

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

For NPS use only

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

received **MAR 15 1985**
date entered **APR 11 1985**

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

1. Name

historic Old Armory

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 320 First Avenue East not for publication

city, town Williston vicinity of

state North Dakota code 38 county Williams code 105

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name City of Williston

street & number 22 East Broadway

city, town Williston vicinity of state North Dakota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Williams County Courthouse

city, town Williston state North Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? N/A yes no

date N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The "Old Armory" was designed as a multi-purpose activity center for the use of citizens in Williston and the surrounding area. It is a solid brick structure 50' x 130' with two stories and a full basement. Its design does not refer to a common academic style, but elements of the composition have antecedents in castle forms. Two shades of brick are used on the facade. Fenestration on the north and west sides is marked by connected brick labels and brick sills. A prominent turret rises at the northwest corner. Poured concrete forms the foundation, the entrance stairways, and prominent entry-way element on the west side. The interior is divided into five bays. A substantial auditorium is located within. Alterations have been few, the most noticeable being the removal of the crenelated parapet on front (west) and rear facades.

The corbel of dark brick at the base of the parapet was originally capped by the crenelated brick work. The enlarged piers on the exterior, originally also crenelated, are present on the north and west sides and the building's corners. The juxtaposition of colored brick also forms a semi-circular arch above the two main entrances and above the windows to form a small entablature.

The turret, a feature unique among North Dakota armories, houses storage and office area. Windows on the building generally fall within three arrangements: twelve fixed panes, three across and four vertically, are found in the turret on all but the ground-floor openings and on the front facade. Eighteen-paned windows, three across and six vertically, light the auditorium and are seen on the main floor of the exterior's sides. Lastly, an assortment of glass block and bulkier window pane groupings constitute the ground floor openings.

The five bays on the interior are separated by brick pilasters. These bays comprise the large auditorium (50' x 80') which is fronted by an elevated stage. Wooden roof trusses complete the support system for the structure. A balcony once extended the auditorium seating capacity by 250 but this is presently closed to the public. The basement floor contains a variety of facilities, from kitchen and restrooms, to a large recreation area with a stage.

Maintenance costs have recently led city officials to propose demolition of the building. It is hoped that listing will make the property attractive to developers as well as heighten and focus public sentiment toward the structure.

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 1915-16

Builder/Architect J. G. Harding (builder)

Robert Stacy Judd (architect)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Old Armory brought together diverse sectors of the public in its creation and subsequent use: local government, military, private business, and the general townspeople. In architectural character it is uncommon, yet representative of a once-popular type of design for armory buildings in the state.

The terms under which the building was financed and came to be built are typical of twentieth century public buildings in North Dakota. A group of the local National Guard (Company E) composed of both enlisted men and officers, met on February 3, 1915 to discuss plans for a new building. The Guard had, until that time, trained in streets, vacant lots, or in rural areas. They planned for an armory which would provide space for military functions combined with meeting places for public gatherings, conventions, entertainment, etc. A committee was designated who took the proposal for a \$27,000 building to the Adjutant General of the State's Guard. The state promised a loan of \$15,000 if a \$10,000 local match could be raised. A local commercial club offered to supervise the fund raising and by early 1916 the \$10,000 was raised. A \$5,000 no-interest loan from the state was secured, and a balance of \$12,500 remained to pay for the new building, which was currently under construction. The organizers had two options to finance the balance: they could borrow from private investors at 7% interest, or take another loan from the state at 4% interest. To obtain the lesser interest the city had to secure the loan to the state through passage of a bond issue. Such a bond would allow the Armory to retire its debts through profit-making enterprises without requiring city funds to be used. For the state, the bond also pledged the city's credit to guarantee the loan. The city, which also owned the land, took title to the building in exchange for their bonded interest in the loan. Thus, all parties - city, state, Guard, and citizens - worked in concert to provide a space for use of all parties ("Ask City to Buy Armory," Williston Herald, January 13, 1916, p. 1).

As various community sectors have contributed to the financing of the Armory, the structure has housed diverse community activities. The first public event at the facility was a two-day homecoming for soldiers returning from the First World War. For several years afterwards the Armory opened its doors to the families of guardsmen for celebrations such as Armistice Day, Independence Day, etc.

During the 1940s the Armory began to extend its contact with the general public. Teen dances with bands took advantage of the large floor space and balcony seating. The floor was used for roller skating, as well. An annual Rock and Precious Mineral show made use of the space. As many soldiers were fighting in Europe and in the Pacific at that time the Armory provided supervised activities for Williston's youth.

The citizens did not relinquish the Armory to exclusive Guard use at the end of the end of the Second World War. They continued to schedule there many of the same social events that they had during the early 1940s. In the mid-1950s the area Recreation

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Slightly over .35 of an acre.

Quadrangle name Williston East

Quadrangle scale 7.5'

UTM References

A

1	3	6	0	2	7	0	0	5	3	3	3	4	0	0
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

Lots 20, 21, and 22, Block 8 of Original Williston Townsite Plat.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

George D. Schreiner, DES Coordinator;
name/title revised by L. Marty Perry, Architectural Historian on January 3, 1985

organization City of Williston/Williams County
State Historical Society of ND

date December 20, 1983

street & number P.O. Box 1914
North Dakota Heritage Center

telephone (701)572-6846
(701)224-2672

city or town Williston
Bismarck

state North Dakota

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 Alois B. Spielman

Alois B. Spielman
title State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota)

date 3/1/85

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

for Allene Byers
Keeper of the National Register

date 4-11-85

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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Council took up residence within the building and instituted regular dances and basketball leagues. The construction of a new armory in the late 1950s allowed the building to be placed under community control. It remains today in City stewardship, but development plans for Williston's downtown put the building's future in question.

The building of the Armory was part of a significant increase in construction during 1915-16 in Williston. Projects totalling \$250,000 were completed, including the Great Northern Hotel Annex, Central School Building, LaDou Courts (apartments), First National Building (Creaser Block), and a pontoon bridge across the Missouri River. One source singles out the several projects as the largest annual expenditure on construction in Williston until 1927 when the large bridge across the Missouri River was built (photo and caption, Williston Herald, June 23, 1927, Section 4, p. 1).

A survey of National Guard facilities in 1940 shows four styles into which the buildings might be categorized. Devils Lake had the sole Chicago Style armory. Edgeley, Grand Forks, and Cando's Armories had revival styles. Four others reflected moderne influences. The remaining Guard headquarters, in Williston, Minot, Wahpeton, Lisbon, Hillsboro, and Fargo all effected a similar fortress-like appearance through the use of crenelated parapets, block-like massing, and uneven heights of their bays. (Historical and Pictorial Review, 1940, pp. xii-xiv). This fashion of building enjoyed more popularity than any other for the design of armories in the state, yet it is without clear academic recognition. These structures obviously appealed to the viewer's image of castles to suggest a feeling of strength and security, characteristics consistent with the military enterprise. Williston's Armory is one of two remaining out of seven (Bismarck's, not listed in the Review, also exhibited the style) which displayed this decoration, and it retains the greater integrity. All of them have been demolished except for Williston's and Minot's, the latter of which has been radically altered (Frank Vyzralek, 1985).

The listing of this property will establish the Armory as an example of the style. Researchers will be aided by using it as a point of comparison with which to trace the influence of this style on other construction. Buildings throughout the state serving a variety of functions, such as the Patterson Land Company (an apartment building in Bismarck) and a commercial building in downtown Elgin, exhibit elements of the design and are but two examples of this work which needs further investigation.

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"Ask City to Buy Armory" Williston Herald, January 13, 1916, p. 1

Historical and Pictorial Review of the National Guard of the State of North Dakota, 1940 (Baton Rouge: Army and Navy Publishing Co., Inc., 1940).

"Modern Armory," Williston Herald, August 12, 1915, p. 1.

Personal Interview with Frank Vyzralek, January 8, 1985.

Williston Herald, various issues (August 12, 1915; August 26, 1915; April 20, 1916; May 4, 1916; June 23, 1927).