

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

OCT 20 2007

1264

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gould Community Building

other names/site number American Legion

2. Location

street & number Kennedy Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Gould [N/A] vicinity

state Oklahoma code OK county Harmon code 057 zip code 73544

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

[Signature] State Historic Preservation Officer 10-22-07
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Oklahoma Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- other, explain
 See continuation sheet.

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Edson H. Beall 12-11-07

Gould Community Building
Name of Property

Harmon County, Oklahoma
County/State

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
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO DISTINCTIVE STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STONE: limestone

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

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

Gould Community Building
Name of Property

Harmon County, Oklahoma
County/State

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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Periods of Significance

1937-38

Significant Dates

1937

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

W. P. A. - builder

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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 Historical Society/SHPO

Gould Community Building
Name of Property

Harmon County, Oklahoma
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 14 429200 3836530
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing [] 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 Jim Gabbert, architectural historian

organization Oklahoma SHPO date 9/07

street & number 2401 N. Laird Ave. telephone (405) 522-4478

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73105

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Gould

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Gould Community Building
Harmon County, OklahomaSection number 8 Page 2**DESCRIPTION**

The Gould Community building is a two story, stone veneer, flat roofed building of no distinctive style. It is located on the east side of Kennedy Street (once known as Main Street), one-half south block of Olney Street (US 62). To the south of the building is a small park, to the east a modern church building and parking lot, to the west are parking lots for a bank and the new post office building, and to the north, separated by an empty, tree-lined lots, is a row of single story, older, brick buildings. Historically, the empty lot adjoining the north side of the building was occupied by a single story building. Gould is a small town, with widely dispersed buildings. Streets are wide and sidewalks are rare. A sidewalk is present in front of the Community Building, leading from the intersection of Kennedy and Olney to the park. The Community Building is a distinct presence on the street, and apart from the replacement of the front door, the loss of a small front stoop, and the recent covering of windows with plywood, it retains excellent integrity.

The Gould Community Building is two stories, with a flat roof and a rectangular footprint that measures 25' x 90'. Its primary façade faces west. It has little architectural embellishment and exhibits no distinctive style. The distinctive characteristics of the building include the rhythm of fenestration and the random ashlar of the stone veneer.

The west elevation, or main façade, faces west. Located in the center of the first floor is a modern, steel, paneled door with original wood sidelights and transom. The transom has four panes while the sidelights have a single light atop a paneled bottom section. On either side of the entry are 6/6, wood sash windows. These windows, as do all others on the building, have concrete lug sills, simple brick molds, and flat, steel lintels. On the second floor, there are also two 6/6 windows, but they are not aligned with the first floor windows. The second floor windows are located slightly more toward the centerline of the building. The walls are stone veneer; large, flat stones are randomly placed and interspersed with smaller stones. In some places, small sections of the smaller stones are coursed. Above the front entry is evidence that a flat roof stoop once sheltered the door. It has long since been removed. Between the door and the southernmost window is a bronze WPA shield that reads "WPA 1937-1938 USA." The top of the wall is topped with a smooth, concrete cap.

The south side of the building has the same stone veneer pattern. Each floor has ten window openings, distributed in sets of two equally along the long side of the building. All of these windows have been covered with plywood sheets, but the 6/6 windows are intact underneath. Some of the windows (but not all), exhibit stonework that resembles jack arches. However, this is merely the handiwork of individual masons as each window actually has a steel lintel. All windows have matching concrete sills. The concrete cap continues around the entire building.

The east elevation has a single entry door centered on the first floor. A wooden, five panel door with original hardware is slightly recessed and is flanked by single pane sidelights. There are no other openings and the wall surface has a stucco coating. Modern electrical meters and wiring is attached to the north half of the wall.

The north elevation is also stuccoed. There are windows only on the second floor, in the same paired pattern as the south elevation. These windows have also have plywood inserts to protect the original 6/6 windows. It does not appear that there was ever an attachment of another building to the Community Hall, but it appears that one was located close to it. The roof drains for the Community Building are located on this elevation; there are two scuppers with downspouts dividing the elevation into thirds. A natural gas pipe enters the building at the back 1/3 of the wall.

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SIGNIFICANCE

The Gould Community Building is a significant resource within the context of New Deal work relief programs in Harmon County. It is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. Harmon County in general, and Gould in particular, benefited greatly from the various work relief programs of president Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. In particular, the Works Progress Administration (Work Projects Administration) had a visible, tangible effect on virtually every community in the county. The Community Building constructed in Gould stands as the best, most intact remnant of the work done by the WPA in the community.

Background

The town of Gould had its genesis in a plat filed October 12, 1908 by landowner Samuel Gibson. Platted as "Gibson," the nascent town's name was changed when an application for a post office was filed in early 1909. Postmaster John A. Gould had the honor of having the new post office, and therefore the town, named after him in February, 1909.¹ Gould began a speculative town whose economy was based on agriculture. The town would serve a large region of eastern Harmon County.

Harmon County was carved out of the area of Old Greer County, once considered a part of Texas. A surveying error, a misinterpretation of a river, and a Supreme Court decision eventually turned Greer County, Texas, over to Oklahoma Territory. When the new state of Oklahoma was created in 1907, Old Greer County was divided into three new counties, Greer, Jackson, and Harmon. It was into this new political entity that the town of Gould was born.

Like so many of its counterparts in western Oklahoma, Gould's population and economic success was tied directly to the agricultural fortunes of the area. At its peak, the population of Gould and its service area was nearly 800. It supported a fully accredited high school and a consolidated school district. (Gould was known for its successful basketball teams) However, as with many rural communities, the agricultural depression of the 1920s, exacerbated by the general economic depression of the 1930s, served to stymie any growth in the down; in fact, it led to a spiral downward in terms of economy and population.

The Depression and the New Deal

Harmon County's economy was built on the backs of hard-working pioneers, first the cattlemen who ranged herds across the Texas shortgrass plains and then the farmers who moved into the Oklahoma Territory to conjure up a living from the semi-arid soils. Merchants settled in small towns, ready to sell to the farm families. Schools were opened for the rural and town children. Eventually, a railroad (Wichita Falls & Northwestern) pushed west from Altus to open the area more easily to markets in the big cities. Unusually wet weather for the region led to bumper crops and expectations of perpetual and continued success. The first two decades of the 20th Century brought prosperity and hope to the newly settled areas of Old Greer County. It was this bright future that enticed people to Gould.

It was a return to normal rainfall, and an erosion in the farm markets that promulgated the slow slide

¹ Shirk, George, Oklahoma Place Names, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press) 1981, pp. 99 and 102.

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into economic depression in western Oklahoma. And, when drought hit in the early 1930s, conditions worsened. Families struggled and the towns of Harmon County struggled after the Crash of 1929. With the election of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932, and the implementation in 1933 of his New Deal for the American People came opportunities for farmers and workers who could not make ends meet to find gainful, temporary employment that would also improve the community at large. Roosevelt's so-called Alphabet Soup of new federal agencies were created to alleviate the effects of the depression. The most successful of these were the work relief programs. Some of these programs, such as the FERA and the CWA, were temporary, but provided a template for the most successful (and sometimes controversial) program – the WPA. Organized in March, 1935 as the Works Progress Administration, the WPA provided federal funds to communities for the purpose of creating jobs.

WPA jobs were open to qualified heads of households – persons who qualified for relief as certified by local and county relief agencies. Projects funded by the WPA were sponsored by local communities and had to demonstrate that they were for the public good. Most of the money expended by the WPA went to construction projects – projects that included road infrastructure, sewers, water lines, recreational facilities, and countless schools.

Communities applied for WPA funding. The applications had to specify the type of project and demonstrate its need. The local community had to provide a match to the WPA funds. This could be cash, but most likely it was in-kind. The community might provide materials or other considerations, including experienced foremen or skilled tradesmen.

Harmon County benefited from the WPA immensely. By the time the Gould Community Building was completed, \$363,714 in WPA funds had been expended on projects in the county, comprising 24 completed projects. Much of this work was in road construction and improvement and bridge building. Almost \$170,000 spent in this category, while nearly \$100,000 was spent on school construction and improvement from March, 1935 to January, 1938. While the \$8,000 expended on the Gould Community Building seems like a drop in the bucket, it was much-needed and much-anticipated in the community.²

Gould received a number of WPA construction projects, excluding roads and bridges in the immediate area. In addition to the Community Building, Gould also received WPA funding for a high school and gymnasium (\$86,000) built between 1936 and 1937, a junior high school (\$11,351) built in 1936, and a bus barn and workshop building (\$8,815), completed in 1938.³ (Of these resources, only the gymnasium is extant, and it lacks integrity.)

The Gould Community Building is typical in respect to building materials for WPA resources state-wide. The use of native stone was common; it allowed extra man-hours of work in the quarrying and dressing of the stone. The building, though, is atypical for southwestern Oklahoma. In a survey of WPA resources in southwestern Oklahoma completed in 1987, Professor David Baird of Oklahoma State University noted that "Many WPA resources identified in the ...southwestern...counties were not constructed of native stone. In these instances stone had no been available because of the geological structure of the plains; other materials such as brick..." were used.⁴ In Gould, the schools and the

² "Harmon County Receives \$363,714 in WPA Program," *Gould Democrat*, 2 February, 1938.

³ Baird, W. David, "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Study, Phase III," prepared for the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, 1987. p 52

⁴ Baird, p. 15

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gymnasium were constructed of brick, The bus shed and Community Building utilized stone. It is surmised that the smaller scale of these buildings allowed for the use of native stone. Alone among the brick buildings of Gould, the two stone stories of the Community Building stand out.

The political winds that brought about work relief programs were meant to bolster the economies of the depression-ravaged nation swept through southwestern Oklahoma. The newspaper in Gould, the *Gould Democrat*, almost always had some news of work relief on its front page, whether specific to local projects, or generally about the statewide or national programs.

Economically, the impact on communities was not great, but it was enough to sustain families while providing meaningful work and useful facilities. Unskilled laborers were paid an average wage of \$31.20 a month, enough to feed families but never meant to be a permanent, living wage. As state WPA Director Ron Stephens remarked, "everyone on a WPA payroll should be consistently and aggressively in search of suitable private employment."⁵

Wednesday, July 7, 1937 marked the first day of work on the Community Building in Gould. The *Gould Democrat* noted that fourteen workmen were excavating for the foundation early that morning. Four trucks, loaned by local businessmen, were used for hauling sand and gravel for the project. Noted the paper: "Estimated cost of the building will exceed \$9,000 and 66 working days have been allocated for its construction by the Works Progress Administration." "The community building is one of the most needed projects at Gould and work starts with much enthusiasm..."⁶ The newspaper in the county seat, the *Hollis Post-Herald* put the exact cost at \$9,550, with local sponsors chipping in \$3,550 of the total. More than thirty workers were slated to work on the building, under the supervision of F. W. Dags, a veteran contractor and supervisor of the WPA agricultural building in Hollis.⁷

The use of the building is noted in the same article on July 8, 1937. Various community functions, including lodge meetings, civic clubs and possibly a library were mentioned. Such functions were considered important in small towns that had few large facilities. In a pamphlet produced by the US Department of Agriculture called "Uses of Rural Community Buildings," it is noted that "The rural community house has demonstrated that it is of great benefit to American agriculture."⁸ Gathering places for dispersed rural communities were considered essential for building a sense of togetherness, for keeping lines of communication and news open. "In the early days of settlement of the West the people used to come together in the 'little red school house,' the one-roomed church, the hall over the grocery store to meet their social desires." Modern life diminished such social networks, thus the rise in interest in the modern community building. The pamphlet goes on to describe three classes of community buildings: the minimum type (hall, dressing rooms, kitchen, playground); the medium type (auditorium, dressing rooms, dining room, kitchen, library, committee room(s), playground; and the maximum type (same as medium, but with gymnasium, pool, showers, museum, charities room, art/music rooms or other such amenities).⁹

The Community Building in Gould would fall into the "minimum" category. Its uses included, for the

⁵ "Relief 'Career' Blasted by WPA Administrator," *Gould Democrat*, 1 July 1937.

⁶ "Work Started on Community Building Wednesday Morning," *Gould Democrat*, 8 July 1937.

⁷ "Building of Structure at Gould Starts," *Hollis Post-Herald*, 8 July 1937.

⁸ "Uses of Rural Community Buildings," *Farmers' Bulletin No. 1274*, Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, 1922.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 3.

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most part, social activities. Clubs and lodges were the primary users, with educational or recreational uses rounding out its typical functions. Bettye Bullington, a graduate of Gould High School, noted that a local man kept his cow in the building one winter; students who wanted to use the building for class function had to remove hay and other cow-related detritus. In the end, the American Legion became the chief tenant.

In terms of the construction of the building and its immediate effect on the community, most importantly it put people to work. The relief provided was necessary and welcome. Baird notes in his survey report the quote of an educator from Gould: one of the 'outstanding accomplishments of the WPA...was human salvage.'¹⁰ Literally, this New Deal program saved families in Harmon County, providing the requisite salary needed to get them through the toughest times. People in the county were grateful for both the work and for the end products. A quote from a Harmon County man on a display at the Harmon County Museum in Hollis sums up what many felt: "That's where you get memories that make you feel good, like the WPA days of the 1930s and what good it did for our people at that time of our lives."¹¹

Conclusion

In summary, the Gould Community Building, a product of the Works Progress Administration, stands as a reminder of the importance of this federal work relief program in Harmon County. The purpose of the WPA was two-fold, to provide direct relief to worthy clients and to provide a lasting community good. At least fourteen families benefited directly from the construction of the Community Building; this was important to them and to the community during the summer and fall of 1936. Importantly as well, the town of Gould also was left with a building that served many social and community functions for decades. Gould benefited from numerous WPA projects, but only the Community Building remains intact and in use. It stands as a testament to the worthiness of the federal, state, and local partnerships fostered by the WPA. It is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, as a tangible reminder of the governmental intervention programs of the New Deal.

¹⁰ Baird, 19.

¹¹ Chambers, J. B., quoted on display in Harmon County Museum, Hollis, OK.

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Hollis Post-Herald. Hollis, Oklahoma. July 8, 1937.

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U. S. Department of Agriculture. *Farmers Bulletin No. 1274*, "Uses of Rural Community Buildings." Washington, D. C. 1922.

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

Gould Community Building
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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 4-6 Block 14, original townsite of Gould

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Includes area historically associated with the Gould Community Building

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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-4 except as noted:

Photographer: Jim Gabbert
Date of Photographs: 8/21/07
Negatives: .tif files at OK/SHPO

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photographic Information</u>
1	Front elevation. Camera facing east. Shows surrounding park-like setting.
2	Front oblique. Camera facing northeast.
3	Rear oblique. Camera facing northwest. Shows stucco on rear and lack of windows.
4	North wall. Camera facing southwest. Shows stucco coating and lack of first floor fenestration.