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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

RECEIVED 2280

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Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Seminole Municipal Building

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 401 North Main St.

City or town: Seminole State: Oklahoma County: Seminole

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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


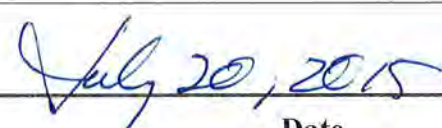
I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

 Signature of certifying official/Title:	 Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

for Gibson H. Beall 9-8-15
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/city hall
RECREATION & CULTURE/auditorium

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/city hall
RECREATION & CULTURE/auditorium

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Seminole Municipal Building is located at 401 North Main Street in Seminole, Seminole County, Oklahoma. The surrounding area comprises the downtown commercial district (not National Register eligible as a historic district) and has many extant commercial buildings from the 1910s as well as from Seminole's oil-boom days of the 1920s and 1930s, before the municipal building's construction in 1936. Most, however, are heavily altered. Measuring 114 feet by 141 feet in dimension, the detached building is designed in Art Deco style applied to a central block with wings. The east elevation is primary and offers the principal entry to the building's central block, the civic center. Both east and west elevations have decorative brickwork and elaborated, cast-concrete, stepped entry surrounds with many applied concrete Art Deco elements, including zigzag, geometric, and floral. The Municipal Building has retained excellent integrity in all aspects required for nomination.

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Narrative Description

Erected in 1936 at 401 North Main Street in Seminole, Seminole County, Oklahoma, the Seminole Municipal Building, sometimes called “city hall,” is sited in the north part of downtown in Block 9 on Lots 7-12. Adjacent to the Municipal Building on the north, on Lots 4-6, is a small, city-owned park dedicated to war veterans. Immediately north of the park is a large, stone building built in 1936 on Lots 1-3 of Block 9 (at that time Lots 1-12 were city land) by the local American Legion post, which now owns the three lots. To the southwest, across the alley from the Municipal Building, is a city-owned fire station. To the west are scattered businesses and residences. To the south is the city’s main business district along Main, Second, and Fourth streets, where remain a number of commercial-style brick buildings erected during the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. An intensive level survey of downtown Seminole determined no historic district to exist. Buildings have been removed, new ones erected, and existing buildings have generally been altered from their original appearances, often by adding a metal front, stucco, or other material. Nevertheless, the downtown area is considerable in size for a small town, reflecting in its quantity, rather than integrity, some feeling of and association with the town’s oil-boom days of the Twenties and Thirties. Exemplary are a large railroad depot building that sits perpendicular to the south end of Main Street (not eligible for the Register), the Union Bus Station (eligible), and the Art Deco 1937 U.S. Post Office (eligible).

Modern Movement/Art Deco stylistic devices characterize the Seminole Municipal Building and set it apart from the two other Art Deco buildings in downtown, both of which are geometric but unadorned. Typical Art Deco elaborations include: zigzags, geometric figures, and stylized floral motifs; vertical projections from or near the roofline and over entryways; and reeding and fluting around or near doors and windows and on other flat surfaces. Metal multi-light window units and panel doors, usually steel, are also common to the style.¹ In designing Seminole’s civic center the architects chose to use concrete work comprising zigzag, reeded, and fluted surfaces, stepped projections, and geometric and floral low-relief plaques to characterize the more important elevations and dramatically emphasize the entrances. Decorative brickwork patterns were also used. On all elevations, a soldier course of brick is applied directly under a metal coping at the parapet. Window bays are created by stepping back the brickwork to the depth of several inches, recessed twice directly above each window, creating shallow piers between them, each topped by a floral-design, cast-concrete plaque. All of the windows are non-original metal 1x1 single-hung units.

The Seminole Municipal Building is downtown Seminole’s largest and most imposing edifice. The primary building material is brick, with applied decorations of cast concrete. The roof is flat, and its low parapet has a metal coping all around. Because construction was completed on a site that sloped strongly to the east and to the north, a concrete footing that was poured around all four sides is only visible on south, east, and north and becomes increasingly deeper toward the east and north. The concrete footing rises to form the concrete windowsills. All upper-story windowsills throughout the building are also concrete. The load-bearing masonry walls are of buff-colored face brick in on all elevations. The brick is set in running bond with every sixth row in an alternating-header-and-stretcher bond. All of the window headers are brick. For each elevation, other decorative work is described below.

¹ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 465–66.

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Measuring 141 feet north-south along North Main Street by 114 feet east-west along East Evans Street, the Municipal Building is a central block with wings. The footprint resembles a “plus sign” (+) with a truncated foot. There are three sections: a central auditorium section, oriented through the center of the building with its long axis east-west (parallel to Evans) and measuring 114 feet east-west by 80 feet north-south (parallel to Main). A north office wing measures 81 feet east-west (aligned with the auditorium’s long axis) by 34 feet north-south. A similar south office wing also parallels the auditorium and measures 81 feet east-west by 27 feet north-south.

East Elevation:

Viewed from Main Street (facing west), the building’s **primary (east) elevation** presents as a horizontal mass illustrating the central-block-with-wings concept. A center (auditorium) section projects outward from and is much wider than the flanking (office) wings. It also projects upward above them for an additional half-story.² Flanking the auditorium section in this elevation on the south is an office wing, with no entry in the east wall, and on the north is a similar office wing, with one entry. In this and also in the north and south elevations, the window bays are created by recessing the surrounding wall for the depth of a brick, with two decorative rows in rowlock at the top. This arrangement creates shallow, full-height piers between the windows (a technique element that is repeated in window bays of the north and south elevations). Each pier is topped with a square, cast-concrete, floral-scroll plaque (a decoration also used in the north and south elevations).

In the east elevation, the **north office wing** is thirty-four feet wide and has two bays. An entry bay with upward-stepped, outwardly projecting concrete surround accommodates two arches, each with an entry door. A waist-high concrete wall to the right of the entry blocks wind. The top of the surround, thin vertical fluting refers to castellation, and a smooth center section has a hexagonal plaque with a floral-scroll motif. The center is flanked by vertical strips of zigzag. Above the entryway is a single window above a shallow concrete pier that separates the arches and doors. To the right (north) of the entry bay is a full-height window bay, recessed between piers, with two windows on the first story and two on the second. The piers have the ubiquitous square, floral-scroll plaques. A shallow landing outside the doors leads to three steps divided by a new metal railing. Below is another landing, with a similar metal railing and five steps down to a sidewalk. Twenty feet from the northeast corner of the building is a low, freestanding brick wall, presumably once used for signage. Its buff brick is clearly a newer product and is shaded slightly lighter than the building. It bears no lettering. All of the windows in this wing are non-original metal 1x1 single-hung units. The deep concrete footing is visible below the windows.

The **south office wing’s** east wall is twenty-seven feet wide and is simple. It has one recessed two-story bay. In each story are three windows. The windows are separated by piers with floral-scroll plaques at their tops. All of the windows in this wing are non-original metal 1x1 single-hung units. The deep concrete footing is visible below the windows.

The symmetrical **center section (auditorium)** is the building’s most elaborate feature. It is 80 feet wide and projects outward past the office wings for seven feet. It has two plain bays flanking a decorated central bay. The south and north bays each have three windows in each story, recessed between piers that are topped with floral-scroll plaques. The decorated center bay denotes this part of the building as the auditorium; at the top of the wall, in the center, the parapet projects upward in three steps. Here a coping is a deep concrete band that is castellated (making it look “scalloped”); in the center, narrow bands of vertical zigzag bracket large vertical and square blocks to support a wide deep band that projects upward. Under the projecting band is a hexagonal plaque with a six-pointed-star motif. Below this are two lines of original bronze lettering designating “MUNICIPAL BUILDING/MCMXXXVI.” Below this, lighting the second story, are three windows recessed between shallow piers with floral-scroll plaques.

² Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1987), 116.

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Below the middle window is the street number, "401," in bronze. Below is the entrance proper in the cast-concrete surround. Its top is also stepped and across its width are a series of a raised vertical bars, like widely spaced reeding. In the center is a hexagonal concrete plaque with floral-scroll motif. Under this is carved the word "AUDITORIUM," immediately above three wide rounded arches that define the entryways. Each arch has a set of new aluminum and slab-glass double-doors. The rounded top of each arched opening has a half-round, wood-infilled "transoms" (which may have been originally been glazed).

Eighteen-inch-deep piers support the arches and separate the doorways. Applied at the flanks of the triple-arched entry are stepped pilasters, and from each projects a wide, two-foot-deep wall framing a shallow landing, from which three steps lead down to a broader landing and then to more steps that access the sidewalk. All of the windows in the auditorium section are non-original metal 1x1 single-hung units.

To summarize, the east elevation is designated as primary because it illustrates the central block-and-wing concept and is visually distinguished by the decoration applied to the upper wall and to the surround in the center (auditorium) bay.

South Elevation:

The south elevation, on Evans Street, is the secondary but is important because it accesses the south office wing and originally accessed the public library. Two entrances in the office section lead to city offices. The elevation has three bays in the **office wing**. The central bay has an outwardly projecting concrete entry surround with three steps upward at the parapet, each step decorated at its top with vertical ribbons of zigzag and vertical fluting, giving a castellated effect. The doorway sits under an arch below the incised words "LIBRARY". Over the doors, there is an arched, infilled transom section (perhaps originally glazed). The door is a non-original aluminum and slab-glass unit. Shallow, stepped pilasters project from the surround, and out from them extend low walls that frame a set of concrete steps and a non-original steel railing leading to the sidewalk. Two original metal light fixtures, with original glass globes, remain attached to the surround, flanking the door. Two smaller windows sit above the surround. Flanking the entry are bays with windows recessed and separated by piers with floral-scroll plaques. To the left of the entry, the bay has three windows on each floor. To the right (east) the bay has three windows in the second story above two windows and an entry door near the building's northeast corner. Low, wide, concrete walls flank the entryway, which is set at ground level. The non-original door is aluminum with slab glass, and it sits under a glazed rectangular transom. Attachments for original light fixtures are visible in the wall beside the door. The **auditorium section**, on the west end of this elevation, is set back from the office part. It has three windows at second-story level above two windows and a non-original aluminum and slab-glass double door under a glazed rectangular transom. Attached to the wall near the corner are a downspout for roof drainage, a kitchen vent pipe, and a radio tower. Beside the "Library" entrance is a steel collection box for utility payments (not original). All of the windows in this elevation are non-original metal 1x1 single-hung units.

North Elevation:

The north elevation faces a small city park. Viewed from the park, looking south, the wall of the **office wing** is divided into three two-story bays. A center bay is recessed, with seven windows in each story, separated by six piers, each topped with a floral-scroll plaque. Flanking that bay are flush-walled, single-window bays, one window in each story. The north elevation's only entrance is in the auditorium (west) end, where a double-door opening with a boarded (but still present) multi-light transom over a non-original steel double-door sits at alley level. In this elevation the **auditorium section** also has two widely separated windows on the top two stories and a single window at the lower level. The west end of the auditorium wall was opened at an unknown date to insert large air-handling vents at ground level. Beside them on a concrete walkway is an air-conditioner condenser unit. This elevation has a metal downspout

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for roof drainage. All of the windows in this elevation are non-original metal 1x1 single-hung units. At the north office section's northwest corner is a wood-paling fence that separates the adjacent city park from a parking area (none of this fence is inside the boundary of the subject property).

West Elevation:

The west elevation parallels the alley. Viewed from the alley (looking east) the west elevation illustrates the center block-and-wing concept, with the office wings set back 27 feet from the alley, while the taller, centered auditorium section terminates at the alley. There are three bays in the **auditorium (center) section**, which has a flush wall (no recessed bays). On the left side of the section is a small freight delivery entry at stage level, about four feet from the ground; it has an original wood slab-type double door. There are no windows above or beside this opening because behind this wall (inside) is the backstage area and the stagehouse (curtain rigging area; these are necessarily unlighted). A brick chimney shaft rises from the roof in this elevation. Flanking the center "stage" bay are two identical window bays, each with two windows in each of the three stories. Four windows have air conditioning units. The windows illuminate interior storage areas associated with theatrical productions. In the north end of the wall an alley-level pedestrian entrance, with a steel door, leads to a small basement under the stage area. To the left (north) of the auditorium section, the set-back **north office wing** has a flush wall with asymmetrical openings in its two stories. There are two widely separated windows in the second story above two windows, a non-original metal and slab-glass door with transom, and a smaller window on the first floor. An air conditioning condenser unit and protective steel railing sit on a concrete walk under the windows. On the other (south) side of the building, the set-back **south office wing** has a flush wall with four windows in each of its two stories (no entries). All of the windows in the west elevation are non-original metal 1x1 single-hung units. Exterior light fixtures are new. Attached to the wall are metal downspouts for roof drainage, various electrical connection boxes, and a gas meter protected by a heavy-duty steel railing.

INTERIOR:

Auditorium section. The general public accesses the auditorium from the east, on Main Street. Entering via one of the three arched doorways, the visitor encounters a terrazzo-floored lobby area. To the left and right are offices. A set of terrazzo steps leads to a terrazzo landing; to the left and right are a ticket office and restrooms, also floored with terrazzo. Two bronze plaques on the right-hand wall indicate that the building was a project of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Project Okla. 1004-R and that it was erected in 1936, designed by Winkler and Reid, and built by Cowan Construction. The lobby ceiling retains six original enamel and glass-globe fixtures. The lobby and landing sit underneath the second-floor balcony. Ahead are three entries, each with its original wood panel double-doors (with original brass hardware), accessing the auditorium proper. Most of the millwork and doors appears to be original.

Through the lobby doors is the seating area of the auditorium and beyond, at the far end, the stage. The seating area originally measured 78 feet wide, left to right (north-south), and it accommodated four rows of bleachers on each of the side walls. Circa 1994 it was reduced by eleven feet on each side, creating additional office space for the office wings to north and south. It now measures 56 feet wide. The length, roughly 69 feet (east-west) from entry doors to the front of the stage, or proscenium, remains as original. The auditorium floor is a newer hardwood; originally it was a basketball floor; and the outer edges are carpeted. An acoustical drop ceiling with newer lighting fixtures has been added over the seating area, thus covering the original open structure that had basketball rigging and light fixtures. The new walls at the sides of the auditorium seating area are now wood-frame and gypsum board with wood paneling below and stucco above. Midway in the "new" walls, doors lead into the new office areas.

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The stage is fifteen feet deep from the proscenium/forestage, to the backstage. The proscenium arch is not curved but is angled at the upper corners and gradually stepped back (compounded) at the sides and across the top. This is the principal reference to Art Deco to be found in the interior. Backstage is approximately 12 feet deep and lies behind a wood-framed wall. Presently, the stage floor comprises the original boards, now covered with aging linoleum. In the "second" and "third" floors, directly above the stage, is the stagehouse, or space above the stage and backstage, that was and is used for the curtain rigging. Upper areas above the kitchen and storage room were used for prop storage, dressing rooms, and so forth. This is still used for storage. At floor level on both sides of the stage, a double door leads into small entry foyers, which access a kitchen and a storage room that flank the stage/backstage areas on south and north, respectively (see floor plan). The stage and kitchen are still in use. Short stairways in the entry areas led up to the side stage. Doors and millwork in the stage area appear to be original, and an original wood-framed multi-light transom with lights is still in place on the north side, though the transom is boarded on the outside, and the steel doors are newer.

From the immediate left and right of the three main entry doors from the lobby, twin stairways on left and right lead up to the balcony. The balcony comprises seven wide, deep concrete risers, or benches that extend up the building's east wall for 18 feet and extend the full original 78-foot width of the auditorium. The area is lighted by the nine second-story windows in the east elevation. The construction of a new two-floor office area in the auditorium truncated the balcony view of the stage from the side areas. Doors in the balcony access the new office space and the original offices in the north and south office wings. The front of the balcony has an original short wall and steel railing to prevent accidents. The balcony is still in use.

South office wing. The offices are entered from Evans Street via a small foyer with a terrazzo floor. A stairway at the side of the foyer leads up to the second floor and provided access to upper offices. The south office wing has been subdivided on both floors several times. The first floor has offices along a central east-west corridor. The library area on the second floor also now accommodates offices on either side of an east-west corridor. Little or nothing remains of the original arrangement of space. The second exterior door in this wing accesses first-floor offices.

North office wing. The entry from Main Street, in the east elevation, has two doors leading to a small foyer with a terrazzo floor. Inside, a doorway to the left leads to a small room with a stairwell and access to restrooms. Straight in from the other door, the north wing has offices on the first floor on either side of a central east-west corridor. The floor plan has been reconstituted various times, with new walls created. The second floor is access via a stairwell with a quarter-turn. The area houses a courtroom in a space originally devoted to that purpose. In 1996 the interior was gutted and new wood paneling and seating added. Other parts of the second floor have judge's chambers and various other offices. Little or nothing remains of the original floor plan.

ALTERATIONS:

Interior alterations, likely made before 1994,³ include the reduction of the size of the auditorium seating area by removing bleachers on each side of the basketball floor and constructing two-story interior walls, in order to expand office space on both floors in both office wings. An original ceiling is now covered by a drop ceiling with new lighting fixtures. Interior walls in the north and south office wings have also been rearranged more than once in order to accommodate changing needs. In 1996 the second-floor north courtroom and judge's chambers were refurnished with paneling, and other rooms may have been altered. Again, very little evidence indicates an original floor plan.

³ Information provided by Pamala Morgan, Municipal Court Clerk, 29 January 2015, Seminole, Oklahoma. Morgan has worked as court clerk since 1994 and says that the alterations pre-date her employment.

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The exterior of the Seminole Municipal Building retains its original design and decoration and almost all of its original materials. The exception is the replacement of doors and windows at an unknown date but definitely before 1994.⁴ Original window units were multi-light in 2x3 and 2x4 pattern, material unknown; the new windows are 1x1 single-hung metal units. Original entry doors were panel with a full-length slab of glass. The arches above the main entry doors to the auditorium appear to have held glazed transoms (visual information was gleaned from a historic photograph that appeared in the local newspaper in 1937).⁵ One original exterior door remains, a wood-slab freight door in the west elevation, and an original transom remains above a door in the north elevation.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *Seminole Producer*, 28 February 1937.

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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 N/A

(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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1936-1965

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

ARCHITECT/Winkler & Reid

BUILDER/Nathan Cowan Construction

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Seminole Municipal Building, located at 401 North Main Street in Seminole, Oklahoma, is locally significant in two areas because it was planned and executed as a multi-purpose civic center building. Under Criterion A, **Community Planning and Development**, it is significant as the City's first purpose-built combination civic center and seat of city government. Erected in 1936, it represents the combined efforts of city leaders and citizens to locate their local government departments into one dedicated facility where local laws and ordinances might be made and enforced and public events could be held. It also represents a cooperative effort of a federal government agency, the Public Works Administration, to unite with a local entity to create an investment in local industry in order to construct a public building. It is also eligible in the Criterion A area of **Entertainment and Recreation** as a venue for large public events. The period of significance extends from 1936 to 1965, after which the library function and sports venue function declined.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Seminole Municipal Building is locally significant in the area of **Community Planning and Development**, as the seat of government services and commercial promotion for the City of Seminole, Oklahoma, and under **Entertainment and Recreation**, as a civic center and venue for public events. The town of Seminole, in Seminole County, developed in the late 1890s after the Chicago, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad ("the COG line") built a line through the region (acquired in 1904 by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway). An existing town named Tidmore was bypassed, and residents moved their businesses to the present location of Seminole, which was platted in 1906. It was one of numerous agricultural trade centers for residents of the Seminole Nation, and in 1907, when Oklahoma became a state, the community had only 206 inhabitants. Until the petroleum industry reached the area around the time of World War I, Seminole was a sleepy village of unpaved streets and no public utilities. In 1926 Seminole was transformed by an oil boom after a gusher "came in" at the Fixico No. 1 well on the Fixico lease. Thereafter, Seminole's population exploded from around eight hundred to sometimes as many as thirty thousand. It became an oil boom town, with all of the customarily associated shacks, tents, hard-working men, vices, crime, diseases, and money. The infrastructure was completely unable to handle the huge influx of population.

Social conditions became so deplorable that in March 1927 Gov. H. S. Johnston appointed Dr. J. N. Harbor as mayor in order to bring law and order to the area that was no longer able to be a functioning "community." In concert with public-spirited citizens such as O. D. Strother, W. E. Grisso, and John Mitchell, and the members of the city council, Harbor did a fair job of calming the waters, and he was subsequently elected to office repeatedly until he resigned in February 1937.⁶ Symptomatic of the town's

⁶ *Seminole Producer*, Tenth Anniversary Edition, Section "City is Transformed During Harbor Regime," 24 March 1936; *ibid.*, 10 February 1937.

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ills brought on by economic prosperity was overcrowding in local schools because of an influx of oilfield children. Only two schools existed in 1920; a new high school was built downtown at Main and Evans in 1921, and by 1930 five new elementaries had been erected.⁷ The population stabilized after 1930 at 11,000 when the boom was ending (and remained at that number for forty more years).

During Harber's tenure as mayor he led the city council to plan, fund, and create all of the necessary community services and amenities for a town that had started with none and suffered greatly from the lack. They directed the planning and construction of sidewalks, street paving, and storm drains, a water and sewer system, park sites, a lake and recreation area, an airport, and a junior college (through the Oklahoma Junior College System). Their works impacted community life at all levels. Circa 1926 or 1927 the city fathers erected a two-story building for a city hall, fire station, police station, and jail on Fourth Street between Oak and Broadway.⁸ It quickly became too small to serve the population. Further, because by 1929 the public school district had to build another, bigger high school (the second in fewer than ten years), the city government was able to move into a "new" city hall in the "old" high school building at the corner of Main and Evans in 1930.⁹ A retrofit of classrooms into offices was adequate but not precisely what was needed, although the building did have an arena.

From 1930 through 1934 the "new" city hall had city offices in the classrooms area along East Evans Street, and the Superior Court used space there as a courtroom and judge's chambers. The building also housed the sheriff's office and the public library. Along North Main Street side of the building lay the former high school's basketball arena, still to be used for athletics but also serving as a "civic center." Many groups held events there until a disaster in 1934. On the evening of December 29 a gas leak in the auditorium caused the building to explode. Several people were inside; three died, and several were injured.¹⁰ The offices area (former classrooms) was repaired, and a few city offices remained in the shored up structure until late 1935.¹¹

The planning, funding, and construction of the Seminole Municipal Building, erected in 1936 and fully functional from 1937, was an intergovernmental accomplishment of no small significance for a city the size of Seminole. The facility was the pinnacle of the community planning effort that had begun in 1927. Months before the disaster of December 1934 the city council, contemplating a purpose-built civic center, had directed several architects to draft plans. In January 1935 the council also contemplated a bond issue to pay for it. A planning committee discussed buying a new site and creating a facility that would accommodate city offices, a banquet hall, an auditorium, a public library, and chamber of commerce offices. Several citizens objected to spending money on a new site when the old site was available, and a straw vote led the council to re-use the site of the 1921 high school for the new construction¹²

After interviewing various architectural firms, the council selected the Oklahoma City firm of Winkler and Reid to handle the project. They designed a building to cost \$75,000 (originally) and to include all of the desirable spaces that the city had outlined in the pre-disaster discussions.¹³ Meanwhile, the mayor and council decided to apply to the Public Works Administration, a New Deal agency, for a grant.

⁷ Ibid., 31 December 1934; see also "Survey Report: Intensive Level Survey of Downtown Seminole," State Historic Preservation Office, 2014, 19.

⁸ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Seminole, Oklahoma, 1925, 1927.

⁹ *Seminole Producer*, 31 December 1934, 24 March 1936.

¹⁰ Ibid., 30 and 31 December 1934.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 1, 8, 16, 25, 27 January 1935, 6 and 13 February 1935.

¹³ Ibid., 27 February 1935.

Seminole Municipal Building

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Seminole, Oklahoma

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The Public Works Administration (originally the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works), created in June 1933 by Executive Order of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt, was designed to build large-scale, expensive public projects. The PWA was empowered to provide grants and loans to state or local governments, with a certain percentage of project cost to be provided by the grantee. Unlike the mission of its sister agency, the Works Projects Administration, the Public Works Administration geared its efforts toward stimulating corporate manufacturing and construction companies, rather than providing "make-work" or direct relief, to the unskilled unemployed. Therefore, the federal grant/loan would be used to pay architects and contractors and materials providers, rather than construction workers (other than indirectly as skilled employees of the construction companies). Over its ten-year history, the PWA expended and generated local expenditures on more than \$60 million on construction projects in Oklahoma in nearly every county.¹⁴ The list of projects is lengthy, and the writer of this nomination has identified at least 317 of them in Oklahoma.¹⁵ Nationally, by 1942 PWA had expended more than \$6 billion on 34,512 projects in 3,068 of the nation's 3,071 counties.¹⁶ A fair number of PWA projects were civic auditoriums—city hall combinations like the Seminole facility.¹⁷ The agency ended its service by executive order in July 1943.

The City of Seminole applied in April 1935, anticipating an outright PWA gift (grant) of 30 percent and a 70 percent loan at 4 percent interest. The city would be required to repay the loan portion and planned to do so by issuing bonds (usually the federal government bought all the bonds of a local issue designed to fund the grantee share). One of Oklahoma's U.S. Representatives, Percy Gassaway, tried to shepherd the application through the Byzantine process of federal grants management. On May 14, 1935, Seminole taxpayers approved a bond issue, and the architects presented final plans, which were approved by the city council on May 21. On its first floor the proposed building was to have city and county (branch) offices, chamber of commerce offices and rooms, a separate section with a 500-seat dining room, and a 69-foot by 77-foot arena-type auditorium with four rows of bleachers and a large balcony at the rear. The second floor was to house a library and the superior courtroom.¹⁸

Again fate intervened. The Public Works Administration changed its funding formula. Now the city would have to come up with 55 percent of the cost, with the federal government providing 45 percent in a grant and a loan at 3 percent interest.¹⁹ On September 26, 1935, the PWA approved the expenditure of \$86,818 with an outright grant of \$39,068 and a loan of \$47,749.90 financed through the issuance and sale of bonds.²⁰ The first federal check arrived on January 27, 1936. By that time, Nathan Cowan Construction had sent materials and equipment to the site.²¹

Ground was broken in March, and in mid-November 1936 various city offices quietly moved in to their new headquarters. A grand opening came on Thanksgiving Day, November 25, 1936, with religious

¹⁴ *America Builds: The Record of PWA* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1939), 285.

¹⁵ In *America Builds: The Record of PWA*, as of 1 March 1939, the PWA reported that 302 projects were completed or currently at work in Oklahoma, for a total of \$51,896,062 in cost. Other projects were pending and were later approved before the PWA closed its books. See also Cynthia Savage, "Building the Grady County Courthouse: The Public Works Administration Amidst Local Politics," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 84 (Spring 2006).

¹⁶ *Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), 14 March 1940.

¹⁷ See, for example, the Saddle River, New Jersey, Municipal Building and the Montgomery, Alabama, City Hall and Auditorium featured in C. W. Short and R. Stanley-Brown, *Public Buildings: A Survey of Architecture Under the Public Works Administration* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1939) on pages 11 and 20.

¹⁸ *Seminole Producer*, 1, 15, 17, and 23 May 1935; see also *Oklahoma Libraries, 1900–1937* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Library Commission, 1937), 87–88.

¹⁹ *Seminole Producer*, 26 May 1935.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 29 September 1935.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 28 January 1936.

Seminole Municipal Building

Seminole, Oklahoma

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services for the entire community. Local church choirs and the high school glee club provided a 75-voice chorus, various ministers and public officials spoke, and the building was formally dedicated.²²

After the November 1936 grand opening and dedication, the Seminole Municipal Building provided an appropriate and well-used venue for **Entertainment and Recreation**. It continues to do so. A wide variety of events have occurred there. For instance, because the architects had designed a wide freight door in the northwest corner of the auditorium area (it still is in use), automobiles could be driven into the building. One of the earliest public events was, therefore, the Seminole Producer's Auto Show, opening January 8, 1937.²³ In addition to the 1937 cars, professional singers and dancers of the era performed on the new stage in the auditorium. The Seminole Junior College basketball team regularly held its games in the arena. Bridge clubs and local sororities and fraternities held meetings and dances there. An article in the *Producer* of February 28, 1937, announced that the "New Auditorium [is] Center of City's Activities," with dances, the Boy Scout Merit Badge Show, the auto show, a weekly Thursday night wrestling card sponsored by the American Legion, and the college basketball games the most well-attended events.²⁴

Through the 1930s, the World War II era, and the 1950s Seminole's public events continued to center around the auditorium. The kitchen was regularly used for banquets and the stage for varied performances. Examples of events held there over the building's first fifty years included city-sponsored meetings of the Rural Electric Association in July 1956, the Seminole Garden Club Show in May 1958. In the 1960s and 1970s it was still used for the Seminole Arts Festival and the annual Canadian Valley Day.²⁵

The Seminole Municipal Building's dates of significance extend from its 1936 construction to a date of 1965 because two of the more important public functions continued only until the mid-1960s. Collegiate basketball games were no longer held there from the late 1960s, and in the early 1970s the local junior college built its own campus. Thus the "sports venue" utility lasted only until the mid-1960s. Other community functions were now held in a newer, smaller community building erected in a local park. The public library function met a similar fate. Through the 1950s the portion of the building that had been set aside as the library (originally the entire south wing but later only the second floor in that section) quickly declined from professional library standards and became outdated. In the 1950s professional standards and guidelines for libraries changed, and in the 1960s, due in large part to federal aid, and libraries were now viewed as vehicles for "total community library service," according to the 1960 Public Library Guidelines.²⁶ The Seminole library, like others in small towns, increasingly needed to expand its book collections, its circulation management systems, its reference services, and its spaces for public programming for adults and children. By the mid-1960s the space provided in the Municipal Building was unworkable for those purposes, and beginning in the early 1960s the library board acknowledged the facility's inadequacies and drew plans for a new building because "libraries are destined to play a central role in the community as greater numbers of people . . . use both print and non-print media for information and recreation." The board actually described a library as a place for relaxation as well as for its traditional purpose as a place for acquiring information.²⁷ A new public library building was erected in less than a decade. Despite the degradation of its important public functions as a community planning project and as a recreation/entertainment venue, the Seminole Municipal Building remained the seat of Seminole's city government and is well maintained.

²² Ibid., 23 September 1936, 8 and 28 October 1936, 16 and 25 November 1936.

²³ Ibid., 8 January 1937.

²⁴ Ibid., 28 February 1937.

²⁵ *Daily Oklahoman*, 1 Nov 1954, 1 July 1956, 11 May 1958, 1 April 1973, 15 August 1973; information from City Facilities Manager Sharon Emmett, 29 January 2015.

²⁶ Leigh Estabrook, "Emerging Trends in Community Library Services," *Library Trends* (Fall 1979), 152-153; Shirley A. Fitzgibbons, "School and Public Library Relationships," *School Library Media Research* 3 (September 2000), 3-4.

²⁷ *Seminole Producer*, 21 April 1974.

Seminole Municipal Building
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Seminole, Oklahoma
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Because windows and doors were replaced, listing under Criterion C, Architectural Significance, is not being suggested for the Seminole Municipal Building. Considerably more than fifty percent of the exterior materials are intact, and the footprint retains its original integrity. The building still serves its original purposes as a city hall and occasionally as an auditorium and public meeting place. More importantly, all of the Art Deco decorative elements remain as original. The building retains more than sufficient integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to facilitate its listing under Criterion A, Historical Significance, for its role in Community Development and Planning and in Recreation and Entertainment for the population of Seminole, Oklahoma.

Seminole Municipal Building
Name of Property

Seminole, Oklahoma
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

America Builds: The Record of PWA. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1939.

Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma). 24 September 1936, 20 December 1936, 1 Nov 1954, 1 July 1956, 11 May 1958, 1 April 1973, 15 August 1973, 1 August 1980.

Morgan, Pamala, Municipal Court Clerk. Interview with Dianna Everett, 29 January 2015, Seminole, Oklahoma.

Oklahoma Libraries, 1900–1937 (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Library Commission, 1937)

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Seminole, OK. 1927, 1933, 1933/corrected to 1947.

Savage, Cynthia. "Building the Grady County Courthouse: The Public Works Administration Amidst Local Politics." *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 84 (Spring 2006).

Seminole Producer (Seminole, Oklahoma). 1934–1937, 1974.

Short, C. W., and R. Stanley-Brown. *Public Buildings: A Survey of Architecture Under the Public Works Administration*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1939.

"Survey Report: Intensive Level Survey of Downtown Seminole." State Historic Preservation Office. 2014.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Seminole Municipal Building
Name of Property

Seminole, Oklahoma
County and State

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 (one) acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 35.226777 | Longitude: -96.668978 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Seminole Municipal Building
Name of Property

Seminole, Oklahoma
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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is sited on Lots 7 (Seven) through 12 (Twelve) in Block 9 of the Original Town of Seminole, Oklahoma.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the boundary description recorded in the County Assessor's Office of Seminole County and in the Seminole County Deed Records, Book 1933, page 116.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Dianna Everett, Ph.D., Consultant
organization: for Preservation OK, Inc.
street & number: 2510 Countrywood Ln.
city or town: Edmond state: OK zip code: 73012/6433
e-mail weaver25@cox.net
telephone: 405-348-4679
date: 23 February 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

Seminole Municipal Building
Name of Property

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- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Seminole Municipal Building

City or Vicinity: Seminole

County: Seminole State: Oklahoma

Photographer: Dianna Everett

Date Photographed: 29 January 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 7.
To Be Added

Photo 0001: East elevation, camera facing West

Photo 0002: South elevation, camera facing Northwest

Photo 0003: Entrance Detail, South elevation, camera facing North

Photo 0004: North elevation, camera facing South

Photo 0005: Interior, first floor, lobby, doors to auditorium, camera facing West

Photo 0006: Interior, first floor, auditorium and stage, camera facing West

Photo 0007: Interior, north office section, second floor, courtroom, camera facing West

Seminole Municipal Building
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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Seminole Municipal Building
401 N. Main, Seminole, Seminole Co., OK
WGS Datum 1984
Image date 3/9/2014
Accessed 1/12/2015



35.226777 -96.668978

© 2015 Google

Google earth
Earth Point

Imagery Date: 3/9/2014 lat 35.226777° lon -96.668978° elev 898 ft eye alt 4179 ft



1995 as Ave

Seminole Municipal Building
401 N. Main, Seminole, Seminole Co., OK
WGS Datum 1984
Image date 3/9/2014
Accessed 1/12/2015



35.226777° -96.668978°



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Google earth



Imagery Date: 3/9/2014 lat 35.226777° lon -96.668978° elev 898 ft eye alt 1257 ft



MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MCMXXXVI

AUDITORIUM





LIBRARY

CITY OF SEMINOLE
ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICES

NO SMOKING
WITHIN 25 FT
OF ENTRANCE

CITY OF SEMINOLE
WATER OFFICE
MUNICIPAL COURT
ADMINISTRATION
8AM-12PM 1PM-5PM



NO SMOKING
WITHIN 25 FT
OF ENTRANCE









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Seminole Municipal Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OKLAHOMA, Seminole

DATE RECEIVED: 7/24/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/24/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/08/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/08/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000580

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9.8.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:



RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

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



Oklahoma Historical Society

Founded May 27, 1893

State Historic Preservation Office

Oklahoma History Center • 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive • Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7917
(405) 521-6249 • Fax (405) 522-0816 • www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm

RECEIVED 2280

JUL 24 2015

July 20, 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Park Service 2280, 8th floor
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

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

Fuksa Portion of the Chisholm Trail, Bison Vicinity, Garfield County
Seminole Municipal Building, Seminole, Seminole County
Sally Ann Apartments, Tulsa, Tulsa County
James Martin Baggs Log Barn, Pickens Vicinity, Pushmataha County
KCS Railway Depot, Stilwell, Adair County

The members of the Historic Preservation Review Committee (state review board), professionally qualified in the fields of history and prehistoric archeology were absent from the public meeting at which each of these nominations was considered and the recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer was formulated. Therefore, the member possessing the requisite professional qualifications for evaluation of KCS Railway Depot, Seminole Municipal Building and Fuksa Portion of the Chisholm Trail was not present for the HPRC's formulation of its recommendation on the nomination. However, substantive review of this nomination is not requested because the SHPO staff member possessing the requisite professional qualifications participated in the HPRC's deliberations on this noncontroversial nomination.

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

Sincerely,

Melvena Heisch
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

MKH:iso

Enclosures