

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name Kingfisher Armory

other names/site number Kingfisher National Guard Armory

2. Location

street & number 301 N. 6th St. not for publication N/A
city or town Kingfisher vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Kingfisher code 073
zip code 73750

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 _____ nationally _____ statewide x locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Blake Wade _____ February 22, 1994
Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register _____ See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register _____ See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- removed from the National Register _____
- other (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall 4/7/94

~~Entered in the National Register~~ _____

Signature of 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

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

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

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DEFENSE Sub: arms storage

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DEFENSE Sub: arms storage

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Works Progress Administration

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ECONOMIC
MILITARY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1936

Significant Dates 1936

=====

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Nolen, Bryan W., Supervising Architect
Works Progress Administration, Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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: N/A

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10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property Less than one (1) acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>596560</u>	<u>3969110</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

N/A See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Dianna Everett, Research Associate
organization State Historic Preservation Office date December 17, 1992
street & number 621 N. Robinson, Suite 375 telephone (405) 521-6249
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73102

=====
Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name State of Oklahoma/Oklahoma Military Department
street & number 3501 Military Circle Northeast telephone 405-425-8000
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73111

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

NATIONAL
REGISTER

Section 7 Page 9

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

SUMMARY:

The Kingfisher Armory (Kingfisher National Guard Armory) is a self-contained, horizontal, two-story building constructed of red brick with cast concrete detailing. The building measures 138 feet (east to west) by 125 feet (north to south). A local project of the Works Progress Administration in Oklahoma, it was constructed in 1936. The armory property is located at 301 N. 6th Street. The surrounding area is commercial. The armory's main entrance faces west. The floor plan typical of WPA-built armories, in that the building comprises two distinct sections: An east section, with barrel roof, contains the drill area, while a flat-roofed west section comprises offices, supply and arms rooms, and a garage area. The building exhibits decorative brickwork and cast concrete detailing, all exemplifying the best of WPA architecture and construction philosophy in Oklahoma. Though the massing is strongly horizontal, several architectural details give the building a vertical emphasis: the stepped entrance bay; stepped parapet on all four sides; corner and pilasters topped with stepped concrete caps; a panel of vertically laid brick over each second-floor window on the south wall in the drill hall section; and narrow, vertical steel-framed, multiple-light windows (all original) in all facades. Other decorative brickwork includes four-row header pattern segmental arches over each garage door on the west and south facades and in the recessed entry. The interior garage doors and most office doors are original. Alterations: In 1988-1991 five exterior overhead garage doors, originally wood, were replaced with steel doors, and five pedestrian doors were replaced with steel doors. Interior alterations are minimal: two second-floor offices have been divided with wood-framed walls. The Kingfisher Armory retains appropriate integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship to enable it exemplify WPA-type military architecture in Oklahoma.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION:

The Kingfisher Armory is a self-contained, horizontal, two-story building constructed of red brick with cast concrete detailing. The square plan measures 138 feet (east to west) by 125 feet (north to south). A local project of the Works Progress Administration in Oklahoma, it was constructed in 1936 of red brick manufactured in McAlester, Oklahoma, at the state penitentiary. The armory property is located at 301 North 6th Street in a commercial district. It is bordered by Sixth on the west, by Admire on

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 10

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

the south, by an alley on the east, and by a parking lot and commercial building on the north.

As with many WPA armories in Oklahoma, the building is designed to have two principal facades that each give pedestrian and/or vehicular access to a street. The Kingfisher Armory has two principal facades, one accessing Sixth Street (the west, or main entry) and one accessing Admire. These walls are characterized by outwardly projecting pilasters that enframe window/door bays. The west facade's main focus is an elaborate door surround consisting of markedly stepped and castellated parapet; tall, shallow pilasters that enframe second-story strip windows; and a first-floor entry consisting of a compound segmental arch. The south facade is divided by shallow pilasters into two parts, one being the administrative section, characterized by its fenestration--tall, vertical metal-framed windows--and the drill hall section, characterized by stepped castellated parapet and first-floor window/door arrangement. Cast concrete detailing is an important visual aspect of the two primary facades. The secondary facades, on the north and east, have almost no decoration, though the administrative section (west side) of the north facade is characterized by fenestration similar to that of the primary facades.

The roofline of the Kingfisher Armory indicates that the building comprises two distinct sections: An east section, with barrel roof, comprises the drill area, while a flat-roofed two-story west section comprises offices, supply and arms rooms, and garages. (Historically and presently), the drill hall roof is roll roofing, and the west section's roof is tar and gravel overlaid in spots with black foam sealer. The roofline of the Kingfisher Armory gives the building a fortress-like aspect. In both sections the generally horizontal roofline is distinguished by stepped parapets on all four sides. The southeast parapet over the drill hall section exhibits castellations. On the south and west (street sides) the parapets are complicated, with upward projections or steps at the corners and in the center of the roofline. The steps are particularly exaggerated in the eastern end of the south facade, where they serve to conceal the arc of the barrel roof. The east side roofline is marked by very high projections in the corners, and the north side roofline is a less complicated version of that of the south side.

Windows and doors are character-defining elements of the Kingfisher Armory. Each facade exhibits regular openings that indicate the dual nature of the building and the functions of interior spaces. All of the steel-framed windows are original. Glazing patterns include combinations of two or three

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 11

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

lights set in four, five, or six rows (2/4/2, 4/4/2, 4/2/4/2, 3/6/3, 3/6/3/3, and 6/3/6/3, with one or two sets of vertical center-pivot windows and a bottom row that opens in hopper fashion). The WEST facade (offices and garage) consists in three bays: On the ground floor, the central bay contains the compound-arched, recessed entrance, with new steel door; while on the second floor, recessed and under a brick segmental arch, there are three six-light vertical strip windows (these do not open but only provide light for the stairwell). A concrete slab functions as a ground-level porch. The northernmost bay, between a corner pilaster and the central bay, contains two vehicle doors, on the ground floor, and, in the second story, triplets of 2/4/2 windows flanking a single 2/4/2 window. The southernmost bay replicates this pattern. In each corner pilaster, in the second story, there is a 4/2/4/2 window. Openings in the SOUTH facade also indicate the building's various functions. Concrete-capped, shallow but very broad pilasters enframe two bays. The western bay exhibits matched triplets of windows, three identical sets in the second story (2/4/2, 3/6/3, 2/4/2) and two sets (4/4/2, 3/6/3/3, 4/4/2) in the first story. The eastern (drill hall) bay has windows on the first story only: A central (new, steel) overhead vehicle door is flanked by a sets of three windows (4/2/4/2, 6/3/6/3, 4/2/4/2). The central and eastern pilasters each contain a steel pedestrian door (new) topped by a 3/6/3 transom. The EAST facade (drill room) has a central pair of (permanently sealed) door openings, each topped with a 3/6/3 transom; the doors are flanked by two regularly spaced pairs of 6/3/6/3 windows. The NORTH facade is divided into two bays: the eastern bay (drill hall) has windows on the ground floor only: a small two-foot-square window in the center, and a single 3/6/3 window near each corner. The western bay (office section) has two triplets of 3/6/3 windows on each floor. In the corner pilaster, in the second story, is a 4/2/4/2 window. Several dozen window lights are missing, and a few others are painted over to block sunlight.

Though the massing is strongly horizontal, architectural details and trim influenced by Art Deco style give the building a vertical emphasis: the stepped parapet on all facades; two-story pilasters divided into three vertical parts, with stepped concrete caps and vertical concrete panels; vertically-laid strips of brickwork over each window on the ground floor of the south facade in the drill hall section; and narrow, vertical, steel-framed multiple-light hopper-opening windows in all facades. Original metal downspouts are in place on the north and east facades.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 12

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

One of the distinguishing architectural features of the Kingfisher Armory is its decorative brickwork. On the west and southeast facades (street sides), "layered" or multi-level pilasters enframe the bays. At the northwest and south corners of the west section, and at the southwest and southeast corners of the drill hall section, there are "compound" pilasters: That is, three vertical "shafts" of brick actually make up the corners of the building. Other decorative brickwork includes four-row rowlock-pattern segmental arches over each garage door on the west and south facades and over the recessed entry. In addition, on the south wall, over each ground-floor window and pedestrian door in the drill hall section, there is a wide panel of brick in which the bond runs vertically from the window header to the top of the parapet. In addition, in every pilaster there are long, narrow, rectangular-shaped "incisions" flanking the second-story window.

Cast-concrete details are another significant feature of the building: These consist of the compound segmental-arched portal (main entrance) on the west side, the coping of the parapet, all pilaster caps, all window sills, and the drip-mould just above ground level on the south and west facades. The corner pilasters and the central pilasters at the entrances are tripartite, each having a central window topped with a concrete panel and flanked by a stepped concrete cap that give the pilaster a strong vertical emphasis, even making it appear to have defensive "towers."

WPA markers identify the building. Over the front door is a small metal shield with the legend: "USA/1936/WPA." In the southwest corner of the west wall is a cornerstone bearing the inscription: "State Armory/Built by Works Progress Administration/1936/W. S. Key/State Administrator."

Alterations include the replacement of all exterior doors, both pedestrian and vehicle, with steel doors. All of the steel-framed multi-light hopper-style windows are original. Stove vents are visible in second-story windows on the north facade. A window-type air conditioner has been installed in an upstairs window in the north facade. The building retains its original metal downspouts on all facades. On the west wall near the southwest corner of the building is affixed a diamond-shaped red and gold metal sign, symbol of the 45th Infantry Division. A gasoline pump, a tall air vent pipe, and an air conditioner condenser sit to the south of the main entrance; a communications antenna is visible on the roof in the northwest corner, and a flagpole rises above the main entrance bay. Attached to the east wall and to the north wall is a chain-link fence separating armory property from a parking lot belonging

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 13

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

to a neighboring business. At streetside is a modern wooden sign identifying the property as a National Guard facility.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION/ALTERATIONS:

The Kingfisher Armory exhibits a rectangular plan that was standard for WPA armories. The building is divided into two functional sections, a drill hall area on the east, and a two-story administrative/garage section on the west. The first-floor garage extends the width of the building, north to south, as does the second-floor office section.

The 86' by 125' east, or drill hall section, was and is characterized by a very high vaulted ceiling. In the 1980s a drop ceiling was added, but the lower portion of the steel trusses are exposed. The stage and dressing rooms, in the west end, are intact; under the stage, a basement area rifle range is still accessible but has been condemned; doors to backstage dressing rooms and rifle range are original wood panel type. The interior wall between the drill room and the garage section is brick (load-bearing), and original wood-panel overhead garage doors and pedestrian doors are still in place. The interior walls exhibit multiple pilasters of brick. The entire drill room, from ceiling to floor, has been painted silver. The original 1936 wood-block floor in the drill room was removed in the 1960s, leaving the original 1936 concrete subfloor exposed.¹ Still visible is residue of the asphalt used in the process of installing the flooring. In the west section, ground floor, the original floor plan remains, with one large garage on either side of the central hallway/stairwell. Each garage has two small storerooms. All interior walls are brick.

On the second floor, the original floor plan remains. All interior walls are also brick. The Kingfisher Armory was designed to house two separate National Guard units. Thus the second-floor is divided into two sections by a central east-west hallway/stairwell. A long north-south hallway bisects each section. Each "half" still retains the original five-rooms-per-guard-unit plan: Each unit had a locker room and supply room (with arms vault) on the east side of the hallway, and a shower/latrine, an office, and a classroom on the west side. One locker room (in the northeast corner), plus part of the hallway (walled off), and the original shower room now serves as a kitchen/mess hall. A wood-framed wall has been added to the office in the southwest section to divide it into two rooms, and a drop ceiling conceals the original concrete ceiling. No original walls were removed in this process.² The original

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 14

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

concrete ceilings are visible in all rooms except the remodeled office.

The Kingfisher National Guard Armory is essentially intact and unaltered, retaining more than adequate integrity of location, setting, exterior design, materials, and workmanship to convey its significance as the embodiment of WPA-type military architecture in Oklahoma.

ENDNOTES

1. Sgt. David Mugg, HHB-189th Field Artillery, interview by Dianna Everett, Kingfisher, Oklahoma, December 16, 1992.
2. Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 15

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

SUMMARY:

The Kingfisher Armory (Kingfisher National Guard Armory) is significant within the economic context of Works Progress Administration projects in Kingfisher, Oklahoma, 1936, within the military context of national defense requirements of the Oklahoma National Guard's local unit in the era between the two world wars, and within the architectural context of WPA building style and methodology locally and in Oklahoma. The armory was constructed in 1936 by local men who were qualified for work relief under WPA guidelines. The project brought \$34,000 into the economy of Kingfisher, Oklahoma, by employing an average of 40 previously unemployed, unskilled workers for more than ten months. The armory also filled a longstanding military need for an adequate, secure drill hall and arms storage building for use by two Oklahoma National Guard units, Headquarters Battery and Combat Train, 2nd Battalion, 158th Field Artillery, and Battery F, 158th Field Artillery, of the 45th Infantry Division. These two units previously had no permanent armory. The Kingfisher Armory is significant architecturally as an excellent, intact example of WPA architecture. The materials, brick, with cast concrete ornamental Art Deco-style detailing, and the workmanship, evident in the masonry and detailing, reflect both the goals of the WPA Building Program in Oklahoma and the practical considerations of using unskilled labor to construct large public buildings. As it is essentially intact, the Kingfisher Armory is able to convey appropriate feeling and association within these three contexts.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Oklahoma suffered severely during the initial years of the Great Depression, 1929-1933, but in a predominantly rural state, where in 1930, 65.7 percent of the population lived in rural areas, and twenty-seven of the state's seventy-seven counties had no towns of more than 2,500 persons, drought and general agricultural failure from 1932 through 1938 exacerbated the general economic depression. Rural communities, towns, and cities, which functioned as agricultural service centers, consequently foundered.

Oklahoma's state and local governments were unable to provide much help for citizens, whether urban or rural. Limited relief offered by counties did not alleviate the suffering, nor did meager annual appropriations by the state legislature. No public funding was available to maintain the existing infrastructure, and private charity failed to create or to support relief initiatives. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration, established in May

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 16

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

of 1934 by the Roosevelt administration, provided some direct relief, in terms of food, clothing, and small stipends, but until the inception of the Works Progress Administration in 1935 only a few Oklahomans received adequate assistance. The urban unemployed and displaced farm families combined to create a situation in which 33 percent of all Oklahoma families were on the direct relief rolls by the time President Roosevelt created the WPA by executive order in May 1935. By July 1935 there were 127,416 jobless men certified in Oklahoma.¹

The inauguration of the Works Progress Administration in 1935 stands as one of the benchmarks of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" for the United States. Administered nationally by Harry Hopkins, the program was designed to assist in lifting the nation from the depths of severe economic depression. Make-work projects provided work-relief for literally millions of individual citizens whose lives had been devastated by the near-collapse of the American economy. After the inception of the WPA in 1935, the infusion of cash into projects all over the state made a significant economic impact on hundreds of communities. During the seven-and-one-half-year life of the WPA, more than \$10.75 billion were expended nationally; of this amount, Oklahoma received more than \$185 million for projects ranging from school lunch programs, flood control, and archeological excavations, to major construction projects such as armories, highways, bridges, schools, athletic stadia, and museums.²

Localities competed for WPA funds from the outset. Chambers of Commerce and planning committees drew up specifications to meet three major criteria established by the administration: 1) projects must meet a well-defined community need; 2) each project must be sponsored by a public body, such as a city or county government or school district, which was required to provide from 10 to 25 percent of the project cost in cash and/or materials; and 3) 90 percent of those hired must be unemployed employable workers who were carried on the relief rolls. Compensation was to be based on 130 hours of work for \$21 (later \$23) per month for unskilled labor.³ In June of 1935 Oklahoma WPA Director (Gen.) William S. Key estimated that there were already "70,000 employable unemployed" ready to work on his agency's projects throughout the state; by November of that year, 67,973 Oklahomans were at work for the WPA, and by January of 1936 WPA rolls reached an all-time high of 94,281.⁴

Armory construction was the first major thrust of the WPA Building Program in Oklahoma. By mid-1937, 126 armories had been constructed throughout the United States, and 51 of these projects were located in Oklahoma. When the WPA

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 17

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

ended its program in 1943, 54 armories had been built and 53 others "reconstructed" in the state. The new construction had infused \$3.5 million into local economies.⁵

Kingfisher, in north-central Oklahoma, had been established in April of 1889, following the Land Run of 1889 which opened central Oklahoma's Unassigned Lands. By 1910 Kingfisher (city) had grown to 2,538, and by 1930 its population stood at 2,726. Kingfisher was the primary service and shipping center for Kingfisher County, an agricultural region in which wheat was the major crop. In the 1920s a drop in the market price of wheat seriously depressed agriculture in western Oklahoma.⁶

As with most rural Oklahoma counties, Kingfisher County was further devastated by drought and depression in the early 1930s. By September of 1934, 1,445 families, comprising 37.2 percent of the county population, were on direct relief. In mid-1935, 187 heads of families in Kingfisher (city) were certified as "employable unemployed," ready to work. WPA projects allowed them to use their energy, and by September of 1935 the number of county families on direct relief had been reduced to 618, or 17.6 percent of the population. By September of 1936 the WPA employed 316 persons in Kingfisher County on various projects, including the armory.⁷

Kingfisher's city council submitted its bid for a new armory in August of 1935. WPA officials approved the projects, and blueprints arrived in Kingfisher in September. The city provided a vacant site (six city lots) at the northeast corner of 6th and Admire, where sales had been held on weekends.⁸ Red tape in Washington, D.C. delayed the project for several months, but finally on January 23, 1936, twenty WPA workers began clearing ground. The project's supervisors estimated that it would employ twenty to forty-four men on one eight-hour shift for six months, but in true WPA fashion, a short project expanded into a long one.⁹ By April, supervisors decided to work two six-hour shifts, each requiring forty men, in order to provide more employment opportunity and in order to finish the project by July 1. The exterior was completed in the summer, but interior work continued through October 29, the day of dedication.¹⁰ The two Guard units actually moved into the building on October 15, two weeks before it was completed. A dedicatory celebration was held on October 29, 1936, with General Key, state WPA director, and other state and local dignitaries participating, and the day-long program concluded with a dance in the new armory.¹¹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 18

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

WPA projects in 1935-1937 propped up the sagging rural economy of Kingfisher County. The WPA's cost on the armory project was \$34,000 (with the city contributing only the land and the cost of hooking up electrical, sewer, and water connections). The federal government invested more in the armory than in any other building project in the county.¹² In human terms, thousands of person-hours of labor went into the armory's construction. Most significantly, a monthly average of forty-four men were employed on the project, a number that grew to eighty as the building neared completion. These figures testify to the labor-intensive nature of WPA projects, which were designed to provide as much work as possible for those on relief rolls. Most of the hours were consumed in hand labor--in laying brick, pouring and finishing concrete for the foundation, window sills, and decorative detailing, for the roof of the one-story section, and in installing a maple-block floor in the 86' by 125' drill hall (more than 100,000 maple blocks were cut, primed, set in asphalt, sanded, oiled, and polished). A concrete floor would have sufficed, but ample time and labor allowed for a complicated design.¹³

Upon completion, the Kingfisher Armory became the home of the Headquarters Battery and Combat Train 2nd Battalion, 158th Field Artillery, and Battery F, 158th Field Artillery, of the 45th Infantry Division, Oklahoma National Guard.¹⁴ Reorganized under the National Defense Act of 1920, the Guard was an integral part of United States military preparedness. Since 1920, approximately five-sixths of America's military strength lay with "citizen soldiers"--National Guard divisions and Reserve divisions in nine corps areas across the nation. Each corps area had one Regular Army division, two National Guard Divisions, and three Reserve divisions. Oklahoma, along with New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona, formed one division of the Eighth Corps. Despite inadequate training facilities, the Oklahoma National Guard provided service during numerous natural disasters and civil disturbances during the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁵ Because the Guard paid its members a monthly fee, which they spent locally to feed and clothe their families, Oklahoma communities actively competed to secure local Guard units during these years. In 1921 Kingfisher received a unit of the Field Artillery; by 1923 the unit had been reorganized into two batteries. By 1936 the units included nine officers and one hundred enlisted men.¹⁶

The National Guard received only one-tenth of the War Department's budget in the interwar years, and equipment was surplus from World War I. Many units needed permanent training, drilling, and storage facilities, as Guard members were required to meet 48 drills per year. Units without permanent armories

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 19

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

usually rented space in warehouses that often lacked proper security. Four hundred new armories created by the cooperative effort of the federal and local governments helped correct this serious deficiency.¹⁷

The new Kingfisher Armory provided permanent housing for the unit, which formerly had rented space around town. The new facility was more than adequate for the detachment's needs. The building was divided into areas serving specific functions. On the ground floor, the entire one-story east section housed the drill hall, comprising the stage and the drill floor. The two-story front, or west, section, housed the arms vault, the supply room, and the locker room, the garage, offices, and classroom. Underground, beneath the stage, was a rifle range. Thus the building provided for virtually every training need, except for field exercises.

Due in large measure to the WPA armory-building program, the 45th Infantry Division was able to achieve a level of military efficiency and readiness that prepared it to be among the first four National Guard divisions federalized in late 1940 by President Roosevelt. After the United States entered World War II, the 45th saw action in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy.¹⁸

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Kingfisher Armory typifies WPA armory architecture in Oklahoma. In the mid-1930s two armory plans were developed by Major Bryan W. Nolen, an Oklahoma City architect and National Guard officer selected in 1935 to serve on the staff of WPA administrator Gen. William S. Key. Nolen's exterior design indicates the building's functions. He planned for every armory to have a drill hall section, usually having a high ceiling and either a barrel or a flat roof, and also a flat-roofed, single-story extension on one or both sides, the number of extensions depending on the number of units (one, two, or four) to be housed in the building.¹⁹ Design was flexible, allowing for the orientation of the building to various avenues of egress or accommodating the dimensions of the site. In Kingfisher's case, the chosen site was too small to hold a two-unit armory constructed according to a standard, one-story, two-wing plan. The plans were redrawn in 1935 to provide for a second story in the administrative/garage section.²⁰ The WPA preferred to use locally purchased building materials, and therefore armories were constructed either of native stone, usually quarried locally, or brick, manufactured locally or within the state. The Kingfisher Armory was constructed of brick manufactured at the state prison in McAlester.²¹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 20

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

WPA architectural philosophy prohibited ornate features, intricate design, and elaborate trim; therefore, WPA armories tend to be straightforwardly utilitarian. They have a strong horizontal massing, a fortresslike quality, which is often relieved only by vertical Art Deco detailing, as evident in the Kingfisher Armory, or by virtue of being a provincial interpretation of a romantic high style, such as Tudor.²² The Kingfisher Armory is strongly Art Deco in detailing, this being apparent in the stepped parapet on the north side and in the cast concrete "pyramid" design that adorns the pilasters at the corners and around the entrances. Armory architecture and construction methodology reflect the skills of designers and supervisors and the minimal funding for design and materials, as well as the use of unskilled labor as bricklayers, stonecutters, and so forth. These buildings may not be architectural masterpieces, but they served the WPA's purpose--to make work, and to provide secure space for national defense units. WPA armories exemplify the New Deal's practical determination to "do something--and do something now." As David Baird notes in his survey of WPA structures of Oklahoma, WPA buildings are "the architecture of the poor," "mute reminders of the emotional distress and physical pain many Oklahomans suffered during the 1930s and of the enlightened relief effort by the federal government that alleviated much of the suffering."²³ In type, style, scale, materials, and workmanship, WPA armories, of which the Kingfisher Armory is an excellent example, are unique when compared to the rest of the built environment, both in Kingfisher and across the state.

ENDNOTES

1. C. Roger Lambert, "Dust, Farmers, and the Federal Government," Hard Times in Oklahoma: The Depression Years, ed. K. E. Hendrickson, Jr. (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1983), pp. 71-72, 78-79, 81; W. David Baird, "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)," (Stillwater, Okla.: Oklahoma State University, 1987), 5; Guthrie (Oklahoma) Daily Leader, July 9, 1935.
2. Baird, "Final Report," 10; "Final Report of the Oklahoma Work Projects Administration, February 27, 1943," Archives of the Work Projects Administration and Predecessors, 1933-1943, Series One: The Final State Reports, 1943 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1987), 1; "Building Construction Report, February, 1943," *ibid.*, 5-6; Daily Oklahoman, March 12, 1943.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 21

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

3. "Questions and Answers on the WPA [brochure]," (Washington, D.C.: Work Projects Administration, December 1, 1939), Vertical File, Oklahoma Historical Society; Baird, "Final Report," 11; Kingfisher Times, July 9, 1936.
4. Guthrie (Oklahoma) Daily Leader, June 23, 1935; *ibid.*, November 13, 1935; Daily Oklahoman, September 12, 1937.
5. "Accomplishments: Works Progress Administration for Oklahoma, July 1, 1935-March 1, 1937," (Oklahoma City: Works Progress Administration, 1937), 38; "Building Construction Report," 5-6.
6. John W. Morris, "The Smaller Cities," Cities of Oklahoma, ed. John W. Morris (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1979), 11; Pioneers of Kingfisher County (n.p.: Kingfisher County Historical Society, 1976), 6; Donald E. Green, "The Beginnings of Wheat Culture in Oklahoma," Rural Oklahoma, ed. Donald E. Green (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1977), 56, 59, 62-65.
7. Daily Oklahoman, September 29, 1935; Kingfisher Times, August 29, 1935; Daily Oklahoman, September 12, 1937.
8. Kingfisher Times, October 31, 1935.
9. *Ibid.*, November 14, 1935; *ibid.*, January 16, 1936; *ibid.*, January 23, 1936; WPA Project No. 230, "Index to Reference Cards for Work Projects Administration Project Files, 1935-1942," (Washington, D.C.: WPA, c. 1942), Micro T-935, reel 55.
10. Kingfisher Times, April 30, 1936; *ibid.*, June 25, 1936; *ibid.*, August 6, 1936; *ibid.*, September 26, 1936.
11. *Ibid.*, October 15, 1936; *ibid.*, October 22, 1936; *ibid.*, October 29, 1936.
12. Kingfisher Times, March 26, 1936; *ibid.*, May 14, 1936.
13. *Ibid.*, March 21, 1935; *ibid.*, March 19, 1936; *ibid.*, April 2, 1936; *ibid.*, *ibid.*, August 6, 1936; WPA Project No. 230, "Index to Reference Cards."
14. "Accomplishments," 44.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 22

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

15. Guy Nelson, Thunderbirds: A History of the 45th Infantry Division (Oklahoma City: 45th Infantry Division Association, 1970), 6-9; Kenny Franks, Citizen Soldiers: Oklahoma's National Guard (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 38, 40, 49; Historical Annual: National Guard of the State of Oklahoma, 1938 (Baton Rouge, La.: Army and Navy Publishing Company, 1938), 16-17.
16. Pioneers of Kingfisher County, 1889-1976, 342; Historical Annual, 29, 310.
17. Nelson, Thunderbirds, 6-9; Franks, Citizen Soldiers, 38, 40.
18. Nelson, Thunderbirds, 12.
19. "Accomplishments," 38, 40; Historical Annual, 18.
20. Kingfisher Times, October 31, 1935; ibid., January 16, 1936; Pioneers of Kingfisher County, 345.
21. Kingfisher Times, March 16, 1936.
22. Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-43 (Washington, D.C.: G. P. O., c. 1943), 52; Baird, "Final Report," 15, 21, 23.
23. Ibid., 17; ibid., 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 23

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

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Pioneers of Kingfisher County, 1889-1976. N.P.: Kingfisher County Historical Society, c. 1976.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 24

Kingfisher Armory
name of property
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
county and State

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Lots 13 (thirteen), 14 (fourteen), 15 (fifteen), 16 (sixteen), 17 (seventeen), and 18 (eighteen) of Block 6, original city of Kingfisher, Kingfisher County, a property measuring approximately 150 feet north-south by 140 feet east-west.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

These are the property's legal boundaries as recorded in Book 77, pages 119-120, Deed Records, Kingfisher County.