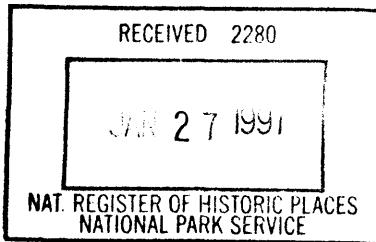


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL

other names/site number CENTRAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL/OLD LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 809 "C" AVENUE not for publication N/A
 city or town LAWTON vicinity N/A
 state OKLAHOMA code OK county COMANCHE code 031
 zip code 73502

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this XX 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 XX meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide XX locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] January 21, 1997
Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the
National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the
National Register
- removed from the National Register

[Signature] 2/27/97

___ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper 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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>5</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>6</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: SCHOOL

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: SCHOOL

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

CLASSICAL REVIVAL

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK

other COPPER

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION
ARCHITECTURE
ECONOMICS

Period of Significance 1909-1946

Significant Dates 1909-10
1922-23
1939

=====

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

=====

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder 1909-C. E. Hair and Smith of Chickasha/L. Crosby and Son

1923-Tonini & Bramblet/W.S. Bellows of Oklahoma City

1939-PWA, Paul Harris/Dennehy Construction of Oklahoma City

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property 2.94

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>554980</u>	<u>3829300</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	<u>NA</u>	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>				

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Neysa Clark, Historical Geographer; ed. Jill Marsh, OK SHPO
organization Private Consultant date August 25, 1996
street & number 4324 N.W. 50th Apt. 308 telephone (405) 946-5899
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73112

=====
Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Lawton Public Schools-John Shoemaker Education Center

street & number 753 N.W. Ft. Sill Blvd. telephone (405) 357-6900

city or town Lawton state OK zip code 73502

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Summary:

Lawton High School is located in southwest Oklahoma in Lawton, the county seat of Comanche County. Southwest Oklahoma's arid climate, short grass prairies, and featureless terrain is distinctively associated with the southeastern edge of the Great Plains. North of Lawton is Fort Sill, a U.S. army base established in 1869. The Lawton High School, originally built in 1909-1910, became Central Junior High when a new high school was built in 1954. It is an irregular-shaped, approximately 250 feet x 300 feet, four-story brick building with massive columns of the Ionic Order and a copper-covered dome, hallmark features of the Classical Revival architectural style often associated with federal or public buildings. Three stages of construction can be noted by materials, architectural style, and shape: the Original Building in 1909-1910, the North Addition in 1922-1923, and the Public Works Administration (PWA) Annex completed in 1939. The school towers above local buildings and serves as an aerial landmark for local and military pilots. The building, occupying the northwest corner of Block 31 of Lawton Original plat, lies on an east-west axis, facing south to "C" Street with "B" Street on the north. The elevation of the site slopes from Ninth Street on the west, northeast to Eighth Street. With few alterations, the school continues to retain its integrity as an excellent example of both Classical Revival architecture adapted for public buildings and Modern Movement style architecture. It also significant as the only secondary school in Comanche County with the Classical Revival architectural style.

DESCRIPTION

Lawton High School is an irregular-shaped building, approximately 250 feet x 300 feet, four-story brick building with massive columns of the Ionic Order and a copper-covered dome, hallmark features of the Classical Revival architectural style. Three stages of construction are apparent by materials, architectural style, and shape: the Original Building in 1909-1910, the North Addition in 1922-1923, and the Public Works Administration (PWA) Annex completed in 1939. The building, occupying the northwest corner of Block 31 of Lawton Original plat, lies on an east-west axis, facing south to "C" Street with "B" Street on the north. The elevation of the site slopes from Ninth Street on the west, northeast to Eighth Street

The original school, a t-shaped, 2-part Classical Revival brick building, featuring impressive Classical Revival detailing with massive columns of the Ionic Order and a large copper-covered dome, was constructed in 1909-1910 (see photographs #1 and #2). There are four floors with a small, partially excavated sub-basement once used as a boiler/ incinerator room. On the exterior, a concrete band separates the partially exposed basement from the upper floors as does the darker brick of the basement. On the south elevation, a recessed, two-story porch with six Ionic columns, which are three to four feet in diameter, supporting a flat-roof porch, commands the center of the building. A narrow spindle and concrete-capped brick balustrade crowns the heavy concrete cornices, unadorned brick friezes, and a band of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 10

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

dentils. The coping is interrupted with three false front, gable brick-faced dormers across the front and the east and west elevations of the building. The dormers have two fixed windows with three vertical lights in each window. Above the front entry along the brick frieze is a concrete inset with metal lettering of "Central Junior High," replacing the original "Lawton High School" inset.

The porch is 80 feet wide and 5 feet deep with a 7 foot x 4 foot pedestal flanking each side of the stairway. At the rear of each concrete-capped pedestal are twin columns with the remaining two framing the front entry. A designed gap between the porch floor and wall exposes the basement windows protected with ornate iron grates. A triangular concrete pediment with scroll side brackets, a fan medallion at its apex, and fluted-tipped ends above the front entry continues the classic Classical Revival focus. The side lights and a single transom panel wraps around a pair of modern metal doors, each with a single light. A broken transom spans the base of the actual pediment. On the east elevation of the building, a 12 foot wide and 4 foot deep pediment entry continues the Classical Revival architectural theme but on a smaller scale using only a pair of columns of the Doric Order to support the triangular pediment. A small band of dentils defines the transom and the double metal doors. In front of the entry, a free-standing metal awning protects the north/south walkway from this doorway to the cafeteria.

Aluminum encased windows are alternatively recessed between two-story brick pilasters with bases and caps of concrete. Variations of two and three sections of windows with vertical panels of five lights each break the continuity of the brick wall. A decorative concrete keystone at the top of each section sets the windows off. The fourth floor is created by the tall, flat top hipped roof. Asphalt shingles have replaced the original red clay tiles according to an earlier survey and photographs.

The building's show piece, a large, copper-covered dome mounted on a lipped-cornice, completes the Classical Revival style. A 2 foot flat ridge with a recessed channel divides the dome into four sections. Below the cornice of each section, a large scroll bracket and a band of five fixed windows with colored panes of glass breaks up the walls of the circular base. At the apex of the dome is a crown-shaped finial and flag pole. The interior of the fourth floor is largely unfinished except for classrooms immediately adjacent to the area beneath the dome.

Two brick chimneys extend above the roof line: the original roof vent exits on the south elevation of the building from the partially excavated basement, and the second chimney, measuring 6 foot x 7 foot, which is attached to the exterior of the north elevation, were apparently added on at a later date. The two-story auditorium and basement extends 65 feet on the north/south axis. The interior of the auditorium retains many of its original features including an arched shaped stage front; a suspended, cylinder-shaped plaster

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 11

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

light fixture; a wrap-around balcony; double wood doors; and, a split staircase with highly polished spindle banisters. The basement below the auditorium is presently used as a music room. At this end of the original building, the North Addition or Central Junior High, was added in 1922-23 (see photograph #3).

The builders made an effort to continue with much of the same Classical Revival architectural style, details, and materials of the Original Building, although not quite as elaborate in architectural detail. The North Addition, built for a junior high, is irregularly shaped but of a general mass plan, approximately 66 feet x 180 feet, on an east-west axis. With the North Addition, the building takes the form of an "H" shape. The recessed north entrance aligns with the south entrance of the older building. Concrete-capped pilasters separate five sections of aluminum-encased windows and the recessed entrance. The continuous band of concrete window sills girds the lower part of the building. Two 2-story tall columns are perched on the concrete skirt above the entrance. These columns frame a brick relief of the frontal view of the Original Building. Below the relief, the ornate concrete pediment with scroll brackets rests just above the south entrance. The entrance, slightly elevated above the street level, is flanked by two 4 foot x 3 foot concrete-capped pedestals. A tri-pane transom with vertical panes spans the recessed double wood doors and plywood panels cover the original side lights.

There are two floors of classrooms, a basement, and a partial sub-basement for the heating and cooling utilities. A concrete band separates the upper floors from the basement floors as does the rich dark brown brick on the lower level facade and the lighter tone brick on the upper stories, as with the Original Building. The continuous concrete cornice with decorative dentils visually ties the Original Building and the North Addition together.

Like the Original Building, there are side entrances on the east and west elevations. Because of the northeast slope of the land, the east entrance is elevated with a flight of concrete steps leading to the landing. All the ornate exterior fixtures were removed in 1975 when the adjacent gymnasium was built. At that time, an extended metal awning and a 40 foot concrete ramp for handicapped accessibility was added, leading to the cafeteria building. Above the metal door entrance is a stationary three-light transom and two aluminum encased windows above the entrance. Rectangular brick panels with ornate medallions off set a raised brick embattlement around the side entry.

When the west entry of the North Addition was incorporated into the 1939 PWA addition, all outer fixtures were removed, including the exterior doors, creating an open entrance to the stairwell.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 12

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

=====
The classrooms in the North Addition, like the exterior, remain relatively unchanged. The original highly varnished wood staircases at the east and west ends and most of the classroom wood doors with single fixed lights and operative transoms are still intact. In the classrooms, the original narrow, slate blackboards are still being used as is the high-glossed maple wood flooring in the girl's gymnasium. The gymnasium extends from the auditorium of the older building. Below the gymnasium, a swimming pool and changing rooms were constructed; however, the pool has been filled with concrete and the area is now used as a large open concession-recreation room for students.

In 1939, a 2-story, U-shaped, Modern Movement style annex, 96 feet x 230 feet, was added on to the west elevation of the Original Building and North Addition entries (see photograph #4) with funding through the PWA. It was designed by Paul Harris, an architect from Chickasha, and constructed by the Dennehy Construction Company of Oklahoma City for a total cost of \$111,575.60. The connecting side entrances are a story and a-half tall, 16 feet wide. Later, the doors were replaced and contrasting brick used to fill in around the smaller doors. The annex created an interior courtyard, 50 feet x 90 feet, with a north/south sidewalk connecting the two west entries. In approximately 1967, the walkway was enclosed with metal girding and windows. A 2-foot pebble concrete skirt wraps around the buff brick building and a concrete cap seals the edge of the flat roof. The center of the west facing annex, which contains a barrel-shaped roof gymnasium, extends above a one-story, 12-foot x 42-foot front admissions foyer. The entrance, set off by a concrete gable-shaped encasement, has a transom across the modern metal doors. Six narrow, awning-style windows along the front of the gymnasium are also enframed with narrow partitions of concrete. Each window has a round metal medallion at its apex.

On each side of the gymnasium is a 2-story, flat roof, front facing L-shaped side wing. The north wing is for vocational activities on the first floor with a single, 5-panel wood garage door on the northwest corner and classrooms on the second. The south wing includes the school administration offices, a library, and classrooms. Like the gymnasium foyer entrance, the entrance of each wing is also encased with concrete, but rectangular in form. A small, 6-foot x 12-foot, front gabled entry porch to the administration side was added on much later. The metal encased sash windows are set in bands of three with five lights in each window and concrete sills. The annex was of a functional or utilitarian construction with minimal detailing around the windows and entry way. The streamline detailing around the tall, narrow windows reflect the Modern Movement influence of the 1930's.

FOUNTAIN: On the south elevation, at the southeast junction of the sidewalk and the flight of concrete steps, is a contributing 10 foot diameter rubble, rock water fountain now used as a flower planter (#5). The rim, approximately 1 foot wide, is finished with a concrete cap. A wedge concrete skirt

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 13

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

encircles the base of the fountain. A metal plaque embedded in a 5 foot rock spindle honors the class of 1931. The splash bowl at the top of the fountain is missing.

ENTRY PORTALS: Four contributing, rectangle-shaped, red brick entry portals flank the south elevation (front) and east elevation sidewalks at the top of a 5 step stairways (see photograph #6). They are 7 1/2 feet tall, 4 feet wide and 3 feet deep mounted on a concrete base. A concrete band separates the top layer of vertically laid brick from the main column. The top of the portals is overlaid with a flat lipped concrete cap. The rough workmanship suggest that students of the graduating classes of 1924-25 possibly constructed the monuments. Narrow brick windows outline concrete insets with the names of members of each class on the front and rear sides.

NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES:

Two noncontributing buildings are within the area of the Old Lawton High School: a cafeteria constructed in 1954 by Charles T. Hughs Construction Company of Oklahoma City, and a gymnasium built in 1975. These buildings are not attached to the main building.

CAFETERIA: A concrete block cafeteria, 50 feet X 100 feet, sets between the east wings of the Original Building and the North Addition; however, it is not attached to the historic Lawton High School buildings (see photograph #7). The ell-shaped gymnasium wraps around it on the north and east elevations. This is a utility building with few notable features. The outer facade is bricked with a dark red brick veneer on the bottom and a bright red brick veneer on the top. The rectangular-shaped building has a flat asphalt roof with a 3-foot wood overhang. A flat roof awning covers the 8-foot side entry on the south. On the west end, two 4-foot x 8-foot metal-encased refrigeration units extend from the kitchen. In between the refrigeration units, a small metal awning spans between metal doors of the cafeteria and the basement of the Original Building. On the south elevation, a plywood-covered foyer with rough wood double doors is attached to the metal freestanding awning leading to the east entry of the original school building. Windows are of a varying lot of louvered vents, 2 plywood covered windows and bands of small metal double-sash windows. A 45-foot x 5-foot plywood-covered porch is located on the north side with double doors opening to the handicapped ramp off the North Addition.

GYMNASIUM: The gymnasium is located on the northeast corner of Block 31 and directly east of the North Addition (see photograph #8). It is a 2-section, metal L-shaped building. The actual gymnasium, 60 feet x 100 feet, lies on the east\west axis and is 1 1/2 stories with a slightly pitched gabled roof. The roof and outer walls are constructed with insulated, ribbed metal panels. Since the elevation is above street level, a 6-foot concrete embankment wraps around the east and north sides of the building. A concrete flight of stairs

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 14

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

=====

from the northeast leads to a single, metal door. Strips of vertical metal flashing extend approximately 2 1/2 feet from the flush roof and wall junctions on the north side. Metal louvered vents are located on the east and west elevations. The one-story ell, 68 feet x 33 feet, lies on a north\south axis. Entries include a handicapped ramp with a concrete retaining wall on the south end and a narrow flight of stairs with a concrete-wall on the east elevation. A brick veneer covers only the outer wall of the ell. A narrow 6-foot alley separates the cafeteria and gymnasium on the west side.

ALTERATIONS: The exterior of the school appears relative unscathed by structural alterations with only a few minor changes. The exterior columns of the west entries of the Original Building and the North Addition were removed with the addition of the PWA Annex in 1939. In 1974, the east entrance columns of the North Addition were removed to accommodate a ramp for the handicapped. A small 6-foot by 8-foot gable shed covers a rear exit from the basement of the Original Building on the east side. Most of the exterior doors appear to have been replaced with metal security type doors; however, many of the transoms and some of the side lights are still in place, except on the west entries of the PWA addition. The replacement doors, however, in the PWA Annex were smaller than the original doors and the resulting wall space was filled with contrasting brick. A small, 6-foot X 12-foot, front gabled entry porch was also added to the south wing of the Annex. All of the original windows have been replaced with aluminum encased windows. The walkway between the PWA gymnasium and the courtyard was enclosed in approximately 1967, but the rear windows and wall left intact. Overall, these alterations have not compromised the integrity of the school.

Lawton High School, with its imposing Classical Revival architectural style and the PWA annex, continues to remind the community of its local, state, and national heritage. It is the only school in Comanche County with the distinctive Classical Revival architecture exemplified by the oversized columns of the Ionic Order. The PWA Annex, built near the end of the Great Depression era, is an excellent example of the Modern Movement style detailing often associated with utilitarian-styled buildings constructed in urban areas during that era. The Lawton High School continues to retain its integrity of its original design, workmanship, materials, setting, and location and it conveys the feeling of its past.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

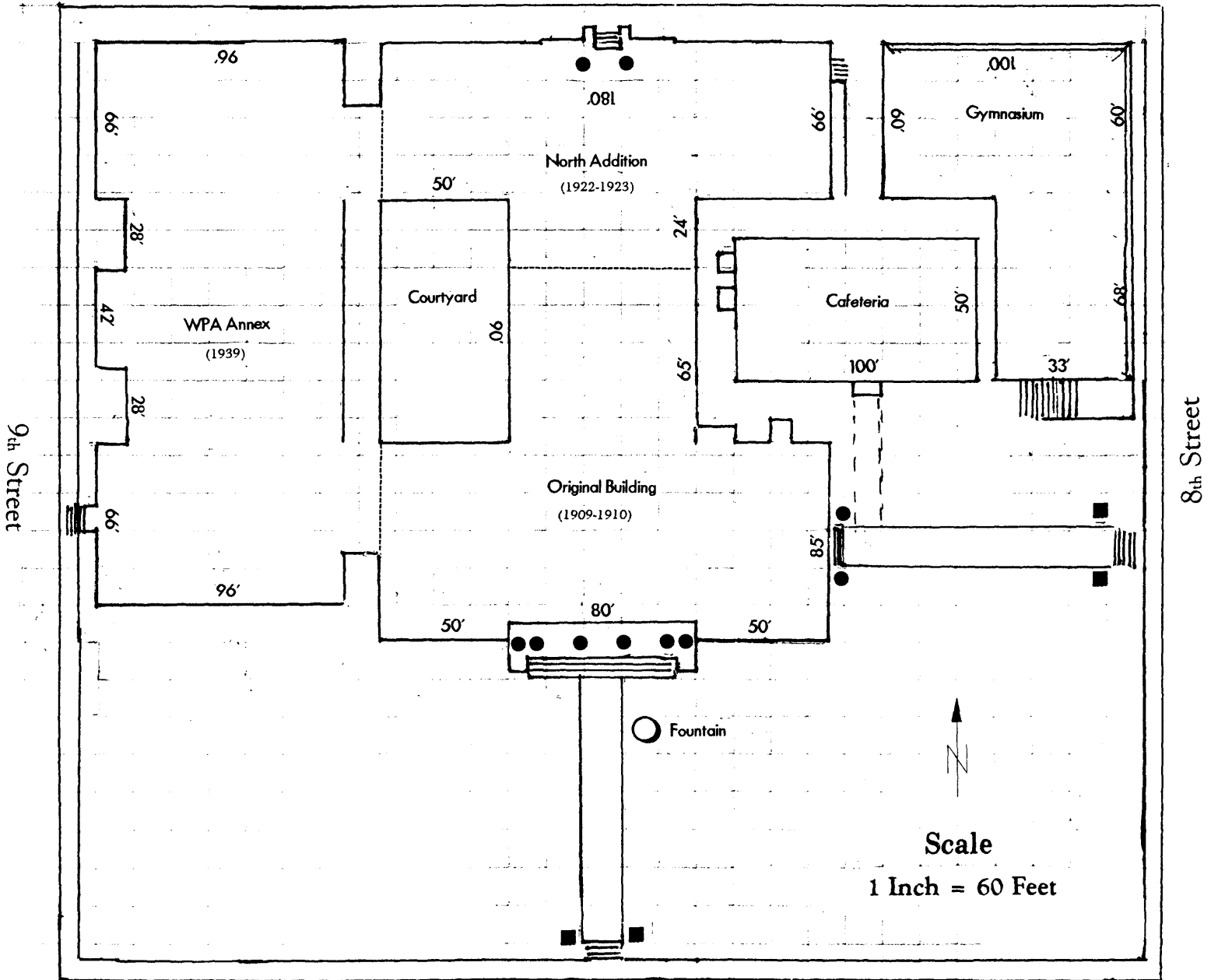
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 15

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Lawton High School

"B" Street



"C" Street

400' x 320

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 16

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

=====

SUMMARY:

Lawton High School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A because of its importance as a public school in the city of Lawton between 1910 and 1946. Its architectural style and growth during that period represents a local response to the broader patterns of our state and national history. The Original Building's oversized presence reveals the importance local and state leaders placed on secondary education after statehood. The North Addition, built in 1922-23, provided additional classrooms as the Fort Sill schools merged with Lawton's school district. The construction of the PWA Annex in 1939, provided employment opportunities for local building contractors and skilled labors during the later part of the New Deal Era. The vocational classrooms and gymnasium were an extension of national policies to revitalize the youth of the nation; however by 1942, the annex's function shifted to a "Victory School," a temporary elementary school set up in response to the military training at Fort Sill during World War II. Lawton High School continues today as an educational center and a local and aerial landmark. Lawton High school is also eligible under Criterion C because it is an excellent example of the Classical Revival style and the Modern Movement style adapted for a secondary educational building. It is also significant as the only secondary school in Comanche County exhibiting the oversized architectural features of the Classical Revival style.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The history of the city of Lawton begins before the 1901 opening of the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache unassigned lands. Beginning in 1892, the United States government began negotiating an agreement with the Kiowa, Comanche, Apache and Wichita tribes regarding the sale of their surplus lands equaling approximately 3.6 million acres. Although Congress approved the Wichita agreement in 1895, action was suspended until sanction of the Kiowa, Comanche and Apache agreement, which ultimately occurred in 1900. At this time, the former reservation lands were divided into three counties, Caddo, Comanche and Kiowa. In each of these counties a half section of land was reserved for the development of a county seat. In Comanche County, the federal government created the town of Lawton as the county seat. The town was to be located just south of Fort Sill, a military outpost since 1869.

With the impending opening of unassigned lands in Oklahoma Territory, land fever drew thousands of speculators to the edge of the shortgrass prairies. The chaos of the earlier land runs forced the federal government to reorganize its method of dispersal of Indian lands with a land lottery. It created government-planned county seats of 320 acres with sites set aside for courthouses, residential areas, central business districts, and schools. To

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 17

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

=====

keep order, the U.S. Army presided over the registration at the land offices in Fort Sill and El Reno. During July, 1901, 164,516 people registered, but only 6,500 names were drawn to lay claim to 160 acres of agricultural land. On August 6, 1901, many claims were filed and over 1200 town lots were auctioned off to finance public buildings and works for the county seat.¹ By the morning of August 7, the burgeoning town of Lawton was firmly established with tents in place of the buildings soon to come.

Lawton's future as a strong economic center was secured with the established military facility, Fort Sill, and with the early arrival of the railroad. Anticipating the opening, tracks for the Rock Island and Frisco Railroads were all but completed just prior to the opening of the lands. By 1902, the Oklahoma City and Western Railroad lines connected Lawton and Oklahoma City. The early presence of a railroad provided three important assets to the community. First, it created a major transportation artery into a remote area. Prior to that time, the only roadways were stage routes, military trails, and ruts from the cattle drives. Second, it transported important building materials, which included brick, to be on site for immediate construction of the central business district. Third, it established Lawton as a major agri-rail center by providing a mode for the exportation of local commodities.²

The town's population swelled to an estimated eight thousand people within the first year of its founding. The city's limits expanded from the original townsite with successive additions. After the flurries of the land opening settled, civic leaders concentrated on the problems of the development of its infrastructure and culture, including providing education facilities. Three small school buildings, two grade schools on block 18 and the grades six through twelve on block 31, were built costing a total of \$15,000; revenue generated from the original sale of town lots. A school census held in November, 1901, revealed there were as many as 882 school age children in the area. There was an urgent need for additional classrooms as well as teaching supplies and text books.³ Meeting these challenges were members of Lawton's first board of education: Frank McMasters, W.E. Edgar, C.B. Garrett, J.P. Cummings, W.T. Willis, B.C. Orrick and A.T. Howell, superintendent.⁴

Lawton's population maintained steady growth and by January, 1905, another school census revealed there were 1,110 school age children in Lawton; however, funding for more classrooms and teachers still remained a problem.⁵ In the following spring of 1906, an 8-room brick building was constructed by T.O. Keefe & Company of Oklahoma City and paid for by the Secretary of the Interior out of the Lawton lot sales fund. Local citizens provided the slate blackboards and seats.⁶

The push for better facilities heightened after statehood in 1907 when Oklahoma's first elected state superintendent of public instruction, E.D. Cameron, campaigned vigorously for establishing statewide educational

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 18

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

standards both for the teachers and students. He, along with the new state legislature, united the education system previously segregated by territories, race, and economics.⁷ Their enthusiasm was contagious. Lawton's educators and civic leaders pushed for a new high school, the fourth largest in Oklahoma. By September 24, 1908, the School Board and the Chamber of Commerce requested an election for a \$100,000 school bond issue. The following December the City Loan and Trust of Gainesville, Texas, and an investor's group from Chicago entered a joint venture and secured the bid for the bonds.⁸ Plans moved rapidly and by February 26, 1909, the initial architectural plans by Hair & Smith of Chickasha were accepted. The construction contract was awarded to Crosby and Son of Kansas City, Missouri, who also constructed the first Comanche County Courthouse. The total cost of the school exceeded the estimated \$100,000 by \$3,830, which was paid for out of the school's general fund. By September of the following the year, the school was completed.⁹

Even though the presence of Fort Sill brought economic security to the community, it also brought an unsettling fluctuation of local demographics thus affecting the local school census. As the nation moved toward involvement in Europe's raging battle lines of World War I, Lawton's population peaked to an estimated 60,000 people with the constant in-pouring of military trainees and their families. Population growth slowed after World War I and by 1920, Lawton's population declined to 8,830 people, creating a brief post-war recession from 1921 to 1922.¹⁰ Despite the sudden loss of population, M.J. Cotton, the school superintendent, reported high school enrollment alone had nearly doubled to 585 since 1916. Part of the increase in the number of students in the Lawton public school system was due to the assimilation of the Fort Sill school district in 1921.¹¹

To alleviate the overcrowded conditions of Lawton's public schools, a bond issue was passed on April 20, 1922 to finance a new junior high school to be built onto the north side of Lawton High School. Up till then, classrooms for the junior high were located in the Emerson school with some of the classes held in the high school building, and their general assemblies at the Baptist Service Club. The construction of the new junior high cost \$156,046 with specifications designed to incorporate the same Classical Revival architectural design of the original high school building. W.C. Bellows Company was the successful contractor for the project for the sum of \$128,265; A.F. Binns Company supplied the plumbing and heating contract for \$25,860; the Oklahoma Electrical Supply Co. provided the electrical wiring for the sum of \$1,900; and, architectural fees of \$5,500 were secured by the architectural firm of Tonini & Bramblet, all of Oklahoma City. The final project was completed by January 10, 1923.¹²

Despite the decline of economic growth after World War I, Lawton never experienced the economic devastation of the Great Depression like the rest of southwest Oklahoma. Its diversified economic base provided continuous

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 19

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

=====
employment opportunities during the leanest of years. In the early 1930s, the federal government initiated a \$4.4 million building program at Fort Sill, providing local jobs. About the same period, President Roosevelt's New Deal programs, especially the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), provided additional employment opportunities for those previously on relief rolls. The Public Works Administration (PWA) provided funding for public work projects spurring the state and local economies by providing jobs for contractors and skilled laborers. The state administrator for the WPA was Ron Smith, a Lawton businessman, who channeled many projects to Lawton and could have possibly influenced many of the PWA projects, including the construction of the annex on the Lawton High School.¹³ The new annex cost a total of \$111,575 with the Public Works Administration providing 45 percent and Lawton providing the remaining amount of \$61,366.58. Paul H. Harris was the architect of the annex with the Dennehy Construction Company constructing the addition. The resident engineer and inspector for the PWA was T.A. Brandes. The PWA Annex, completed on July 22, 1939, provided additional classrooms for vocational instruction and a large gymnasium, both facilities in keeping within the New Deal philosophy of preparing children for a better future.¹⁴

New Deal activities declined as the United States moved towards World War II. The city of Lawton's population and economic expansion boomed due to the military build-up at Fort Sill. Just prior to World War II, the military population averaged about three thousand, but between 1940 and 1945 over forty thousand soldiers came to Fort Sill for training.¹⁵ Many of their families followed them, causing housing shortages and school overcrowding. To accommodate the sudden influx of children into the school system, a temporary elementary school was set up in the Lawton High School annex for the school year 1942-43. It was named the High School Annex Elementary School with Maude Maib named as its principal. It was more commonly known as the "Victory Elementary School" in support of the war effort.¹⁶

By 1951, the Lawton school district boasted of 6,104 students.¹⁷ In 1954, a new high school was constructed on the corner of 11th and Ferris and the Lawton High School building became the junior high. Officially, in 1957, the school was renamed "Central Junior High."¹⁸

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The architectural development of Lawton High School provides an insight to the history of the community and architectural trends since its construction in 1909-1910. The massive T-shaped, 4-story brick building is magnified with its Classical Revival architectural features including massive columns of the Ionic Order supporting a two-story porch, ornate triangular pediments, and an imposing copper-covered dome mounted on a lipped, circular base. The school

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 20

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

stands out in the community as the only secondary school in Comanche County constructed in the Classical Revival style. It is also an excellent example of a Modern Movement style public works project of the Public Works Authority during the Great Depression. Due to its distinctive copper-covered dome, the school further serves the community as an aerial landmark for local air traffic, including the many pilots destined for Fort Sill.

As the city of Lawton grew, the demand for more educational facilities initiated a movement to enlarge the Lawton High School to include a junior high. The school board was very conscious not to compromise the architectural integrity of the school building. The builders of the North Addition, constructed in 1922-1923, replicated many of the same features of the Original Building including the same brick type, continuous concrete bands, and the pedimented entries, thus promoting continuity between the two buildings. The North Addition changed the T-shaped floor plan to an "H" shape; however, it is barely discernable because of the excellent masonry techniques.

The PWA Annex, built in 1939, is an excellent example of the federal government's New Deal policy to expand educational facilities in the urban setting while stimulating the economy. The conservative architectural design of the buff brick building is oversimplified with the limited use of Modern Movement detailing with vertical lines and elongated windows. The entrance is set off by a concrete gable-shaped encasement and a transom with a single tower of windows on each side. Six narrow, awning-style windows between gymnasium and the front entry are also enframed with narrow partitions of concrete. The masonry of the building is of remarkable quality. Although the use of buff brick contrasts with the brick of the Original Building, it also reflects the economy of the times with the school board's effort to curb the cost of construction.

Except for periodic maintenance and general improvement such as windows and door replacements and the modification of the west entries when the PWA Annex was added, the Lawton High School and its additions remain much the same as when they were first constructed. The school continues as the center for education and recreational functions for Lawton's Central Junior High. The Lawton High School is architecturally significant as an excellent example of two Twentieth Century architectural styles, Classical Revival and the Modern Movement.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 21

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

=====

ENDNOTES

1. William H. Murphy, A History of the Opening of the Wichita-Caddo-Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservations (Stillwater, Oklahoma: A & M College, History Department, 1932): 25.
2. Reconnaissance Survey of Southwest Oklahoma, State Office of Historic Preservation, 1996.
3. The Lawton Constitution 26 July 1906.
4. Nellie Wolverson Tilton, "Lawton Public Schools--1901-03: Organization and Early Progress," The Chronicles of Comanche County 2 (Autumn, 1958) 84-86; "Lawton: Golden Anniversary, 1901-1951, N.P.
5. Lawton News-Republican Journal, 19 January 1905.
6. Ibid., 26 July 1906.
8. Arrell M. Gibson, "Education in Oklahoma," The History of Oklahoma (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972) 203-210.
8. The Lawton Constitution-Democrat, 24 September 1908; 3 December 1908.
9. The Lawton Constitution 1 September 1910.
10. Arlene Baker et al, "History of the Old Town North Neighborhood Lawton, Oklahoma," Unpublished pamphlet, Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory, Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 126.
11. The Lawton Constitution, 4 September 1917; 17 January 1922.
12. Ibid., 8 January 1922; 17 January 1922; 8 June 1922.
13. Ibid., 80 August 1937.
14. "Lawton School Board Minutes," 31 March 1939; 19 April 1939.
15. Baker, "History of the Old Town North Neighborhood Lawton, Oklahoma," 8.
16. Mary Frances Melton, interview with Neysa Clark, Lawton, Oklahoma, September 2, 1996; Lawton School Board Minutes, 27 July 1942.
17. "Lawton: Gold Anniversary, 1901-1951," p. 48.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8, 9 Page 22

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE, OKLAHOMA

=====

ENDNOTES (Cont.)

18. "Central Cougars: Student Handbook, 1995-1996." Lawton Junior High.
Lawton, Oklahoma.

=====

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

America Builds: The Record of PWA. United States Government Printing Office.
Washington D.C., 1939.

Gibson, Arrell M. "Education in Oklahoma." The History of Oklahoma.
Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972.

"Lawton: Gold Anniversary, 1901-1951." Lawton, Oklahoma.

"Lawton School Board Minutes." John Shoemaker Education Center. Lawton,
Oklahoma, 1939-42.

"Lawton." Vertical File. Oklahoma Historical Society Library. Oklahoma City,
Oklahoma.

Morris, John W. Cities of Oklahoma. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma
Historical Society, 1979.

Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: State Historic
Preservation Office.

The Lawton (Oklahoma) Constitution. 1906-1910.

The Lawton (Oklahoma) Constitution. 1917-1923.

The Lawton (Oklahoma) Constitution. 1939.

The Lawton (Oklahoma) Constitution-Democrat. 1908.

The Lawton Constitution-Republican Journal. 1905.

Tilton, Nellie Wolverton. "Lawton Public Schools--1901-1903: Organization
and Early Progress." Chronicles of Comanche County. 4 (Autumn 1958):84-86.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 23

LAWTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMANCHE, OKLAHOMA

=====

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Beginning at the northwest corner of Block 31, Lawton Original Townsite, proceed east 400 feet along the curblineline of "B" Street; turn south and proceed 320 feet continuing along the curblineline of 8th Street; then turn west and proceed 400 feet along "C" Street; turn north on 9th Street and proceed 320 feet to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries encompass all the property historically associated with the school. All resources within this site still operate within the original criteria.