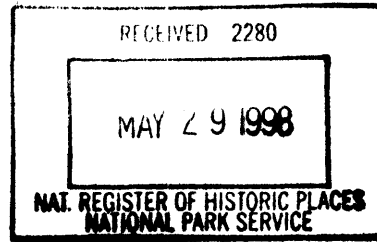


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



733

1. Name of Property

historic name Checotah City Hall

other names/site number Old City Hall; Checotah Chamber of Commerce

2. Location

street & number 201 N. Broadway not for publication n/a
city or town Checotah vicinity n/a
state Oklahoma code OK county McIntosh code 091
zip code 74426

=====

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this XX 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 XX meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide XXX locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Blake Wade 18 May 1998
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 6/26/98

Signature of Keeper Date
Beall 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 0

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: <u>GOVERNMENT</u>	Sub: <u>city hall</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>fire station</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>correctional facility</u>
<u>EDUCATION</u>	<u>library</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>COMMERCE</u>	Sub: <u>organizational</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>fire station</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCIAL STYLE

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)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance 1916-1948

Significant Dates 1916

=====
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)
=====

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Valeur, H. O., Architect
Rooney, J. J., 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: _____

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property less than one acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>15</u>	<u>271140</u>	<u>3928000</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 Karen Bode Baxter, Architectural Historian

organization _____ date March 4, 1998

street & number 5811 Delor Street telephone (314) 353-0593

city or town Saint Louis state MO zip code 63109-3108

=====
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 City of Checotah

street & number 115 North Broadway telephone (918) 473-5411

city or town Checotah state OK zip code 74426
=====

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

Located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Spaulding Avenue and Broadway Street, the Checotah City Hall is just one block north of the intersection of U. S. Highways 266 (Gentry Avenue) and Business 69 (Broadway Street), which is the center of the small town's historic business district. The Checotah City Hall is in a prominent location along the major north-south arterial road which bisects the community (roughly paralleling the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad tracks) and carries traffic north to Muskogee and south through Eufaula (the McIntosh County seat) to McAlester, both major communities in eastern Oklahoma. Besides its location, the Checotah City Hall dominates the surrounding streetscape because of its size and corner location as a two-story, flat roofed, red brick, detached, Commercial Style building with a symmetrical (office) facade facing west onto Broadway Street and another long brick elevation (with its fire truck entry) facing south onto Spaulding Avenue.

The original building is basically rectangular in plan with a 43 foot (west) facade on Broadway and a 68 foot (south) elevation on Spaulding. However, the north elevation is stepped back 3 feet at a point 32 feet 8 inches from the front (west) elevation which makes the rear (east) elevation only 40 feet wide. Attached to the original building on the rear (east), is a one-story brick garage addition, constructed in the mid-1960s. The addition is 33 feet long facing south on Spaulding Avenue, 50 feet deep along the alley (east) elevation and 34 feet 6 inches long on the north elevation, making it slightly wider on its back (north) side. Since the property is 50 feet wide, there is a small strip of land to the north of the original building, approximately 7 feet wide at the front, ensuring that this will always be a detached building.

Exterior Description

The two street elevations share common stylistic details. While their walls are primarily vitrified red brick, the deeply recessed and wide mortar joints on this running bond pattern provide texture and dimension for the walls. The polychromatic appearance to these two primary elevations is achieved by the use of concrete window sills and contrasting brown vitrified brick details which form the first floor lintels, the second floor continuous lintel course, the belt course at the top of the parapet, and the framing for decorative brickwork (in the corner piers, in vertical bay divisions, in between the first and second floor and in the parapet above the second floor windows). Each corner of these two elevations is anchored by a thick brick pier with a flat stone cap that extends slightly above the top of the brick parapet walls.

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The two primary, street elevations have a strong vertical emphasis. This is especially evident in the decorative brown brick trim which forms vertical brickwork dividing the bays of both elevations and it is reinforced by similar brickwork decorations in the corner piers, and the slight projection at the roofline at each corner.

The west facade is symmetrical with decorative brickwork at the top flanking a smaller brick bordered stone name plate that has the words "CITY HALL" carved on it. Large, vertical, decorative brickwork also adds detail to the two corner piers. Below the second floor continuous brick lintel, the facade is centrally divided into two bays by vertical decorative brickwork, similar to the brickwork on the corner piers but smaller in scale. To each side of this middle division are two sets of paired, sashed, nonoriginal windows on the upper level with the outer pair being narrower. Each paired window is in line with first floor openings, the outer pair being above entries and the inner pair being above additional window openings. Originally the first floor had paired sashes on the inner bays, but stationary window panes (divided horizontally with the upper half boarded over) were installed in recent years. To each side of the first floor window bays are entries, the one on the north leads to the main staircase that provides access to the second floor offices and meeting room while the south entry opens into the main office area that occupies most of the west end of the first floor. The north doorway is original with its paired wood framed glass doors with a stationary transom of four vertical lights, but the south doorway has been modified with an aluminum framed doorway with a wider glass door, a sidelight, and single paned transom (now boarded over).

The south elevation is not symmetrical. This elevation has four bays and the same decorative brickwork as the west elevation. Between each of the bays is vertical decorative brickwork which matches the front decorative detail and extends from the first floor sill level to the second floor continuous lintel. As on the facade, the first floor openings are in line with the second floor paired windows, except for the fire station access which spans the width of two paired upper floor window bays. The front bay (west end) first floor window opening retains its original sill, having originally had paired window sashes, but it now has a stationary window which matches those on the facade. The second bay from the front was originally an entry to the shop utilized by the Water Department and street workers.¹ The third bay on the first floor level of this elevation contained the large doorway to the fire station for the fire truck and a smaller, secondary entry that provided access to the judge's office, the jail, and the rear stairs to the fire department's living quarters on the back half of the building. All three of these entries have had the doors removed and the front two (the larger openings) have been infilled with weatherboard siding while the secondary entry has a replacement wooden door with an infilled transom. Also,

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in addition to the siding in the former fire truck opening is a small, nonoriginal window and an air conditioning unit. In the back (fourth) bay is another pair of sashed windows which have been infilled with weatherboard siding.

In addition, these two street elevations are banded horizontally, a common characteristic of Late Victorian commercial buildings and of the Commercial Style. It has four visual horizontal divisions: the first floor level (to the lintel level), the area between the first and second floor, the second floor window band, and the parapet area above the second floor lintels. This horizontal banding is achieved by the second floor fenestration pattern of paired sashed windows with continuous brick lintels and by the common sill lines on both floors (which match the height and position of the bottom border on vertical brick panels between the bays). This horizontal banding is further accentuated by the common brick lintel positioning for all first floor openings, by the flat stone capped parapet above a brick belt course that extends between the brick corner piers, and by the decorative horizontal brickwork between the first and second floor levels and along the brick parapet above the second floor windows.

Both the rear (east) elevation as well as the north elevation have a lower quality brick with a simple running bond pattern and without the decorative details of the two street elevations. Even the color of the brick varies slightly and the window openings on both levels are scattered and of various sizes, with segmental brick arched tops. The north elevation steps back 3 feet, making the front of the building slightly wider than the back. All window openings on both of these secondary elevations have been infilled.

On the east elevation of the Checotah City Hall is a brick, one-story garage addition which was constructed in the mid-1960s to house the fire department. The Spaulding Avenue (south) facade consists of two overhead metal garage door bays with a small wooden, half-light door on the west end, adjacent to the original building. There is a small parapet across the south facade that extends higher than the other elevations. The alley elevation has three small, metal framed, horizontal windows and another half-light door. The north elevation has two additional horizontal windows near each corner with a tiny window in the middle of this wall. Although constructed of brick, the one-story addition is easily discernible from the larger, two-story historic building.

Interior Description

The interior first floor plan of the original building is divided by its uses. The main staircase is a straight-flight staircase adjacent to the north wall with a foyer at the northwest corner of the building. Across most of the front (west end) of the first floor is the office space (including the original toilet room and the vault room with its extra thick walls), originally occupied by the city

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clerk staff, with the windows facing both streets and the entry near the southwest corner of the west facade. Behind this office is a space which originally served as a shop for the Water Department and street crew with access through what was originally a doorway on the Spaulding Avenue (south) side. Behind this section is the large garage bay for the fire truck with a second straight-flight staircase, mostly enclosed, leading to the fire department's sleeping quarters upstairs. At the front, southeast corner is a small room which originally served as the city judge's office and at the back northeast corner, is the single jail cell.² Over the years, the spaces on the first floor have remained basically unchanged, but remodeling covers most original features in the office (wood paneling, acoustical suspension ceilings, and carpet). The functional spaces of the shop, fire station, and jail with their high ceilings and minimal trim remain unaltered. Even the flat metal grid jail door is intact. The distinctive foyer and main stairway have not been altered.

The second floor space was divided approximately in half with the front serving as the courtroom/council chambers originally while the back half served as sleeping quarters for the fire department.³ The main stairway runs along the north wall forming a hallway on the second floor with the courtroom to the south opening into the hall with a pair of half-light 2-panel doors with a double transom. At the west end of the hall, above the front foyer is a small office. Another room at the east end of this hall has a small bathroom that has a skylight/vent that measures approximately 3 feet by 5 feet. Since this skylight/vent projects above the roof approximately 6 feet where its exterior sides are brick, this may be a physical indication that this space was formerly used as the hose (drying) room for the fire department. This area connects directly into the rear sleeping quarters area for the fire department across the rear of the building. It has small rooms along the south wall, the rear straight-flight staircase opening into the middle of a large common room, as well as small closets and a bathroom along the north wall.

The interior decorative elements were restricted to the functional necessities: plaster walls and ceilings, wooden floors upstairs, wood paneled doors with functional glass transoms, and hard pine⁴ interior trim. The interior features reveal some elements common in the early Colonial Aesthetic, becoming increasingly popular during this era due to its practicality (less dust collection): high unadorned plaster ceilings and simpler, painted millwork. The first floor has slightly more elaborate trim with plain cap trim on the doors while second floor doors have square-edge trim. Most original interior doors are wooden half-light, 2-panel doors with opaque glass in the doors and transoms. The baseboards and cap trim are both square-edged. The most distinctive interior spaces are the two staircases, both of which have "anti-dust" newel posts and square balusters. The front staircase has both a railing up the stairs and one

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along the side of the stairwell in the second floor hallway. The rear stairway is mostly enclosed, but the lower portion is open with a railing and the opening on the second floor is surrounded on three sides by a railing with newel posts on both sides at the top of the stairs.

Alterations

Overall, the building retains its integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, feeling and association. It even retains its original flag pole on the roof of the building (approximately 25 feet tall with a ball top) located near the front center of the building. It also retains the brick walled skylight near the rear of the building, although the attached siren system is not original to the building.

The original wooden sash windows have been replaced throughout the building with metal sash windows that closely approximate the size and appearance of the original windows, although they are slightly shorter, a distinction most evident on the interior where the infill is visible for closer inspection. From the exterior, public perspective, the modification is visible, although the new windows are placed within the original openings and retain the basic window configuration with paired, one-over-one windows.

Other exterior alterations are primarily limited to the infill of the first floor openings. These infills are within the original openings and the spaces still clearly define their original intent (fire truck entry, doorways, and windows).

Along the back of the building, the City of Checotah attached a simple, red brick one-story, flat roofed garage addition in the mid-1960s⁵ which then became the fire station. This addition is constructed across the back of the original building, adjacent to the alley and along Spaulding Avenue which is a secondary street in Checotah that extends only one-half block further east where it stops due to the railroad tracks. Given its position and smaller scale, the fire station addition does not detract from the integrity of the original building.

Changes to the interior have been very minimal. Even the office remodeling covers, but does not replace, original walls and ceilings. The second floor is unaltered, except for a small partition wall between the sleeping quarters and the public spaces at the front of the building. However, lack of use of the second floor in recent years and a leaking roof have led to damage, especially to the plaster ceilings.

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Endnotes

¹Interview with Dick Crumpler, City of Checotah Administrator (retired), by Karen Bode Baxter, Checotah, Oklahoma, 3 December 1997.

²Ibid.; Interview with W. J. Frazier, Checotah Police Chief (retired), by Karen Bode Baxter, Checotah, Oklahoma, 20 November 1997; Interview with Tommy L. Duncan, Checotah Fire Chief (retired), by Karen Bode Baxter, Checotah, Oklahoma, 20 November 1997.

³Interview with Dick Crumpler; Interview with Tommy L. Duncan.

⁴"New City Building," The McIntosh County Democrat (retired), 21 October 1915, p. 1.

⁵Interview with Dick Crumpler.

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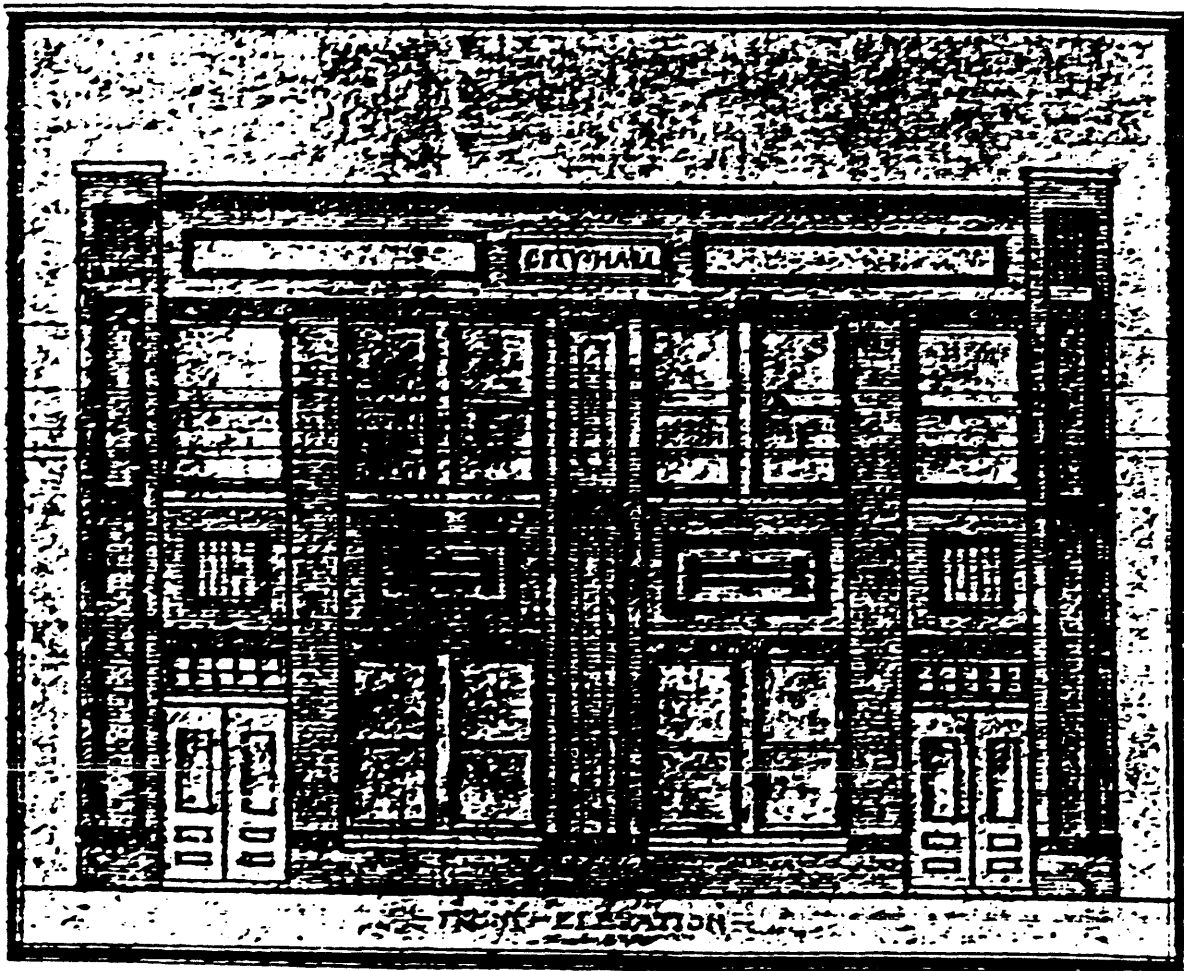
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Checotah City Hall
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Architect's rendering published in
The McIntosh County Democrat (October 21, 1915), p. 1

CHECOTAH'S NEW PUBLIC BUILDING.



Front elevation of Checotah's new city building which is to house the various city officials, fire station, jail and library. Drawn by H. O. Valour, of Muskogee and accepted by the city council and committee of the Checotah Commercial club.

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Checotah City Hall is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with local politics/government. Finished in August 1916,¹ the Checotah City Hall represents a significant stage in the development of local government for this small community of 3,000 in east central Oklahoma. This was the first city hall building in Checotah, consolidating city services and administration which had previously utilized separate, often inadequate, leased facilities including a fire station that was "little better than a shed."² While most early twentieth century commercial buildings in Checotah were designed with a single purpose (i.e., car dealership, post office), the city services required a building designed to accommodate widely varied uses: offices, meeting room, workshop, garage, jail, library and residential spaces. In addition to all city government services, other government agencies utilized the new Checotah City Hall, consolidating many county government services on the second floor of this same public facility, most notably as a branch of the county court.³

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The construction of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway (known as the Katy Railroad) through Indian Territory reached what is now the city of Checotah in February 1872, naming the location Checote Switch for Chief Samuel Checote of the Creek Nation. The spelling was later changed due to an error of a map maker and the term "Switch" was dropped. Even though the Katy Railroad had established the site as a town, in actuality it was little more than a telegraph station and post office since the railroad company was entitled to nothing but the 200 foot right-of-way across the Indian nations' lands in what is now eastern Oklahoma. Without the ability to incorporate towns, establish schools, or obtain ownership of the land because the land was held in common by the Creek Nation, no town lots could be laid out and prospective settlers and businesses failed to materialize. For nearly 20 years, the site remained little more than a rail switch with large stockyard and unloading pens for the cattle hauled to this point, although Checotah became one of the most important points for shipping cattle with some of the largest ranches in the Creek Nation located north and west of the settlement. Only in 1888 did the small community see its first general store established. Commercial establishments and white settlement did not develop until the federal government established the Dawes Commission in 1893 which began the process of pressuring the Creek Nation to agree to divide up its tribal lands, allotting ownership to each tribal member.⁴

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Under the provisions of the Curtis Act in 1898, towns could officially incorporate and Checotah quickly completed its incorporation, establishing the city council-mayor form of government still used today. Checotah held its first city election October 25, 1898. Towns lots were surveyed, a plat of the city completed, lots sold and titles to property issued -- spurring the commercial development of the town which quickly evolved from a cattle shipping point into a major agricultural center since it was surrounded by very fertile soil that produced corn, wheat, cotton, fruits and vegetables in great abundance. In 1900, Checotah had become the only town of its size in Indian Territory to install an electric light system. By 1915, the commercial district had been transformed from a few wooden buildings into 4 blocks of one- and two-story brick commercial buildings, including 4 banks and a post office. With statehood in 1907, Checotah nearly became the county seat over its rival, Eufaula, but Checotah had to settle for being the northern branch of the county court. Industrial growth led to increasing economic prosperity culminating in the decade prior to World War I with a glass factory and bottling company, a cotton seed oil plant, an ice plant, a light and water company, five cotton gins, and a sorghum mill. The town's prospects seemed to be assured with the discovery of natural gas in the outlying areas and the development of what became the United Smelting and Refinery and Mineral Company which grew into a 20 block smelter and operated a zinc refinery. By 1915 the community was well established and prosperous, encouraging Checotah's leaders to construct a city hall building to serve the growing community.⁵

But, the smelter closed in the 1920s because of the post-war industrial decline. At the same time, agricultural conditions deteriorated as area farmers faced declining profits, boll weevils invading their cotton fields and then drought, resulting in a regional economic depression that did not reverse until World War II again brought increased demand for agricultural products. As a consequence, the rapid growth of population and the economic prosperity, which had encouraged the city council to construct their new city hall in 1916, reversed in the 1920s and the town experienced a long period of economic decline and population loss that did not stabilize until 1940,⁶ making the Checotah City Hall the last major building constructed during the town's period of growth and development.

Prior to 1916, the City of Checotah services had been housed separately and in very inadequate facilities. The city had rented space for the council chambers at a cost of \$600 per year, utilizing various second floor locations in the downtown area.⁷ The fire station was located in various wooden sheds in the central business district,⁸ an acceptable facility for the horse drawn wagon that required mostly a stable, but inappropriate for the planned purchase of a modern, American LaFrance motorized fire truck.⁹ The police department's facilities consisted of a city jail that was so deplorable that the news reports encouraging support for the city hall bond issue thought it "better not to mention it at all."¹⁰ While the need had been apparent for two or three years, no definitive

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action was taken on building a city hall until a group of leading citizens petitioned the city council on July 12, 1915, to hold an election to approve the sale of bonds and the construction of a city hall to which the city council quickly agreed¹¹ since the city was "without suitable and adequat[sic] buildings to house the City officers and fire equipments."¹² On August 3, 1915, the issuance of \$20,000 in bonds for a city hall, fire station and jail was overwhelmingly approved by local taxpayers with only eight votes in opposition to the bond issue.¹³

The city council contracted with the Building Committee of the Checotah Commercial Club to serve as the general contractor for the project¹⁴ which engaged H. O. Valeur and Company as the architect¹⁵ and J. J. Rooney as the builder.¹⁶ Although originally planned for a lot in block 68 (directly south of the Checotah City Hall property), complications with the title delayed the project and the city had to acquire another property before the building could be started.¹⁷ Fortunately, the large corner lot directly north was available, although W. I. Cook's stock and hay barn had to be cleared from the lot and the large scales relocated.¹⁸ As a result, the Checotah City Hall is situated northeast across the intersection from the post office finished less than ten years earlier. This still positioned the Checotah City Hall prominently on the northern edge of the commercial district and along Broadway, the major north-south artery in Checotah which has traditionally been part of a major north-south highway (now U. S. Highway 69) through eastern Oklahoma.

Designed by H. O. Valeur, an architect from Muskogee,¹⁹ this is the only major example of early twentieth century commercial design in Checotah that utilizes polychromatic brick as the key decorative element and it is the only commercial building in Checotah known to be designed by a professional architect. Its simple but functional design is an excellent example of the transition from the late Victorian design influences into the cleaner lines preferred in the early twentieth century Commercial style. The cleaner lines of the two street facades are void of the intricate three-dimensional details (especially the corbelling or pressed metal common to earlier Late Victorian designs). In addition, the use of vitrified brick with wide, deeply recessed mortar joints and the concrete slab foundation were distinctive early twentieth century characteristics in contrast to the very narrow joints and stone foundations (and basements) common on earlier commercial buildings in Checotah. The most distinctive elements of the building are the massive brick corner piers and the use of contrasting brown brick to form decorative brickwork, giving the appearance of a three-dimensional treatment to the flat brick facade.

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Although the building had to accommodate multiple uses (including several entries and a garage bay for the city's new motorized fire truck), the design is still compact and orderly since Valeur utilized common lintel and sill lines, the contrasting brown brick details, the vertical alignment of the window and door openings and the corner piers to visually unify the design of the exterior. As promoted by the local newspapers, the design was to be practical and convenient, including many modern twentieth century features: telephones, electrical service, toilets, and shower rooms.²⁰

Work began in March 1916²¹ and by August 7, 1916 the city council held its first session in the new building²² although the building's first occupant was installed in the new jail on July 7, 1916 while finishing touches were being completed.²³ For the first time, when city government moved into the new city hall, all city services were located in the same facility: the city clerk and mayor's offices, council chambers, water department, fire department, city jail, police department and public library.²⁴ With the exception of the public library (which relocated by the mid-1940s to a separate building in the business district),²⁵ all city services remained in this building until the mid-1960s when the fire station addition was completed on the back of the building. Only in the early 1970s did city services again divide into separate facilities when the city offices moved out of the Checotah City Hall to occupy the Mitchell Building (current City Hall at 115 N. Broadway), leaving the fire, ambulance, and police departments in the old city hall location for the next twenty years.²⁶ In 1990, a new police department and jail was constructed elsewhere in Checotah²⁷ and only the ambulance services remained in the original building.²⁸ When the devastating 1992 fire in the central business district destroyed the entire commercial block adjacent to the Mitchell Building, the city offices temporarily moved back into the original city hall while damage to the new city hall was repaired.²⁹ Even today, the city continues to use the building to house its emergency siren system. Thus, the Checotah City Hall has been in continuous use by city services since it was completed in 1916.

Most city services had originally been located on the first floor. The city clerk's and mayor's offices were on the front of the building, facing Broadway with a built-in vault room and a "toilet room" included in the original design. Behind these offices was a shop used by the Water Department and street crews,³⁰ but it also served other functions, having been a community cannery during the 1930s for area homemakers who needed to preserve the summer harvest of vegetables, especially sweet corn.³¹ Behind the shop was the garage which housed the city's fire truck with a staircase leading to sleeping quarters upstairs.³² The police department utilized the back of the garage bay to provide access to

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the city's single jail cell located in the northeast corner of the building and the city judge usually held court in this same location, actually leaving the prisoner in their cell during the hearing.³³

The front portion of the second floor was utilized for various public services. A large meeting room on the second floor, which is still known as the courtroom, served not only for the council chambers but also as a branch of the McIntosh County court, with court held weekly in Checotah until Oklahoma reformed its court system into district courts in the mid-1950s, requiring that district court be held only at the McIntosh County Courthouse in Eufaula.³⁴ The public library had also been located upstairs originally in the front portion of the building, but it relocated to other facilities in town and this area of the second floor became the offices of the county health department with the large room still used as the council chambers and the remaining space used for storage.³⁵ When the city went to an all volunteer fire department in 1959, the sleeping quarters were converted into an apartment for a resident fireman and his family with minimal structural changes to the space.³⁶

From 1916 until the early 1970s, city services were consolidated by the Checotah City Hall, and it continued to be used by various city services until the mid-1990s. This building is significant for its contribution to the history of local government services. As the historic city hall and the only two-story building on the block on the north end of U.S. Highway 69, the Checotah City Hall is a major landmark at the entry to the heart of Checotah, symbolizing both the development of city government services and the early twentieth century prosperity of the community.

ENDNOTES

¹"City Hall Completed," The McIntosh County Democrat (hereinafter referred to as MCD), 3 August 1916; "Into Their New Home," The Checotah Times (hereinafter referred to as CT), 11 August 1916, p. 1; "Meets in New Home," MCD, 10 August 1916, p. 1.

²"Bonds Sold Well," MCD, 29 July 1915, p. 1.

³"New City Building," MCD, 21 October 1915, p. 1; "The New City Hall," CT, 22 October 1915, p. 1.

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⁴Yvonne Gamblin, Checotah Historical Highlights, 1890-1990, Marceline, Missouri: Jostens, 1990, pp. 5-6; C. W. West, ed., McIntosh County Memories, n.p.: McIntosh County Historical Society, 1993, pp. 50-54.

⁵Gamblin, Checotah Historical Highlights, pp. 7-9; West, McIntosh County Memories, pp. 52-54 and 144-154.

⁶Gamblin, Checotah Historical Highlights, pp. 9-10.

⁷"Bonds Sold Well," MCD, 29 July 1915, p. 1; "City Hall Election Aug. 3," CT, 23 July 1915, p. 1; "City Hall for Checotah," CT, 16 July 1915, p. 1; "For New City Hall," MCD, 15 July 1915, p. 1.

⁸"Bonds Sold Well," MCD, 29 July 1915, p. 1; Sanborn Map Company, "Checotah, McIntosh County, Oklahoma," June 1909, p. 3; Ibid., December 1914, p. 2.

⁹"Bought Motor Truck," MCD, 20 April 1916, p. 1; "Rapidly Nearing Completion," MCD, 22 June 1916, p. [5].

¹⁰"Bonds Sold Well," MCD, 29 July 1915, p. 1.

¹¹"City Hall Election Aug. 3," CT, 23 July 1915, p. 1; "For New City Hall," MCD, 15 July 1915, p.1; Checotah, Oklahoma, City Council, Transfer Minute Record, July 12, 1915, pp. 1201-1202; Ibid., July 19, 1915, pp. 1203-1206.

¹²Checotah, Oklahoma, City Council, Transfer Minute Record, August 3, 1915, p. 1229.

¹³Ibid., p. 1223; "Eight Votes Against," MCD, 5 August 1915, p. 1; "Only Eight Voted No," CT, 6 August 1915, p. 1.

¹⁴Checotah, Oklahoma, City Council, Transfer Minute Record, October 19, 1915, p. 1295.

¹⁵Checotah, Oklahoma, City Council, Transfer Minute Record, October 18, 1915, p. 1294; "New City Building," MCD, 21 October 1915, p. 1; "The New City Hall," CT, 22 October 1915, p. 1.

¹⁶"Contract Let," MCD, 23 December 1915, p.1.

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¹⁷"New City Hall Site Chosen," CT, January 21, 1916, p. 1.

¹⁸"Clearing Up for City Hall," MCD, 24 February 1916, p. 1; "Making Ready for City Hall," CT, 25 February 1916, p. 1; "New City Hall Site Chosen," CT, January 21, 1916, p. 1.

¹⁹"New City Building," MCD, 21 October 1915, p. 1; "The New City Hall," CT, 22 October 1915, p. 1.

²⁰"New City Building," MCD, 21 October 1915, p. 1.

²¹"Work on City Hall," MCD, 30 March 1916, p. [8]; "Work on City Hall Soon," MCD, 2 March 1916, p. 1.

²²"Into Their New Home," CT, 11 August 1916, p. 1; "Meets in New Home," MCD, 10 August 1916, p. 1.

²³"Occupied New Jail," CT, 7 July 1916, p. 1.

²⁴"New City Building," MCD, 21 October 1915, p. 1; "The New City Hall," CT, 22 October 1915, p. 1.

²⁵Interview with W. J. Frazier, Checotah Police Chief (retired), by Karen Bode Baxter, Checotah, Oklahoma, 20 November 1997.

²⁶Interview with Dick Crumpler, City of Checotah Administrator (retired), by Karen Bode Baxter, Checotah, Oklahoma, 3 December 1997; Interview with Tommy L. Duncan, Checotah Fire Chief (retired), by Karen Bode Baxter, Checotah, Oklahoma, 20 November 1997; Interview with Shirley Fox, City of Checotah, by Karen Bode Baxter, Checotah, Oklahoma, 27 October 1997.

²⁷Interview with Jimmy Hamm, Checotah Police Chief, by Karen Bode Baxter, Checotah, Oklahoma, 20 November 1997.

²⁸Interview with Shirley Fox.

²⁹Ibid.

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³⁰"New City Building," MCD, 21 October 1915, p. 1; Interview with Dick Crumpler;
Interview with W. J. Frazier.

³¹Interview with Helen Duncan, by Karen Bode Baxter, Checotah, Oklahoma, 20
November 1997.

³²Interview with Dick Crumpler; Interview with Tommy L. Duncan.

³³Interview with Dick Crumpler; Interview with W. J. Frazier.

³⁴"New City Building," MCD, 21 October 1915, p. 1; Interview with Dick Crumpler;
Interview with Tommy L. Duncan.

³⁵"New City Building," MCD, 21 October 1915, p. 1; Interview with Dick Crumpler;
Interview with W. J. Frazier.

³⁶Interview with Dick Crumpler; Interview with Tommy L. Duncan.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Southerly 50 feet of Lot 7, Block 53, City of Checotah, Oklahoma.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the city hall.