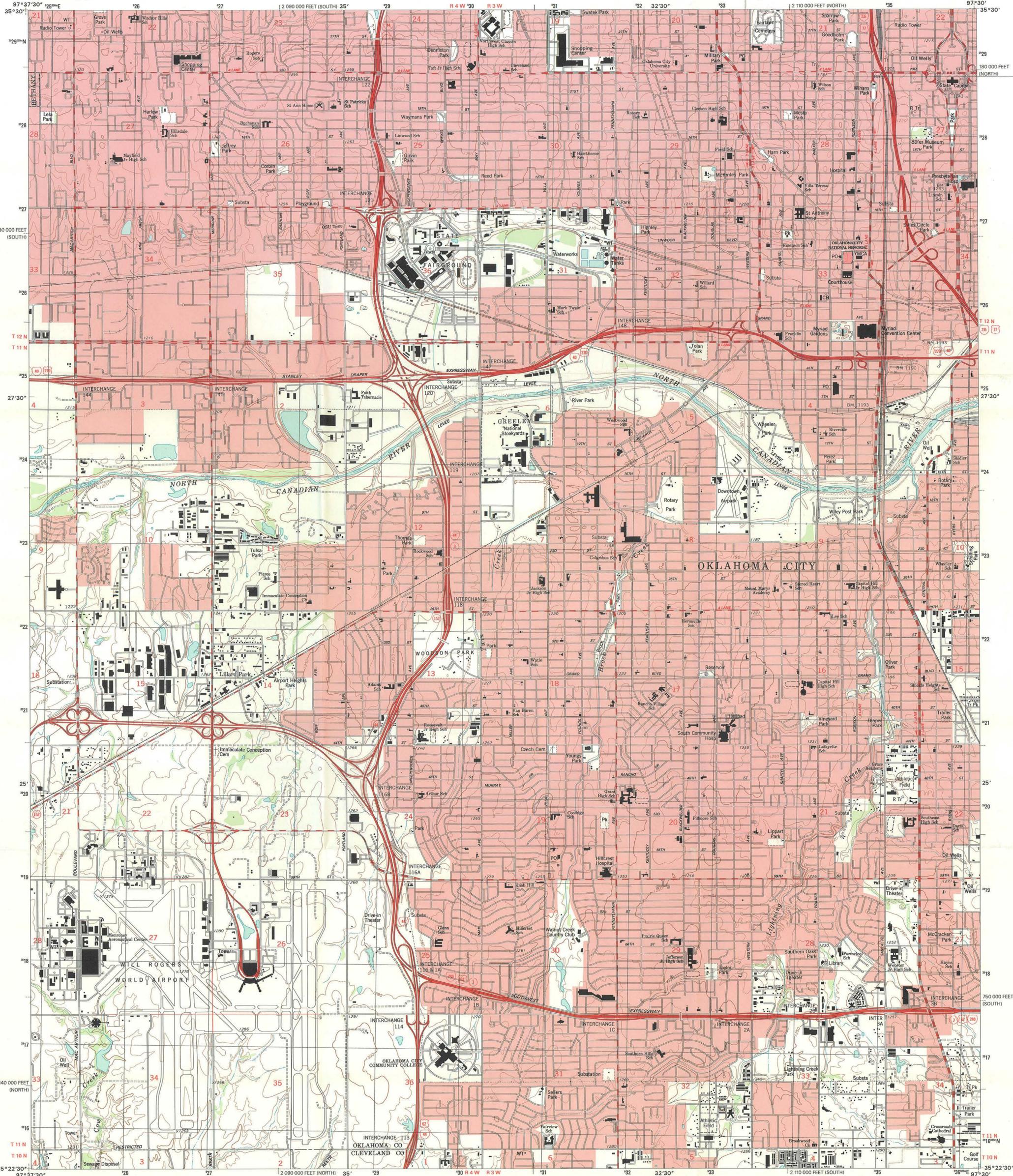
1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara Werneke / Gardner Tanenbaum
6. Camera is pointing North (tower base, garage access and shops to right)
7. 0010 of 12



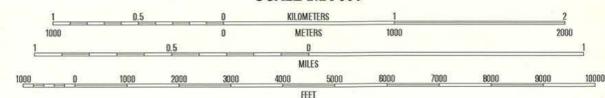
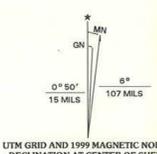
1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara Werneke / Gardner Tanenbaum
6. Camera is pointing east (top exterior deck)
7. 0011 of 12



1. Citizen's Bank Tower
2. Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
3. Sara Werneke
4. June 2009
5. Sara Werneke / Gardner Tanenbaum
6. Camera is pointing North
7. 0012 of 12



Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Topography compiled 1954. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1995 and other sources. Public Land Survey System and survey control current as of 1985.  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 14 1 000-foot ticks: Oklahoma Coordinate System of 1983 (north and south zones).  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software.  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.  
Landmark buildings verified 1985.



SCALE 1:24 000  
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

1	2	3	1 Bethany
			2 Britton
			3 Spencer
4	5	4 Mustang	
			5 Midwest City
			6 Oklahoma City SW
6	7	8	7 Oklahoma City SE
			8 Moore

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225  
AND OKLAHOMA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73069  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK  
1995  
NIMA 6454 I NE-SERIES V883



National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Citizens Bank Tower

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OKLAHOMA, Oklahoma

DATE RECEIVED: 1/22/10      DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY:      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/08/10  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 09000978

DETAILED EVALUATION:

\_\_\_ACCEPT    \_\_\_RETURN    \_\_\_REJECT    \_\_\_\_\_DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**The Citizens Bank Tower building meets National Register Criterion C at the local level in the area of Architecture. The 1965 building, by local architect Robert Roloff, represents an exceptional work of modernist design within the limited context of mid-twentieth century, Oklahoma City. The building is a well-maintained example of modernist period (Wrightian) design with few comparable, contemporary examples in terms of scale, quality of design, or boldness of architectural form. Among the community's earliest suburban, high-rise designs, the modernist building was a highly visible reflection of modern design activity and rejuvenated private development efforts in Oklahoma City during the 1960s. The commission combines outstanding design aesthetics along with the use of modern materials and technologies to create a rather innovative and eclectic commercial property.**

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Criterion C

REVIEWER PAUL R. LUSIGNAS

DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 3/8/2010

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



# Oklahoma Historical Society

Founded May 27, 1893

## State Historic Preservation Office

Oklahoma History Center • 2401 North Laird Ave. • Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7914  
(405) 521-6249 • Fax (405) 522-0816 • [www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm](http://www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm)



October 21, 2009

Ms. Jan Matthews  
Keeper of the Register  
National Park Service 2280, 8th floor  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Matthews:

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

Ingle Brothers Broomcorn Warehouse, Shattuck, Ellis County  
Irving Baptist Church, Ryan, Jefferson County  
Downtown Mangum Historic District, Mangum, Greer County  
Attucks School, Vinita, Craig County  
The Bassett House, Cushing, Payne County  
Citizens State Bank, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County

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

Sincerely,

Melvena Heisch  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer

MKH:lbs

Enclosures

## Eligibility Comment Sheet

**Property Name:** **United Founders Life Tower**  
**Oklahoma City**  
**Oklahoma County, Oklahoma**

The United Founders Life Tower building meets National Register Criterion C at the local level in the area of Architecture. The building represents an exceptional work of modernist design within the limited context of mid-twentieth century, Oklahoma City urban construction and development. The building is a well-maintained example of modernist period (Expressionist/Populuxe) design with few comparable, contemporary examples in terms of scale, quality of design, or boldness of architectural form. Among the community's earliest suburban, high-rise designs, the modernist building was a highly visible reflection of modern design activity and rejuvenated private development efforts in Oklahoma City during the 1960s. The commission was recognized at the time of construction for its outstanding design aesthetics along with the use of modern materials and technologies to create a rather innovative and eclectic commercial property. The design and development approach selected also appeared to usher in a new acceptable vocabulary for suburban commercial development, leading to an expansion of Oklahoma City's commercial downtown to outlying areas of the growing city.

The current documentation for the United Founders Life Tower Building justifies significance under NR Criterion C (Architecture) and Criteria Consideration G for a property less than 50 years old. The 1963, Lee Richardson design represents a distinctive example of mid- to late-twentieth century expressionistic modern architecture utilizing "space-age" visual forms and a distinctive building plan. The United Founders design was a rather unique reaction to mainstream modernist architecture of the period, molded in large part by the desires of the clients and architects to create a highly-visible, signature building for their suburban development site, and the creative freedom that seems to have pervaded Oklahoma City architecture thanks in large part to the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, Bruce Goff, and others, that helped establish the local region a unique laboratory for unconventional twentieth-century designs (Price Towers, Citizens Bank Tower).

Freed of the orthogonal grid of a downtown location and seeing the opportunity of the open, low-rise landscape of the Oklahoma City suburbs, the sponsors and designers of the United Founders Tower took advantage of that local freedom of design to create an expressive modernist design that exalted in three-dimensional sculptural qualities and moved outside the more mainstream rectangular boxes of the period. The building's "technological innovations" as outlined in the narrative, add an interesting component of the construction story, although they do not appear by themselves to present sufficient grounds for justifying exceptional significance. Rather the use of folded plate technology and the incorporation of a revolving roof-top restaurant present further evidence of the open, experimental and somewhat unconventional nature of the architect's approach to the overall building design and commission. The fact that the building had the only revolving platform restaurant in the state and cantilevered office balconies are not in themselves grounds for warranting exceptional significance under Criterion C, but these features clearly point to the remarkable creativity of design and marketing that were inherent in the creation of this particular building. The inclusion of a revolving restaurant atop the building placed the building in limited company with other similar buildings of the period and represented a unique example of the creative marketing and commercial development history of the site.

### Integrity

The building has undergone several fairly serious alterations, which detract from the historic integrity of

the original design. While none of the changes (windows, interiors, color) individually negate the potential eligibility of the dramatic design, cumulatively they present serious cause for concern, particularly in light of the need to justify exceptional significance for this less than fifty-year-old building. In the final analysis the macro-design elements of the original building continue to dominate the visual appearance of the unique structure and allow us the ability to read through the later changes. Seen from a distance, as perhaps intended by the architects and building marketers, the building remains a structural tour-de-force, with several dominant features designed to catch the eye of the passing viewer—soaring verticals at the lower levels enhanced by an alternating pattern of slender, solid projections (balconies) and dark voids (window walls), supporting an extremely top-heavy upper balcony level, and all capped by an (angular) crown or spaceship. The sculptural qualities of this three-dimensional building are still largely intact conveying the original design elements as envisioned by the architects/builders.

The research undertaken to identify previous scholarly recognition for the property is laudable and quite extensive—even if the results were limited. While the lack of extant scholarly appreciation often makes the evaluation process more difficult, the documentation provided by the proponents provides at least a minimal framework for understanding the place of the United Founders Life Tower design within the scope of contemporary Oklahoma City construction activity. The documentation outlines: the relative dearth of major high-rise construction commissions during the period, the most visible and noteworthy of these local efforts, and the prominent design trends associated with that activity and those that followed the construction of the Founders Tower. The documentation provides sufficient minimal context to identify the Founders Tower design as a unique reflection of mid-century construction activity and architectural design in the Oklahoma City community. While the documentation does not mark the Founders Tower as a particularly exceptional masterpiece of modern design, it nevertheless provides a sufficient overview of the nature, role and impact of the property within the context of local historical and architectural development in the 1960s to assess the significant contributions of the design to mid-century Oklahoma City architecture.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Citizens BANK TOWER

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OKLAHOMA, Oklahoma

DATE RECEIVED: 10/23/09      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/10/09  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/25/09      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/07/09  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 09000978

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS:   
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

     ACCEPT         RETURN         REJECT                         DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**RETURN**

**SEE ATTACHED COMMENTS**

RECOM./CRITERIA RETURN

REVIEWER Paul R. Lusignan

DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN

TELEPHONE                     

DATE 12/7/09

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

# CITIZENS BANK TOWER

## Oklahoma County, OK

### National Register of Historic Places - Return Comments:

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The current nomination is being returned for technical and substantive revisions.

#### Description

The narrative could use a much stronger assessment of integrity for the interior spaces, given the renovation of the spaces from open-plan offices to residential units, particularly with the unique structural nature of the building and its open cantilever floor plates.

A building/site plan would be useful to help piece together the various buildings on the site and their angular orientation to one another.

#### Significance

The nomination really needs to set the local context for Modernism in Oklahoma City and provide a comparative analysis of the various examples built during the period, rather than relying solely on uniqueness. Why is unique significant? The nomination also seems to rely on the reader's prior understanding of the history, development, and significance of the Price Towers property; assuming a knowledge of the publicity, prestige, and acclaim (?) that accompanied Wright's design and why one would want to emulate the Towers in Oklahoma City. It would seem that more development of that context and that of Wrightian/organic architecture in Oklahoma in general might be useful for placing the Citizens Bank Tower in perspective.

The current nomination makes a number of interesting points (post-tensioning concrete construction, prominent local architectural firm, suburban development patterns, etc.) but fails to capitalize on any of these to help establish and justify *exceptional* significance. For example it is noted that the architects were prolific local designers, but we do not really get a sense of how this particular design might represent an *exceptional* example of their work. Likewise, we are told of the placement of the property outside the main urban downtown core, but little if any significance is given to that aspect of the property. In my mind the very nature of the commercial complex with its spread out, multi-building design and unique three dimensional appearance reflects one of the most important elements of the architectural design. As seen in the nearby United Founders Life Tower, such suburban locations free architects to prepare plans outside the normal confines of tight urban sites, creating truly three-dimensional corporate signatures on the landscape. Such buildings often need, or seek, to be "unique" or exceptional in order to capture the attention of the local automobile/suburban society.

In most cases, a justification for exceptional significance is bolstered by evidence of scholarly appreciation for architectural designs, or at least a sense of the contemporary reception of these buildings within the local community. If, as the nomination says, the building was *influential*, the nomination needs to address in what way this was the case. How was it received by the local community? By tenants? Within the patterns of local architectural or commercial development?

It is fairly easy to justify *exceptional* significance under Criteria Consideration G for a property just slightly over the fifty year mark when the body of the comparative context rests in the historic, greater-than-50-year period, but it is quite another thing to establish exceptional significance when the identified context runs

from c. 1950—1970, as in this property. (Please see the NR Comments for the United Founders Life Tower attached.)

If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me directly at the number or e-mail listed below.



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Paul R. Lusignan, Historian  
(for) Keeper of the National Register  
(202) 354-2229  
[Paul\\_lusignan@nps.gov](mailto:Paul_lusignan@nps.gov)

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# Oklahoma Historical Society

Founded May 27, 1893

## State Historic Preservation Office

Oklahoma History Center • 2401 North Laird Ave. • Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7914  
(405) 521-6249 • Fax (405) 522-0816 • [www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm](http://www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm)

January 20, 2010

Attn: Paul Lusignan  
National Park Service 2280, 8th floor  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington D.C. 20005

09000978



Dear Mr. Lusignan:

Enclosed are the continuation pages and the site map you requested for the Citizen's Bank Tower, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma National Register nomination. Please let me know if there is anything further you need.

Sincerely,

Lynda B. Schwan  
National Register Program Coordinator

Enclosure