

PH 0662062

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED

FEB 6 1978

DATE ENTERED

MAR 21 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Oklahoma County Home for Girls

AND/OR COMMON

Blinn House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

6300 N. Western

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Oklahoma City

VICINITY OF

No. 5

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Oklahoma

40

Oklahoma

109

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER: Non-profit
Service

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

The Junior League of Oklahoma City

STREET & NUMBER

909 NW 71 (temporary) 6300 N. Western (to be shortly)

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Oklahoma City

VICINITY OF

Oklahoma

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Oklahoma County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Oklahoma City

Oklahoma

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Special Blinn House Survey

DATE

1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Oklahoma Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Oklahoma City

Oklahoma

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED (basically)	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Blinn House as it stands today was built in 1928 at a contracted cost of \$13,075. One of its proudest features was a steam heating system, a reminder of the fire that had destroyed the previous Oklahoma County Home for Girls in 1927 after only a year of service. It is faced with mottled brick, predominantly shades of orange and brown. Exterior trim throughout is white.

Though somewhat larger than most, Blinn is not unlike many of the solid, comfortable homes built by Oklahoma City's upper middle class citizenry of the 1920s. Quite plain and unadorned, it is nevertheless spared the "institutional" look, thanks to traditional front and side porches. A two-story rectangle, roughly 40 x 60 feet and built over a full basement, it faces Western Avenue on the west. Trees and shrubs over the years have combined with a generous site to give Blinn House the "home" appearance, if not indeed the atmosphere, county planners intended the institution to have.

Added to the grounds sometime after Blinn was built is a nondescript "Shelter Office" - a roughly 30 x 30-foot structure of native stone, painted white, with a shingled upper story and a low porch across the west front. A tile block lean-to has been added to the south. The building is on the bleak side in appearance and in obviously run-down condition.

An arc of concrete with street entrances to the north and south serves the front of Blinn House. The grounds accommodate a handball court to the south, then slope gently down to a wooded creek that pretty well delineates the property on the east. Buildings and grounds generally reflect a year's vacancy and subsequent neglect.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1928 to 1975

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Guy C. Reid, architect
Jim Beaty & E. G. Schwartz, builder

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

For nearly a half-century Blinn House was - for all its unpretentiousness in appearance, for all its shortfall in matching idealistic purpose with realistic achievement - Oklahoma County's hopeful symbol of well meaning, if necessarily less-than-perfect, humanitarianism. As such, it seems eminently worthy of National Register recognition, especially so because of its "adaptive use" by an organization - the Junior League of Oklahoma City - that is also dedicated to community service.

* * *

A home for unfortunate girls whose home environments are not happy and who need real mothering - that's the way the need for an Oklahoma County home for girls was outlined in 1925 when the excise board proposed budgeting \$15,000 for the operation and maintenance of such a home. It was not for delinquent girls, County Judge C. C. Christianson explained. "It is planned as a home for girls who have unfortunate home conditions." The home was to be "accessible to a good school, and for the first year we may content ourselves with renting a building, later buying or erecting a building as the need grows."

A suitable building was located early in 1926 - a two-story frame house "that looks like a castle" and was then being used by Dr. W. A. Lackey as a sanitarium. The commissioners paid \$25,000 for the building and its ten-acre site, at that time well north of Oklahoma City. The home served little more than a year, however, before fire completely destroyed it. (The nearest hydrant from which fireman had to lay hose was more than a mile away.) But the county commissioners decided to rebuild immediately, on the same site ... only of brick, and with steam radiators for heat. (A forgotten gas heater against an upstairs bedroom wall was believed to have started the fire.)

Cornerstone of the handsome new home was laid in June 1928, and the ceremony prompted a restatement of high purpose for the facility. "There is no other similar home for dependent girls in the entire state," Judge Christianson said, "and the new building remains as a monument to the thoughtfulness and mercy of Oklahoma county citizens." Mrs. F. A. Ritter, the superintendent, pointed out that important features of the new home "will be the large amount of space available, provisions for healthful living, and an atmosphere of home-like comfort."

That Blinn House (a latter-day name change to honor an Oklahoma City mayor and Oklahoma County judge C. J. Blinn) fulfilled at least part of its builders' hopes is indicated by newspaper stories over the years. A 1936 story draws the picture of 32 "little pajama clad girls whose parents lack the resources to provide for them" clattering down the stairway to sing "Good Night, Mother Conkling" and then complete "the daily rite by kissing the 71-year-old matron" before scurrying off to bed.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Shaw, Bob, "Blinn House Focal Point For Efforts to Aid Girls," The Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Nov. 17, 1964

Miscellaneous newspaper clippings, materials supplied by the Junior League

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 10.89 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 633390 3933270
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

DATE

December 1977

TELEPHONE

405/884-5456

STATE

Oklahoma

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Harry L. Dendree M. D. SHPO

DATE

Feb. 2, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

Wm. H. ...
Walter ...

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3 21 78

DATE

3 16 78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Oklahoma County Home for Girls

In 1952 there was the account of "another wedding . . . the second one in two years and it was the same romantic, thrill-packed experience." Then superintendent Addie Mae DeVore was quoted as saying "Even after the girls have become 18 and gone off to jobs and homes of their own, they still come back to visit us." The reporter ended his story by noting: "Traditional tin cans and old shoes were tied to their car as they left amidst the giggles and shouts of their 'family' at NW 63 and Western."

In 1964 Daily Oklahoman writer Bob Shaw took a more serious in-depth look at Blinn House and what it was attempting to do for "neglected or abused girls who are dependent on the court." By then the facility had become a focal point for energetic rehabilitative work by many individuals. "The philosophy of Blinn House," explained Mrs. Elizabeth Skoglund, the director, "is to create an atmosphere of love and warmth along with intellectual guidance to help girls attain a good moral and cultural status." The program to achieve those goals represented what she called the confluence of many peoples' knowledge and concern.

Generally the "intellectual guidance" for carrying out the Blinn House philosophy was provided by people from Oklahoma City University. One initiated a pilot program for improving reading skills. Others served as tutors in math, sociology, psychology, and other areas. OCU helped round out the Blinn House girls in other ways, too - by providing free tickets for OCU fine arts productions, having the girls act as ushers for theater productions. Other people in the community also helped. An Oklahoma City commercial artist held art classes for the girls. A doctor provided beauty college scholarships. A legitimate theater group allowed the girls to attend plays free. Oklahoma Christian College helped organize a chorus and every girl for a time attended a local church and sang in the choir.

By the 1970s, however, times and conditions were changing. More and more of the girls were placed in foster homes. Blinn became increasingly a temporary housing facility for delinquents - girls and, at the end, boys as well. When the state welfare department took over responsibility for the children in 1975 Blinn was no longer needed and the county commissioners put it up for sale. The property was purchased by architect Robert F. Reed, who sold it in 1977 to the Junior League of Oklahoma City, which proposes to give it an eclectic renovation for League headquarters and continued service to the community.

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Oklahoma County as it was established in the Nineteenth Century was deeply influenced by the Populist-Progressive spirit in the southwest. The Oklahoma County Home for Girls was initiated as a result of citizen concern in 1904 in the Territorial period of Oklahoma's history. This effort was the only institution of its kind -- social rehabilitation of girls who had offended the law -- in Oklahoma County and was the first in the entire State. The initial frame building has been destroyed and the original acreage used for further construction. The Blinn House was constructed in 1928 with the acreage for recreation and extensive gardens, which helped to support the institution.

(Note: J. L. Rader, "Oklahoma County . . .", Chronicles of Oklahoma XX (March, 1942), p. 177.)