

DEC 11 2015

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Overstreet Hall

Other names/site number: Site #CO0522

Name of related multiple property listing:  
"An Ambition to Be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas"  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: Northwest of the E. University Street and N. Jackson Street intersection

City or town: Magnolia State: Arkansas County: Columbia

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

	<u>11-2-15</u>
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>


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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register *on 1-26-2016 due to weather-related event. Shuttlesworth*
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

  
Signature of the Keeper

*1-27-2016*

Date of Action

**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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/college  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/college  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, WOOD, ASPHALT

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

Overstreet Hall is the administration building for the Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia, Columbia County. The building is located at the intersection of East University Street and North Jackson Street, and it serves as the focal point of the campus when it is approached from the south. The brick building consists of three floors, with an unfinished attic space, and is on a raised brick foundation with a stone watertable. The front of the building is dominated by a full-height portico supported by six Doric columns. The front part of the building, which houses the administrative offices, is capped with a hipped roof covered in asphalt shingles. The rear portions of the building, which house the original auditorium and the current theater, have low-pitched gable or flat roofs. The building's windows, which are modern vinyl, one-over-one replacements, mimic the pane arrangement of the building's original windows.

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#### Narrative Description

##### *Front/South Façade*

The front façade of Overstreet Hall is symmetrical in composition with a central entrance on the first floor. The entrance has a set of double doors with four rectangular windows in each one. A multi-paned fanlight is located above the entrance and it is also surrounded by engaged pilasters

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and an entablature. On the first floor, the entrance is flanked on each side by eight bays of double-hung windows. On the east side of the façade, in between the sixth and seventh bays is a small, nine-paned octagonal window. The second and third floors are spanned by seventeen bays of double-hung windows. The attic space of the building has four gable-roofed dormers with a six-over-six window in the second dormer from the left. The other three dormers have had the bottom sashes replaced with louvered vents.

The central five bays of the façade are sheltered by a gable-roofed portico supported by six unfluted Doric columns. A large entablature spans the portico and it says "OVERSTREET" in the frieze. Dentils are located along the portico's cornice and along its eaves.

The front façade is approached by concrete steps with brick wingwalls. A brick platform in the center of the steps has a granite cube on a brick pedestal that honors the history of the university.

### *Side/West Façade*

The west side of the front portion of the building is seven bays wide and all of the bays have three floors of windows with double-hung windows, with the exception of the first floor. The center bay on the first floor has a recessed brick panel, which appears to be original, rather than a window. The fifth bay from the front has a fire escape on the third floor with a spiral staircase descending to the ground. The façade's central bay also has an attic dormer with a six-pane sash over a rectangular louvered attic vent. On the rear of the front portion is an exterior fire stair in a small brick addition. The west façade of the addition has rectangular openings in between each floor.

The west façade of the transition space between the front portion of the building and the original auditorium space has a window opening to the south and recessed brick panel to the north on the lower level underneath a staircase and open porch with flat metal awning. The entrance into the transitional space is located between the first and second floors. Between the second and third floors are a pair of narrow, double-hung windows that have fake muntins giving them an apparent two-over-two pane arrangement.

The west side of the original auditorium space is divided into five large bays that are separated by engaged pilasters with stone caps. The northernmost bay has an entrance into the space approached by a ramp with cast-concrete wall. The other four bays have large brick panels mimicking windows. Each panel gets shorter with a raised bottom plane the further south you go along the façade.

The west side of the 1970s theater addition is devoid of fenestration. It is divided into three sections with the center section being recessed. The southern section is on the west side of the original catwalk space. A diagonal wall plane transitions from the center section to the northern section. An entrance with two solid metal doors is located just to the right of the diagonal wall plane.

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***Rear/North Façade***

The north façade is oriented around the Harton Theatre addition to the building. The center of the addition has an open porch projection with an engaged entablature and portico. Across the frieze of the entablature is "HARTON THEATRE." Four Doric columns on brick bases support the entrance projection. The entrance has two sets of metal-framed, plate-glass doors that flank a central plate-glass window. The entrances are flanked by two recessed plate-glass windows on each side. Proceeding outward along the façade, diagonal wall planes transition from the recessed windows to the main plane of the façade, which is devoid of fenestration.

The north side of the east end of the front portion of the building is fenestrated on each floor by five bays of double-hung windows. Smaller double-hung windows are located to the right of the five bays of windows on the second and third floors. On the attic floor, five gable-roofed dormers are located across the façade. The left three dormers and the far right dormer have louvered vents. The remaining dormer retains its six-paned upper sash while a louvered vent has replaced the lower sash.

The north side of the west end of the front portion of the building is fenestrated on the top two floors by five bays of double-hung windows. The bottom floor is fenestrated by three bays of double-hung windows. The west end of the north façade is covered by the exterior fire stair tower, which is devoid of fenestration on the north side.

***Side/East Façade***

The east side of the front portion of the building is seven bays wide and the first floor has windows in all of the bays. The fifth bay from the front has a fire escape on the third floor with a spiral staircase descending to the ground. In order to accommodate the fire escape, the fifth bay from the front on the third floor and the sixth bay from the front on the second floor have solid metal doors in them. The façade's central bay also has an attic dormer with a six-pane sash over a rectangular louvered attic vent.

The west façade of the transition space between the front portion of the building and the original auditorium space has a window opening to the south and entrance with a solid door to the north on the lower level underneath an open porch with flat metal awning. Between the second and third floors are a pair of narrow, double-hung windows that have fake muntins giving them an apparent two-over-two pane arrangement.

The west side of the original auditorium space is divided into five large bays that are separated by engaged pilasters with stone caps. The northernmost bay has a loading dock with a large roll-up garage door. The other four bays have large brick panels mimicking windows. Each panel gets shorter with a raised bottom plane the further south you go along the façade. Furthermore, six-pane windows are located above the brick panels in the southern three bays.

The west side of the 1970s theater addition is devoid of fenestration. It is divided into three sections with the center section being recessed. The southern section is on the east side of the original catwalk space. A diagonal wall plane transitions from the center section to the northern

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section. An entrance with two solid metal doors is located just to the right of the diagonal wall plane.

***Interior***

The interior layout of Overstreet Hall consists of central hallways running north-south and east-west in the front portion of the building, which separate the office spaces (originally classrooms and offices). The Harton Theatre addition contains a large open theater space with associated ancillary spaces, while the original auditorium space now contains theatre offices, dressing rooms, prop rooms and costume rooms and classroom space.

***Integrity***

Overstreet Hall retains relatively good integrity from the time of its construction during the 1940s. Two of the largest changes to the building include replacing the original windows and the construction of the Harton Theatre addition in the 1970s. However, the replacement windows maintain the original size and pane arrangement of the original windows. The Harton Theatre addition, which is on the rear of the building, wraps around the original catwalk space, and allowed for the reusing of the original stage area while allowing for a larger theater space for the growing campus. The setting around Overstreet Hall still retains the feel of a college campus even though newer buildings have been built since it was completed. Overstreet Hall also still retains its prominence as the gateway building to campus as it's approached from the south.

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## 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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years



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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION  
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1941-1966  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1941-1943  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Wittenberg & Delony, Architects  
Works Progress Administration, Builder

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Overstreet Hall, located on the campus of Southern Arkansas University, in Magnolia, Columbia County, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A with local significance** for its importance in the history of higher education in Columbia County and also for its associations with the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Built between 1941 and 1943, and designed by the noted Arkansas firm of Wittenberg and Delony, Overstreet Hall, exhibited the design characteristics for many of the buildings on the campus in the period, including an accentuated front door, symmetrical façade, and windows with double-hung sashes with apparent multi-pane glazing, the building employs many of the stereotypical characteristics of the Colonial Revival style. As the Administration Building for the college, it is an important part of the educational history of Columbia County. The building is also important for its associations with the New Deal programs of the 1930s and early 1940s. Overstreet Hall is also being nominated under the associated multiple property listing “An Ambition to Be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943.”

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY**

Columbia County was settled in the early nineteenth century by European immigrant yeoman farmers and other migrants from surrounding Southern states in search of better land to grow cotton on. However, early white settlers did not begin to come in significant numbers until Arkansas achieved statehood in 1836. The settlers initially formed small communities such as Spotsville, Atlanta, Calhoun, and Lamartine. The population of the area continued to grow throughout the early nineteenth century, and by 1850 there was a large enough population to form a new county. In 1852 Columbia County was created out of sections of Lafayette, Union, Ouachita, and Hempstead counties.<sup>1</sup> The county was named after the female personification of America, Columbia.<sup>2</sup> The city of Magnolia was founded in 1855 to act as the county seat. By the 1860s there were a handful of prosperous plantation families, but the majority of the citizens of Columbia County were family farmers.<sup>3</sup>

The city of Magnolia lies one mile east of the geographical center of Columbia County and is located in the bottoms of Big Creek. Two men, J.J. Thomas and John L. McCarty, deeded the land where Magnolia was founded on June 21, 1853, and a temporary courthouse was soon built. “Colonel M. G. Kelso surveyed and laid out the city, modeling it after the town of Oxford,

<sup>1</sup> *Overview: History of Western Columbia County*. Unknown publisher, c.1983. Pages 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Swaim, Kathleen, and Ralph S. Wilcox. “Cross and Nelson Halls Historic District, Magnolia, Columbia County, Arkansas.” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> *Overview: History of Western Columbia County*. Unknown publisher, c.1983. Page 2.

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Mississippi, which he had previously surveyed. Magnolia was incorporated in 1855 with Hiram Slay as the mayor. The next year, the log courthouse was replaced by a larger frame structure.”<sup>4</sup>

By the late 1850s Magnolia received its first newspaper, the *Clarion*, which was soon followed by the *Flower* and the *Vindicator*. Not long afterward Magnolia, like much of Arkansas, was dealing with the Civil War, and approximately 1,000 men signed up to fight for the Confederacy. About a third of them died in the war. However, it was during the Reconstruction period that Magnolia really started to grow. With the addition of the railroad, both cotton and lumber were exported from the city, and banks were soon established to oversee the cotton trade. In 1899 Magnolia’s city phone service was established, and the railroads extended to connect with Louisiana. Over time the cotton prices became low, so farmers began to diversify by growing fruits and grapes.<sup>5</sup>

Although the Civil War did affect the Magnolia area, the effects were less severe than in other parts of the state. There was minor trade disruption of civilian trade, but nothing severe. After the war, the county underwent agricultural changes in the tenant/sharecropper system. By 1880 the population grew to 14,090 and there became more emphasis on cotton as a cash crop. Also during this time was the building of the St. Louis, Arkansas, and Texas Railway which brought change to northern Columbia County.<sup>6</sup> This was especially significant in Columbia County due to the lack of any reliable waterways for transport.<sup>7</sup> The railroads ensured a cheap and reliable method of selling and transporting cotton, and also bolstered the lumber trade in that region of Arkansas. Before the railroad, it was simply not cost effective to cut and sell lumber. Now there was a lumber boom and seven mills were built along the railroads in Columbia County alone. This led to a population boom in the county, and by 1910 there were 23,820 residents.<sup>8</sup>

As timber was cut throughout Columbia County, the newly logged areas became available as farmland, and people were eager to take the opportunity. With the railroads, cotton and corn were grown more than ever, and subsistence farming was fading as cash-crop farms increased the amount grown, hoping for enough money to pay their debts.<sup>9</sup>

Since agriculture was such an important part of life in the state, the Arkansas legislature passed a bill in 1909 that established four agricultural schools, and Magnolia was one of the cities chosen by the state. The school was built in 1911 and had 75 students its first year. The Third District School, as it was called, allowed students to gain a high school diploma as a four year program. Tuition at this time was free due to the sustainability of farmland and livestock, which were to be the tasks of the students, and government funding helped keep the school running. Curriculum

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<sup>4</sup> Lancaster, Guy. “Magnolia (Columbia County).” Encyclopedia of Arkansas. Available at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=855>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Overview: History of Western Columbia County*. Unknown publisher, c.1983. Page 3.

<sup>7</sup> Swaim, Kathleen, and Ralph S. Wilcox. “Cross and Nelson Halls Historic District, Magnolia, Columbia County, Arkansas.” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> *Overview: History of Western Columbia County*. Unknown publisher, c.1983. Page 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Overview: History of Western Columbia County*. Unknown publisher, c.1983. Page 5.

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consisted of agriculture and home economics with English, history, science, and math provided the minimal requirement for a high school diploma.<sup>10</sup>

The first school in Columbia County was a “subscription white school near Calhoun, about 1850-51.” This was created to “keep the boys out of mischief.” No colored schools appeared until after the Civil War. In the northern part of Columbia County, before the Civil War, was a white school “of some value” called Columbia Institute. In the 1870s a Columbia Female Institute “flourished instead of the public schools.” “Those who cared for special education were sent off to Eastern institutions. The public school idea grew slowly...” In the 1870s and up to 1890, the Magnolia Female College, and Buckner, Waldo and McNeil High Schools all [were] private institutions. By 1890 there were “47 districts, in which are 18 frame and log schools... for which are employed 72 teachers, 42 being white and 30 colored.”<sup>11</sup> “The Southwestern Academy, a private preparatory school, was established in 1894, but it closed in the early twentieth century, and its building was used by the Magnolia Grammar School until it burned. Magnolia High School was built in 1917. Later additions to the campus were constructed by the WPA.”<sup>12</sup>

In the mid-1920s, the Third District School was elevated to junior college status. It was officially called State Agricultural and Mechanical College, Third District, but everyone knew it as Magnolia A&M, and would continue to know it as such after the name was changed again in 1951 to Southern State College. The agriculture and home economics curriculum remained but the school increasingly emphasized the two-year Associate of Arts degree it offered. This degree was for students who planned on going to a four-year institution.<sup>13</sup>

A year after neighboring Union County had struck oil, Columbia County struck oil on June 8, 1922. Between the oil industry and the textile mills that arrived in 1927, Magnolia was insulated somewhat from the Great Depression in the 1930s. The city opened a library on June 1, 1929, and later that year a new jail was built to replace the 1890s jailhouse. During the Depression, the Public Works Administration built the city hospital in 1939.<sup>14</sup>

The economic downturn of the 1930s did not hinder the enrollment of several hundred students to Magnolia A&M. Costs were low in order to be the least expensive school in the state. President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal Program provided funding that expanded the physical plant and the graduating classes donated memorial constructions such as the Greek

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<sup>10</sup> Swaim, Kathleen, and Ralph S. Wilcox. “Cross and Nelson Halls Historic District, Magnolia, Columbia County, Arkansas.” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Goodspeed. *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas: Clark, Miller, Sevier, Howard, Pike, Lafayette, Hempstead, Columbia, Little River, Nevada, Cleveland, Ouachita, Dallas, Bradley, Calhoun, Union, Ashley, Drew, Lincoln, Desha and Chicot Counties*. St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1890, p. 461.

<sup>12</sup> McNeill, Mike. “Columbia County.” Encyclopedia of Arkansas. Available at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=758>.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

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Amphitheatre (NR listed June 1, 2005).<sup>15</sup> On July 9, 1976, the school was renamed Southern Arkansas University.<sup>16</sup>

As the University continued to grow throughout the 1900s, new buildings were needed to meet the needs of the school's growing enrollment and programs, especially during the late 1940s and 1950s. In response to this, the University built a number of new buildings, including Overstreet Hall, which was built in 1941-1943.

Overstreet Hall was designed by the noted Little Rock architecture firm of Wittenberg, Delony, and Davidson and was designed in the Colonial Revival style. Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson was established in 1919 in downtown Little Rock by George Wittenberg and Lawson Delony under the name Wittenberg & Delony Architects. In their early years there was little capital to begin, so Wittenberg taught mechanical drawing part time and coached football for Little Rock High School while Delony took charge of the office.<sup>17</sup>

During this time they built residential homes mostly, until the new Little Rock High School project. This school (now known as Little Rock Central High School) was the most expensive high school built in the United States at the time, and bolstered Wittenberg & Delony's acclaim. This allowed them to become more competitive with the established firms.<sup>18</sup>

By the mid-1930s, Wittenberg & Delony employed eight people. Wittenberg focused on marketing and administration, Delony specialized in design, and newcomer Julian Davidson was in charge of producing working drawings. The firm was active during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs, and the firm worked diligently to acquire federal loans and grants for their clients from the federal agencies to build their projects. While most of their projects were residential, the firm was diversifying, taking on several college projects.<sup>19</sup>

When World War II began, most of the firm's employees had gone to war. With fewer employees and an increase in military work, those remaining were kept busy. Once the soldiers returned, Wittenberg & Delony decided to restructure their firm. Julian Davidson was made a full one-third partner and the firm became Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson.<sup>20</sup>

As architecture became more complex and involved in the 1950s, the firm decided to specialize in design, drafting, planning, interior design, landscaping, and construction administration. In 1959 the firm incorporated and is now known as Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson, Inc.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Willis, James F. "Southern Arkansas University (SAU)." Encyclopedia of Arkansas. Available at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=4140>.

<sup>17</sup> Information on Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson from: <http://www.wddarchitects.com/profile/history>.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

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During the 1960s the firm grew significantly in terms of numbers of projects. School projects were the majority, such as those in Southern Arkansas University, followed by residential, commercial, and college, but medical projects were making significant gains. The firm won significant design awards for the Empire Life Building, the Arkansas State Health Department building, and the Arkansas State Hospital. George Wittenberg retired during this time, and his son, Gordon, took the same role as his father and specialized in securing and procuring clients. Tom Gray was also added into the firm's integral design team.<sup>22</sup>

In the 1970s WD&D, Inc. was awarded for their Regions Center Office building, Riceland Foods, University of Arkansas Student Union, and Gordon Wittenberg's residence. In 1976 Tom Gray became president of the firm and wanted to maximize individual talents, so that project managers would specialize in specific building types. WD&D, Inc.'s work in financial buildings was in high demand, and college, medical, planning, and interior design categories grew significantly.<sup>23</sup>

Tom Adams became the new president in 1987 and wanted to develop two new growth markets – corrections and hospitality. Need for more prison space and already established relationships within the government provided the firm with corrections projects. The firm also built hotels in Atlanta, Dallas, Destin, Chicago, Little Rock, and San Antonio. By now, the firm was becoming predominantly institutional and commercial.<sup>24</sup>

In 1991 the firm opened another office in Fayetteville, and in 1997 the Little Rock office was moved to the Regions Center. Throughout the 1990s the firm built hotels, themed restaurants, and even casinos. For example, WD&D built a St. Louis casino and the award winning Pour House Restaurant in the new River Market District. Ed Peek took over in health care design, and led projects for hospitals in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, and Texas. Medical, financial, and planning projects were the majority of the work the firm for the decade.<sup>25</sup>

The most recent projects for Wittenberg, Delony, & Davidson, Inc. have been the Little Rock Statehouse Convention Center expansion, multiple projects for Springdale School District, First Security Center, two Hot Springs Convention Center expansions, Arkansas Department of Correction's Malvern Medium Security Unit, and the renovation of the Excelsior Hotel.<sup>26</sup>

The use of the Colonial Revival style for Overstreet Hall was not an unusual choice, since it was a style that was popular throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The use of the style for academic buildings was a popular choice throughout the twentieth century, since, in some people's opinions, it "conformed to the traditional spirit of the American college" and also harkened back to the colonial buildings of some well-respected eastern colleges, such as Yale, Harvard, and the University of Virginia.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Axelrod, Alan, ed. *The Colonial Revival in America*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1985, pp. 355-356.

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The Colonial Revival style began its rise in popularity in the 1870s, and was specifically influenced by two events – the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876 and the widely publicized 1877 New England tour of the popular architects McKim, Mead, White, and Bigelow to study historic Georgian and Adamesque buildings first-hand. However, the early examples of the Colonial Revival style are rarely accurate copies of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century originals. Rather, they take colonial details and interpret them freely.<sup>28</sup>

However, by the early twentieth century, buildings built in the Colonial Revival style became more accurate interpretations of the historical precedents. Two publications in the first part of the era greatly influenced the development of the style. The first publication was *The American Architect and Building News*, which in 1898 started a large series titled “The Georgian Period: Being photographs and measured drawings of Colonial Work with text.” The second publication was the *White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs*, which began in 1915, and extensively documented colonial buildings through photographs. These two publications, among others, brought more accurate information on colonial buildings and styles, which allowed a wider audience to have a better understanding of the style. As a result, buildings designed in the Colonial Revival style during the 1915-1935 period tend to more accurately resemble colonial buildings than previous attempts at the style did.<sup>29</sup>

Although the style continued to be popular from the late 1930s through the 1950s, partially influenced by the activities at Williamsburg, Virginia, in the 1930s, later examples of the style tended to be simpler than the buildings from the early twentieth century. The simplification of the style was influenced by several factors, including the Depression, World War II, and changing fashions after World War II. As McAlester states in *A Field Guide to American Houses*, “These later examples are most often of the side-gabled type, with simple stylized door surrounds, cornices, or other details that merely suggest their colonial precedents rather than closely mirroring them.”<sup>30</sup>

Planning for Overstreet Hall began in the late 1930s when the board of trustees applied for a \$300,000 grant and loan from the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation for the construction of a physical education building and administrative building. However, rising building costs only enabled the construction of Overstreet Hall.<sup>31</sup>

Although it is not known exactly what date the construction of Overstreet Hall began, it was under construction by August of 1941. In 1945, after he retired, the building was named after Charles A. Overstreet who served as the first president of Magnolia A&M, the name of the university in 1925. An article in the Magnolia *Banner-News* showed a rendering of the building and gave the following description:

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<sup>28</sup> McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994, p. 326.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Willis, James. *Southern Arkansas University: The Mulerider School's Centennial History, 1909-2009*. Magnolia, AR: SAU Foundation and Xlibris Corporation, 2009, p. 137.

Overstreet Hall  
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The new \$187,000 administration building...probably will be completed next spring. Brick work now is up to the second floor.

It will be a fireproof building, 61 feet by 178 feet, is three stories high and has brick walls and concrete columns and floors.

The building will house administrative offices, nine class rooms, three chemistry laboratories, a physics laboratory, a biology laboratory and a dairy and agricultural laboratory. All laboratories will be furnished and equipped with modern mechanical features. All floors will be finished with asphalt tile, and the laboratories will have smooth brick walls in two colors. All lighting will be fluorescent.

Outer walls will be of face brick to match the newer buildings on the campus. Wood columns will be of California redwood, and wood trim will be heart cypress. The roof will be of weathered English tile. The work is a joint project of the college and the Works Projects [sic.] Administration.

Wittenberg & Delony of Little Rock are architects for the college. John H. Byrd is the architect's superintendent.

A \$100,000 auditorium has been approved and money provided. It will be located just to the rear of the new ad building, and probably will be started about the first of the year.

It will provide seating capacity for about 1000, house music rooms, band and speech departments. It will be on [sic.] brick, concrete and steel.<sup>32</sup>

Even though the construction of Overstreet Hall was a big deal for the campus, little coverage of the building's construction appeared in the local newspaper. By August 1943 the building was finished and the newspaper reported that "This new three-story structure will be ready for use this school term which begins on Sept. 2. It contains a new auditorium for the college and a number of science laboratories."<sup>33</sup>

The construction of the building was slow and the progress was uneven. As is explained in *Southern Arkansas University: The Mulerider School's Centennial History, 1909-2009*, "war production took priority in allocating materials, and many workers who could make more money in defense plants outside Arkansas were not available." However, the completed building

provided for the first time modern, up-to-date labs and classrooms for chemistry (third floor) and biology (second floor). The first floor's east end housed all administrative offices, and the west end

<sup>32</sup> "Auditorium To Be Started By First of Year." *The Banner-News*. 28 August 1941, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> "Beautiful New Building On A. And M. Campus Houses Laboratories, Auditorium." *The Banner-News*. 19 August 1943, p. 5.



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provided space for offices and classrooms in English and other liberal arts fields. The auditorium at the rear of the building contained five hundred seats on a sloping floor leading to a full-size theatrical stage, a great improvement over facilities in the armory that had also functioned as a basketball court.<sup>34</sup>

The fact that the WPA was involved in the construction was somewhat unusual for the university and for the state. On many of the other state-university campuses around Arkansas, and even at the Third District A. and M. college campus (as Southern Arkansas University was then known), building projects were often assisted through the PWA.

Overstreet Hall served the university in its original form until 1975 when a major remodeling of the auditorium and stage occurred. The project, which was completed at a cost of \$1,200,000, included a modern 500-seat theater, along with classrooms, offices, and dressing rooms for the speech and theater departments. The new theater was later named the Harton Theater in honor of Margaret Harton, who had a thirty-year career in the school's theater department.<sup>35</sup>

After the remodeling of 1975, it was only a few short years before the main portion of the building was also remodeled. In 1980 and 1981, the rest of the building was completely remodeled for \$647,000. On the interior of the building, "The president's office and other top administrators' offices were enlarged and moved to the west end of the building where a wood-paneled board of trustees meeting room was added. A major expense was for an elevator to help the disabled to more easily reach the second and third floor biology and chemistry facilities that were also refurbished."<sup>36</sup>

The interior remodeling of Overstreet Hall was followed up with the construction of Overstreet Plaza in front of the building in 1982. The plaza included an expanse of brick and landscaping that led to the front entrance of the building. The centerpiece of the plaza was a pink granite cube that weighed 5,000 pounds and featured the seals and dates of the four schools inscribed on its sides. The cube was paid for by friends and alumni of the university.<sup>37</sup>

Since the completion of Overstreet Hall in 1943, it has been a prominent building on campus. Located at the south end of campus, Overstreet Hall's location actually blocked the view of the previous Old Main as people approached the campus from the south. Even today, the building serves as the campus' southern gateway, and remains an important legacy of the WPA in Magnolia and Columbia County.

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<sup>34</sup> Willis, James. *Southern Arkansas University: The Mulerider School's Centennial History, 1909-2009*. Magnolia, AR: SAU Foundation and Xlibris Corporation, 2009, pp. 160-161.

<sup>35</sup> Willis, James. *Southern Arkansas University: The Mulerider School's Centennial History, 1909-2009*. Magnolia, AR: SAU Foundation and Xlibris Corporation, 2009, p. 282.

<sup>36</sup> Willis, James. *Southern Arkansas University: The Mulerider School's Centennial History, 1909-2009*. Magnolia, AR: SAU Foundation and Xlibris Corporation, 2009, p. 295.

<sup>37</sup> Willis, James. *Southern Arkansas University: The Mulerider School's Centennial History, 1909-2009*. Magnolia, AR: SAU Foundation and Xlibris Corporation, 2009, pp. 295-296.

Overstreet Hall  
Name of Property

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**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY**

Overstreet Hall represents the last efforts of Roosevelt’s New Deal programs on the Southern Arkansas University Campus, and also reflects the importance of higher education in Magnolia. When it was built in 1941-1943, Overstreet Hall was the centerpiece of the SAU campus. With offices, classrooms, laboratories, and an auditorium, the building served many purposes and would truly have been a center of education and activity on the campus. Although other buildings on the SAU campus were constructed by New Deal agencies, such as the NYA (Greek Amphitheatre, NR listed June 1, 2005) and the PWA (Cross and Nelson Hall Historic District, NR listed January 20, 2010), Overstreet Hall is the only representation of the work of the WPA. The fact that the building was finished during the last year of the WPA’s existence also illustrates that it was truly the end of an era on the campus.

Overstreet Hall, located on the campus of Southern Arkansas University, Magnolia, Columbia County, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its association with the Works Progress Administration’s work in Columbia County, and for its association with higher education in the county. Overstreet Hall is the only WPA-built building on the SAU campus, and remains today an important hub for the college campus. It is also being nominated under the multiple property listing “An Ambition to be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943.”

Overstreet Hall  
Name of Property

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County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

“Auditorium To Be Started By First of Year.” *The Banner-News*. 28 August 1941, p. 1.

Axelrod, Alan, ed. *The Colonial Revival in America*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1985.

“Beautiful New Building On A. And M. Campus Houses Laboratories, Auditorium.” *The Banner-News*. 19 August 1943, p. 5.

Goodspeed. *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas: Clark, Miller, Sevier, Howard, Pike, Lafayette, Hempstead, Columbia, Little River, Nevada, Cleveland, Ouachita, Dallas, Bradley, Calhoun, Union, Ashley, Drew, Lincoln, Desha and Chicot Counties*. St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1890.

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<http://www.wddarchitects.com/profile/history>.

Lancaster, Guy. “Magnolia (Columbia County).” *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*. Available at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=855>.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994.

McNeill, Mike. “Columbia County.” *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*. Available at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=758>.

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Willis, James F. “Southern Arkansas University (SAU).” *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*. Available at <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=4140>.

Willis, James. *Southern Arkansas University: The Mulerider School’s Centennial History, 1909-2009*. Magnolia, AR: SAU Foundation and Xlibris Corporation, 2009.

Overstreet Hall  
Name of Property

Columbia County, Arkansas  
County and State

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Southern Arkansas University, Magnolia, Arkansas

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** CO0522

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Approximately 1.5 acres.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 33.289638 | Longitude: -93.236093 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

**Or**  
**UTM References**

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Columbia County, Arkansas  
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Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 478017 | Northing: 3683421 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beginning at UTM point 15/477984/3683392, proceed northerly for 170 feet to UTM point 15/477988/3683445, thence proceed easterly for 35 feet to UTM point 15/478001/3683444, thence proceed northerly for 210 feet to UTM point 15/478006/3683507, thence proceed easterly for 115 feet to UTM point 15/478043/3683504, thence proceed southerly to UTM point 15/478036/3683434, thence proceed easterly to UTM point 15/478050/3683431, thence proceed southerly to UTM point 15/478046/3683387, thence proceed westerly for 210 feet to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes Overstreet Hall and its immediate surroundings.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator  
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
street & number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500  
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201  
e-mail: ralph@arkansasheritage.org  
telephone: (501) 324-9787  
date: August 14, 2015

Overstreet Hall  
Name of Property

Columbia County, Arkansas  
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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Overstreet Hall

City or Vicinity: Magnolia

County: Columbia County

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Callie Williams

Date Photographed: March 23, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 13. South façade, looking northeast.

2 of 13. Detail of the main entrance on the south façade, looking north.

3 of 13. East façade of the front portion of the building, looking west.

4 of 13. North façade of the east end of the front portion of the building, looking

Overstreet Hall  
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southwest.

- 5 of 13. East façade of the original auditorium space, looking west.
- 6 of 13. East façade of the new auditorium space, looking northwest.
- 7 of 13. East façade of the new and old auditorium spaces and the north façade of the east end of the front portion of the building, looking southwest.
- 8 of 13. North façade of the new auditorium (Harton Theatre), looking southwest.
- 9 of 13. North façade of the new auditorium (Harton Theatre), looking southeast.
- 10 of 13. West façade of the new auditorium, looking southeast.
- 11 of 13. West façade of the new and old auditorium spaces and the north façade of the west end of the front portion of the building, looking south.
- 12 of 13. West façade of the new and old auditorium spaces, looking northeast.
- 13 of 13. West façade of the front portion of the building, looking northeast.

Overstreet Hall  
Name of Property

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Overstreet Hall – 1943



Overstreet Hall  
Name of Property

Columbia County, Arkansas  
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Overstreet Hall – 1946

Overstreet Hall  
Name of Property

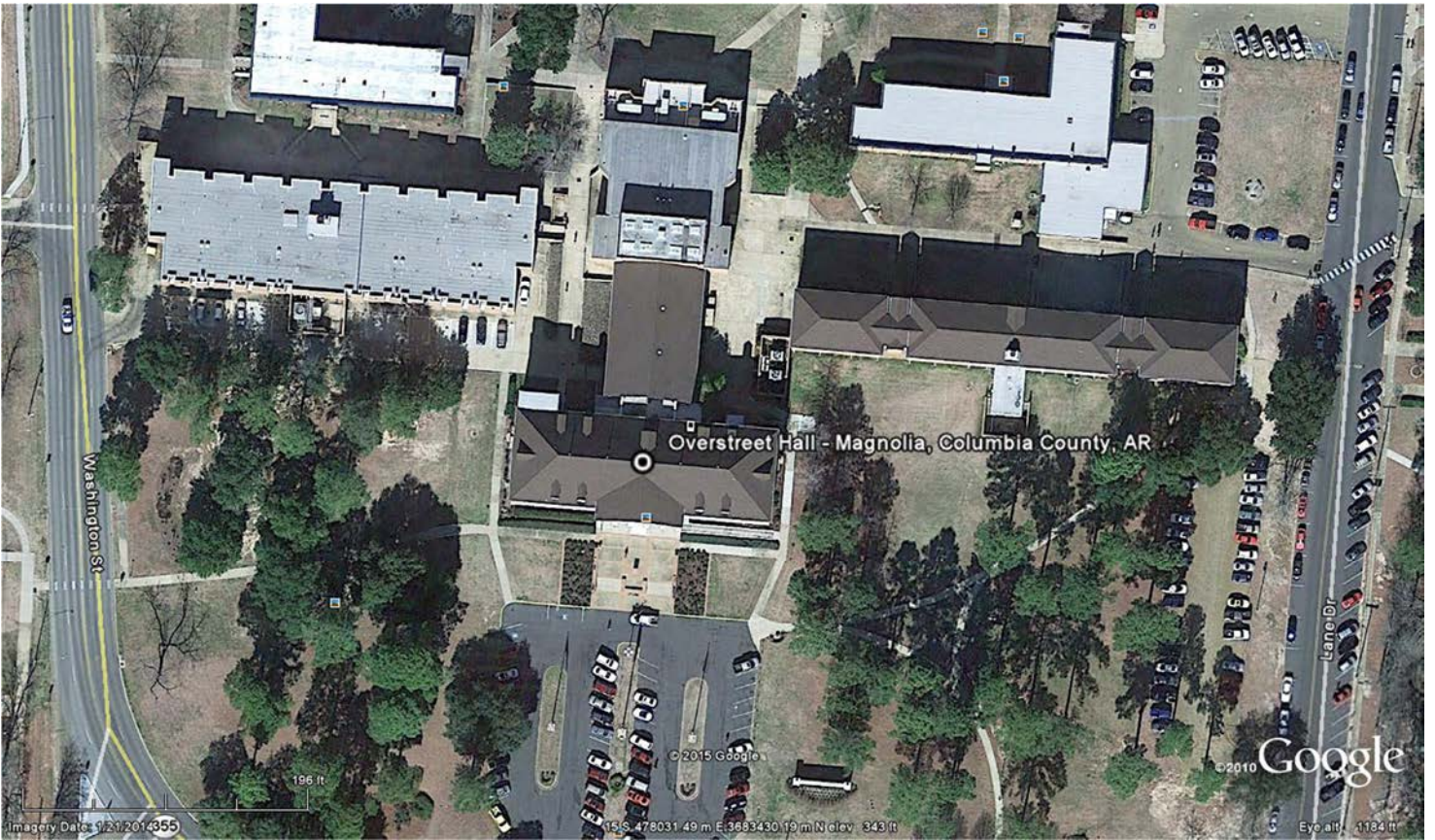
Columbia County, Arkansas  
County and State



Overstreet Hall – c.1945

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



|-----196 feet-----|

Overstreet Hall  
Magnolia, Columbia County, Arkansas

15 478017E 3683421N



North



|-----1354 feet-----|

Overstreet Hall  
Magnolia, Columbia County, Arkansas

15 478017E 3683421N



North



OVERSTREET

OVERSTREET HALL













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PARKING  
ANY  
TIME







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HARTON THEATRE

AKA

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Overstreet Hall  
NAME:

MULTIPLE New Deal Recovery Efforts in Arkansas MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Columbia

DATE RECEIVED: 12/11/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/08/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/25/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/26/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000992

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 1-27-2016 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Due to weather-related gait shutoffs 1-25 & 1-26, this property  
was automatically listed. The nom was previously reviewed  
& is acceptable

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A

REVIEWER J. Gilbert

DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N Y see attached SLR Y/N Y

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS  
**HERITAGE**

**RECEIVED 2280**

DEC 11 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

December 2, 2015

Asa Hutchinson  
*Governor*

Stacy Hurst  
*Director*

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.  
Washington D.C. 20005

---

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural Heritage  
Commission

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars  
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum

RE: Overstreet Hall – Magnolia, Columbia County, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Ralph S. Wilcox of my staff at (501) 324-9787. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hurst  
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:rsw

Enclosure



Arkansas Historic  
Preservation Program



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