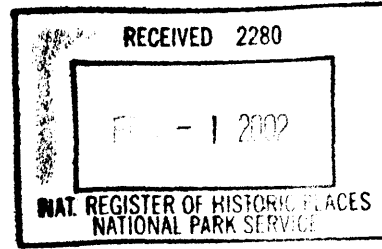


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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Harding Junior High School

other names/site number _____

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 3333 N. Shartel Avenue not for publication N/A
city or town Oklahoma City vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Oklahoma code 109
zip code 73118

=====

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> </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

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: EDUCATION Sub: school

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: school

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:
Collegiate Gothic

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
roof CONCRETE
walls BRICK
LIMESTONE
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)

ARCHITECTURE
EDUCATION

Period of Significance 1923-1926

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

Significant Dates 1923
1926

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Architect: Layton, Smith and Forsyth
Builder: A. F. Stewart Construction

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: Oklahoma City Public Schools Administration Building

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

Acreage of Property 5.63 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>633700</u>	<u>3930290</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 Jocelyn Lupkin

organization Robison & Associates Architects date July 18th, 2001

street & number 2927 The Paseo telephone (405) 524-4544

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73103

=====
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 Oklahoma City Public Schools
street & number 900 North Klein telephone (405) 297-6522
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73106
=====

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

General

Harding Junior High School is an outstanding example of a Collegiate Gothic style brick masonry building. The building was originally constructed in 1924, with additions in 1926 (an auditorium), 1930 (acoustical treatment), 1940 (fire escape and windows), 1954 (small gymnasium and music addition), and 1957 (large gymnasium). The floor area of the original building is 125,321, with later additions bringing the building square footage up to 175,539. (See attached "School Plant Record.") The original portion of the building is three stories tall above grade, plus a partially below grade basement level. Harding has a poured concrete structure which is in excellent condition. The building floor plan is a courtyard enclosed on the north, south and east and open to the west. The building roof is composed of very shallow intersecting gables and very shallow pitched single sloped roofs that slope towards low parapets for drainage, except for a moderately pitched hipped roof over the swimming pool. The pool roof is a glazed steel structure with four gabled dormers that have ventilating grilles on the front. (Photo #1)

The Harding Junior High School site encompasses two contiguous square blocks bounded by Northwest 33rd street on the north, Hill Street on the south, Shartel Avenue on the east, and Olie Avenue on the west; an area of approximately 5.36 acres. The building occupies the east portion of the site and a large playground occupies the west portion. The site is one block long in the north/south direction and two blocks long in the east/west direction. The building is centered on the block between 33rd and Hill Streets, facing Shartel Avenue. Harding has a wide setback from the street, in proportion with its large size relative to the residential neighborhood around it. Harding's wide setback is also functional; it provides adequate gathering space for children arriving in the morning and leaving at the end of the day. (See attached "Harding Middle School Plot Plan.")

Harding is the most imposing building within its neighborhood, Central Park. Because of its important function and its physical presence, it is an important focal point, situated on, Shartel Avenue, a centrally located major street with a landscaped median. Central Park, the neighborhood containing Harding is, essentially, unchanged from the time of its construction, which was basically contemporaneous with Harding's construction. Central Park is composed mostly of modest, single-story bungalows, tudor revival, colonial revival, and National Folk residences, and some larger prairie style residences, mostly constructed between 1910 and 1929. Taken together, Harding and Central Park provide an excellent illustration of what Oklahoma City was like in the first third of the twentieth century.

East Elevation:

Harding has a symmetrical three story east (front) elevation. (Photo #2 and #3) Bays have an A, B, C, B,

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A configuration, consisting of end ("A") bays with decorative brick panels at the second and third story levels, recessed "B" bays with four sets of tripartite windows stacked vertically on each floor, and a central bay flanked by projecting octagonal towers. The brick panels at the "A" bays feature a flemish diagonal bond further accented with the use of a charcoal gray brick at the diagonals. This same bond is featured in a wide band above the third story at the front towers in the central bay, and at the building parapet. The central bay has a recessed arched entry, with a band of five windows above on the second and third floors, and it is accented by the liberal use of limestone veneer in contrast to the dark red brick that is used for most of the building exterior.

Windows typically have limestone sills, lintels, and jambs. Stones at jambs are set in an irregular quoin pattern. The limestone accents contrast with the predominantly red brick veneer exterior. Windows within groups are separated by plain limestone jambs. There is a continuous limestone belt course at the level of the first floor window sills and at the third floor window heads. The belt courses are fluted and project out from the surface of the building. The upper belt course forms a lower ledge for the parapet, which is capped with a matching belt course. "A" bays do not have windows. "B" bays have windows in groups of three. Projecting towers have pairs of windows on the east, north and south faces. Projecting tower windows have double transoms with articulated horizontal limestone panels between transoms and windows. (Photo #5) The central bay has bands of five windows. (Photo #4)

The parapet is stepped at the "A" bays and at the central bay, and it is level at the "B" bays and at the tops of the towers. It has regular, widely spaced crenels between groups of windows at the "B" bays. The projecting towers at the "A" bay have crenels at the center of each side, producing a much quicker rhythm. Crenels have deep, sloped, projecting limestone drip mouldings. Downspouts for roof drainage are coordinated with crenel locations at either side of the projecting towers.

A broad sidewalk and three broad limestone steps lead up to the front entry. A broad central arch leads to a recessed porch with three pairs of doors separated by limestone panels. (Photo #4) Each pair is surmounted by a transom. Exterior doors on the north and south ends of the front entry lead to the library on the south and the administrative offices on the north. The library has its original incised stone exterior building sign ("Library") above its door. The original wood north and south doors off the entry porch have a 3 x 5 divided light pattern. The entry is defined by a heavy, limestone, low-rise, ribbed gothic arch flanked by limestone pilasters with bas relief quatrefoil and trefoil tracery designs. A plain limestone band surmounts the arch and intersects with the pilasters. At the point of intersection, there are bas relief designs of shields and vegetation. There are large quartrefoil medallions with center shields, griffins and mythical sea creatures in the spandrel panels on either side above the arch. (Photo #6) A plain limestone base, approximately three feet tall, anchors and further defines the central entry and projecting towers.

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Ornate bi-folding iron gates are on either side of the entry.

The arched central entry is surmounted by a series of five vertically oriented second and third story windows with limestone surrounds. (Photo #4) A broad horizontal limestone band between the second and third story windows is subdivided by continuous vertical limestone pieces that define jambs between windows. The jambs terminate at their lower edge in four individually designed gargoyles. (Photo #6) The jambs divide the horizontal band between windows into five parts, each with an identical bas relief design of three panels of dagger tracery. The third floor windows at the central bay have transoms. Moulded bands at the third floor window sills and heads are divided at the jambs with small individual square medallions with flower and fleur de lis motifs. The band at the third floor window head is contiguous with the belt course. At the central bay parapet, flemish bond brick panels are between vertical limestone panels set in an irregular quoin pattern between the belt course above the third story windows and an articulated horizontal limestone band. Running bond brick panels between vertical limestone panels set in an irregular quoin pattern are between the horizontal band and the stepped limestone parapet cap. (Photo #7)

The building cornerstone is set on the south end of the east elevation. It credits the architectural firm of Layton, Smith, & Forsyth and the A. F. Stewart Construction Company. There is also a limestone plaque with the following inspirational quote ascribed to Warren G. Harding:

Be Thoughtful
Be Fair
Be Generous
and Above
all, Be Clean.

North Elevation:

The north elevation is asymmetrical. It has a main classroom bay on the east end, with six sets of windows in groups of three lined up vertically on all three stories. The next bay to the west is a narrow, slightly projecting entrance with a limestone arched recessed entry similar to the central east entry bay, but on a smaller scale. The next bay to the west projects out further to the north and is four stories tall. This bay contains the auditorium. (Photo #3) A narrow three story bay to the west of the auditorium contains ancillary auditorium spaces. A 1950s two story music addition is on the northwest corner. (Photo #9)

The classroom bay is three stories above grade. Its windows have limestone sills, lintels, and jambs.

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Stones at jambs are set in an irregular quoin pattern. Windows within groups are separated by plain limestone jambs. There is a continuous limestone belt course at the level of the first and second floor window sills and at the third floor window heads. The belt courses are fluted and project out from the surface of the building. The upper belt course forms a lower ledge for the parapet, which is capped with a matching belt course.

The parapet is level at the classroom bay and slightly stepped at the entry bay. It has regular, widely spaced crenels between groups of windows. Crenels have deep, sloped, projecting limestone drip mouldings. Downspouts for roof drainage are coordinated with crenel locations at either end of the classroom bay.

The next bay contains the north entry. (Photo #8) The site slopes down from east to west, thus two tiers of eleven steps each with an intermediate landing are required up to the north entry. The steps are flanked by low brick wing walls with a limestone cap. The entry is defined by a heavy, limestone, low-rise, ribbed gothic arch flanked by limestone pilasters with a bas relief dagger tracery design. A limestone band surmounts the arch and intersects with the pilasters. At the point of intersection, there is bas relief dagger tracery. There are large quatrefoil medallions with center shields surrounded by a garland in the spandrel panels on either side above the arch. The word "Auditorium" is inscribed in the plain band above the entry arch in Gothic script. The entry has two pairs of double doors with the original transom glazing. The transom is divided into small rectangular panes with a central limestone vertical jamb with dagger tracery. Groups of five vertical windows with transoms are on the second and third floors above the arched entry. A broad horizontal limestone band between the second and third story windows is subdivided by continuous vertical limestone jamb pieces between windows. The jambs terminate at their lower edge in small square medallions with individual flower and fleur de lis bas relief motifs. The jambs divide the horizontal band between windows into five parts, with alternating deep bas relief quatrefoil tracery design. Running bond brick panels are between vertical limestone panels set in an irregular quoin pattern between the belt course above the third story windows and the limestone parapet cap, with a central limestone panel with a deep bas relief shield.

The auditorium projects a little further to the north of the entry. It is four stories tall with a narrow three story bay to the west for ancillary spaces. The basement level has a pair of windows, a single window, and four sets of paired windows going from east to west. (Please note - most of this portion is not below grade because the site slopes down from east to west. Floor designations are in relation to the east elevation, where the first floor is at grade.) A fire escape door is above the west pair of windows. The belt course at the first floor story window sill is notched to accommodate the door head. The first floor has two small single windows and three small pairs of windows going from east to west. The second and third

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floors are not divided - they read as a single double-height area. In this area there are four sets of relatively tall equally spaced window panels. The panel to the east is half bricked in and half glazed, the next panel to the west is mostly glazed with a small lower portion bricked in, and the two panels to the west are completely bricked in with running bond. These windows are flanked on the east and west sides by large flemish bond brick panels that extend from the belt course at the second story window sills to the belt course below the parapet. Smaller flemish bond panels surmount each window panel. All window panels have the typical limestone heads, sills and irregular quoin surrounds. The adjacent narrow bay has a basement level and a first and second story. There is a single large window panel with basketweave and running bond brick infill.

The 1950s music addition on the northwest corner is two stories tall, a basement level plus one story, relative to the rest of the building. (Photo #9) It consists of a small, plain brick veneer box, a recessed entry, and a larger brick veneer box on the northwest corner. The recessed entry has a flat canopy over flush steel double doors with sidelights. There are square cast stone panels above the canopy relieved by a single row of square windows at the second story. The larger portion has continuous bands of windows separated by horizontal cast stone panels, and it rests on a concrete base.

South Elevation:

The south elevation mirrors the north elevation up to the west side of the second, or entry, bay. (Photo #2) Like the north elevation, it has a main classroom bay on the east end, with six sets of windows in groups of three lined up vertically on all three stories. The next bay to the west is a narrow, slightly projecting entrance with a limestone arched recessed entry, also similar to the one on the north side. The third bay to the west is a 1926 gymnasium addition, and it is on the same plane as the first bay. The two bays on the west are the 1954 small gymnasium and 1957 large gymnasium additions, respectively. They project out further to the south and are separated by a narrow passage that is fenced off from the street.

The classroom bay is three stories above grade. Its windows have limestone sills, lintels, and jambs. Stones at jambs are set in an irregular quoin pattern. Windows within groups are separated by plain limestone jambs. There is a continuous limestone belt course at the level of the first and second floor window sills and at the third floor window heads. The belt courses are fluted and project out from the surface of the building. The upper belt course forms a lower ledge for the parapet, which is capped with a matching belt course.

The parapet is level at the classroom bay and slightly stepped at the entry bay. It has regular, widely spaced crenels between groups of windows. Crenels have deep, sloped, projecting limestone drip mouldings. Downspouts for roof drainage are coordinated with crenel locations at either end of the

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classroom bay.

The next bay contains the south entry. (Photo #10) The site slopes down from east to west, although there is less of a change in grade than on the south side. A single set of twelve steps is required up to the south entry. They are flanked by low brick wing walls with a limestone cap. The entry is defined by a heavy, limestone, low-rise, ribbed gothic arch flanked by limestone pilasters with bas relief dagger tracery designs. A limestone band surmounts the arch and intersects with the pilasters. At the point of intersection, there are bas relief dagger tracery panels. There are large medallions with bas relief center shields and vegetation in spandrel panels on either side above the arch. The word "Gymnasium" is inscribed in the band above the entry arch in Gothic script. The entry has two pairs of double doors with the original transom glazing. The transom is divided into small rectangular panes with a central vertical limestone divider with dagger tracery. Groups of five vertical windows with transoms are on the second and third floors above the arched entry. A broad horizontal limestone band between the second and third story windows is subdivided by continuous vertical limestone jamb pieces between windows. The resulting panels are vertically divided in half and have bas relief dagger tracery. The jambs terminate at their lower edge in small square medallions with individual flower and fleur de lis bas relief motifs. Running bond brick panels are between vertical limestone panels set in an irregular quoin pattern between the belt course above the third story windows and the limestone parapet cap, with a central limestone panel with a deep bas relief shield.

The 1926 gymnasium is on the basement level, plus two floors above grade. The gymnasium addition is divided into seven sections demarcated by parapet crenels. The basement level has paired windows in the six sections to the east and a basement level double door addition with a flat canopy on the west end. Basement windows have the limestone sills, heads and quoin pattern jambs typical of the rest of the original portion of the building. Basement windows open onto a paved below grade area shielded by a low stepped brick wall with a limestone cap. The first floor has paired windows in the center four sections, lining up vertically with the basement windows. First floor windows sills are formed by a limestone belt course. The second floor has paired windows at the two sections on the east and west ends, with a glazed shallow projecting addition in the center three sections. Second floor window sills are individual limestone pieces. First and second floor windows have plain brick jambs and heads with steel lintels.

The 1954 and 1957 gymnasium additions are three stories tall, a basement level plus two stories, relative to the rest of the building. (Photo #11) The smaller addition adjacent to the original building has, on the lower level, a single window and a band of four windows with limestone sills. The rest of the elevation of both gyms is a plain brick veneer box, with a fenced passageway in between.

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West Elevation:

The west, or back, elevation is primarily where the 1950s additions have their greatest impact on the building. On the southwest corner there is a gymnasium addition (Photo #11), and on the northwest corner there is a music addition. (Photo #9) These were added to the westward projecting legs of the original building, preserving its courtyard organization. (See attached "Harding Middle School Plot Plan.")

The dominant feature of the west elevation, which faces the playground, are plain brick veneer walls on both additions. The music addition has an entry on its south end with a flat canopy and low brick wing walls. The canopy is supported by pipe columns on the wing walls. The gymnasium addition has an entry with a flat canopy on its northwest corner. On the north and south ends of the gym addition there are pairs of recessed flush metal doors with large ventilating grilles above them at the second story level. The grilles are on the same plane as the brick veneer. A low planter forms the north edge of the entry. To the east of the entry, on the north elevation of the gymnasium, there is a projecting bay with vertical brick fins between first and second story windows separated by cast stone spandrel panels. (Photo #9) Both additions have a plain cast stone or limestone parapet cap.

Interior Features:

Although not strictly speaking an interior feature, Harding's courtyard configuration has been preserved. From the courtyard, the original portions of the building, including brick boiler stacks from the physical plant, are intact, with almost no alterations to obscure them. (Photo #12) The interior layout, of double loaded corridors wrapping around to the auditorium on the north and the cafeteria and gymnasiums on the south, has been preserved. (See attached floor plans Basement (1), 2, 3, and 4) Spaces that are no longer used, such as the 1926 gymnasium (Photo #13) and the original swimming pool (Photo #14), are intact. (The gym is in very good condition and the pool appears to be in a repairable condition.) The auditorium is in nearly original condition, including its proscenium stage, semi-circular balcony and wood seating. An original central double staircase is intact, with the original wood and metal center railing, simple turned wood newell cap and wood handrail (Photo #15). The original wood chair rail runs throughout the building. There are hardwood floors in the classrooms, black and white ceramic tile detailing around drinking fountains (Photo #16), and windows have their original interior wood trim. The library has its original wood bookshelves with crown moulding. The original poured in place concrete structure is in excellent condition, and is visible from the boiler room.

Alterations:

Harding Junior High School is notable for its integrity and condition, despite its continuous use as a public school from the time of its construction. The following changes were noted:

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The original front doors have been replaced with flush metal doors, and the transoms above the front doors have flush wood panel infill. A music wing addition from 1954 was constructed on the northwest corner. Two gymnasium additions, a smaller gym from 1954 and a larger gym from 1957 were constructed on the southwest corner. A small basement level double door entry with a flat canopy was added on the west end of the 1926 gym. It appears to be of the same era as the adjacent 1950s additions. A very shallow projecting addition was placed at the center portion of the top floor of the 1926 gymnasium, which is now a science classroom area. It has a continuous band of aluminum windows with flat, vertically ribbed, metal siding below the windows and floor structure. (This is noted as a "conservatory" on a school floor plan.) Running bond brick infill at two windows on the north side of the auditorium matches brick from 1950s additions. Bronze anodized aluminum stick frame replacement windows and transoms were installed during the 1980s. The front entry has an accessible pedestrian ramp on the south side of the stairs. The front entry has three pairs of new flush metal doors with flush infill panels at the transoms. Side entries have two pairs of new flush metal doors. Narrow metal grilles have been inserted in the horizontal brick veneer bands below windows, most likely as a component of a new heating, ventilating and air conditioning system that was installed in the 1990s.

Despite these changes, the portions of the building that were constructed in 1923 and 1926 are virtually intact, and have the primary impact on the major street elevations of the building. The additions were made to the rear of the building and use similar materials. The additions are compatible, but easily distinguished from the original building. They have little impact from the main facade of the building and do not detract from the integrity of design or workmanship.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Harding Junior High School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as the best remaining example of a Collegiate Gothic junior high school building in Oklahoma City, and because of its association with one of Oklahoma's most prolific architects, Solomon A. Layton and his firm, Layton, Smith and Forsyth.

Historical Background

Oklahoma City

The construction of Harding Junior High School was due, in part, to the pace and pattern of physical growth in Oklahoma City and the desire for good public education. The rapid growth of Oklahoma City and the will of its people made possible the construction of a 125,000 square foot state-of-the-art educational facility just thirty-five years after the first tents were pitched after the land run.

"A common description of western towns is that they 'sprang up overnight.' In the case of Oklahoma City, the literal truth is that it came into being between noon and sunset of April 22, 1889...ten thousand settlers...camped by nightfall over the wide expanse east and west of the Santa Fe's single-track boxcar station, where land had been set aside for a townsite."¹

The boundaries of the townsite were established two months after the opening, "...at Seventh Street on the north, Walker Street to the east, Seventh Street to the south and the Santa Fe Railway on the west."² In the 1890s, growth continued at a steady pace, and the development of a streetcar system in 1902 helped to launch more rapid growth to the north.

Oklahoma's statehood in 1907, the winning of the state capital from Guthrie in 1910, and Oklahoma City's role as a crossroads for the railways paved the way for its "...vigorous growth as the trade center of an expanding new territory. In...twenty years, the population grew from 10,037 to 66,408, and it had become by far the state's largest city...As the state capital, Oklahoma City attracted thousands of state employees, many of whom remained after their political employment ceased. And with the development of the state's natural resources of oil, coal, and metals, the city became a financial and manufacturing center as well. Stimulated by the World War I boom, Oklahoma City's population in 1920 was 91,295."³

This rate of growth continued during the 1920s. Population grew "...by over one-hundred percent in ten years," and the value of building permits issued "... increased... from about five million dollars in 1920 to eight million dollars in 1924."⁴

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After World War I, economic activity intensified. Petroleum exploration allowed the state's economy to diversify, greatly benefitting Oklahoma City. "Manufacturing became less bound up with agriculture and expanded into new fields, and in the late 1920's, a gusher oil field was developed on the east side, within the city limits. As Oklahoma City grew industrially, it added new iron and steel plants, factories for making furniture, clothing, and electrical equipment. Various large utility companies, brokerage houses, and commission concerns also established their headquarters downtown."⁵

As new businesses and industries moved into the downtown area, the city necessarily expanded. "In terms of geographical area, the city covered 15.6 square miles in 1910, 17.2 square miles by 1920, and by 1930 it had grown to 25.2 square miles."⁶

The direction of residential growth away from the city center was not strictly concentric, but had a northward pattern. One reason for this was a force of nature. "The flooding of the North Canadian had disastrous consequences for city development in the early years on the south side, especially the disastrous flood of 1923...The broken and wooded lands along this valley impeded residential development."⁷

No doubt this unsuitability for development on the south side of Oklahoma City influenced far-reaching decisions by two of Oklahoma City's major early developers. "In 1902, John Shartel and Anton H. Classen began the construction of the street railway system, which allowed further growth to the north...The residential sections responded by shifting into the areas that were served by the lines...this period began the noticeable shift in single family dwelling residential areas away from the original townsite..."⁸ Thus, an early northward settlement pattern was established by civic leaders. Civic amenities and further residential development followed the lead of Shartel and Classen. Belle Isle Park at Northwest 36th and Classen came to be served by a street car line⁹ and "(r)esidential construction continued to move forcefully to the northwest with the opening of Putnam Heights to the west of Classen boulevard north of Thirty-fourth Street."¹⁰

Central Park

One of the neighborhoods that was created from this northward expansion was Central Park. The quarter-section sized area that forms Central Park is composed of the Grand View, Central Park, Central Northwest Highland and Ross-Mann additions. Central Park, the east half of the quarter section, and Central Northwest Highland, about ten acres of the far northwest quarter of the quarter section, were both platted in 1907. Grandview Addition, about 23 acres in the southwest quarter of the quarter section, was platted in 1904. The Ross-Mann Addition, which occupies the central portion of the west half, was platted in 1909. All of the additions were incorporated into the city between 1907 and 1910.¹¹

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Incorporation of the area encompassed by Central Park was part of a pattern of growth. "To accommodate the persistent demand for housing, the city continuously annexed more land. Between 1907 and 1908 alone twenty-two additions were incorporated into the city, bringing a population of three thousand persons... This expansion thrust the northern city limits beyond Twenty-Third Street to approximately Hill Street. Within a short period of time, the city again extended its limits. The Central Park, Central Northwest Highland and Ross-Mann additions were all incorporated into the city by 1910, extending the city limits to Thirty-Sixth Street."¹²

Access to and from the area was made possible by the streetcar system. "In return for construction of the route in certain areas, real estate owners conveyed related right-of-ways through their property, thus lessening the construction price of the street car line and increasing the value of the area property. Central Park property owners Mary L. Mann et al and the Central Park Realty Company were two of the many who entered into this advantageous arrangement... From these lines, connections to traverse the entire city, as well as nearby towns and cities were available."¹³

During the 1910s real estate developers began promotion of Central Park.¹⁴ "The Mann Development company touted Central Park as having 'good car service direct to the business part of the city; fine school close; paved streets and all modern conveniences.'" In addition, "(t)he Mann Development Company spent twelve thousand dollars in grading and beautification work, including the planting of several thousand trees, between 1911 and May 1912. The company also built thirteen 'handsome' homes in the tract during that time."¹⁵

Central Park grew quickly into an established neighborhood. "By 1924, G.A. Nichols, Incorporated was advertising the sale of the 'only thirty four lots left' in a two block area of Central Park."¹⁶ However, the great success of its residential development, as well as residential development in surrounding areas, necessitated a need for schools. In 1924, Harding Junior High was constructed to serve this portion of Oklahoma City.

Public Schools

Schools in Oklahoma during the territorial era and early statehood were limited to what could be constructed by determined parents, and school terms were generally only three months long. "The first schoolhouses were of material locally available, and varied from comfortable log buildings to cold frame buildings of native lumber, or even to sod houses in a few districts. Some schools were held in small residences that farmers had abandoned when they "proved up" on their farms and moved back to their homes in 'the states'. Home-built furniture was meager and crude. Blackboards were homemade and usually poor."¹⁷ However, the focus of this effort was important in the eyes of Oklahoma's settlers. "The

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local schoolhouse soon became the community center, providing a place for school programs open to the public, literary societies, box suppers, singing schools, Sunday schools, and preaching."¹⁸

"Public schools first opened in the fall of 1890 but they were severely underfunded. In 1890 Congress appropriated \$50,000 to be used for all the schools in the Oklahoma Territory...That first year some 700 students were taught by 20 teachers..." That small and thinly distributed sum was the basis of Oklahoma's school financing for its many and widely dispersed school districts.¹⁹

"In 1894 Congress helped public education in Oklahoma City by giving it a plot of ground known as the Military Reservation. The money that derived in 1896 from selling the lots carved out of what was called Military Hill was used to build the first two schools, Washington and Emerson. Funds raised by a bond issue of \$45,000 built three additional buildings - Jefferson, Lincoln, and Garfield - so that each ward would have its own elementary school, and there was a segregated school for all black children in town. The high school building opened in 1896 and would be used until 1937, when it burned (for a time it served as the temporary capitol of the state.) By 1898 some 2,000 students were being served in the Oklahoma public schools."²⁰

The growth of the student population paralleled the city's growth in the 1910s and 1920s. For example, in 1921 there were 20,700 children of school age, an increase of 3,000 over the previous year.²¹ In a board of education meeting on February 27, 1922 it was observed that "...Next fall, if there are an additional two thousand children, there will be no place to house them."²² In 1923, the school census reported a population of 26,202.²³

The condition of the public school system was clearly recognized by the heads of city government who, apparently, wanted to participate in the decision-making process. Their efforts were manifested when a "committee from the City Planning Commission and Mr. George E. Kessler, City Planning expert and designer of the Lincoln Boulevard parkway near the capitol, came before the Board with a map of development of Oklahoma City. The map was presented to the Board with the request that these outlines be taken into consideration in making plans for school sites and additions to school sites for playground purposes."²⁴

Soon afterward, on the 25th of April, 1922, a bond issue for improvements to the school system in the amount of \$1,900,000.00 was passed by a vote of 5636 to 3706, and Oklahoma City School District voters raised the mill levy on taxable property for school financing from five to fifteen mills by a vote of 6,457 to 2,898.²⁵

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Further improvements for public education followed. In 1923, important state legislation benefitted the public schools, including "...one giving free textbooks to all pupils in the first eight grades and...one giving state aid to all public schools."²⁶ In addition, school districts voted to lengthen terms. An article titled "Schools Vote Longer Term" announced that, "More than twice as many Oklahoma County children will have the advantage of nine-months school terms this year as had that opportunity last year."²⁷

Amidst all the progress, there was dissent. The Board of Education was compelled to pass a resolution to hire the architectural firm of Layton, Smith & Forsyth to work on a contingency basis on construction documents for the school work financed by the bond issue because it was contested.²⁸ The suit, Board of Education vs. Woodworth, et al., was tried in district court, where an injunction was granted against the issuance of the bond. The case was appealed to the Oklahoma Supreme Court, which reversed the district court decision and dismissed the case on March 13, 1923.²⁹

In July of 1923 Blocks 9 and 10 of the Ross-Mann addition were purchased by the Board of Education as a site selection for the new northwest junior high school.³⁰ In September, a resolution was passed to pave the streets around the school property and close off Francis Street, which runs between the two blocks, for the "protection and safety of the children of this city attending said Junior High School..."³¹ An advertisement for bids was published in The Oklahoma News from September 12-15, from September 27 to 29, and on October 1, 1923 for bids on the "new Junior High School" and other improvements to existing schools. Bids were accepted until October 1st, 1923,³² and Harding Junior High School opened on September 8, 1924.

Integregation

No history of public education is complete without mention of integration, and integration of the Oklahoma City public schools was particularly difficult. Oklahoma's Jim Crow laws were firmly in place under "Article 5. Separate Schools" of the Oklahoma Statutes, 1961. Article 5 stated that the "public schools of the State of Oklahoma shall be organized and maintained upon a complete plan of separation between the white and colored races with impartial facilities for both races."³³

Part of the effort to desegregate the Oklahoma City Public Schools resulted in the "Pairing Plan." The Pairing Plan recommended that blacks "trapped in Negro neighborhoods by former school segregation policies and current residential patterns to transfer to ...schools where they can attain an integrated education." Four schools were paired: predominately black Northeast High School with totally white Harding Junior High School and totally white Classen High School with predominately black Central Junior High School.³⁴ Thus, Harding became a major focus in the struggle to integrate the school system.

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The Oklahoma City School Board repeatedly filed appeals and requests for rehearing which delayed implementation of the plan, and the contention during the four years that passed between the Plan's proposal and its implementation (1965-1969) fanned the flames of divisiveness, especially in the community around Harding.

"Unfortunately because of the delay, by the spring of 1969 "white flight" from the Harding attendance area had given the school a predominately Black enrollment. This obviously defeated the objectives of the Pairing Plan, and the plan was modified to add more white students to the Harding attendance area. With its failure, Judge Bohanon (Judge Luther Bohanon, who was instrumental in the desegregation of the Oklahoma City Public Schools) was ready to extend the integration concept to additional schools, and accordingly, the Oklahoma City School Board was ordered to prepare an additional desegregation plan for the total system."³⁵ The Board of Education responded with a plan to extend the attendance areas of Harding as part of a "full, comprehensive plan for the complete desegregation and integration of the Oklahoma City Public School system."³⁶

Eventually, the comprehensive plan worked to the court's satisfaction, where more limited approaches had not. "When it became obvious that the remaining racial barriers in the Oklahoma City School District were dropping, Judge Bohanon, on January 19, 1977, ended the court's involvement in the case."³⁷

Currently, Harding has a student population that is mixed, with African-Americans, Hispanics, Whites, Native Americans, and Asians.³⁸ The make-up of the student population seems to reflect Harding's environs, as well as the rich mix of cultures in Oklahoma City.

Architectural Significance

Harding Junior High School is significant because it is the best remaining example of a Collegiate Gothic junior high school building in Oklahoma City, and because of its association with one of Oklahoma's most prolific architects, Solomon A. Layton and his firm, Layton, Smith and Forsyth.

As the city rapidly grew and matured from a frontier Victorian town to an urban center with business and manufacturing, the importance of having a good public education system also grew. A period from about 1919 to 1924 was an exciting time for Oklahoma City's public school system, where student population growth and progressive ideas about education paved the way for great progress.

An essay written in 1924, "The History of the Junior High Schools in Oklahoma City", highlights some significant developments:

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"In 1916 the Oklahoma City Board of Education first proposed a bond issue to establish junior high schools. This first bond issue failed, to be followed by another in 1919. This bond issue for \$1 million dollars to erect Webster, Capitol Hill and Classen Junior High Schools passed. These schools opened in 1920. "Even at that date the junior high school throughout the country was still in its infancy and the number of cities as large as Oklahoma City with such a type of organization was very small."

"By 1922, the original three buildings had become over-crowded and it became necessary to provide for an expansion of the junior high school program. Again the Board of Education and the community as a whole expressed themselves as favoring separate buildings for a junior high school type of organization by voting the money to erect the Harding and Roosevelt Junior High Schools. At this time, Classen was changed to a senior high school.

"...As a result of the expenditure of this money every seventh, eight (sic), and ninth grade pupil in Oklahoma City is now housed in a building especially designed and equipped for his needs. This means that each junior high school is provided with a library and library equipment, cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium, swimming pool, clinic, and special rooms for the teaching of home making, industrial arts, fine arts, science, and the other junior high school subjects.

"Without these special buildings and their equipment, a junior high school program such as that illustrated in this book would be impossible."³⁹

This essay provides a thumbnail sketch of the challenges and accomplishments of the public school system during a period of extraordinary growth. The book that is referred to is a publication called "Opportunities for Junior High School Boys and Girls" that was given to "all students entering Oklahoma City Junior High Schools." This was done to give every student the chance to "realize the opportunities which are before them."⁴⁰ This publication goes on to describe the junior high school curriculum and the resources available to the students. At this time, the junior high school in this comprehensive form was an innovative building type that reflected a change in attitudes towards education. The curriculum even featured "finding and broadening courses" that gave "students representative sampling of the more advanced work offered in later years...(to) help students find their interests and abilities."⁴¹

Clearly, Harding offered its students these opportunities and the lives of the students and the life of the community benefitted greatly. A review of the Harding newspaper, The Marionette, from 1932 showed a wide variety of subjects covered, including, library acquisitions, student council elections, school plays, student enrollment (1141 in 1932), book reviews, a poetry column, hobbies, experiments, banquets for the debate and honor societies, and a report on the swimming pool being closed due to operating costs. An

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article titled "Various Vacations Planned by Faculty" provides a window into the faculty's interests and accomplishments by reporting on their summer plans, including summer study programs at Berkeley, Columbia and the University of Chicago, and sixteen out-of-state trips, including a trip to Mexico to paint. Clubs for intramural sports, activities and hobbies reported on included baseball, dodgeball, hiking, volleyball, tennis, basketball, horseshoes, debate, French plays, industrial arts, teas and skating parties.⁴² All of this intellectual and physical activity was fostered by Harding's status as a state-of-the-art educational facility.

The other Junior High School that was built at the same time as Harding was Roosevelt. Roosevelt was also designed in the Collegiate Gothic style but, due to its conversion to an administration building for the Oklahoma City Public Schools, significant features have been changed. Most notably, its original arched front entrance has been completely removed and replaced with an aluminum and glass window and door system with an attached flat canopy over the porch. In addition, a drive through canopy has been added which obscures the main elevation. Large window openings at the auditorium have had windows and limestone surrounds completely removed and bricked in. Most original windows have been replaced with aluminum windows without retaining limestone jambs between individual units in window groups.

Classen, Capitol Hill, and Webster Junior High Schools, which were mentioned in the essay, are all earlier Classical Revival buildings.

Harding is also significant because it was designed by the firm of Layton, Smith & Forsyth. Solomon Layton "designed more than 100 public, educational, and commercial buildings" and "is widely described as the major designer of territorial and early statehood days, and as one of the most important and influential architects in all of Oklahoma's history."⁴³

Layton was the state's premier designer of educational and civic buildings. An application Layton and Forsyth submitted to the United States War Department in April, 1941 listed 75 major commissions. Layton's body of work included 46 buildings for the Oklahoma City public school system alone, 16 courthouses, and the state capital building. (Layton was also instrumental in getting the state capitol moved from Guthrie to Oklahoma City.)⁴⁴

Layton's long list of buildings includes many on the National Register. These are:

- Central High School, NR 76001570
- Mid-Continent Life Building, NR 79002009
- Oklahoma County Courthouse, NR 92000126

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Oklahoma Historical Society, NR 90000124
Oklahoma Publishing Company Building, NR 78002249
Oklahoma State Capitol, NR 76001572
Skirvin Hotel, NR 79002010
El Reno High School, NR 00000179

Other significant Layton designs include the Oklahoma Governor's Mansion and buildings for the University of Oklahoma such as the Bizzell Memorial Library and the original portion of the football stadium, the Oklahoma City University fine arts auditorium, the Oklahoma Gas & Electric building, and the original building on the University of Oklahoma medical school campus in Oklahoma City.⁴⁵

Harding is eligible for the National Register because of the unique combination of its style, size, amenities, materials, use and condition; and because of its association with Solomon Layton. The design and construction of Harding Junior High is a physical manifestation of one of the most vibrant periods of Oklahoma City's development and of the progressive ideas that some of its civic leaders and a majority of its voters had about education. Harding's impressive design and sound construction are reminders of a time when only the best was good enough for Oklahoma City.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

A tract of land in the North ½ of the West ½ of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 21, Township Twelve (12) North, Range Three (3) West, described as follows:

Blocks 9 and 10, Ross Mann Addition to the City of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, State of Oklahoma.
(See attached "Harding Middle School Plot Plan.")

Boundary Justification:

Encompasses the entire property historically associated with Harding Middle School.

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Photo Labels:

Photo #1

Jocelyn Lupkin (applies to all photographs)
July, 2001 (applies to all photographs)
Oklahoma SHPO (applies to all photographs)
Camera facing northwest (pool roof)

Photo #2

Camera facing northwest (elevations)

Photo #3

Camera facing southwest (elevations)

Photo #4

Camera facing west (front, or east, entry)

Photo #5

Camera facing west (tower detail)

Photo #6

Camera facing west (entry arch detail)

Photo #7

Camera facing west (parapet detail)

Photo #8

Camera facing southwest (north entry)

Photo #9

Camera facing northeast (elevations)

Photo #10

Camera facing north (south entry)

Photo #11

Camera facing northeast (elevations)

Photo #12

Camera facing east (courtyard)

Photo #13

Camera facing north (gymnasium)

Photo #14

Camera facing east (swimming pool)

Photo #15

Camera facing west (staircase)

Photo #16

Camera facing west (tile detail)