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A remarkable aspect of the Apache State Bank is how closely it conformed to the prototype of such financial institutions erected in small towns around the turn of the century. Built in 1901-1902 on the corner of the principal intersection of Apache's budding business district, it was constructed of a good quality yellowish-brown sandstone quarried from the hills southwest of the town. The bank itself occupied the corner of the 50 x 100-foot, two-story structure. Entrance was from the corner, under a cut-stone slab reading BANK. Above was a corbel pointing upward to the conical tower. A classic railing topped the ornamental cornice on the two street sides. Also typical of its age was the interior. The J. S. Pilkenton general merchandise store opened even before the building was entirely finished, occupying the 'L' space on the ground floor around the bank. A stairway, leading up from the sidewalk served the second-floor offices of doctors, dentists and other professional people.

History of the Apache State Bank follows the pattern, too. But for the roof-top railing, the building survives today with its exterior -- its appearance -- virtually unchanged. But the interior is now unoccupied. The Apache State Bank became the American National Bank in 1914. When this institution moved to a nearby town in 1943 the space was used by non-banking businesses for a time, but is now vacant. The second floor, again following a nation-wide pattern, in small-town business life, has ceased to be attractive for offices and is also empty.

The Apache State Bank building, then, in concept, in construction, and in use over the years, has followed a strongly established pattern. Its significance today rests primarily in the fact that it remains almost intact, physically, in a town that has not itself changed appreciably. An Oklahoma architect puts it this way:

. . . the building is an excellent example of its brief era, and there aren't many of them left. Even the material. While native stone was frequently used for the first permanent buildings in many towns, it was a bit primitive for the taste of people creating instant civilization. Brick was the status material. I offer the theory that if the building had been erected two years later it would have had a brick front and a stone behind.

Curiously, the next most preposessing commercial building in Apache was built by F. J. Amphlett to house his drug and jewelry store, established in 1902. He spent \$9,000 on his two-story building, which also provided upstairs office space for doctors and others. It was ornamented with a fancy cupola. He completed it in 1908. And it was built entirely of brick.

The Apache Historical Society proposes to repair the storm damage at the building's southwest corner and then to restore the structure to SEE INSTRUCTIONS

PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	16th Century	18th Century	🕱 20th Century
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SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicab	le and Known) 190	1 to present	
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Ch	eck One or More as Appropri	iate)	
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Conservation	Music	Transportation	

"I remember as a child going to town in a wagon," recalls an elderly California woman in a letter to the Apache Historical Society, "and the first thing I saw was that bank building. I thought then it was so beautiful and still do." Impressions on youth -- and especially those that help shape the thinking and emotional loyalties of youthgrown-old -- provide a true, if not always readily measurable clue to historical significance. The letter writer is but one of many whose feelings toward the one-time Apache State Bank building have brought about a modest, minor miracle in the small southwestern Oklahoma town of Apache and established something of an ad hoc "significance" for an aging two-story sandstone structure seemingly slated for demolition.

Historically, the Apache bank building has lived out its 70-year existence according to a script followed by thousands of similar small town structures all across the country, but perhaps particularly on the Great Plains because of the time in history this area developed. If the town of Apache appeared on the scene somewhat later than most (1901) and remained smaller (present population: 1455), its evolution has not been untypical. This three-county area was opened to white settlement August 6, 1901. Apache sprang up almost overnight as a tent city with the routine complement of lumber yards, general merchandise emporiums and salcons - plus a newspaper, and a bank. Three months later it acquired its second financial institution, the Apache State Bank ... and demonstrated the corporate character trait that was to mark these small towns indelibly for the next half century. Choosing a yellowish-brown sandstone quarried from the hills southwest of the town, the new bank's directors authorized construction of a structure that remains today the town's most prepossessing. Banks were the most important businesses in these newly established towns. As such, they were expected as a matter of course to occupy the town's most imposing buildings. Accordingly, they staked out a choice corner lot in the heart of the business section, proceeded to erect the most impressive structure imagination and/or financial resources allowed. Invariably it was two stories or more in height and embraced most if not all of these conditions: solidly classic lines, durable materials (brick or rock), ornamented corner doorway into the bank itself with tower (and/or cupola) to highlight it, miscellaneous lesser business enterprises at either or both ends of the building's street-fronting extremities, offices for doctors, dentists and lawyers on the upper floor or floors.

12. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA LATITUDE AND LONGTUDE COONDINATES DEFINITION AND LONGTUDE COONDINATES LATITUDE AND LONGTUDE COONDINATES DERINATION A RECTARLE COATING THE PROPERTY DESTINATION ACRES Degree Minute Seconds Degree Minutes Seconds Degree Minutes Seconds NE 0 0 0 NE 0 0 0 0 SE 0 0 0 0 0 NE 0 0 0 0 0 0 NE 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 Italiantical acceleration of the property is acceleration of the property is included in t	9.	I	Files of	RAPHICAL R f the <u>Apac</u> shed resea	<u>che Week</u> arch mat	<u>ly h</u> eria	al com					listoric	al		
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Form 10-300a (July 1969)

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Oklahoma

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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No. 7. Description - 2

Apache State Bank

its 1902 appearance, including the ornamental railing. Interior will accommodate the town library, serve as meeting room for various town and community groups. As such it could become once again the focal point for local pride itwas in the early 1900s as the bank at the "top of the hill." The secretary of the Capital Hill Southeast Citizens Association (cf. No. 8) has praised the lines of the building as "historic, interesting, authentic." But the feeling area residents have for the old bank building seems to go deeper than authenticity. Apache was not a county seat and so could not concentrate its attention and/or affection on a traditional courthouse square. The old bank appears to have been something of a courthouse surrogate. It is a remarkable tribute to a building that is, in itself, not especially remarkable ... except perhaps in the degree of fondness shown it by those determined to preserve it from the wrecker.

Form 10-300a	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	STATE				
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Apache State Bank

This pattern of civic development was followed by all but the small est, or least progressive, towns that came into being toward the end of the 19th century - and, in the case of southwestern Oklahoma Territory, the early 20th century. Until the late 1940s and early 1950s virtually all of these towns grew up around this corner bank building (or, in the larger towns, bank buildings). The availability of professional services upstairs maintained for the bank its center-of-town status position as commercial center. Meanwhile the bank served as a visual focal point by virtue of architectural elegance.

However, the post-World War II years of affluence, population explosion and ever increasing dependence on the automobile have drastically changed this pattern of small town life. Gradually the upstairs profese sional office suite has given way to the separate ground-level clinic with ample (and free) parking. With upstairs space empty and virtually unrentable, and the "parking problem" an obvious factor in the profitability of even the ground-floor banking operation itself, a general exodus began to commodious near-downtown locations where drive-in service could be made available. Today thousands of small towns across America's heartland have business districts that are characterized by the unhappy fact that their most impressive "core" structure has staringly vacant upper windows and, on the ground level, imposing porticoed entrances to business establishments that specialize in repairing shoes, making loans, or frying hamburgers. And many thousands more are seeing these onceproud reminders of past glory being torn down to make way for developments that future generations will undoubtedly find to be fully as quaint and unserviceable.

The Apache State Bank might well serve as such an archtypical small town status symbol. Even before it was completely finished and the bank installed in its northeastern corner, the J. S. Pilkenton general merchandise store open in an "L" around it (giving it ground-floor entrances on both Evans and Coblake). Doctors and other professions moved into upstairs offices. When the bank closed is other businesses occupied took over the choice location. For a time the upstairs even provided living quarters and classroom space for the town's schools. Then in 1970 lightning struck a back corner of the building, damaging it seriously. Its last business moved to a new location and the owner prepared to demolish the structure. And then occurred the "miracle" of awakened nostalgia and human pride. Newspaper publicity spread word of the building's imminent demise. A concerned Apache Historical Society was formed. Appeals were made, and almost at once the letters and checks began to arrive ... including unsolicited contributions like those from Doris L. Pinza "in memory of my late husband, Ezio Pinza," and another from the

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

No. 8. Significance - 3

Apache State Bank

secretary of the Capital Hill Southeast Citizens Association of Washington, D. C. declaring that "The lines of the building you are saving are historic, interesting, authentic." Within months some 265 memberships have been signed, thousands of dollars collected, and a good bit of dormant civic pride awakened.

Call the building, if you like, small town, turn-of-the-century frontier classic. But it strongly characterizes pioneer vision and determination. If not the most impressive small-town bank building, neither is it the least. And as these downtown commercial cores give way to the wreckers crowbar and sledge, the more important they become - not just to the awakened pride of the local citizenry, but to the awareness of generations to come that have not known -- and indeed can never know -the peculiar mystique that was small town living of 30 and 40 years ago.

The Apache State Bank building today, even in dirty-window abandonment, is handsome and impressive. As is the breadth -- and depth -- of the sentiment that has grown up among residents, past and present, to preserve it as a museum and community-service facility. And so, we feel, it is "significant," both as a symbol of small-town, turn-of-the-century boosterism and, as well, of small-town, late-twentieth-century nostalgia for ways of life and for human values that have now virtually disappeared.

Form 10-301 (Dec. 1968)	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT (NATIONAL PARK SEI			STATE Oklahoma	
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