

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

For NPS use only

received FEB 1 1985

date entered MAR 12 1985

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

and or common Same

2. Location

street & number 701 D. Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Lawton

N/A vicinity of

state Oklahoma

code 40

county Comanche

code 31

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name First Christian Church

street & number 701 D. Avenue

city, town Lawton

_____ vicinity of

state Oklahoma 73501

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Comanche County Courthouse

street & number 6th and C. Avenue

city, town Lawton

state Oklahoma 73501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Oklahoma Comprehensive Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date March 15, 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society

city, town Oklahoma City

state Oklahoma 73105

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The First Christian Church of Lawton is a three-story brick structure of Gothic Revival style. It has a concrete foundation. Brick load bearing walls and a full length Basement. The pitched roof has intersecting ridges which form a cross, the east portion being longer than the west. Roof ends are terminated at the outside walls with brick gables and parapets. Composition shingles cover the roof, pierced by one brick chimney which relates very closely to the wall buttresses.

A compound Gothic arch at the main entry and the twelve sectioned stained glass rose window above dominate the church's front. Narrow Gothic arched windows, buttresses, broken parapet with finials complete the decorative features of the principal facade. Set back from the facade at each side are additional decorative gables, narrow Gothic arched windows, compound buttresses and many finials. Parapet caps, finials, weathering blocks, sills and other decorative accents made of limestone. The roof has copper guttering and downspouts.

A side entry on the east utilizes a Gothic compound arch in company with other decorative features typical of this building. East and west sides of the sanctuary each have five, two-story Gothic arched stained glass windows, which are protected with clear safety panels. Each stained glass window is subdivided into two windows separated by a filler in the top. Symbolism fills each of the divided windows and the top filler, leaving the lower areas with operators for opening and closing. Other windows in offices and classrooms are metal casement with the majority containing ten panes each. Window patterns vary on gable ends with one window near the Apex, two on the next level, etc.

The impressive interior is dominated by the monumental compound arch of Gothic design in wood near the pulpit area. A second Gothic arch encloses the pipes of the organ and the baptistry, separated from the congregation with cloth screens and drapes. The sanctuary heights contain massive wood trusses of typical members of king posts, collar braces, knee braces and provide the support for the ornamental iron cathedral lantern style light fixtures.

Minor remodeling has occurred in the pulpit area since 1929. Main entrance steps were altered in 1952 to direct traffic to either side. In 1951, carrillion bells and central heating and air conditioning were installed. An educational building was constructed in 1958 immediately west of the west wing. However, the church retains its historic integrity.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1929 **Builder/Architect** Walter T. Vahlberg, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The First Christian Church is significant because it is the best example of Gothic Revival style architecture in Southwest Oklahoma.

The architect, W.T. Vahlberg, was a graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and came to Oklahoma to practice his profession. He designed several churches in the state. One of his best designs is Lawton's First Christian Church. Designed in the Gothic Revival style, the building was constructed in 1928. However, it burned shortly after completion. In 1929 the structure was rebuilt in accordance with the original plans. The 10 stained glass windows and the rose window are outstanding features of the building, and they are the most impressive such windows to be found in a church in southwestern Oklahoma.

The building has a unity and consistency of style from the exterior to the interior. It is the best example of Gothic Revival style architecture in Lawton and the southwestern region of Oklahoma. The Gothic arch is a dominant feature throughout the structure.

9. Major Bibliographical References

First Christian Church
1951 Golden Anniversary 1901-1951. Unpublished pamphlet on file, Church Office,
Lawton.
First Christian Church
1976 Diamond Jubilee 1901-1976. Unpublished pamphlet on file, Church Office, Lawton

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx 1 acre

Quadrangle name Lawton, OK 1956-1975

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	4	5	5	5	1	6	10	3	18	2	19	1	4	10
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is on City Lots 13,14,15 and 16, Block 37, Original Town Addition, City of Lawton, Oklahoma.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Northcutt

organization Museum of the Great Plains date March 14, 1983

street & number 6th and Ferris; P.O. Box 68 telephone (405) 353-5676

city or town Lawton state Oklahoma 73502

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *C. E. [unclear]* 1-15-85

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Beth Grosvenor date 3/12/85
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration