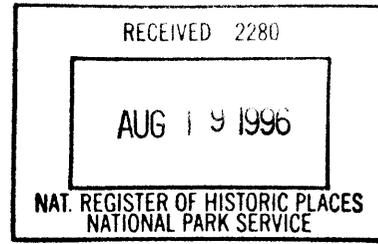


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 Art Building

other names/site number Arts & Flower Building - 50T457

### 2. Location

street & number Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds [N/A] not for publication

city or town Rocky Ford [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Otero code 089 zip code 81067

### 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 [ ]. )

James Edward Hartman State Historic Preservation Officer August 14, 1996  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Office, Colorado 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
- other, explain  
See continuation sheet [ ].

Edson H. Boell Signature of the Keeper 9-27-96 Date  
Entered in the National Register

Art Building  
Name of Property

Otero, CO  
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)

Recreation and Culture

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Octagon Mode

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation  
walls Wood  
roof Asphalt  
other

Narrative Description

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

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Continuation Sheet

ART BUILDING  
OTERO COUNTY, CO

Section number 7 Page 1

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**DESCRIPTION**

The 1901 Art Building is a one-story octagonal wood frame structure located on the Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds in, Rocky Ford, Otero County. Now commonly referred to as the Arts and Flower Building, the structure is 300 feet in circumference and contains approximately 2,152 square feet. The building sits on a single row of cement blocks that rest on a concrete footer. Exterior and interior walls are lapsiding. The low pitched, concave, hipped roof was originally covered with wood shingles. They were replaced with asphalt shingles in 1990. The eaves are boxed, and there is a vent at the roof's peak.

A row of five wood framed windows, most of which have four lights, is located just below the eaves on four of the eight sides. The second and fourth windows in each row are hinged at the top and swing inward for ventilation. An evaporative cooler was installed in the third window on the east wall circa 1980. On the exterior, as a security measure, heavy mesh screening has been stapled over the windows. On the north wall, there are double wooden entry doors located below the central 6 light window. Another double door is located on the south wall. A decorative sign, installed at an unknown date, with the words "Flowers" and "Needlework" is located above the entry doors.

The building maintains a high degree of integrity. It has experienced few changes and remains essentially as constructed in 1901. Circa World War II buildings to its east and west have housed local 4-H and school district functions as well as uses associated with the Otero County Fair. Over the years, maintenance to the Art Building has primarily consisted of exterior and interior painting and window repairs. At an unknown date, brick planters were installed on either side of the entry doors. Recent maintenance and improvements to the building have been provided through the fundraising efforts of the Rocky Ford Garden Club and the City of Rocky Ford. In 1990, a ramp with a metal railing was added at the north entry in order to provide access for handicapped visitors to the Fair. At that time, the three sides of the building that face the midway were scraped and painted off-white with medium brown trim. In 1991, the remaining exterior walls were scraped and painted to match. In 1994, the entry doors were repaired and painted.

On the interior, the original narrow tongue and groove ceiling was repaired by city workers in 1992. Care was taken to blend any new material into the original. A ring of chamfered wood columns contributes to the roof's support, along with a square section wood column centered under the roof's peak. The ceiling is painted white as are the walls and wood columns. The wooden display shelves that surrounded the building are a soft, cool turquoise. Although some shelves have been added over the years, much of the shelving is original. In 1994, a new plywood floor was installed. It is painted gray.

Art Building  
Name of Property

Otero, CO  
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.)

### 9. Major Bibliographic 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
- # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Periods of Significance**  
1901-1946  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**  
1901  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person(s)**  
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**  
Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository:  
City of Rocky Ford  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Continuation Sheet

ART BUILDING  
OTERO COUNTY, CO

Section number 8 Page 2

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Art Building, the oldest building on the fairgrounds, is significant under Criterion "A" for its long term association with the popular Arkansas Valley Fair, an annual event important to the social history of the surrounding area. The fair is among the earliest of the many fall festivals that were held in Colorado communities. Such events served to bring community members together and were promoted as a means of bringing tourists into an area. For more than a century, the Arkansas Valley Fair has been an Otero County tradition. Since its construction in 1901, the Art Building has played a significant part in the continuing success of the fair.

The Art Building is also significant under Criterion "C" as a well-preserved example of a structure constructed in the Octagon Mode, a building type that enjoyed some popularity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although somewhat of a curiosity, the type was promoted for residential use by Orson Squire Fowler in his 1854 publication The Octagon House: A Home for All. Octagons were also constructed to serve as barns. As in the case of the Art Building, they also proved to be quite functional as exhibition halls. With its open floor plan, high ceiling, and large windows that provide natural light and ventilation, the Art Building has successfully accommodated the wide variety of art work and flowers displayed in the building each year during the Arkansas Valley Fair. Over the years, the building has experienced very few modifications and provides a sense of visual continuity for those attending the fair.

The building has always been a great drawing card, a place where young and old alike delight in viewing the beautiful handmade articles created by local artisans that are displayed there each year. During its first year as an exhibition hall dedicated to properly showcasing local artistic talent, a local newspaper article stated that "those who formerly thought that the handiwork of women amounted to little, have reason to think otherwise." Currently, many talented people throughout the Arkansas Valley continue to enter their paintings, needlework, sculptures, crafts, and floral arrangements. Almost everyone knows someone who has an entry on display, and this familiar octagonal building remains a popular place to meet old friends year after year.

Early Development of the Arkansas Valley Fair

George W. Swink, a two term State Senator, was the Father of Watermelon Day and founder of the Arkansas Valley Fair. Born in 1836 in Breckenridge County, Kentucky, Swink came to Rocky Ford from Illinois in 1871 and engaged in the mercantile and stock business. In 1875, Swink began experimenting with raising agricultural crops, particularly the vine crops. The first Watermelon Day was held in front of Swink's place of business in 1878 with only about twenty-five people from the thinly settled county participating.

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ART BUILDING  
OTERO COUNTY, CO

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By 1888, approximately 1,500 attended Watermelon Day and enjoyed helping themselves to free melon from the Watermelon Pile. For several years the Watermelon Pile was located near the train depot. By 1891, Watermelon Day had evolved into a much larger annual event, and the Arkansas Valley Fair Association was formed in 1892. Swink was elected President, and held the position until his death. For many years, the Watermelon Pile has been located just across the midway from the Art Building. Swink is credited with donating the funds needed to install the building's original tongue and groove ceiling and to paint it so that it would be ready for use during the 1901 Fair.

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ART BUILDING  
OTERO COUNTY, CO

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Carrillo, Richard F. "Four Corners Research Commission Historic Survey of Rocky Ford, Colorado." 1981. Copy on file at Colorado Historical Society, OTCPOR.
- Doll, John. "Biography of George W. Swink," Rocky Ford Daily Gazette, July 2, 1976.
- Gordon, Stephen C. How to Complete the Ohio Historic Inventory. Ohio Historical Society: Columbus, Ohio, 1992.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1984.
- Sturges, Dorothy. Circa 1960. Researched pertinent newspaper articles from Rocky Ford Tribune, Rocky Ford Daily Graphic, Gazette Topic, and Rocky Ford Enterprise. Newspapers were stored in basement of Gazette Building, and most have since been destroyed when basement flooded.
- West, Helen. Local Historian, research on Rocky Ford, copies on file at Rocky Ford City Hall.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary includes the footprint of the Art Building as indicated on the attached Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds, Master Development Plan site map of July, 1994, plus 20' around the perimeter of the building.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated area includes the property historically associated with the Art Building.

Art Building  
Name of Property

Otero, CO  
County/State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 613880 4212560  
Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. 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 Jo Nixon

organization Rocky Ford Garden Club date 2/21/96

street & number P.O. Box 848 telephone 719-254-7253

city or town Rocky Ford state CO zip code 81067

### 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 City of Rocky Ford (Contact: Darryl L. Schulz, City Administrator)

street & number 203 South Main telephone 719-254-7414

city or town Rocky Ford state CO zip code 81067

**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.

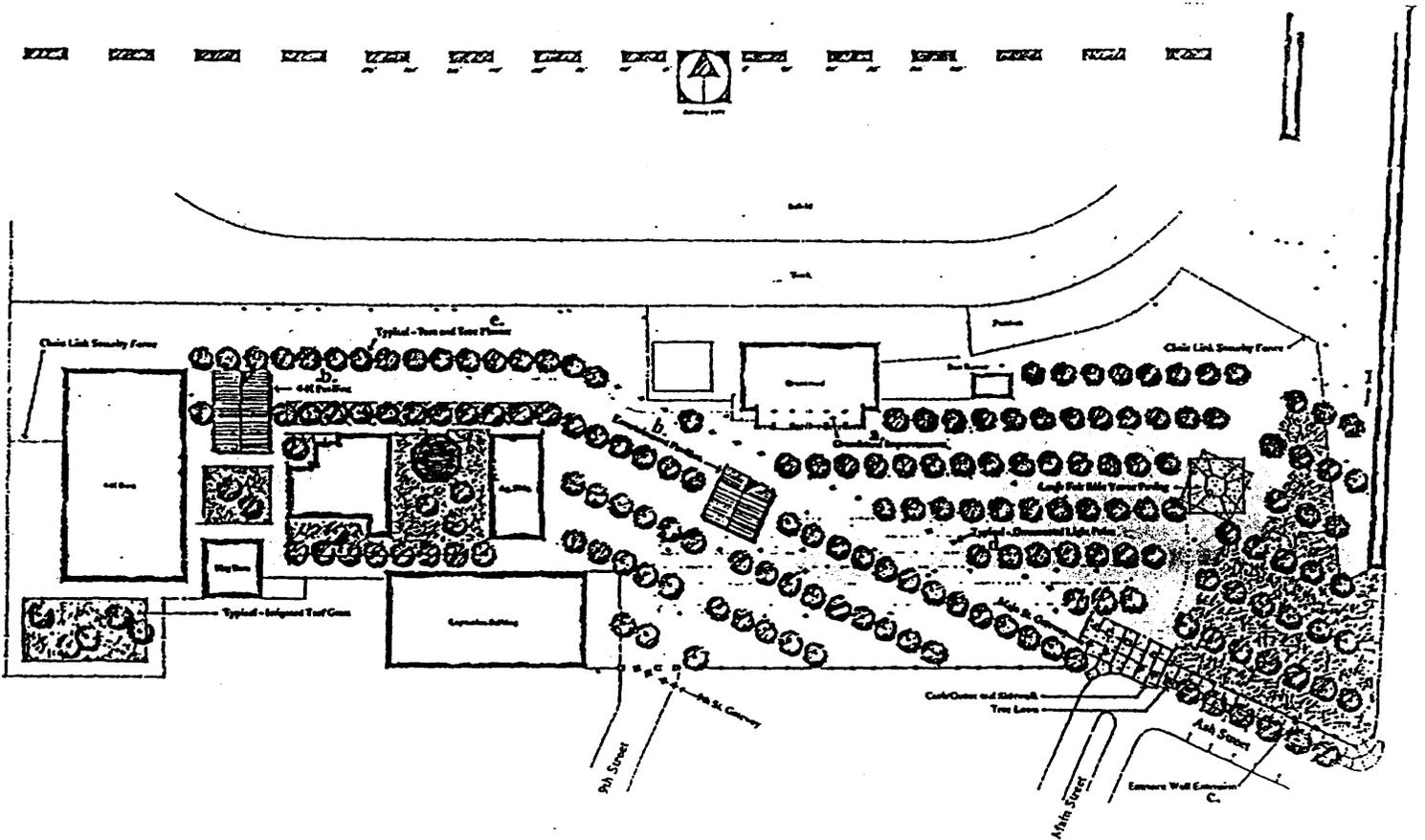
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SKETCH MAP



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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP  
Rocky Ford, CO

