

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED **JAN 22 1980**
DATE ENTERED **APR 9 1980**

**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 Gas and Electric Company Building

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

321 N. Harvey

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5

STATE

Oklahoma

CODE

40

COUNTY

Oklahoma

CODE

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
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company

STREET & NUMBER

321 N. Harvey

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

VICINITY OF

STATE

Oklahoma

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Oklahoma County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

320 Robert S. Kerr

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Oklahoma County Commercial Sites Survey

DATE

1979

- FEDERAL
- STATE
- COUNTY
- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Shirk Collection, Oklahoma City University Library

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company Building is a twelve-story limestone office structure measuring 150' x 75'. The architectural design is gothic, with arches on the north and east sides, cut-stone ornamentation above the arches, and a strong vertical expression accented by columns on the first level.

The base of each column is sheathed in polished granite from Minnesota. The arches and upper levels are constructed with Bedford limestone from Indiana. Cut into the limestone above the arches is a series of gothic torches, medallions, and small arches. Above the ground level are vertically aligned rows of windows arranged with three windows per bay. On levels two through six, which was the extent of the original construction, the window bays are separated by engaged columns, while the windows in each bay are separated by minor piers. This symmetrical pattern is visually impressive. The top six levels, which were added in 1954, vary slightly from this pattern, for although the major columns are continued the minor piers and ornamental spandrels are absent.

Despite these changes the variation is subtle and does not detract from the structure's original architectural integrity. Otherwise, the building's exterior is in excellent condition, showing no modification. The interior, however, has been remodelled several times, most extensively in 1954.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1928-1979 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Layton, Hicks, and Forsythe

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company Building is significant both to Oklahoma City and the state, for it was constructed in 1928 as the headquarters for the state's oldest and most influential utility; moreover, the structure is one of the few buildings designed by Solomon Layton surviving in Oklahoma City. The structure's unique architectural design, combined with the importance of O,G, & E' to the economic and social development of Oklahoma, makes the O,G, & E Building one of Oklahoma City's most important historic structures.

Although officially incorporated in 1902, the predecessors of O,G, & E began operating within a year of the land opening of 1889 under the name of Oklahoma Ditch and Water Power Company. Typical of utility enterprises on the frontier, this company's successes were the successes of Oklahoma City. For example, using free enterprise principals, the directors of this first utility planned a six-mile channel to divert water from the North Canadian River through the downtown business district of Oklahoma City. Such a project supposedly would provide power for Oklahoma City, while making profits for the company. Like numerous other grandiose development schemes, the channel idea failed. Utility advocates, however, forged ahead with new investments and ideas.

Personal energy and investment capital were not enough to overcome the expenses of initial construction during the early years, for a system of pipe and wire had to be laid, arc lamps had to be installed, and the benefits of electrical power had to be promoted. After several financial setbacks, city financiers George Wheeler, E. H. Cooke, Henry Rule, and W. W. Storm reorganized the utility and incorporated in 1902 under the name, Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company. Despite several changes in ownership, the utility incorporated in 1902 has operated continuously since that time.

The perseverance and dedication of these early utility promoters served a social and civic purpose as well as private profit, for a dependable supply of energy was essential for economic growth. By 1922 O, G & E maintained more than 315 miles of cable and wire

(cont.)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

W. F. Kerr and Ina Gainer, The Story of Oklahoma City (Chicago: 1922), pp. 667-668.

Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City), March 18, 1928, Sec. E, pp. 1-5.

Daily Oklahoman, May 23, 1954, p. 1.

UTM ^(cont.) NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Circa 1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Oklahoma City

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A | 1, 4 | 6 | 34 | 3, 50 | 39 | 26 | 0, 65 |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

D | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

E | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

F | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

G | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

H | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the curb on the southwest corner of 3rd and Harvey, which is approximately 12' northeast of the building, proceed 170'

(con)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dr. Bob L. Blackburn, Project Director August 7, 1979

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma County Historical Society

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

3801 N. Shartel

TELEPHONE

405-528-5091

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

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

Glenn Jordan

DATE

1-8-80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Michael J. Skell

DATE

4-9-80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Mace McDaniel

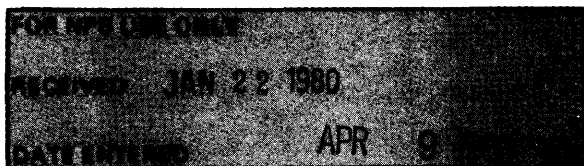
DATE

4/2/80

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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CONTINUATION SHEET 1

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in Oklahoma City, providing excellent service for established customers and incentive for the relocation of new industries. O, G & E also employed 250 persons in Oklahoma City, serving as one of the largest employers in town. This influence extended to other sections of Oklahoma as well, for O, G & E in 1922 provided energy to 30 towns in central Oklahoma, operated six generating plants, and employed a total of 600 persons statewide.

The growth from 1902 to 1922 was fortunate for both the utility company and the citizens of Oklahoma, for during the decade of the 1920s Oklahomans witnessed a revolutionary change in lifestyles through the widespread use of electricity and appliances. Electric irons, refrigerators, toasters, ovens, fans, and radios transformed life in Oklahoma; O, G & E was there to provide the energy. By 1927 O, G & E's service had expanded to 148 towns, more than quadrupling wattage output.

This physical growth forced O, G & E directors to look for a new administrative and operations headquarters. To design a new multi-storied building, they chose the architectural firm of Layton, Hicks, and Forsythe. Solomon Layton was the best known architect in Oklahoma at the time, for he had designed the Oklahoma State Capitol Building, the Skirvin Hotel, and Central High School, all of which are now on the National Register. He went on to design seventy-five public structures in Oklahoma, earning him the distinction as Oklahoma City's foremost architect.

Construction began in April of 1927, and was completed in March of 1928. The structure was six stories tall, but the foundation was built to accommodate another six levels. The architectural style was gothic, featuring arched openings, columns, and gothic ornamentation. The interior also was distinctive, with a marble and walnut trimmed lobby which was highlighted by a hand-painted ceiling. In the basement customers found an entire house with every conceivable appliance.

In the new structure O, G & E continued to grow. In 1954 company officials voted to add another six levels to the structure, making it a twelve-story building. Today, O, G & E still provides dependable energy to Oklahoma City and hundreds of other towns in Oklahoma. As in 1902, this service is still an important key to economic growth and the quality of life. The significance of O, G & E's contributions to

(cont.)

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2

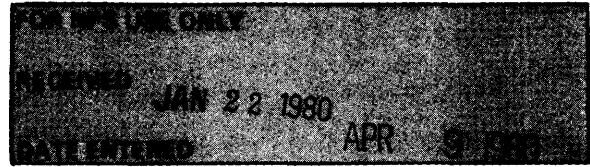
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the development of Oklahoma City and the state is represented by their twelve-story headquarters building. When combined with its architectural significance, the O, G & E Building assumes an important role in the history of Oklahoma.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 3

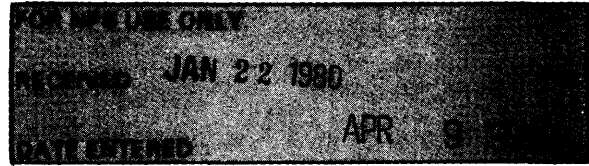
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PAGE 1

George Steinmeyer, "A History of the Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company to the Year 1904," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. LI, no. 2 (Summer, 1973), pp. 195-210.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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south along the curb to a point 10' beyond the southeast corner of the building. Then proceed 85' west through the parking lot to a point parallel with the west side of the building, which abuts with another building on the northwest side. Then proceed north 170' along the face of the building to the curb on 3rd street, which is 10' beyond the north side of the building. Then proceed 85' east along the curb to the point of departure.