

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED **AUG 10 1979**
DATE ENTERED **OCT 10 1979**

**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

Skirvin Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

Skirvin Plaza Hotel

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1 Park Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5

VICINITY OF

STATE

Oklahoma

CODE

40

COUNTY

Oklahoma

CODE

109

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

BMA Properties, Inc. (Contact: Lloyd Coker, President)

STREET & NUMBER

BMA Tower, One Penn Valley Park, at 31st and SW Trafficway

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City,

VICINITY OF

STATE

Missouri

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Oklahoma County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

320 Robert S. Kerr Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Comprehensive Statewide Survey

DATE

March 1979

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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
<input type="checkbox"/> _FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> _UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>1910-11</u>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Originally built in two sections of 10 stories each, the Skirvin Hotel later was expanded in several additions to those identical sections of 14 stories each. Columns with ionic capitals extended onto the sidewalk on Broadway and Park Avenue (west and south) sides. The Broadway columns were removed in a major \$8 million renovation in 1973-74. There were six columns on the west side and four on the south facade, each with an entry canopy. Main entrance later was moved to the south side as a concession to the automobile. Park Avenue was being less heavily traveled. Canopies had a balustrade on top, with urns atop each post. Main body of the hotel is brown brick laid in a Flemish bond pattern. First two stories are marble at the base up to about five feet, with limestone facades reaching to the third floor level.

From the third level up, the entire structure is brown brick. At the 10th level, there is a belt course of limestone. Eleventh and 12th floors are brick with limestone pilasters in Corinthian style, which occur between windows and at corners. At the corners, this executes a double pilaster effect. Above the pilasters is an elaborate cornice and the cornice is surmounted by another limestone balustrade. The 14th floor has a penthouse and a roof garden. Top floors have a slight set back with stone parapets. Decorations include flame and torch and limestone plaques with a circular design going around south, west, north and east sides. Each of the three towers is separated by a rounded bay running the full height of the building. These contain rooms and suites and were put there to give all rooms an outside window. The bays are set back, to give exterior views to inside rooms of the various towers.

The coffee shop added in a 1929 remodeling and extension took almost half the first floor, extending east from the main lobby. It was decorated with black Belgian marble. An elaborate feature of the 1929 expansion was the roof garden, which covers the west wing. It was finished without columns to allow unobstructed views. The roof is supported by steel trusses. Ceilings of the roof garden and some ballrooms are domed.

Exterior alterations in the 1973-74 renovation were limited to construction of a new drive-in entrance on the north side, removal of the sidewalk pilasters on the Broadway (west) side and renewal of the canopy over the Park Avenue entrance, where pillars were left. Awnings were added over lower level windows, and solar bronze glass replaced some original glass on lower levels.

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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Skirvin was built in 1910-11 by William Balser Skirvin, who had made a fortune in oil exploration in Texas and Oklahoma. At the time of its construction, it was the most expensive building in Oklahoma City, costing \$1.8 million. Instantly proclaimed an Oklahoma show place, it was caught up in the opulent era spawned by the state's infant oil industry and its new status of statehood. It quickly became headquarters of such famed oil giants as Robert Galbreath, William Skelly and Walter Ramsey. The Skirvin children lived there with their parents, including eldest daughter, Pearl, who gave her first party in the hotel. She later became Perle Skirvin Mesta, legendary hostess of Washington, D. C. through the administrations of five presidents. (She was minister to Luxenbourg from 1949-1954, by appointment of President Harry Truman.)

The Skirvin was just across the street from the Rock Island depot. Also, it was only a few blocks from the Santa Fe and Frisco train stations. Visitors to early-day Oklahoma City found it not only luxurious but conveniently located. Skirvin ran his hotel like a feudal baron. It had its own water well, electrical generation equipment, private gas pipeline, laundry and even disposed of its own garbage. Famous outlaw figures of the day, wealthy cattlemen, the Miller Brothers of the 101 Ranch, political figures of both parties and famous entertainers mingled in its well-appointed dining rooms and lobbies.

The 10-storied double wings were added to every few years. In a 1921 addition, a Venetian summer roof garden was opened and brought such entertainers as Ted Weems, Jimmie Joy, Jan Garbor, The Seven Aces. From the original 250 rooms, additions and expansions brought it to more than 450 rooms.

During and after World War II, it was used on occasion by Perle Mesta for parties honoring political figures or servicemen. As the era of opulence faded, the hostess continued as one of the city's leading hostesses. But after the founder's death in 1944, it was sold and gradually the hotel's glitter began to tarnish. By late 1970, it ran into severe financial difficulties and was placed

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Daily Oklahoman and Oklahoma City Times Clip Files.
 Mesta, Perle, Perle, My Story, (1960).
 Nelson, Mary Jo, "The Buildings of Solomon Andrew Layton," Southwest Prologue Series, (1978).
 Oklahoma County Records, Oklahoma County Courthouse, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME _____ QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 4	6 3 4 8 6 0	3 9 2 5 8 7 5	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Oklahoma	40	Oklahoma	109
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mary Jo Nelson, Special Writer

ORGANIZATION

Daily Oklahoma and Oklahoma City Times

DATE

March 28, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

500 North Broadway

TELEPHONE

405/231-3213

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

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

TITLE

Harry D. Boyce, Jr.

DATE

7-13-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Coral Shull

DATE

10-10-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Bob Groves

DATE

10/1/79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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8. SIGNIFICANCE

in the hands of a receiver. New owners then restored the Skirvin's grandeur in a major renovation, giving it dowager status. The hotel has hosted scores of famous personalities from the arts, theater and motion pictures. Among U. S. Presidents it has sheltered are Harry Truman, Lyndon B. Johnson (before he was chief executive) and Gerald Ford in October 1976. Skirvin added a second hotel across Broadway from the Skirvin in 1936, naming it the Skirvin Tower. Tunnels he built to link the two running across Broadway and north from the Tower became part of Metro Concourse when Oklahoma City built more than 1.7 miles of underground walkways and shops in 1974-75. Architect for the Skirvin and its later additions (until his death in 1943) was Solomon Andrew Layton, AIA, principal architect of pre-statehood and early statehood Oklahoma City.

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10. Verbal Boundary Description

The Skirvin Hotel is located on Lots 1 through 18 and the vacated alleys adjoining on the East and South; 39 feet of Lots 13 through 16 and the vacated alleys adjoining on the South; and Lots 29 through 32. All in Block 8 of the original Oklahoma City addition.