

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Oklahoma	
COUNTY	
Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	SEP 19 1974

(Number all entries)

No. 8. Significance

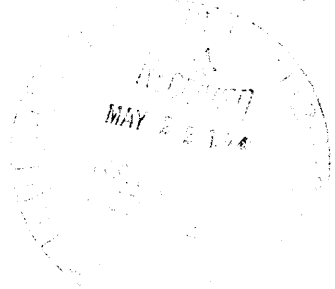
Price Tower

Wright spoke of his Tower this way at its dedication in February 1956: "This is an assertion of the American sense of itself. This upraised hand on the prairie is a symbol of American independence. Now the skyscraper comes into its own on the rolling plains of Oklahoma." Little more than a decade later several American cities were in flames, adding an ironic footnote to a comment Wright made to a newsman immediately after the dedication.

"Big cities are out of date," he said, "out of character with modern life. They have become overcrowded architectural pigpiles. Now, buildings like the Price Tower point the way to decentralization of our civilization. This building will say to the people: 'Stay at home and be as beautiful and productive as you know how to be in the American way.' This nation had to come to Bartlesville to find an American who had the courage, initiative, character and enterprise to build this Tower and make a reality of an American dream."

Price came to Bartlesville in 1915, fresh out of college, went to work as a chemist in a zinc smelter. Out of a job in 1920, when a slump hit the zinc industry, he opened an electric welding shop. It was an era of expansion for the petroleum industry. Phillips and Cities Service, both headquartered in Bartlesville, were struggling infants then. The H. C. Price Company grew with them. And Wright's strikingly designed tower -- an "upraised hand on the prairie" -- is thus a monument of sorts to both men. On the day of the dedication Price himself put it this way: "We all appreciated the benefits we had received from living in our community, a community that had been very helpful to a young man with no material assets. Therefore, we desired to build a structure which would be a credit to our city for years to come."

The building is something less than twenty years old now. But it has already fulfilled the predictions of both Wright and Price. The Tower -- the "upended street" of concrete and copper and glass ... the "tree that escaped the crowded forest" -- is both a bold "assertion of the American sense of itself," as Wright declared, and "a credit" to the community that gave him his start, as Price wanted it to be.



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Oklahoma	
COUNTY: Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
SEP 13 1974	

1. NAME

COMMON:
Price Tower

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Sixth Street and Dewey Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Bartlesville

STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40** COUNTY: **Washington** CODE: **147**

No. 2, Honorable Clem McSpadden

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
H. C. Price Co.

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Bartlesville** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Office of the County Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:
Washington County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: **Bartlesville** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Special Price Tower Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: **1973** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: **Oklahoma City** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: **Oklahoma**
COUNTY: **Washington**
ENTRY NUMBER: **SEP 13 1974**
DATE: **SEP 13 1974**
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

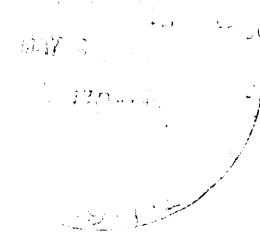
Construction on the Tower began in November 1953. It was completed and the building dedicated in February 1956. Tower height is 221 feet to the top of its spire. It is built on the cantilever design, with all floors and walls projected from four interior vertical shafts of reinforced concrete. None of the exterior walls are structural, but merely screens resting on the horizontally cantilevered floors. They measure approximately 45 feet across each side. Twenty-inch copper louvers, pre-oxidized for the blue-green patina, shade the gold tinted window glass.

The interior shafts divide Price Tower into four separate vertical quadrants. As noted in No. 8, this enables the building to offer tenants both living and working space. The entire structure is laid out on a 60° unit system that creates parallelogram units, or modules, to which all walls and partitions conform (see the attached sketch of a typical office floor plan). A two-story wing on the northeast side of the Tower houses the Bartlesville offices of the Public Service Company of Oklahoma.

The H. C. Price Company itself now occupies all the office space above the 11th floor. The 16th floor has a buffet and kitchen, surrounded by open terraces. These and the roofs over the covered carports form planting areas filled with greenery. The 17th floor has a small office in the center of the tower. The 18th floor includes a conference room for the Price Company. The 19th floor, with no full quadrant areas, contains Price's private office in the center. An outside roof garden adjoins this office.

Glass throughout the Tower is gold tinted. Stamped copper plates of special design decorate the facia on the buildings exterior. They have been used in a limited way for interior decor. Frank Lloyd Wright designed the interiors and furniture only in that part of the Tower occupied by the Price Company.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1956 to the present

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Frank Lloyd Wright's Price Tower is a strikingly handsome monument to one of the world's great architects ... a somewhat breath-taking adaptation of an essentially urban concept -- the skyscraper -- to a basically rural setting. Frank Lloyd Wright considered his 191-foot-high creation "the tree that escaped the crowded forest." With it, he felt, the skyscraper had at last come into its own. Here "to the rolling plains of Oklahoma," he said in 1956, the skyscraper had come "as a fresh realization of the advantages of modern architecture yet unknown to the great city."

Wright was never one to doubt the reality of his genius. Even the skeptic, however, is likely to accept the master's basic concept ... and admit that he carried it out boldly. "As a tree crowded in the forest has no chance to become a complete entity," he wrote, "standing free it may establish identity and preserve it. Witness this release of the skyscraper from the slavery of commercial bondage to the human freedom prophesied by our Declaration of Independence." The rhetoric may be a bit heavy -- especially in contrast to the amazing lightness of line of the tower itself -- but no one who has experienced the massive oppressiveness of urban-core "canyons" in New York City and Chicago can deny that the Price Tower in its clean, small-town setting does indeed have strong, eye-appealing, altogether appropriate "integrity."

Architecturally the tower is striking, if not necessarily innovative. The cantilever design with its central core for elevators and other services is hardly new. More unusual is the 60° unit system which breaks up all floor space in the building into 60° parallelograms instead of the more conventional rectangles. It is in the area of space utilization that the tower is perhaps the most innovative.

Partly at the insistence of Harold C. Price, the pipeline company executive who hired Wright to design his headquarters building, the Tower combined living space with office space. All floors from three to 15 are basically identical in design. Three of the quadrants were designed for office space. The fourth, to the southwest and possessing a separate entrance, was designed to accommodate eight two-story apartment units. Currently the H. C. Price Company itself occupies all the office space above the 11th floor.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hosokawa, Bill, "Price's Tower of Independence," The Denver Post,
 March 1956
 Wright, Frank Lloyd, "Personal Commentary," Taliesin West, undated

 Yount, W. E., Bartlesville, Oklahoma, A Personal Interview Jan. 11, 1974

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

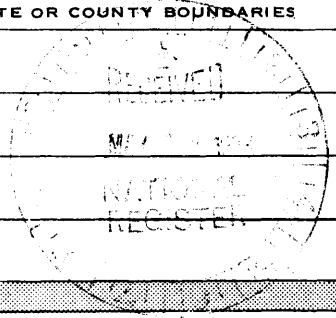
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES							
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE					
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds			
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	36°	44'	51"	95°	58'	34"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

NO
UTM
LF

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **c. 3 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION: **Oklahoma Historical Society** DATE: **April 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Historical Society

CITY OR TOWN: **Oklahoma City** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name *Sam as Shu*

Title *SLO for Okla*

Date **MAY 14 1974**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

R. P. Muntz
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date *9/13/74*

ATTEST:

Wm J. Muntz
 Keeper of The National Register

Date *9.13.74*