

JUL 29 2016

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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma Building

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 1215 South Boulder Avenue

City or town: Tulsa State: OK County: Tulsa

Not For Publication:  Vicinity: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 X C \_\_\_ D

 Signature of certifying official/Title: _____	 Date
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Joe Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

9.12.18  
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)

<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business: office building

HEALTHCARE: medical business/office: insurance

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

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business: office building

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

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

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

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick

### 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

The Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) of Oklahoma Building is a 12-story with basement, Modern Movement style office building situated in downtown Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma. The building was designed and constructed in two phases 1) 1954 for floors Basement through 3 designed by the architectural firm of Koberling and Brandborg AIA with engineer W. C. Roads and constructed by general contractor John B. Martin Company, and 2) 1969 with floors 4 through 12 designed by architect Joseph R. Koberling, AIA with engineer W. C. Roads and constructed by general contractor W. R. Grimshaw Company.

Clad in muted yellow tan brick, the building has a flat roof and a concrete foundation. Each of the upper floors is articulated with a band of continuous fixed windows and continuous flat concrete projecting canopies on the west facing façade and the south elevation. The east and north elevations have rectangular fixed pane windows. The ground level main entrance is articulated by two pairs of glass doors and a flat concrete projecting canopy. A bas relief in the PWA manner extends over the entrance transoms, depicts people engaged in health related work, and includes the Blue Cross and Blue Shield emblems. The pink marble planter that is north of the entrance is a foretaste of the extensive amounts of the same material used inside for planters

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and cladding for the lobby walls. The lobby floor is a similarly colored terrazzo. A round section of terrazzo flooring featuring the emblems of Blue Cross and Blue Shield is centered between the direct path from the entrance doors to the elevator doors. Much of the building's historic Modern Movement detailing, both exterior and interior, remains intact.

The building is located just north of highway US64/US 75/OK51 (circa 1970s) and on the south end of the Inter-Dispersal Loop identifying Tulsa's downtown and forming the southern boundary of the 2009 intensive level architectural survey of downtown. Addressed at 1215 South Boulder Avenue, the building rises among other commercial buildings and surface parking lots that extend north and south along both sides of Boulder Avenue and on Main Street, having been cleared of the former single family residences during the 1950s and 1960s. Changes to the exterior include the removal of the original driveway servicing the drive-up window on the west (front) of the building. Aluminum framed windows were replaced in the 1990s with larger paned aluminum framed windows. A large rotating sign atop the roof and sign letters and emblems associated with the BCBS occupancy on the exterior walls were removed upon BCBS moving out of the building. The setting of the building was modified in the 1970s by the construction of the highway to the south. Despite the changes, the Modern Movement design and detailing of the building retain a high degree of integrity.

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## **Narrative Description**

### Site and Setting

Designed by the Tulsa Architectural firm of Joseph Koberling and Lennart Brandborg, the first three floors of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma headquarters building were designed and constructed in 1953-1954. The expansion to 12 stories was also designed by Joseph Koberling in 1967 with construction completed in 1969. The building faces west and is located two blocks south of the shift in the city grid from the original town plan alignment with the railroad tracks to the cardinal system. It is in an area with other multi-story low rise and mid-rise commercial buildings that line Boulder Avenue, one block west of Main Street. The building site is just north of highway US64/US 75/OK51 and therefore just inside the boundaries of the Intensive Level Survey of Downtown Tulsa (2009) in which it was identified as individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The blocks to the east and west have been mostly cleared of former residential development to make way for surface parking lots. The "back" of the building originally faced the alley to the east, however, the alley is now most visibly identified as access to the parking lots on the east.

There is one other remaining building on the block on the northeast lots. The 1939 edition of the Sanborn maps first documented the lots cleared of former houses and in use as a used auto dealership. The 1962 edition documents a one story building. Drawing archives from the BCBS building files indicate this building as an automobile sales and service building at the time of the design and construction of floors 4 through 12. In addition to the automobile sales and service building, the 1968 site plan also identifies two other buildings on the northwest lots (office buildings no longer extant) for purposes of utility work along the alley to accommodate the new floors of the BCBS building. Later drawings (1991) show that only the automobile sales and service building remains and work on this building is proposed by BCBS. The 1991 renovation

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work converted the building from automobile sales and service space to the print shop for BCBS and included the removal of most of the windows, infilling the openings with brick and painting the entire exterior of the building. The building again has an owner apart from the ownership of the 12 story office building. Although associated with BCBS for a relatively short period of time, it was not part of the property associated with the BCBS building during the period of significance, 1954-1969.

### General Description

The BCBS building has a rectangular shaped plan with overall outside dimensions of 99 feet by 118 feet. The north side steps in by nine feet at a distance of 53 feet east of the façade (west). The roof is flat and extends to multiple levels functionally related to the mechanical equipment in the penthouse level and by design related to the composition of the elevations and the three dimensional massing of the overall building. The finished roof material is a white single ply membrane. The roof and floor structure is reinforced concrete with structural concrete ribs. The walls are yellow tan brick veneer with structural clay tile back-up. In addition to the 12 floors above grade there are two basement levels below grade. To allow natural light into the occupied basement level there are continuous window wells offset from the basement walls by three feet and between six and ten feet deep on the façade and the south elevation.

### Façade

The west facing façade is on Boulder Avenue. It has a ground level primary entrance of two pairs of non-original aluminum framed entry doors placed at the northern most 25 feet of the west elevation and recessed by about three feet. The side walls of the recess are angled toward the entrance at 45 degrees. A vertically bisected transom with a New Deal stylized bas relief sculpture above extends over the entry doors. The sculpture depicts people engaged in health related work and includes the Blue Cross and Blue Shield emblems. A concrete canopy with inward beveled edge from the top extends from the northern edge of the west elevation for a distance of about 38 feet south. In addition to the entrance, the concrete canopy protects a vertically oriented, rectangular, fixed pane window south of the entrance and, more southern still, three smaller, rectangular, fixed pane windows in vertical alignment with equal amounts of masonry in between. The entire asymmetrical entrance composition, extending about one-third the length of the façade, is clad with ruddy pink polished marble minimally inset from the face of the façade. A “waist-high” planter is north of the entrance and extends out from the building façade toward Boulder Avenue. It is clad with the same ruddy pink polished marble.

This ground level entrance composition is the only use of intense color contrast in the façade. The balance of the facade is comprised of yellow tan brick, tinted windows and precast concrete detailed accents. The remaining height of the façade above the entrance is accented by two vertical bands of cut stone that extend from the top of the projecting concrete canopy to the parapet above the 12<sup>th</sup> floor. The vertical bands divide alternating horizontal bands, one of windows and one of brick for each floor, into three equal parts with each part accommodating a pair of fixed windows. The overall composition is framed by precast concrete which in turn is framed by brick sections on the side and top edges. This vertical section of the façade, which comprises about one-third of its overall length, evokes the Art Deco style.

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Additional details of the Art Deco influenced portion of the façade include precast concrete sills and soldier brick headers for the windows. Each section of brick below the horizontal bands of windows is articulated by six sections of brick that project from the rest of the field. The center detail is only one header brick wide and the two flanking details are each two vertical rows of stretcher brick. The overall height of the bottom three sections is twice that of the top three sections and they are separated from each other by two rows of field brick. The top two flanking sections are arranged with three rows of stretcher brick topped by three soldier bricks toward the outer edges and alternating three soldier bricks topped by three rows of stretcher bricks toward the center section.

The remaining two-thirds of the length of the façade is horizontally articulated with alternating horizontal bands of yellow tan brick below continuous bands of fixed tinted windows for each of the twelve floors above grade. The window bands are accented by cast stone sills and projecting concrete flat canopies at the window heads. Windows are non-original units, that although they are fixed single lite units, the overall unit size is the same as the individual units originally used on the 1954 first three floors which were divided into four horizontal lights. The window units have dark bronze colored aluminum frames. Brick fields are laid in a common bond with every eighth brick row comprised of alternating header and stretcher brick. The projecting flat canopy over the 11<sup>th</sup> floor windows is set higher than the canopies of the other floors and horizontally bisects the brick band between the head of the 11<sup>th</sup> floor windows and the sills of the 12<sup>th</sup> floor windows. This canopy is also an exterior balcony floor at the twelfth floor level. The vertical pickets associated with the balcony's aluminum railing extend below the balcony floor to the head of the 11<sup>th</sup> floor windows. In this way, the railing pickets are about the same length above the balcony floor as they are below the balcony floor. The projecting flat canopy above the band of windows of the 12<sup>th</sup> floor is set above the window heads by about 18 inches, thus it acts as a roof over the balcony. The balcony roof is further articulated by regularly spaced wedge shaped beams and surface mounted light fixtures centered between the beams. The top of the parapet for the southern two-thirds of the west elevation is about six feet lower than the vertically articulated northern third.

### South Elevation

Nearly the entire length of the south elevation matches the details of the southern two-thirds of the west façade. It is horizontally articulated with alternating horizontal bands of tan brick below continuous bands of fixed tinted windows for each of the twelve above-grade floors. The window bands are accented by precast concrete sills and projecting flat concrete canopies at the window heads. The canopies from the facade wrap around to the south elevation. Windows are non-original units, that although they are fixed single lite units, the overall unit size is the same as the individual units originally used on the 1954 first three floors which were divided into four horizontal lights. The window units have dark bronze colored aluminum frames. Brick fields are laid in a common bond with a row of alternating header/stretcher brick at every eighth row. The twelfth floor balcony, railing and projecting concrete canopies of the south elevation matches in every detail as described for the façade. The top of the parapet matches the height of the top parapet of the southern two-thirds of the façade.

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The articulation of the south elevation, in as much as it matches the majority of the façade, can be described as the secondary street facing elevation. The site and setting for the building was originally mid-block. However, the highway to the south, visibly under construction by 1976, has effectively rendered the south elevation as a street facing side. The east end of the south elevation is terminated by a vertical projection that meets the outside edge of all of the projecting canopies so as to frame and conceal them from the south edge of the east elevation.

### East Elevation

The east elevation is the one that could most be considered the back because of its orientation to the original alley now repurposed as access to the parking lot on its east side. Consistent with the tenets of the Modern Movement style, the south half of the east elevation retains some of the design elements found on the façade and south elevation; the west half neatly transitions with similar design elements employed on the east part of the north elevation. The top of the east elevation steps up from the south toward the north end in thirds, each third about one level taller than the one just south of it. These higher parts are the penthouse and mechanical levels.

The south end has horizontal bands of windows with precast concrete sills and projecting concrete canopies at the window heads alternating with brick bands similar to the south and west elevations, except that the canopies stop short of the south end of the elevation and extend about half the length of the east elevation. The windows are five units wide from south to north, then interrupted by a section of brick about two window units wide followed by another two window units. At the fourth floor the two window units are actually louvers. The canopies extend past the ends of this window/brick articulation by a distance nearly equal to the width of one unit at each end. The pattern of openings is interrupted at the northern part by taller and independent louvered units at the 11<sup>th</sup> floor. The middle section of the stepped building top also contains two louvered units independent of the rhythm of the other openings of the east elevation.

The northern half of the east elevation switches to a vertical emphasis with a flat field of the typical yellow tan brick interrupted by three vertical bands of alternating rectangular fixed pane windows and inset brick panels that extend from the fourth floor to the 12<sup>th</sup>. The window sills are the typical precast concrete pieces used on the other elevations and the heads are articulated with a soldier course. One of these vertical bands is offset toward the south by a good distance from the other two vertical bands closer to the north end. At the third floor, there is a wider window unit centered on the band above. The two northern bands are separated from each other by a brick field that is about the same width as the window units and inset brick panels. Above the 12<sup>th</sup> floor windows of the northern vertical bands is a field of brick (not inset). Above the brick field and of the same width as and aligned with the bands below are two louvered units nearly three times taller than the window openings below. These louvers are set into the tallest part of the penthouse/mechanical level above the 12<sup>th</sup> floor. Aligned with and below these two vertical bands at the third floor level, are two similar rectangular fixed pane windows.

The grade level of the east elevation is nearly one floor higher than the facade and the south elevation. An east facing rear pedestrian/delivery entrance and a north facing vehicular freight entrance/loading dock are located here. The entrances are accommodated by one story additions, constructed in 1991-1992, that protrude into the space formerly occupied by the alley.



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### North Elevation

The transition between the initial three floors and the later additional nine floors is most evident on the north elevation. The brick color is very slightly lighter for the initial construction phase. Set close to the east end of the lower three floors is a distinctly different fenestration pattern of three vertically aligned rectangular fixed pane windows, one per floor. A short distance toward the west, a row of vertically aligned smaller rectangular painted metal louvers (one per floor) extends from the fourth floor to the 12<sup>th</sup>. Just west of the column of louvers is a column of windows similar in size to the northern most columns of windows on the east elevation. Also similar to the east elevation, this column of windows is accompanied by inset brick panels from the fourth floor to the 12<sup>th</sup>. To the west of this column are two more columns of openings. On the lower three floors the openings are “oversized” and contain louvers. The brick panels begin above the openings of the fourth floor and extend to the 12<sup>th</sup>, alternating with the window openings. Combined with the column of windows resembling the two columns of windows and inset brick panels of the east elevation, these two columns are composed together so that the two end columns are the same and the center column is nearly twice as wide with the window sills set higher by almost half the entire height of the windows of the flanking columns. At the fourth floor, this set of three openings appears to have been modified (as observed by the discontinuous precast concrete sills), accommodates louvers instead of window units and have acquired the brick section between the center and the east flanking openings. The character of the fenestration just west of these window/inset brick columns recalls the design of the alternating horizontal bands of windows and brick present in the other three elevations, but for a shorter distance, this section only four window units wide. Like the other elevations the windows have continuous precast concrete sills and projecting horizontal concrete canopies. Exceptions to this treatment occur at the 12<sup>th</sup> floor where the balcony with railing and balcony roof details present at the façade and south elevations reappear. The balcony feature extends beyond the horizontal window/brick bands below and overtakes the west flanking and center windows of the tripartite window features to the east.

At the mechanical penthouse level above, the length of the north façade from the east end to the west side of the balcony presents an alternating rhythm of tall louver units (also found on the north end of the east elevation) nearly the same width as the brick sections between them. This is the tallest portion of the building on the north elevation. However, it is slightly exceeded by a chimney feature that is tucked into the corner where the building footprint steps out by nine feet from the east 60% of the entire north face. This stepped out section is about 40% of the length of the north face and more closely resembles the vertical façade articulation of the north end of the façade above the inset and ruddy pink marble clad walls framing the main building entrance. This section is shorter than the rest of the north elevation and the same height as the façade around the corner to the west. Slightly off center of this 40 foot wide section of the north elevation are three columns of windows with inset brick panels that extend from the second floor to the 12<sup>th</sup> with the entire set of vertically oriented features contained by a precast concrete detail reminiscent of a picture frame. Like the picture framed window and brick panel feature of the facade, the north side also has patterned brick articulation in the panels. The design on this elevation presents slightly projecting frame around the panel one rowlock thick on the sides and one stretcher tall on the top with the bottom a soldier course that also serves as the head of the

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windows. A “cross” shape is slightly projecting from the rest of the panel’s brick field completely dividing the panel into four sections with the top sections about half the height of the bottom.

### Interior

The most distinguishing features of the interior are found on the ground floor level in the public lobby which extends for the full length of the building from north to south. The floors are finished with ruddy pink terrazzo and the walls are clad from top to bottom with ruddy marble. The same marble is used to shape a continuous planter along the north side and on the east side near an open staircase. The rest of the first floor, which extends east from the lobby, is elevated from the lobby by a half level and the open staircase in the southeast corner of the lobby provides access to it. There is also an open staircase from the lobby down to the upper basement (one of two basement levels) with the same marble clad walls and terrazzo floors. Between the main entrance doors and the bank of three elevators on the east side of the lobby, is a circular shaped contrasting inlay of terrazzo that also contains the emblems of the Blue Cross and the Blue Shield. The upper levels, floors 2 through 12, have elevator lobbies that are also the north/south oriented corridors. The secondary corridors extend east/west and are located to the south of the elevators. Most original walls and the interior surface of the exterior walls are plaster. Window sills are marble, similar in color to the marble in the main entrance lobby on the first floor.

### Alterations

The BCBS of Oklahoma headquarters building has not undergone significant alteration since the completion of the nine additional floors designed in 1967. The only additions to the building have been the rear pedestrian entrance and small loading dock constructed in 1991. Notable changes to the building consist of the replacement windows which are, in overall size and configuration, consistent with the language of the windows shown in historic photographs. Although other modifications over time have been well documented with extant construction drawings, the window replacement was not and the date of replacement is unknown. The removal of the original driveway and drive-up window on the façade have changed the front elevation in a minor way.

Originally, the 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> floors were unfinished except for the elevators, stairways, and vertical file conveyor; layouts for future bathrooms were provided. The fifth floor was equipped with a raised access floor for computer main frames. The seventh and eighth floors had some offices, but were largely undivided with the primary and secondary corridors defined. The eleventh floor was originally a cafeteria, large lounge, commercial kitchen, and lunch room. It is likely that the 1954 basement cafeteria was remodeled according to the 1967 design when the cafeteria moved to the 11<sup>th</sup> floor. The 12<sup>th</sup> floor originally (1969) accommodated executive and secretary offices with a large conference room and boardroom. Similar spaces were first (1954) located on the upper portion of the first floor level. It is likely that the first floor was remodeled after the top floors were constructed. The 12<sup>th</sup> floor executive level and other spaces were remodeled in 1985. None of these changes has a significant effect on the ability of the building to convey its architectural and historic significance. Other changes to the building are related to the BCBS operation moving out which included the removal of the rotating roof sign and the vertically aligned letter signs on the east and north elevations. Overall, the BCBS of Oklahoma

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headquarters building retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association and is an excellent example of a 12-story Modern Movement style office building in downtown Tulsa.

Condition

Overall the building is in above average condition owing to the consistent maintenance program of the original owner and uninterrupted occupancy since its initial construction.

Historical Photographs



The completed first three floors of the building circa 1954, shortly after construction. (Photo courtesy of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma)

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The completed first three floors of the building circa 1954, shortly after construction. (Photo courtesy of the Owner)



Beginning of construction of the upper floors circa 1968. (Photo courtesy of the Owner)

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The nearly completed upper floors circa 1969 (Courtesy of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma)



The building circa 2010 before Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma moved out and the property sold. (Photo courtesy of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma)

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The first floor lobby showing the Blue Cross Blue Shield emblems in the terrazzo floor between the main entrance and the elevators. (Photo courtesy of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma)

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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.)

HEALTH/MEDICINE

ARCHITECTURE

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

**Period of Significance**

1954-1969

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

**Significant Dates**

1954

1969

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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

**Architect/Builder**

1953-1954: Architect: Koberling and Brandborg AIA with engineer W. C. Roads

Builder: John B. Martin Company

1967-1969: Architect Joseph R. Koberling, AIA with engineer W. C. Roads

Builder: W. R. Grimshaw Company



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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.)

The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma building represents the culmination of Blue Cross Blue Shield's move into Oklahoma with a new and innovative healthcare system for Oklahoma residents. The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A for Health/Medicine which is defined by "National Register Bulletin 16A," as the care of the sick, disabled, and handicapped, and the promotion of health and hygiene. BCBS was the first company to usher in the new age of insurance in Oklahoma as a means to pay for hospital and physicians services.

The BCBS building is also eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion C, Architecture, as a notable example of Modern Architecture. The building has achieved significance within 50 years, criterion consideration "g," as an excellent example of a Modern Movement building originally designed and constructed to a height of three floors, but deliberately designed with the intent to expand to 12 stories to coincide with the BCBS organization's growth at such time that additional space would be required. Although plans for vertical expansion was not unique, the realization of such plans was rare.

The building site is just north of highway US64/US 75/OK51 and therefore just inside the boundaries of the Intensive Level Survey of Downtown Tulsa (2009) in which it was identified as individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C.

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

The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma building located at 1215 South Boulder Avenue in Tulsa, Oklahoma is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A for its historic association with the development and administration of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma and the culmination of the non-profit organization's role in the development of new and innovative healthcare system for Oklahoma residents.

The story of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma building cannot be told without telling the history of the general national movement toward hospital and physicians services insurance which began in 1929 under the direction of Justin Ford Kimball then Vice-President of Baylor University and in charge of the Dallas hospital including the Colleges of Medicine and Dentistry and the School of Nursing. Within his first year at the University he discovered that a significant

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portion of unpaid bills due to the hospital were from Dallas schoolteachers. Considering Kimball's history as a school administrator and former superintendent of Dallas Schools, this discovery held his attention. He proceeded to adapt the concept of prepayment plans used in the lumber and railroad industries to offer an individual hospital prepayment plan to Dallas teachers which became the origination of the Blue Cross hospital insurance plan. Kimball's pioneering plan became so successful within two years that he was invited by the American Hospital Association to present a paper regarding the details of the plan.<sup>1</sup>

The Kimball plan continued to gather momentum so that by the spring of 1939 when a group of Oklahoma doctors travelled to Dallas to learn about this relatively new way of paying for health care there were 4.5 million subscribers in 24 states with 56 contracted hospitals.<sup>2</sup> The Oklahoma doctors went to visit Baylor Medical Center where Kimball's plan originated. They were led by Dr. James Stevenson of Tulsa and Dr. Harry Turner of Oklahoma City.<sup>3</sup> Prior to the Kimball plan, individual hospitals in smaller communities had begun to offer prepayment plans. Doctors and hospitals had traditionally been a "pay as you go" proposition. In Oklahoma, hit with the challenges of the depression and the dust bowl era, patients and their families with limited financial resources would try to pay their bills by bartering with agricultural products (chickens, corn, and pork, for example).<sup>4</sup> The concept of Kimball's plan traveled from Dallas to the east coast, Baltimore and Philadelphia, then through the north central United States before attracting the attention of the Sisters of St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City. Sister Mary Agnes traveled to Philadelphia, Wisconsin and Minnesota researching the prepayment plan. Medical professionals and representatives of the business communities from Oklahoma City and Tulsa made the trip to Dallas.<sup>5</sup>

After their Dallas visit the doctors and businessmen spent the following year planning and gathering information from other health care plans across the country. The Oklahoma pre-paid health plan would be available to individual and corporate subscribers and based on:

"...the seven essentials set forth by the American Hospital Association deemed necessary for a successful group hospitalization plan.

1. Emphasis on public welfare.
2. Limitation to hospital charges.
3. Enlistment of professional and public interests.
4. Free choice of physician and hospital.
5. Non-profit organization.
6. Economic soundness.
7. Cooperative and dignified promotion."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Handbook of Texas, Texas State Historical Association. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fki09>.

<sup>2</sup> Roberts, Jim. Building a Better Oklahoma: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma – The First 65 Years (Tulsa, OK; Self-published by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma, 2004), Page 4.

<sup>3</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 4.

<sup>4</sup> Erling, John. *Voices of Oklahoma: Blue Cross Blue Shield: Two former Blue Cross CEOs discuss the healthcare leader's history and growth.* Interview with Ron King and Ralph Rhoades. February 26, 2013. Page 4.

<sup>5</sup> Erling, *ibid.*, pages 5-6.

<sup>6</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 6.

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To get the program off the ground the organizers needed \$10,000 in seed money. They held a competition; the first city to raise \$5,000 would be rewarded with becoming the location in which the new organization would locate its headquarters. Through the salesmanship of Dr. Stevenson, the Tulsa group won the challenge, and on March 15, 1940 Group Hospital Services opened its doors in a small renter office space in the Tulsa Loan Building on Fourth and Main.<sup>7</sup> St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City was the organization's first client followed by the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce. The cost to participate in the plan was 75 cents a month for individuals or \$1.00 a month for families.<sup>8</sup> Under the leadership of the first administrator, Walter McBee, the plan was an immediate and major success. In one year over 15,000 people enrolled with a growth rate of 1,000 a month. This growth led to financial stability for the new organization, uniquely available to serve all Oklahomans. The \$10,000 seed money was paid off in three years, and by 1943 income was up to \$381,503 with a reserve of \$56,192.<sup>9</sup>

In 1941 N. D. Helland replaced Walter McBee as head of the organization. During the war years the staff remained lean. Despite the small staff, by the end of 1944 enrollment stood at 85,759 members. In 1945 the Oklahoma Physician Services program which would later become Oklahoma Blue Shield was approved by the House of Delegates of the Oklahoma State Medical Association and incorporated by the Oklahoma Legislature under the Mutual Casualty Act as a companion to Blue Cross.<sup>10</sup> After the war, enrollment grew to 325,933 with revenue of \$2.3 million. This growth caused the plan to move to the basement of the Akdar Shrine Building at Fourth and Denver in the late 1940s.<sup>11</sup> The location had no windows and employees were issued candles in case of a power outage.

With both Blue Cross for hospital services and Blue Shield for physicians' services being not for profit organizations, Helland sought special state legislation recognizing this fact. The act was passed in 1949 and BCBS of Oklahoma continues to operate under this act.<sup>12</sup> As a new decade started, Blue Cross and Blue Shield continued to grow and seek to improve medical care for Oklahomans. With the expansion of services covered by the plans, came growth and rate increases. By 1955 enrollment in Blue Cross grew to 464,390 and Blue Shield was 408,845.<sup>13</sup>

N.D. Helland and accountant Ralph Bethel likened the plans to a "three-legged stool concept:" one leg represented the public, one leg was the hospital, and the third leg stood for the physicians.<sup>14</sup> This simple concept made it very easy for the plans' representatives to explain their programs to the public. In addition to expansion of enrollment, BCBS growth spurred hospitals to begin major building programs to meet demands. As hospitals sought to build more space to increase services, Blue Cross Blue Shield came to terms with the fact that they needed more space to accommodate their growing staff. From three employees in 1941 to 130 in 1952, employees were compacted into 20,000 square feet in the basement of the Akdar Shrine

<sup>7</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 6.

<sup>8</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 7.

<sup>9</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 8.

<sup>10</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 11.

<sup>11</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 13.

<sup>12</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 14.

<sup>13</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 18.

<sup>14</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 18.

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Building. After years of leasing space, Helland decided that the benefits of ownership now outweighed the cost of leasing. In March 1953, ground was broken on a new three-story structure with 40,000 square feet at 1215 South Boulder Avenue.<sup>15</sup> Twelve year old Jerry Sellers, who was the first baby born under Blue Cross of Oklahoma in 1941, turned the first shovel of dirt for the ground breaking. Yet, Helland had a vision for the future of BCBS of Oklahoma and ordered that the new building be designed with a structure that could accommodate an additional nine floors to be constructed as BCBS of Oklahoma grew.<sup>16</sup>

The 1960's was a decade of significant change for the country and also Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma. Following the post war population growth, the baby boomer generation grew to teenagers and adults, and put a strain on the plan causing it to run in the red for several years. BCBS of Oklahoma did two things to offset this loss: 1) they increased rates and 2) they started joint underwriting between Blue Cross and Blue Shield. They also received unexpected assistance from the federal government. On July 1, 1960 federal employees were allowed to choose Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma as an option to their Federal Employee Health Benefits Program. The federal government created Medicare, signed into law by President Johnson in 1965, which was designed to meet the medical needs of a growing elderly population. With the addition of federal employees and the removal of those 65 and older, the BCBS programs moved into the black by 1966.<sup>17</sup>

In 1966 Ralph Bethel assumed leadership of the BCBS organization upon Helland's retirement. He also assumed Helland's vision from 1954 for the growth of the facility that accommodated BCBS, now possible and necessary with new increases in enrollment to over a half million subscribers.<sup>18</sup> In 1967 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma turned again to Koberling and Roads, with new contractor W.R. Grimshaw, to add nine floors to the building. The 62,000 square foot expansion cost \$2.1 million and took 2 years to complete with occupancy taking place in late August of 1969. Construction also included the installation of a revolving sign on the roof. Measuring 24 feet wide and 24 feet tall, the sign reached a total height of nearly five stories when placed on a 34 foot tall pylon on the roof.

The completion of the building seemed to also result in plan membership growth. By the end of 1969 membership stood at 633,000. By the end of the 1960s BCBS of Oklahoma had 500 employees and new systems and procedures designed to keep operating costs down. Chief among the new systems and procedures was an IBM computer system occupying nearly an entire floor of the expanded building available to automate claims filing and administration.<sup>19</sup>

On June 30, 1972 ownership of the Blue Cross symbol passed to the Blue Cross Association from the American Hospital Association. On February 27, 1973 a new symbol was introduced; a Greek inspired blue cross with a stylized human figure at its center.<sup>20</sup> In 1973, the Oklahoma

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<sup>15</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 21.

<sup>16</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 21.

<sup>17</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 32-34.

<sup>18</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 34.

<sup>19</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 41.

<sup>20</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 41.

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plans merged into one corporation. For over 30 years the Oklahoma entities of Blue Cross and Blue Shield had operated as separate corporate offices with shared management and staff. The new organization was named Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma. Four years later, in 1977, Ralph Rhoades took over as the head of BCBS from Ralph Bethel. Bethel had been with the plan for 34 years, the last 10 as CEO.<sup>21</sup> BCBS OK had now grown to a \$125 million corporation.

Operationally, Rhoades oversaw many changes as CEO. On April 15, 1977 Rhoades rolled out Member Service Life (insurance). This product allowed BCBS OK to offer to employers and individuals alike, life, health and disability insurance. Also in 1977, in addition to Member Service Life, BCBS OK's early response to the HPO movement, HealthShare, was initiated.

During the 1980's, BCBS OK began using advertising to expand the brand name. The HMO product was expanded to include Medicare recipients. The number of employees grew to nearly 700 and now the organization had outgrown the headquarters building. Over 100 employees were moved out to the Texaco Building at 15<sup>th</sup> & Boulder. The rooftop rotating sign was locked so that it could no longer turn. The size of the sign caused it to become a wind sail during high winds, stripping gears and leading to costly repairs.<sup>22</sup> Vibration from vehicles crossing the Boulder Avenue Bridge (over the highway constructed in the 1970s) caused the top floors to vibrate. On three occasions, structural engineers investigated the issue and found no erosion or structural damage to the building. No erosion nor structural damages to the building have ever been found.<sup>23</sup>

To stay competitive, service expansions and systems updates continued through the next twenty years. Across the nation Blue Plan licenses went from 115 in 1980 to 65 by 1995. Mergers and for profit plans often drove consolidations. In Oklahoma, BCBS remained committed to its independent and not for profit status. Revenues passed the billion dollar level in 2003.<sup>24</sup> By 2010 the building at 1215 South Boulder Avenue was being used less and less; its maximum occupancy achieved in 1973 with 650 employees accommodated by the Tulsa headquarters building.<sup>25</sup> The subscriber services division was relocated to 41<sup>st</sup> and Memorial; leaving only 250 employees and three empty floors at 1215 South Boulder Avenue. With two other locations in Tulsa and one in Oklahoma City, the headquarters building was no longer needed. In 2011 BCBS announced that they would sell their building and relocate all 450 downtown Tulsa employees to its newly renovated 1400 South Boston Avenue location.

The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma building is also eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C as a notable example of Modern Architecture. The building has achieved significance within 50 years, criterion consideration "g," as an excellent example of a Modern Movement building originally designed and constructed to a height of three floors, but deliberately designed with the intent to expand to 12 stories to coincide with the BCBS organization's growth at such time that additional space

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<sup>21</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, page 45.

<sup>22</sup> "Fact Sheet," page 2.

<sup>23</sup> Journal Record, March 12, 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Roberts, *ibid.*, pages 85-86.

<sup>25</sup> Journal Record, *ibid.*

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would be required. Although planning for vertical expansion was not unique, the realization of such plans was rare.

Designed and constructed in 1953-1969, this landmark building in Tulsa's business district was designed by known Tulsa architect Joseph Koberling and W. C. Roads, consulting engineer. It was constructed in two major phases with the later phase anticipated in the design and construction of the first. The building has a design decidedly influenced by earlier Art Deco structures in the Tulsa area; however, significant features such as the alternating horizontal ribbons of glass and brick, projecting horizontal concrete canopies and a relative lack of exterior garnishment that ushered in the local Modern Movement are also evident.<sup>26</sup>

Also constructed in 1954 and designed by the same architect employing a combination of horizontal and vertical forms and details is 1401 South Boulder Avenue. Located about two blocks south of the BCBS building, its proximity and the similar light colored exterior with elaborate marble details on the interior lobby makes 1401 a suitable companion building for the 1954 BCBS building. Although designed with the anticipation of similar future vertical expansion plans, such plans for 1401 were never realized. By the time the fiscally conservative BCBS organization was ready to commit to the building expansion of the additional nine floors, local architectural styles for buildings of comparable size had shifted away from the Moderne and Art Deco influences of the 1953-1954 designs of the BCBS building and 1401 South Boulder Avenue. While the BCBS building is on the southern boundary of the area included in the 2009 intensive level architectural survey of downtown Tulsa, the recently listed Tulsa Civic Center Historic District (NRIS 11000641) includes nearly a dozen Modern Movement resources planned as a civic center core on the north end of the surveyed area. The civic center development is demonstrative of the later Modern Movement architectural styles that were more popular at the time of the expansion of the BCBS building. Specifically, the Tulsa City/County Public Library (Mid-Century Modern, 1965) designed by Charles Ward and Joseph Koberling, a contributing resource to the district, illustrates that other Modern Movement styles had supplanted the earlier Moderne and Art Deco influenced designs at the time that construction of the BCBS building addition had begun. The addition was based on and remained committed to the architectural style and design established only a decade and a half earlier.

The 1954 expandable three story 44,000 square foot structure was increased by 62,000 square feet in 1967 when Blue Cross Blue Shield re-engaged Koberling and Roads to carry through on the originally anticipated expansion. The additional nine floors were constructed for \$2.1 million by W. R. Grimshaw.<sup>27</sup> The addition opened in summer 1969 complete with a 24 foot by 24 foot internally lit rotating sign atop a 34 foot roof mounted pylon. Koberling made the distinction between alternating horizontal ribbons of glass and brick a defining motif distinguishing each floor and divided by a strip of an extended concrete ledge that became a defining characteristic of post-World War II architecture.<sup>28</sup> Koberling designed the building to grow from three stories to 12 to accommodate the growth of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma over time. The

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<sup>26</sup> Journal Record, *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Journal Record, *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Journal Record, *ibid.*

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma Building  
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building served as the headquarters for Blue Cross Blue Shield for nearly 60 years becoming an iconic structure, downtown landmark and a lasting symbol of the insurer.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Journal Record, *ibid.*

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma Building  
Name of Property

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

### **Books**

Niles, Nancy J. Origins of American Health Insurance: A History of Industrial Sickness Funds Basics of the U.S. Health Care System. Greenwood, South Carolina; Lander University, Department of Business Administration. Page 238.

Roberts, Jim. Building a Better Oklahoma: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma – The First 65 Years. Tulsa, OK; Self-published by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma, 2004

### **City Directories**

Research at the City Directory level was not conducted due to the known and confirmed construction and occupancy of the building being limited to BCBS of OK.

### **Other Printed Matter**

Ambler, Cathy. Downtown Tulsa Intensive-Level Historic Resources Survey. Tulsa, OK; 2009

Ambler, Cathy. Osler Building, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, NRIS #12000347, listed 6/15/12, Criteria A, C. 2012.

Ambler, Cathy. Tulsa Civic Center Historic District, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, NRIS 11000641, listed 1/3/12, Criteria A, C, g. 2012.

Journal Record, March 12, 2010

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma, “Fact Sheet”, Tulsa, OK, undated.

### **Websites**

<http://www.bcbsm.com/index/about-us/our-company/our-history.html>

<http://www.preservationnation.org/magazine/2008/may-june/blue.html#.VBSsWPlDX6c>

[http://www.bcbs.com/blog/health-insurance.html#.VBT3D\\_lDX6c](http://www.bcbs.com/blog/health-insurance.html#.VBT3D_lDX6c)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue\\_Cross\\_Blue\\_Shield\\_Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_Cross_Blue_Shield_Association)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health\\_insurance\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_insurance_in_the_United_States)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justin\\_Ford\\_Kimball](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justin_Ford_Kimball)

<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fki09>

<http://www.bcbs.com/about-the-association/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BCBSAssociation/info>

### **Maps**

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Tulsa, Oklahoma, Tulsa County, Oklahoma. New York, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1911, 1915, 1939, 1962, 1968 (owner provided)

Aerial Maps of Tulsa, 1951, 1965, 1976, 1985 (owner provided)

### **Drawings**

Koberling and Brandborg, AIA, Architects, W.C. Roads, Consult. Eng., An Office Building for the Group Hospital Services and the Oklahoma Physicians Service (23 architectural sheets), Tulsa, OK, January 23 1953 (owner provided)



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Koberling, Joseph R. AIA, Architect, Blue Cross Blue Shield Plan Additions to the Home Office Building (34 architectural sheets), Tulsa, OK, May 8, 1968 (owner provided)

Murray Jones Murray Incorporated, Architects Engineers Planners, Blue Cross/Blue Shield 12<sup>th</sup> Floor Remodel (16 drawing sheets), Tulsa, OK, February 18, 1985 (owner provided)

HTB, Inc., Architects Engineers Planners, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma (12 drawing sheets), Tulsa, OK, July 10, 1991 (owner provided)

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**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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** less than 1 (one) acre

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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: **36.144245** Longitude: **-95.988132**

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

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

Oklahoma, Tulsa County, Tulsa: Friend Gillette Subdivision, Block 6, Lots 5 and 6 AND  
Horner Subdivision, Block 2, Lots 9 and 10.

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

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma Building including the property that the building occupies, the parking lot to the south (appearing on the site plan of the 1953 drawings) and a portion of the parking lot to the north (appearing on the site plan of the 1967 drawings). The only other remaining structure on the block (northeast corner), historically a used car dealership and later modified, is outside of the boundary of the property historically associated with the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma Building. The company eventually purchased the property and renovated it for a printing shop (1991). The building remains outside of the current legal boundary for the property.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Catherine Montgomery AIA and Alexander Montgomery  
organization: Preservation and Design Studio, PLLC  
street & number: 11 North Lee Avenue, Suite 310  
city or town: Oklahoma City state: OK zip code: 73102  
e-mail: cm@panddstudio.com  
telephone: (405) 601-6814  
date: December 2015

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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,

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photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Name of Property: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma Building

City or Vicinity: Tulsa

County: Tulsa State: Oklahoma

Photographer: Preservation and Design Studio, PLLC (Sara Werneke)

Date Photographed: March, 2014

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

Number	Subject	Direction
0001	Façade and South Side	Northeast
0002	South and East Elevations	Southwest
0003	East Elevation	West
0004	East and North Elevations	Southwest
0005	North Elevation	South
0006	North Side and Façade	Southeast
0007	Façade	East
0008	Main Entrance	East
0009	Bas Relief Entablature Detail above Main Entrance	East
0010	Detail, Façade above Main Entrance	East and Up

**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.

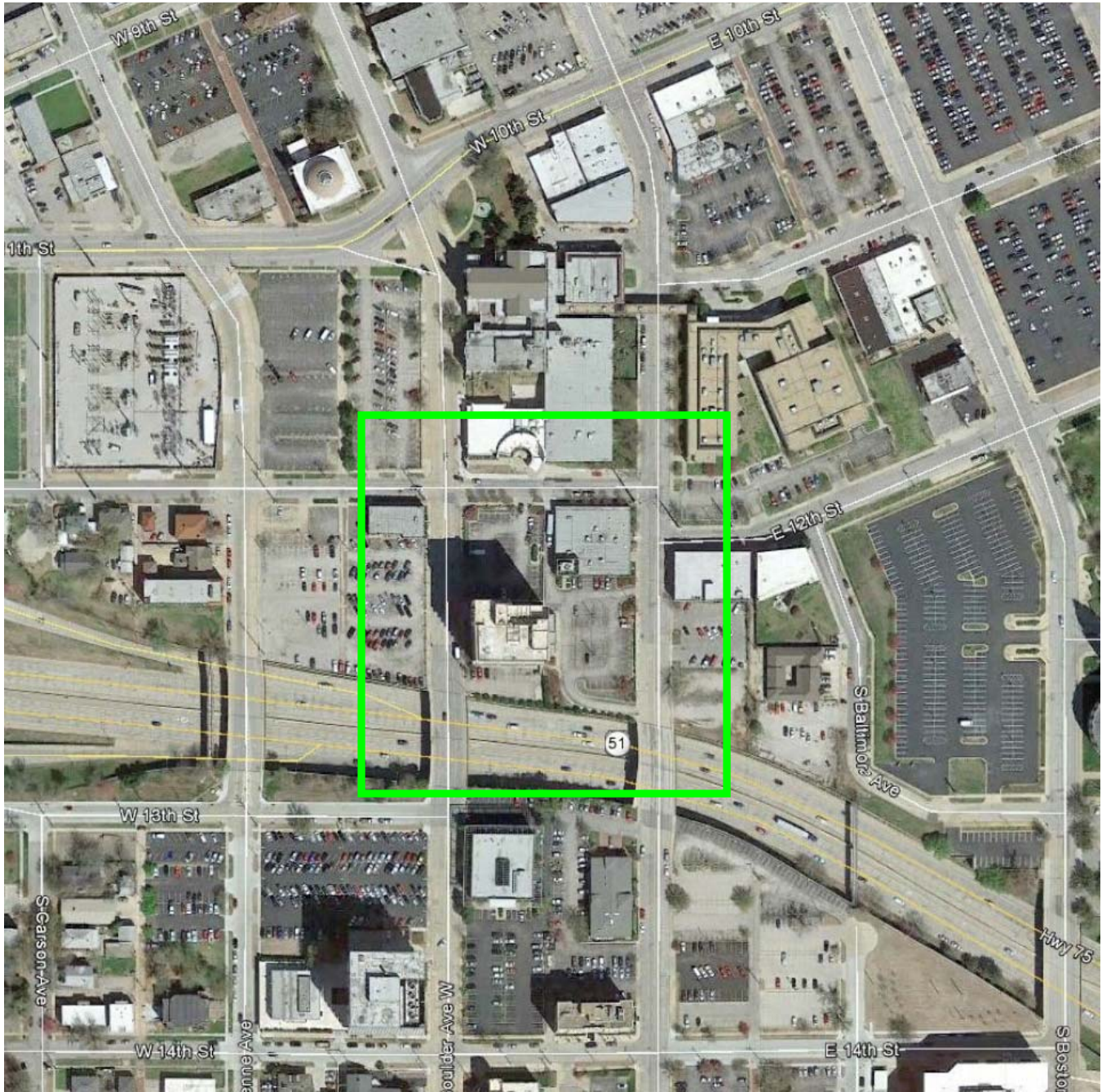
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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The Big Picture: 2015 Tulsa Aerial  
Google Earth 2015

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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Close Up: 2015 Tulsa Aerial  
Google Earth 2015

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**The Big Picture: 1939 (#45)**

ALL AVILABLE SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS

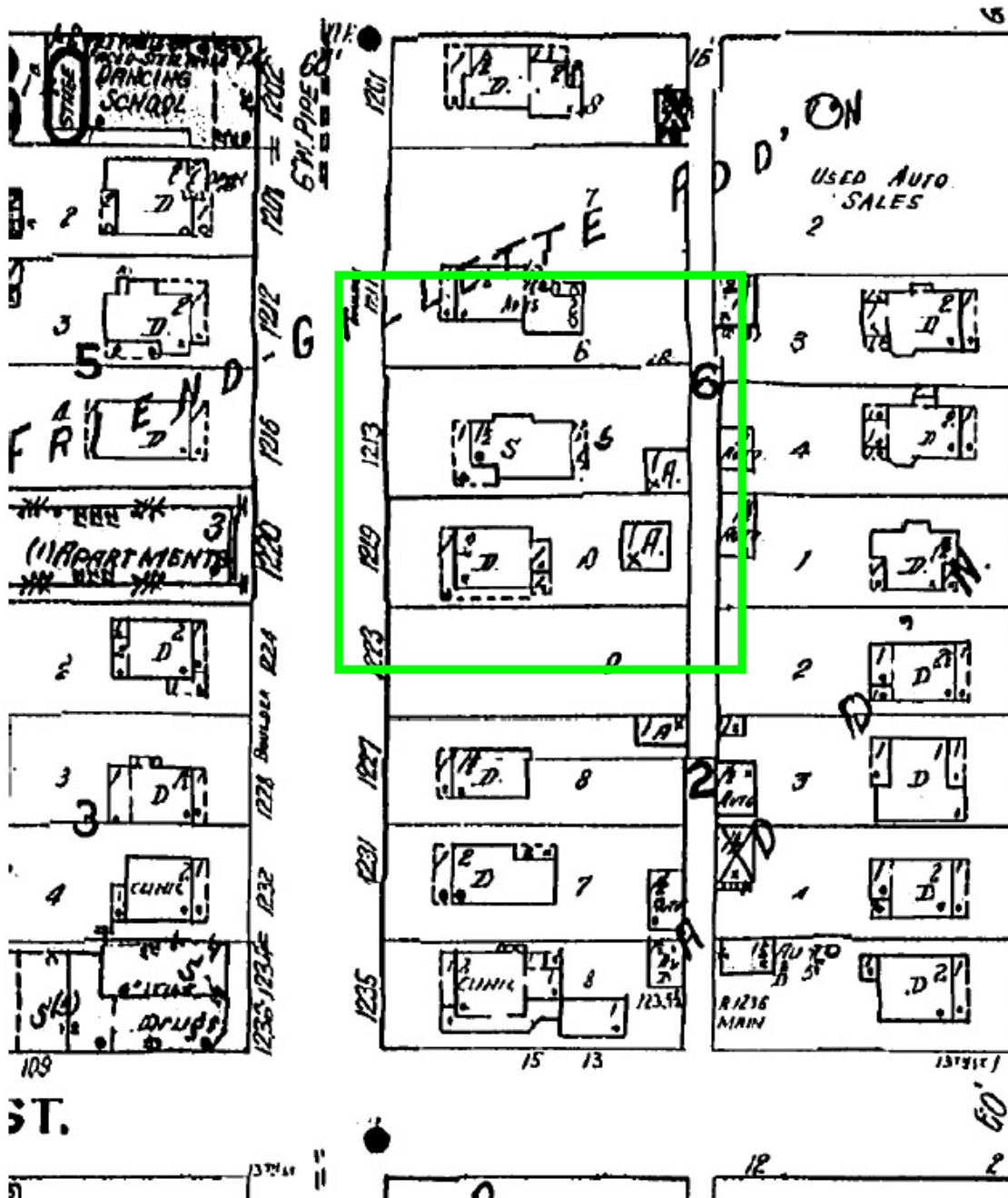
This map shows that this area was originally residential with both single family and multi-family dwellings and a school.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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**Close Up: 1939 (#45)**

ALL AVAILABLE SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS

This map shows that this area was originally residential with both single family and multi-family dwellings and a school. The first phase of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma Building project would not occur until 1954.

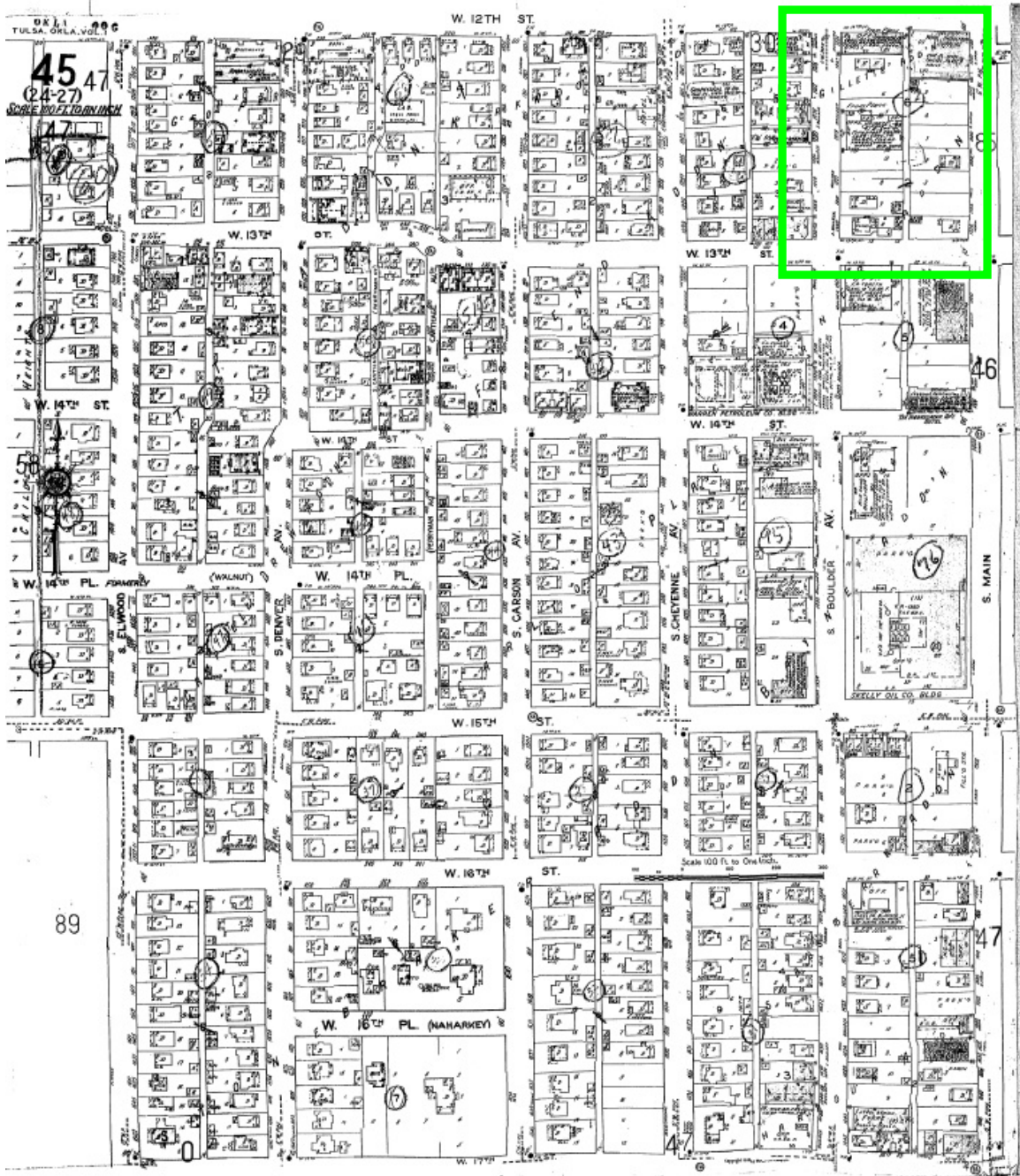


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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**The Big Picture: 1962 (#45)**

ALL AVAILABLE SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS

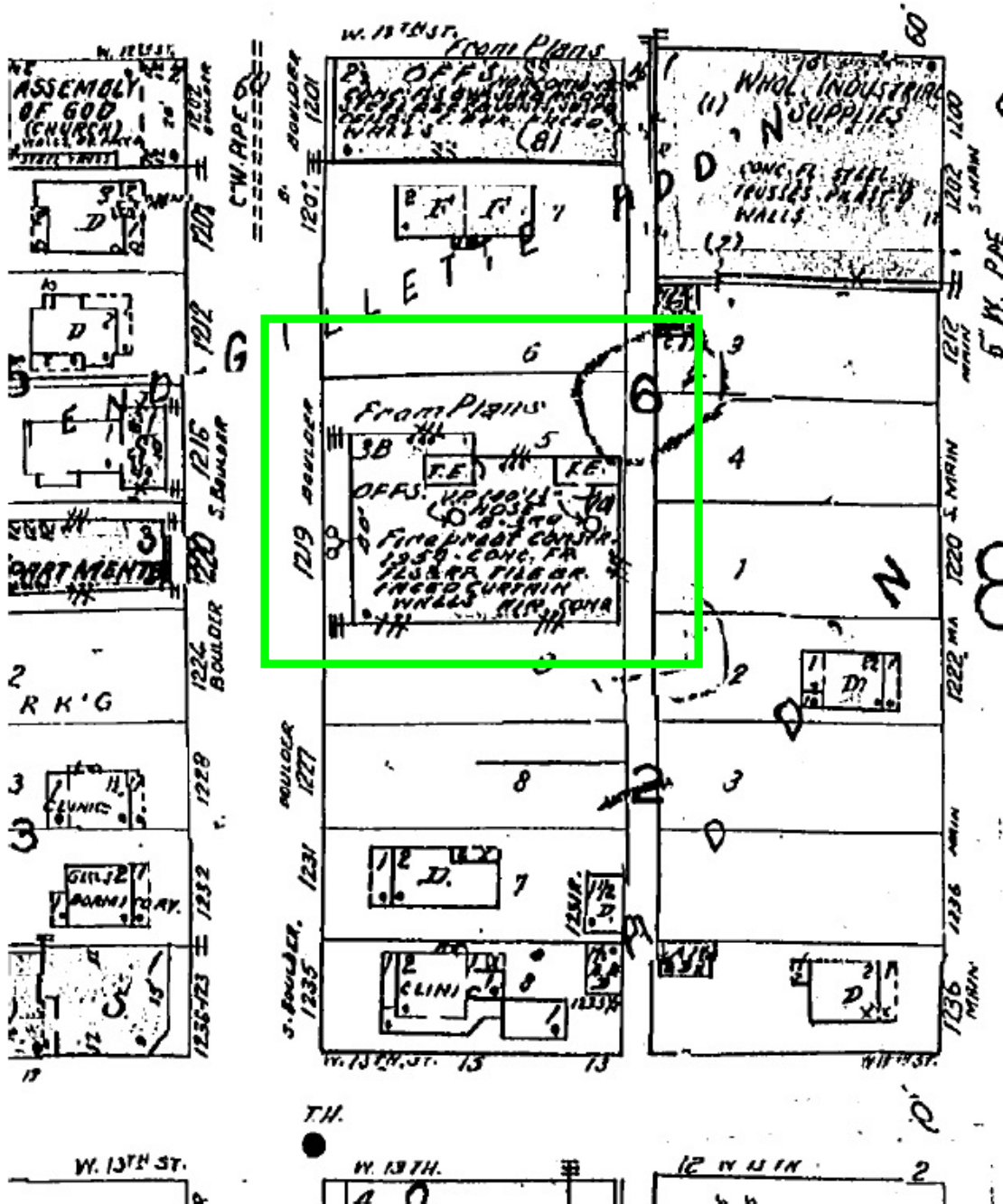
This map shows that the area is starting to have more commercial developments. Eventually, the area to the South of 1215 South Boulder will be vacated entirely to make way for the construction of Interstate 64/US Highway 75/State Highway 51 (circa 1970s).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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**Close Up: 1962 (#45)**

ALL AVAILABLE SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS

This map shows the commercial development in the area. Construction of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma Building started in 1954 with building of floors 1 through 3 plus the full basement. Floors 4 through 12 wouldn't be built till 1967, 5 years after this latest map was produced.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
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**Historic Photo #1: circa 1954**  
PHOTO PROVIDED BY BUILDING OWNER

The building, located at 1215 South Boulder Avenue in Tulsa, was originally built as a Three-story building with full Basement. The building was designed by the architectural firm of Koberling and Brandborg, AIA with engineer W.C. Roads and constructed by general contractor John B. Martin Company.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
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**Historic Photo #2: circa 1967**  
PHOTO PROVIDED BY BUILDING OWNER

Floors 4 through 12 of building were constructed as part of Phase 2 of the overall building project. The building was designed by architect Joseph R. Koberling with engineer W.C. Roads and constructed by general contractor W.R. Grimshaw Company.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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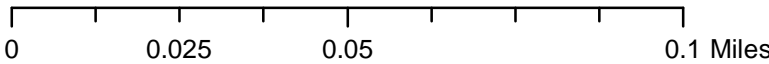
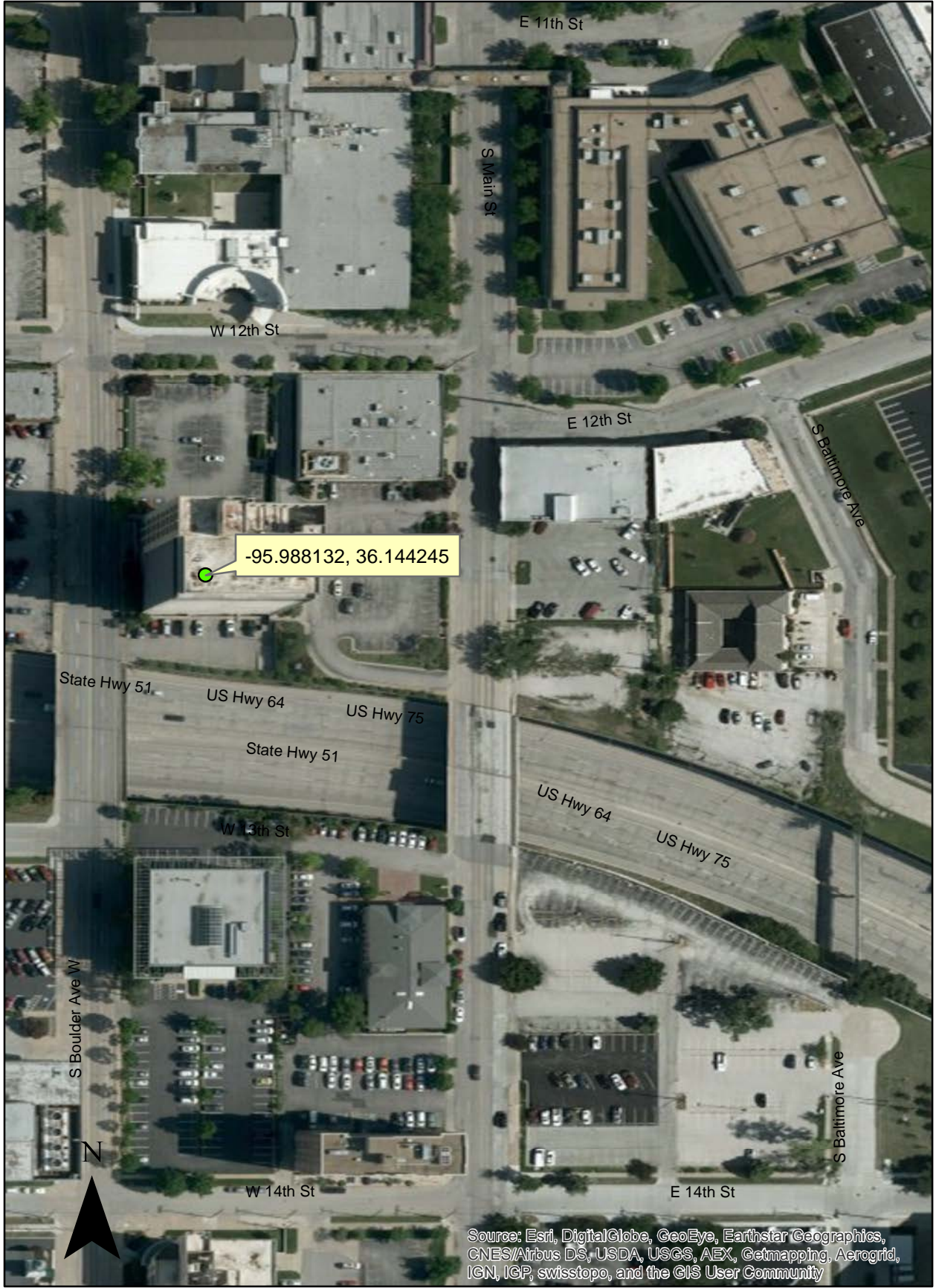


**Historic Image #3: 2011**

PHOTO PROVIDED BY TULSA COUNTY ASSESSORS WEBSITE

The building in its entirety with large sign on roof which is no longer extant.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma Building  
1215 South Boulder Avenue  
Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma











1202







WARNING



FIRE

WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OKLAHOMA, Tulsa

DATE RECEIVED: 7/29/16      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/18/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/02/16      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/13/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000624

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: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    9-12-16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in:  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

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



# Oklahoma Historical Society

Founded May 27, 1893

## State Historic Preservation Office

Oklahoma History Center • 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive • Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7917  
(405) 521-6249 • Fax (405) 522-0816 • [www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm](http://www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm)

July 26, 2016

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
National Park Service 2280, 8th floor  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington D.C. 20005

RECEIVED 2280

JUL 29 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are pleased to transmit eight National Register of Historic Places nominations and one additional documentation for Oklahoma properties. The nominations are for the following properties:

Fort Towson (additional documentation), Fort Towson, Choctaw County  
Central Fire Station, Lawton, Comanche County  
Klingensmith Park Amphitheater, Bristow, Creek County  
Lincoln Park Bathhouse, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County  
Mutual Savings and Loan Association Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County  
Pruett House, Stillwater, Payne County  
Downtown Claremore Historic District, Claremore, Rogers County (owner objection)  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma Building, Tulsa, Tulsa County  
Downtown Tulsa YMCA, Tulsa, Tulsa County

The member of the Historic Preservation Review Committee (state review board), professionally qualified in the fields of architecture was absent from the public meeting at which each of these nominations was considered and the recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer was formulated. However, the member possessing the requisite professional qualifications for evaluation of each nominated property was present and participated in the recommendation's formulation.

We look forward to the results of your review. If there may be any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either Lynda S. Ozan of my staff or myself.

Sincerely,

Melvena Heisch  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer

MKH:Iso

Enclosures