United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1267

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 Hollis City Hall and Jail				
other names/site number				
2. Location				
street & number 101 West Jones Street			[N/A] not	for publication
city or town Hollis [N/A] vicinity				N/A] vicinity
state Oklahoma code OK count	y <u>Harmon</u>	code_057;	zip code ₋	73550
3. State/Federal Agency Certification				
As the designated authority under the National Hist nomination request for determination of elig National Register of Historic Places and meets the my opinion, the property meets does not considered significant nationally statewide Signature of certifying official/Title Oklahoma Historical Society State or Federal agency and bureau	gibility meets the docume oprocedural and profes omeet the National Re ☑ locally. (☐ See con	nentation standards for sional requirements s gister criteria. I reco tinuation sheet for ad	or registering set forth in Commend that Iditional con	g properties in the 36 CFR Part 60. In It this property be
In my opinion, the property meets does not r		ter criteria.		
(L) See continuation sheet for additional comments Signature of certifying official/Title	s.)		Date	
State or Federal agency and bureau				
4. National Park Service Certification	lor	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
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 of the	e Keeper	<u> </u>	Date of Action

Hollis City Hall and Jail Name of Property		Harmon County, Oklahoma County/State			
5. Classification	*				
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resour (Do not count previously liste Contributing	ces within Property ed resources.) Noncontributing	•	
[] private [X] public-local [] public-State	[] building(s) [] district [] site	1	0	buildings	
[] public-Federal	[] structure [] object	0	0	sites	
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		0	0	objects	
		1	0	Total	
6. Function or Use Historic Function		Current Fun	ctions		
(Enter categories from instructions)		(Enter categories from instructions)			
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7. Description					
Architectural Classific (Enter categories from instructions)	eation	Materials (Enter categories from	instructions)		
MODERN MOVEMEN	Γ		CONCRETE STONE: limes	tone	
		roof other	ASPHALT		

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

Hollis City Hall and Jail 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.) [X] A Property is associated with events that have made a	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) POLITICS/GOVERNMENT		
significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.			
[] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	Periods of Significance		
[] 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.	1939 Significant Dates		
[] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	1939		
Criteria Considerations (Mark ``x" in all the boxes that apply.)			
Property is:	Significant Person(s) (Complete if Criterion B is marked above).		
[] A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	_N/A		
[] B removed from its original location.	Cultural Affiliation N/A		
[] C a birthplace or grave.			
[] D a cemetery.	Architect/Builder		
[] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	W.P.A builder		
[] 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.)			
9. Major Bibliographical References			
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more con	ntinuation sheets.)		
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:		
□ 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	State Historic Preservation Office ☐ Other State Agency ☐ Federal Agency ☐ Local Government ☐ University ☐ Other		
# recorded by Historic American Engineering Record	Name of repository: Oklahoma Historical Society/SHPO		

Hollis City Hall and Jail Name of Property		Harmon County, Oklahoma County/State				
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Bou (Explain	Indary on why the boo	Justificatio undaries were selec	on ted on a continuation sheet.)			
11.	Form I	Prepared B				***************************************
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nam	e/title <u>J</u>	im Gabbert	/architectural historian			
orga	nizatior	OK/SHPC)			date_ <u>9/2007</u>
stree	reet & number <u>2401 N Laird Ave</u> telephone <u>405 522-4478</u>			telephone <u>405 522-4478</u>		
city	or town	Oklahoma	City	_ state	OK	zip code_ <u>73105</u>
Ade	ditional	Documen	tation			
Subi	mit the	following ite	ems with the completed	form:		
Мар	s	on Sheets			Re	graphs presentative black and white photographs of the perty.
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.		Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)				
Pro	perty (Owner		<u> </u>		
(Compl	lete this item	at the request of SI	HPO or FPO.)			
nam	e City o	f Hollis				
stree	et & nur	nbe <u>r PO bo</u>	x 188			telephone
city o	or town	Hollis		_ state	OK	zip code <u>73550</u>
Paperw determi Preserv	ork Reducti ne eligibility f ration Act, as	on Act Statement: or listing, to list prop amended (16 U.S.C	This information is being collected for apperties, and to amend existing listings. Rec. 470 et seq.	plications to esponse to t	the National his request is	Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or s required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic

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 raintaining 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.

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DESCRIPTION

The Hollis City Hall and Jail is a two story, stone building with a flat roof and a rectangular footprint. It is located at the southwest corner of North Main Street and West Jones Avenue. The main entrance of the building faces onto Main Street, although the mailing address is on West Jones. The historic main commercial strip of Hollis is Broadway, located one block south of the City Hall and Jail. To the north are more modern commercial buildings, including a bank and a fire station. To the south, the building is separated from a small, one story, concrete block building and to the west, a brick garage adjoins the west wall. The City Hall and Jail is of Modern Movement design and its stone veneer shows a level of workmanship above its contemporary WPA buildings.

The primary façade is the east elevation, facing onto Main Street. Visually dominating this elevation is the main entry. Centered on the first floor and reached by a set of three concrete steps, the entry is slightly recessed. Encircling the modern, aluminum and glass entry doors is a surround of smooth-dressed limestone. The sidewalls of the surround are curved, rounding the corner, and the entirety is enframed with a string of corbelled limestone blocks. These corbelled blocks form a panel above the entry, and painted in the panel are the words "CITY and county JAIL." (Photo #6) Flanking the entry are two small lights, added at an unknown date. A metal electrical conduit snakes down to the northernmost light fro ma point above the entry.

The wall of the front elevation is not flat; at the corners, pilaster-like projections carry to a point where the parapet of the flat roofline is. These pilasters are approximately 2' wide. The central section of the wall also projects out about 6" and also terminated at the parapet. Both the center section and the pilasters are capped with smooth limestone. Single 6/6 windows are located equidistant between the entry projection and the north and south pilastered corners of the building. These windows are slightly recessed and have sills that consist of three stone blocks and flat steel lintels. A string course of smooth dressed limestone extends out from the top of the window the width of the recessed section. There are three second floor windows. These are centered over their corresponding first floor openings. A string course of smooth-dressed limestone acts as lintel and sill for these windows; unlike the first floor, these string courses extend from pilaster-to-pilaster across the central section. The center and southern second floor windows have been boarded over. (Photo #1 & #2)

The walls of the front elevation differ from the other walls. Here the stonework is cut and shaped, laid up in a random ashlar. Some attention to detail is evident; similar blocks of stone, flanked by smaller, stacked blocks, are located directly under the first floor windows. The first floor stonework is of uniform buff color, while the second floor has much more differentiation. The mortar joints are 1", and the mortar is colored a brownish-red. The parapet is capped with concrete. At the north corner is a polished, red granite cornerstone that lists the date of construction (1939) and the city officials who held office at the time.

The north elevation, facing West Jones, serves as the secondary elevation. The wall pattern of the stonework changes here. While still smooth dressed, the stone is no longer cut into blocks. The variegated, random, rubble ashlar presents a more rustic look on the north, east, and south sides of the building. The front corner pilaster wraps around the northeast corner; on this small section is the only evidence of shaped stone. The fenestration of the north side reflects the internal configuration of the building. Near the east end, one each floor, are two 6/6 windows. They have the same steel lintel and three-piece stone sill as those on the front. From the east end of the building, on the second floor, are eight 6/6 windows. These are spaced about six feet apart, and the east-most is off-center on the elevation. A single window is located between floors, halfway between the two sections of windows

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(approximately twelve feet from the last of the eight windows and the east-most of the front set of windows). A single, recessed entry door is located off-center on the first floor. The door has been altered – it is now an aluminum and glass door with an aluminum-framed transom. West of this door is a single window opening that has been completely boarded over; a small air conditioning unit projects out from the bottom of the plywood insert. Just east of this window opening is a large, rectangular recessed section. This was once a garage door opening, but at an unknown time it was filled in with stone and a single entry door. The door is off-center in the recessed section and is a steel slab security door. The stonework in this section is crude and does not match the original walls in detail or workmanship. Another "rocked-in" recessed section with a man door is east of this section. It is screened by a wooden fence. East of this recessed section are two more window openings which have been "rocked-in" and a small chain link cage that juts out onto the sidewalk. The cage is accessed via the wooden screen fence that hides the second receded area. (Photo #3 & #4)

The east elevation, or rear, abuts a newer, one story brick garage. Two second floor windows are visible above the garage. These are both off-center. (Photo #4)

The south elevation is difficult to see due to its proximity to a neighboring building. The However, the fenestration pattern is nearly identical to the north elevation. The two former garage door openings are enclosed with concrete block, and a second floor fire escape is located at the second opening from the east on the second floor. A steel staircase leads to this safety door. Many of the second floor windows are covered with boards. (Photo #5)

Most of the windows on the north side are replacement windows of aluminum or vinyl. Windows on the south, east, and west appear to be original for the most part, and those behind the wooden inserts are intact.

The interior has seen change as the building's use has changed. Since it now functions solely as the police station, security features have been added, restricting access. There has not been much reconfiguration to the walls or room layout, though.

The integrity of the building is high in terms of location, setting, design, and feeling. It suffers a bit in workmanship and materials – the wooden inserts, vinyl windows and "rocked-in" or "blocked-in" openings are a minor distraction. Overall integrity is good, and the building easily conveys its association with the WPA and the New Deal work relief programs. Its striking use of local materials and Modernist design set it apart from the older building stock of Hollis and even its contemporary WPA-built buildings.

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SIGNIFICANCE

President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was greeted with skepticism by many and derision by more than a few. It was embraced by the majority, though, folks desperate for some sort of relief from the economic pressures of the Great Depression. Roosevelt summed up the mood of the country: "What do the people of America want more than anything else? In my mind, two things: Work and Security. They are spiritual values, the true goal toward which our efforts of reconstruction should lead." To that end, the citizens of Harmon County and the city of Hollis embraced the President's New Deal. The county seat's new City Hall and Jail stands as a testament to the positive effect that programs such as the FERA, CWA, and WPA had on the community. As one of the last, and best extant examples of the WPA building projects in Hollis, the City hall and jail is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. It is also eligible under Criterion C, as a unique variation on typical WPA architecture in the region, demonstrating a level of craftsmanship and masonry skill above the typical New Deal era building.

BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

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 Beckham. In 1909, Greer County, Oklahoma was again divided into two counties, Greer and Harmon. Harmon County as it was created in 1909 became the southwestern corner of the state.

Flat and fertile in its south half and marked by escarpments along its north half, Harmon County is rural and sparsely settled. Concentrations of population are in the county seat, Hollis, and small communities such as Gould. Even smaller communities exist, mere ghosts of the rural hamlets that were settled in the age of the horse. The town's namesake, George W. Hollis, settled in Old Greer County in 1896, homesteading a half section along with scores of others who moved into the area. His cattle operation was his primary source of income, but his ranch also served as a wayside for travelers. He applied for a post office in 1901; the application was approved in October of that year. In 1904, G. W. Hollis laid out a townsite and began to sell lots. The first commercial enterprise was, of course, the general store and post office he had established years before. The rich agricultural land of Harmon County attracted settlers, and Hollis' townsite attracted the businessmen who could profit from the trade of the surrounding land. While wheat and corn were the initial crops, but its was the introduction of cotton to the area around 1900 that spurred growth. The nearest cotton gin was in Quanah, Texas, so Hollis' new town seemed a likely location for new enterprise. Within a decade, five gins were operating in Hollis.

In 1909, after a special election, the legislature of Oklahoma agreed to spilt Greer County into two sections. Hollis was declared the county seat of the new county, named Harmon County after Judson C. Harmon, US Attorney General at the time Old Greer County was opened for settlement. Isolated by its remote location far away from major trade centers, and poor roads, Hollis' fortunes made a turn for the better when the Wichita Falls & Northwestern railroad pushed east from Altus and reached the town in 1910. This connected the new county seat to markets first in Fort Worth and then, as the WF&NW grew, to Oklahoma City. The population of the town was nearly 1,000 in 1910.

As with many areas whose economies thrived on monoculture agriculture, Hollis' fortunes depended on the agricultural economy and on the vagaries of the weather. Cotton was the king of crops, providing

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the best return on investment. As the fortunes of cotton went, so went the fortunes of Harmon County's farmers. The agricultural markets dropped precipitously in the 1920s, and while the boll weevil was not as devastating a factor in western Oklahoma as it was in the old south, its effect was surely felt. Newspaper accounts tout the high yields in Harmon County and the profits made by the land owners, but are careful to point out that the county had a large number of tenant farmers who did not see all of the fruits of their labor. So, while landowners were solvent, the numerous tenant farmers of the county were dropping precipitously toward economic hardship.

This downward slide for the working farmer was further exacerbated by the stock market collapse of 1929. Bank closures and land foreclosures dominated the headlines, telling the tale of woe that the Great Depression wrought on the county. Resilient as the citizens of the rural communities were, they took notice of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal promises and bought into the programs whole-heartedly. Newspaper accounts in the two major papers in the county, the *Hollis Post Tribune* and the *Gould Democrat* (both weeklies) carried news of local new deal projects on their front pages nearly every week. The majority of projects in terms of manpower and expenditure were farm to market roads. These projects covered the entire county, and with the numerous culverts and small bridges involved in traversing the rolling land, they were exceptionally labor-intensive. Other WPA projects included numerous schools and/or school additions, and infrastructure improvements in Hollis and Gould. In 1939, a Civilian Conservation Corps camp located near Gould. This Soil Conservation camp worked on farmland terracing and other soil erosion measures. The Resettlement Administration (later Farm Security Administration, or FSA) was especially involved in Harmon County. RA tenant farm programs, including loans programs and extension services, were popular in a county where more than 60% of farmers were tenants.

It was the WPA, though, that seemed to be the program that received the most attention. The county in general and the city of Hollis in particular took every advantage of the program's benefits. Organized in March, 1935 as the Works Progress Administration, the WPA provided federal funds to communities for the purpose of creating jobs. In 1937, the state directorship of the WPA changed from General William S. Key to Ron Stephens. Stephens was from southwestern Oklahoma, and it may be no coincidence that after Stephens became director that Harmon County initiated many WPA sponsored projects.

Hollis sponsored projects of various types. There were sewing rooms and a food pantries; sidewalks and sewers; a new water plant and dozens of culverts. In 1935, the football field for the local high school was improved with a stone retaining wall and a stone and concrete bleacher built into a raised berm. A stone agriculture building was constructed adjacent to the county courthouse in 1935. This building housed the extension office for the county. A community building, two stories of stone, was constructed in 1936. In 1938, an elementary school was built of stone and brick. The final major project of the WPA was the new City Hall, begun in early 1939.

The need for a new city hall was evident. The offices at the corner of Main and Jones were housed in a building constructed around 1908. Two stories, of locally quarried stone, the building was built by the city for use as city hall, but in fact, county offices occupied the bulk of the building until the new courthouse was completed in 1927. The city profited from the lease. In 1936, the *Hollis Post-Herald* posited the replacement of the building as a WPA project. However, it would be more than two years before this prediction would come true.

A local bond election held in October, 1938 approved an expenditure of \$8,000 cash for the construction of a new City Hall. This cash, along with a \$2,000 valuation of salvaged materials from

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the old building would match the WPA appropriation for construction of the project. The final project costs were estimated to bb \$36,000.

Work began with fanfare in early January, 1939, as workers began to dismantle the old city hall building. Stone from the building was to be salvaged for use, if not on the new building, then in other WPA projects. The dismantling of the old building took time; workers were careful to salvage as much materials as feasible, but also the nature of the WPA program did not reward expeditious work. It was April before the old building was completely demolished and the site prepared for new construction. Work progressed smoothly and the new building was completed in the fall of 1939. (A gap in newspaper accounts and a dearth of city records is lamentable in ascertaining the actual completion date or any ceremonies or festivities held in conjunction with the building's completion)

Projects such as the new City Hall had both short term and long term benefits for Hollis and Harmon County. In the first two years of the WPA program in Harmon County, from March 1935 to June 1937, \$297,529 was spent on projects. \$246,292 of this was federal money that went directly into the pockets of WPA enrollees. Locally, over \$100,000 was spent on road projects and over \$90,000 on school projects. The total figure did not include the state-wide projects, only those locally sponsored. (By 1940, state-wide, non-construction projects totaled over \$14,000,000.)

By the time the Hollis City Hall and Jail was constructed, war clouds were brewing over Europe and the United States turned its attention to defense spending. Criticism of the New Deal began to mount, especially in light of increased industrial production and a lessening of unemployment. While the arguments were valid in many cases, especially in population centers that had a strong industrial base, there were still large swaths of the country where economic hardship still reigned. Rural areas like Harmon County had few or no industries outside of agriculture. Federal work projects were still viewed as vital tools, especially in developing a modern infrastructure. Answering criticism about federal projects, Federal Security Administrator Paul McNutt could have been speaking specifically about Harmon County when he said in an article published in the Daily Oklahoman on September 21, 1940: "...we are in a much stronger position by reason of the four-billion dollar investment during the last seven years in paved highways and streets." McNutt went on to say that "Men are assets. The yare assets because of the useful work they can do. So long as there are men in America who are able to work but unable to find jobs, a WPA program is essential to our welfare. So long as there are public improvements necessary, it is required for our security." In summing up, McNutt commented on the long view of the WPA: "...when the public has thoroughly grasped the advantages of the WPA, it will be regarded as one of the greatest contributions of the administration to modern political economy."

Hollis' new City Hall was the last major project that involved a new building in the city. WPA projects continued into the 1940s, but these were primarily water and sewer projects. Of the four large buildings constructed by the WPA, the agriculture building, the community hall, the elementary school, and the City Hall and Jail, the latter retains the best historic integrity. The agriculture building has a large concrete block addition appended to its north side. The elementary school has seen its impressive rank of windows altered with newer, smaller units. The community building stands with its windows boarded.

Minor alterations to the City Hall and Jail do not detract from its reflection of the increasing skill of the WPA laborers who worked on its construction. The agriculture building, constructed of yellow sandstone, is a single story building. Its walls are of roughly cut blocks, with rough quarry face, laid up in a random ashlar. The entry is embellished with a low, cut and dressed stone arch. The community building, constructed a year later, in1936, is two stories in height and has a random ashlar veneer of

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light colored stone, similar to that used later on the City Hall and Jail. The quality of the stonework is not as well executed as that of the City Hall. Joints are rough, and there is little evidence of advanced masonry technique. The Elementary school, constructed in 1938, uses brick, stone, and cast stone. The walls are primarily a random ashlar veneer of light stone. Windows are surrounded by a yellow brick, contrasting the roughness of the stonework. The rear walls are constructed of cement blocks, cast with quarry face, and possibly salvaged from an earlier building.

The City Hall and Jail exhibits a level of masonry workmanship not seen on the earlier buildings, but that is hinted at in the 1938 school building. The primary façade of the City Hall building utilizes stone carefully chosen for its color and placed in patterns that reflect different zones of the building. The random ashlar pattern provides a more formal appearance than do the uncoursed side elevations. The entry surround with its curved walls and corbelled frame provides a degree of Modernist interpretation unseen in any other WPA building in the county. The quality of workmanship shows that the WPA workers were at the zenith of their learned skills and that through prior experience on other construction projects they demonstrated progressive levels of skill.

CONCLUSION

The City Hall and Jail in Hollis is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its association with federal New Deal work programs in Harmon County. These political programs had a direct physical and economic impact on the county as a whole and on Hollis in particular. The city and the county took full advantage of the programs offered. Bond issues and creative financing helped secure a succession of WPA projects, injecting much needed federal money while providing modern infrastructure that otherwise would have been unattainable. The City Hall & Jail was the last large construction project in the city and it remains in use for its intended purpose.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTIONLots 1-6, original townsite.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Property historically associated with the City Hall and Jail

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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-6 except as noted:

Photographer: Jim Gabbert Date of Photographs: 8/21/07

Negatives: .tif at OK/SHPO

Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	Camera facing west, showing main elevation and streetscape.
2	Camera facing west. Main elevation.
3	Camera facing south southwest. Oblique showing north elevation and east elevation.
4	Camera facing southeast. Showing rear (west) elevation and garage.
5	Camera facing northeast. Oblique showing rear (west) and south elevation.
6	Camera facing southwest. Detail of front entry.