

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

56-1844

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: Worthington Armory and Community Building

Other names/site number: Armory Business Center

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: 225 9th Street

City or town: Worthington State: Minnesota County: Nobles

Not For Publication: N/A

Vicinity: N/A

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

 <hr/> Signature of certifying official/Title: Amy Spong, Deputy SHPO, MNHS	10.5.17 <hr/> Date
<hr/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/> Signature of commenting official:	<hr/> Date
<hr/> Title :	<hr/> 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:)



Signature of the Keeper

11/07/17

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)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DEFENSE/armory

RECREATION AND CULTURE/auditorium, gymnasium

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/gymnasium

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Romanesque Revival

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.)

Summary Paragraph

In partnership with the city of Worthington, the Minnesota National Guard built the Worthington Armory and Community Building in 1922 at the corner of 9th Street and 3rd Avenue in the city's commercial district. The building consists of a "head house" with administrative offices and a gymnasium-like "drill hall" for training and social events. These two distinct segments are linked by a narrow section housing stairways and a passageway. The head house is a two-story rectangular brick structure whose front facade faces northeast on 9th Street. It has a side-gabled roof with the ridge running parallel to 9th Street. The drill hall is a much larger two-story, rectangular, brick building behind the head house with its longer side extending down 3rd Avenue to the alley. It also has a gabled roof, but its ridge is parallel to 3rd Street and perpendicular to the ridge of the head house. There is also a one story flat-roofed garage attached to the southeast facade of the drill hall with a paved parking area and driveway in front of the garage. The building reflects the Romanesque Revival style employed in Minnesota armory construction in the 1920s. There have been some alterations, but generally both the interior and exterior of the building convey its historical significance as an armory during its period of significance.

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Narrative Description

Exterior

Head House

The primary facades of the head house are clad in a dark-red brick laid in a common bond and embellished with intricate brick masonry. The front facade faces northeast and runs snugly against the property line for about 66 feet along 9th Street (Photo #1). It has a simple five-bay organization. The upper story of each bay has a set of paired double-hung windows close to the eaves. The lintels and sills of these windows are formed by a row of bricks laid as rowlocks that are joined in a string course across the entire facade. The area between the string course formed by the lintels and the cornice is filled by a stretcher course topped by a soldier course of brickwork. The rafter tails are exposed along the cornice line.

On the lower story, the central bay contains the main entrance which consists of double doors recessed in a shallow alcove capped by a transom. The alcove is reached by two steps from the sidewalk, and one more step separates the alcove from the interior. Each of the four remaining bays has a set of paired double-hung windows with sills and lintels formed by bricks laid as rowlocks. The water table is also composed of rowlock bricks, and the rectangular area below the windows down to the water table is filled with headers laid in a stack bond slightly indented.

The building's Romanesque Revival styling is best reflected in the blind semicircular arches over the main entrance and the four windows on the first floor. These arches are made of two rows of bricks laid as rowlocks and each is filled by diagonal brickwork with a stone medallion at the center. A similar stone decorates the upper corners of each of these windows. The arch over the main entrance originally had a light fixture set in the medallion. The main entrance is protected by an ornate arched hood that echoes the blind arches over the windows. This hood and the brackets that support it are made of painted wood (Figure #3).

Historic photos show that there were originally pairs of basement windows with shallow window wells below the four sets of first floor windows. At some point these were removed and the openings filled with brick. One-over-one metal windows have replaced the original six-over-six wood windows on the first and second level. The entrance doors were originally ten-light wooden doors but they also have been replaced by metal doors. The original ten-light wooden transom has been replaced by a single pane window in a metal frame. The hood and brackets over the entrance doors are intact but the front of the arch has been filled with a wood panel upon which the previous commercial owner had painted the words "The Armory Business Center."

The northwest facade of the head house runs for about 34 feet down 3rd Avenue (Photo #2). It has a three-bay organization with a single window in each bay on the upper level. On the lower level, the middle bay is a single window and the left and right bays have paired windows with

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the same blind semicircular arches as the front facade. The sills and lintels on both levels are made of rowlock bricks that form a string course that continues the string course of the front facade. The water table of the front facade continues on this facade, and between the water table and the paired windows is the same slightly indented rectangular areas of stretchers laid in a stack bond as seen under the front facade's windows. Above the lintels of the upper windows is a stretcher course topped by a soldier course topped by another stretcher course and finally a rowlock course. Above that, the gable end is completed in common bond ending with a parapet that rises a few feet over the roof deck.

As in the front facade, the windows on this side were originally six-over-six wood windows that have been replaced by one-over-one metal windows. There were also basement windows in each of the three bays. Two of these window openings have been filled with brick, but the third opening, the one farthest to the north, has been retained with a replacement metal window.

The other side of the head house, the facade facing southeast, has a much simpler layout (Photo #3). On the upper level there are two evenly spaced single windows. There apparently was one centrally located single window on the lower level that has now been filled with brick. The sills and lintels of the upper windows are formed by a line of rowlock bricks which continue the string course of the front facade. Above these windows is the same pattern of stretcher, soldier, stretcher, and rowlock rows as on the southeast facade. Just as on that facade, the gable end continues with common bond up to a parapet which rises a few feet over the roof deck.

Historic photos indicate that the roof of the head house (but not the drill hall) was originally composed of rounded clay tiles with clay tiles also capping the tops of the gable parapets on both sides (Figures #1, 2, 5). Today, the roof is sheathed in conventional asphalt shingles, and the parapets are capped with vinyl or aluminum trim.

The Drill Hall

The drill hall is a much larger, rectangular, two-story, gable-roofed, brick building joined to the head house by an intermediate structure that is about 12 feet wide (discussed below). The northwest facade of the drill hall runs along the 3rd Street property line for about 115 feet down to the alley (Photo #4). This facade is flush with the northwest facade of the head house. The drill hall is approximately the same width as the length of the front facade of the head house. Because there is a gentle downward slope to 3rd Street as it progresses southwest to the lakefront, the basement level is somewhat more exposed on the southern end of this facade.

This facade is divided into six bays. The first and last bays have sets of three windows separated by brick piers on both the upper and the lower levels. As on the front facade, the sills and lintels are composed of rowlock bricks. In this case, however, they are not joined together in a string course. The sills of the lower level windows, however, form part of the water table which is composed of rowlock bricks. Above the three lower windows in each of these bays are blind semicircular arches made from one row of rowlock bricks with the area enclosed by the arch

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filled with headers in a stack bond. All of these were originally six-over-six wood windows but all have been replaced by metal.

The remaining four bays each have a large semicircular arched window on the upper story that allowed natural light to enter the drill hall.¹ These window openings are divided into three parts by vertical mullions, and the resulting openings were originally filled with wood windows. The arches are created by two lines of bricks, the inner one laid as soldiers and the outer as rowlock. The abutments of the arches continue down to the water table and frame the groups of three windows on the lower level in all but the first of these four bays (counting from north to south). The sills of these lower windows are part of the water table. Between these lower window groups and the arched window above is a panel composed of headers laid in a stack bond decorated at the center with a square of diagonally laid brickwork. Historic photographs indicate that the lower part of the first of these four bays originally had a large wooden door through which equipment could be brought into the drill hall. This door has also been removed and the opening closed with brick

As on the other facades, all the original wood windows now have metal replacements. This side of the building also had basement windows on each bay (save for the second bay, which had the large door). In each case, they were sets of three windows separated by brick mullions, each set within a shallow window well. Two of these sets of windows (in the first and third bay) are gone and the openings filled with brickwork. Two sets remain (in the fourth and fifth bay), but have been replaced by metal windows.

The rear, or southwest, facade of the drill hall faces the alley (Photo #5). It is a flat, brick, gabled wall laid in common bond with a parapet that extends a few feet above the roof. It is broken only by three small arched windows near the peak of the gable, two small doors at the second floor level near the left and right corners of the facade, and two windows on the first floor level, one directly below each of the two small doors. The doors provide egress from the balcony in the drill hall and originally functioned as fire exits. Accordingly, each of these doors opens onto a small iron balcony accessed by an iron ladder attached to the brick wall. There are also three sets of paired basement windows. The arched windows near the gable have been replaced by louvered vents. The other windows, presumably wood in the original, have metal replacements. The door openings have been filled with painted plywood.

The southeast facade of the drill hall is a brick wall that originally had no windows or doors (Photo #6). Today there is a large metal double door near the southern end of this facade to allow equipment to enter the drill hall.² In 1941, the Minnesota National Guard added a one story garage addition, which is attached to the northern half of this facade. A door was cut near the northern end of this facade to allow passage between the drill hall and the garage. The main

¹ As noted below, these window openings are presently closed with interior sheetrock.

² This was very likely created after the large door on 3rd Street was closed with brickwork. Construction documents in the Worthington Armory file of the Adjutant General papers at the Minnesota Historical Society indicate that this work was done about the same time as the 1941 garage addition.

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body of the garage is a rectangular brick flat-roofed structure that stretches about 50 feet along the drill hall and extends 40 feet to the east. The garage has two large garage doors on both its northeast and southwest facades (Photos # 6, 7). There is a small rectangular room attached to the northeast corner of the garage, so that the entire garage is a "L" shape. This extends the front, or northeast facade of the entire garage addition to 62 feet. This room is accessed from the inside by a door in the southeast side of the garage. A sign in the garage over this door identifies the room as the Motor Pool Dispatcher's office. There is also a door to this room on the northeast facade facing 9th Street.

The Connecting Passageway

A passageway, about 12 feet wide, joins the head house and the drill hall (Photo #2). It is built of the same brick but is neither as high nor as wide as the two structures it links. Its northwest facade, however, is flush with and joins the northwest facades of the head house and drill hall. It contains a passageway between the central hallway of the head house and the drill hall on the first and second floors. It also holds the building's only stairway, which is on the northwest side of this structure. The stairwell can also be entered from 3rd Street by a metal door with sidelights, which most likely replaced an original wood door with wood framed sidelights. This doorway is capped with a blind semicircular arch identical to those on the front facade of the head house.

Interior

The first floor of the head house is divided by a wide central hallway that links the main entrance on 9th Street with the entrance to the drill hall. There are several rooms on each side of the hallway that originally were offices and toilets (Figure #9). All floors are hardwood, but the central hallway and some rooms are covered with wall-to-wall carpeting. This hallway, which is three steps above the sidewalk grade, descends five steps down to the connecting passageway between the head house and the drill hall. The northwest end of the passageway contains the stairwell noted above, and the southeast end contains a small room used for maintenance supplies. The entrance to the drill hall is through a set of twelve-light double wooden doors topped by a nine-light transom, all original (Photo #8).

The double doors lead through a short hallway formed by rooms on either side that are tucked under the drill hall's balcony. These rooms were not part of the original construction and were added by the Minnesota National Guard at a later date. This hallway opens to a large two-story space with a hardwood floor measuring about 60 feet wide and 110 feet long (Photo #9, 10). Historic photos show a steel truss system supporting the roof deck, but currently the structure of the roof is hidden by suspended acoustical tile ceiling. Originally the drill hall had a $\frac{3}{4}$ balcony, meaning that the balcony wrapped around the entire room except for the rear (southeast) wall. The balcony on the northwest side (along 3rd Avenue) and on the northeast side (facing 9th Street) is still in place. Historic photos show basketball backboards at both ends and basketball lines painted on the hardwood floor, reflecting the fact that the drill hall was, from the beginning, used as a multipurpose community hall as well as a National Guard training facility (Figure #4).

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Because the drill hall today is used for gymnastics, the backboards are gone and the floor is mostly covered with mats.

There is sheetrock on the northwest elevation above the balcony that covers the large arched windows. In 1999, the gymnastics teams that use the drill hall cut a rectangular hole about 8 feet by 16 feet in the drill hall floor near the rear wall to accommodate a landing pit for gymnasts. The floor was removed and a cradle was constructed about 3 feet below the existing floor to hold gymnastic mats. As noted earlier, the large door into the drill hall on the 3rd Street side was removed and bricked. There is now a wide double door on the southern end of the southeast wall to allow equipment access.

The stairway in the connecting passageway between the head house and the drill hall leads upstairs to the second floor. The landing provides access to the five rooms of the upper level of the head house, some of which were originally intended for the American Legion. Currently, the three rooms along the northeast, or front, facade of the head house are rented as an apartment. In the opposite direction, the stairway landing leads to the drill hall balcony through a hallway created by small rooms on either side, and then through double doors. As noted above, the balcony originally wrapped around the drill hall except for the rear (southwest) wall. It is supported in part by metal rods attached to the steel truss system above. The balcony has hardwood flooring, two levels for seating, and a metal pipe railing. The two side balconies (on the northwest and southeast facades) reached the rear wall and allowed access to the fire escape doors. The gymnastic teams apparently removed the balcony along the southeast facade about the same time the gymnastics pit was created.³

The stairway in the connecting passageway also leads downstairs to the basement. The rooms in the head house basement include a toilet, shower room, and locker room for the National Guard. Opposite the stairway landing in the passageway is the boiler room. The lower level of the drill hall contains a large mess hall (Photo #11), a kitchen, a large storage area with a large vault, a long narrow room along the southeastern wall that was the rifle shooting range (Photo #12), and a gymnasium at the far end along the southwest wall. This last room is several steps below the grade of the rest of the basement. At some point the gymnasium was converted by the Guard into a pistol shooting range. The cradle created to hold the landing pit for gymnasts can be seen in the ceiling of this room. All floors in the basement are painted concrete.

Integrity

Although there have been changes, the building retains its historic integrity because it exhibits the essential physical features that convey its historic significance. Its location and setting in downtown Worthington are unchanged. The design, materials, and workmanship of the exterior

³ City records include a 1999 building permit to cut a hole in drill hall floor and create the gymnastics pit, but no permit with respect to the demolition of the balcony. It does not appear that the State Historic Preservation Office was contacted prior to either action as was required by the preservation easement on the property.

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facades are mostly unchanged. The original brickwork ornamentation is intact, and the ornate wood hood and brackets over the front entrance are in place. However, metal windows and doors have replaced the original wood windows and doors throughout the exterior, and plywood panels have replaced the doors on the rear facade of the drill hall. Some of the basement windows have been filled with brick, and the original large door to the drill hall on 3rd Street has been filled with brick. A door has been added to the southeast corner of the drill hall. The original rounded clay tile roof on the head house has been replaced by a conventional asphalt shingle roof.

The one-story flat roofed garage was added in 1941 because of the growing use of motorized vehicles by Minnesota National Guard units. This addition is within the period of significance, and in any case, it is attached to a non-primary facade and set back significantly from the front property line so that it does not detract from the profile of the head house and drill hall.

The interior rooms of the head house have been used for various purposes over the years, but the floor plan is unchanged and much of the original mill work is intact, including, for example, the double ten-light doors that lead into the drill hall (Photo #8). The open truss work of the drill hall ceiling is obscured by a suspended acoustical tile ceiling. Historic photos indicate that the ceiling was enclosed long ago, perhaps as a fire prevention measure. Although the property was protected by a preservation easement, the gymnastic teams that lease the drill hall have made some changes. The unpainted sheet rock covering the window openings above the balcony on the northeast facade are removable. The drill hall is a defining characteristic of the armory, and the balcony is an essential physical feature in an armory that also functioned as a community hall. Although one-third of the balcony is gone, the other two-thirds are intact and unchanged. Taken as a whole, the drill hall conveys its historic significance as an armory during its period of significance.

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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.)

MILITARY

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1922-1967

Significant Dates

1922

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Lang, Raugland & Lewis, Architects (Minneapolis)

Fred R. Combs, Contractor (Minneapolis)

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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 Worthington Armory and Community Center is locally significant under **Criterion A** in the area of Military because it served as the center in Worthington for military affairs, involving not only the training of National Guard units but also the mobilizing of draftees for various wars abroad. It is also locally significant in the area of Entertainment/Recreation because it was at the same time the center of the city's social, cultural, and recreational life, serving as the venue for dances, trade shows, sports events, concerts, banquets, and immunizations. The Worthington Armory and Community Center is also locally significant under **Criterion C** because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of Minnesota's middle period armories, a group of buildings that represent an important property type associated with the history of the Minnesota National Guard, in particular the use of Romanesque Revival style. The period of significance begins in 1922 with the construction of the building. Because the building continued to serve as an active Guard base and the hub of social life until 1992 the period of significance ends in 1967, as the passage of fifty years is the minimum threshold for considering the eligibility of a property for the National Register. The property relates to the state-wide historical context of "Railroads and Agricultural Development 1870-1940."

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

The growth of a prairie commercial center

Worthington is the county seat of Nobles County and its oldest and largest town. Located in the far southwestern corner of Minnesota, the land that became Nobles County was primarily tall grass prairie when the settlers of European origin arrived in the early 1870s. Today the county is mostly agricultural, with an emphasis on corn, beans, hogs, cattle, and poultry. Worthington was created by the Sioux City and St. Paul Railroad Company, which surveyed a line extending from St. James southwest to Worthington and on to Iowa in 1871. In that year, the railroad platted the original town site on the east end of Lake Okabena. Worthington owes its early development to the fact that a group of Ohio men connected with the *Toledo Blade* chose it as the location of a colony they sought to establish in "the West." This group, led by R. F. Humiston and A. P. Miller, organized a company, which they called the National Colony, with the intent of creating a settlement based on temperance principles. They bought land from the railroad and successfully attracted significant numbers of evangelical Protestants from the East who shared their vision. Although the town was built on the banks of a lake that the Dakota called "Okabena," they named the town Worthington, the family name of A. P. Miller's mother-in-law, who came from a prominent Ohio family.⁴

⁴ Arthur P. Rose, *An Illustrated History of Nobles County, Minnesota* (Worthington: Northern History Publishing, 1908), 61-66, 153-158.

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Worthington grew rapidly during 1872. Rail service began in the spring, bringing new settlers to Nobles County and providing farmers with access to markets. By the end of the year, there were two hotels, a newspaper, and a wide variety of retail businesses. The following year Humiston and Miller's company built a flour mill. The town was incorporated and became the county seat. The good times, however, were cut short by the grasshopper plague of the mid-1870s. Nobles County was hard hit, and the economic downturn that followed caused Humiston and Miller's company to abandon Worthington in 1876.⁵

By this time, however, the town was established as a commercial center and county seat, and as the economy rebounded in the 1880s, Nobles County farmers and Worthington businessmen prospered. The town's importance as a transportation hub grew as it became the junction of two major rail networks. In 1876, the Sioux City and St. Paul Railroad extended its line west from Worthington to Sioux Falls. In 1881, the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha bought the Sioux City and St. Paul, giving Worthington direct access by rail to St. Paul. In 1904, the Chicago and Northwestern bought this line, making Worthington a stop on one of the most extensive rail networks in the Midwest.⁶ Meanwhile, an Iowa railroad called the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern built a line from the Iowa border to Worthington, and later bought the extension of this line west from Worthington to Hardwick in Rock County. In 1903, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad bought the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern.⁷ For many decades, Worthington reaped the benefit of sitting at the junction of the Rock Island and the Chicago & Northwestern lines.

This was a time of great opportunity for entrepreneurs, and none took more advantage of it than George D. Dayton, who enjoyed great success in real estate, banking, and farming during the 1880s. In 1890 he built a grand home in Worthington, which was listed on the National Register in 2003. He was so successful that he began investing in Minneapolis real estate in the 1890s, and in 1902 moved his family to Minneapolis to oversee the department store that bore his name on Nicollet Avenue. Another leading businessman was Peter Thompson, who published the *Worthington Globe*, owned a bank, and built the leading hotel, the Hotel Thompson, a structure added to the National Register in 1984.

Although Nobles County agriculture began as wheat farming, diversification led to increasing reliance not only on corn, beans, and hay but also on cattle, hogs, and poultry. Nobles County eventually became well-known for turkey-raising, and Worthington developed a reputation as a center for turkey processing. When towns throughout Minnesota began to establish an annual celebration boosting a local event or product, Worthington Chamber of Commerce created "King Turkey Day," which one scholar suggested was perhaps the most famous of Minnesota's "town

⁵ Nobles County was severely damaged by the Rocky Mountain locust (which local farmers called grasshoppers) between 1874 and 1877. See Annette Atkins, *Harvest of Grief: Grasshopper Plagues and Public Assistance in Minnesota, 1873-78* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984).

⁶ Richard S. Prosser, *Rails to the North Star: A Minnesota Railroad Atlas* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1966, 2007), 120-121, 126, 161, 164.

⁷ Prosser, 118, 125.

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days," each year drawing state and sometimes even national political figures.⁸ As noted below, the Worthington Armory and Community Building was the venue for various "Turkey Day" activities, as well as many other civic events.

The Minnesota National Guard in Worthington

Minnesota cities organized various volunteer military units in the early days of statehood, some of which fought in the Dakota War of 1862 and in the Civil War. Local militias declined after the Civil War, but in the late 1870s, militia units were formed in Faribault, Winona, and Minneapolis. By 1882, Minnesota had ten infantry companies, a development consistent with the nationwide growth in state militias, which was a response to the growth of the labor movement and especially the great railroad strike in 1877.⁹ To improve the training of guard units, the state established a permanent military camp near Lake City in 1891, the predecessor of Camp Ripley near Little Falls. In 1898, most Minnesota Guard units were federalized and served in the Spanish American War. Congress passed the Dick Act in 1903, which officially recognized guard units as the nation's military reserve. The federal government agreed to outfit and train guard units of those states that conformed to federal military regulations with respect to uniforms, equipment, training, and organization.¹⁰

The first armories in Minnesota were built in the early 1880s in Winona and Minneapolis. They were locally financed, and in fact, there was no state provision for financing the construction of local armories until 1911, when the legislature created the Board of Armory Supervisors, with a budget that allowed it to build up to three armories per year at \$10,000 each. Two years later this was increased to \$15,000, with the understanding that cities would share in the construction costs.¹¹ The National Defense Act of 1916 effectively turned the state militias into a national force by providing the funds to pay officers and men, and recognizing the guard as the first line of reserve. As a result, when the U.S. declared war on Germany in 1917, Minnesota's three regiments of infantry and one of field artillery were called into active service.¹²

In Worthington, citizens organized a militia company in 1905 and the city council agreed to find an armory building. The Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard (MNG) recognized the Worthington group as Company F of the Second Infantry Battalion, and the unit settled into its armory at 211 11th Street.¹³ In June 1916, this unit was called to active duty and sent to the

⁸ Thomas Harvey, "Small-Town Minnesota," 122 in Clifford Clark, ed, *Minnesota In a Century of Change* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989).

⁹ Nell Irwin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: A Grassroots History of the Progressive Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 22. During the 1880s and 1890s, strike-breaking was one of the main functions of the National Guard. William H. Riker, *Soldiers of the States: The Role of the National Guard in American Democracy* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1957), 47-55.

¹⁰ Riker, 68-72.

¹¹ Patricia Murphy, *The Public Buildings of the State of Minnesota: An Architectural Heritage* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1986), 65-68.

¹² Riker, 78-82.

¹³ Rose, 192-193.

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Mexican border in response to the raids of Pancho Villa.¹⁴ They had only been home a few months when the United States declared war on Germany. Once again the Second Infantry was mobilized, and this time sent to Camp Cody in New Mexico. With local guard units called to federal service, the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety in St. Paul authorized the creation of the Home Guard, composed of volunteers not subject to the Selective Service Act. The company formed in Worthington was part of the original Sixth Battalion of the Minnesota Home Guard. In June 1918, this battalion, including the Worthington Company, became part of the newly created Fifth Infantry of the MNG headquartered in Mankato. The Worthington company was designated Company F and continued to occupy the Worthington Armory and Community Building. The Sixth Battalion of the Home Guard was then rebuilt with nine new companies, only one of which, Company I from Adrian, was from Nobles County.¹⁵

After World War I, the Home Guard was retired and the National Guard was strengthened and reorganized. This process was aided by the National Defense Act of 1920, which greatly increased federal allocations to the states for wages, training, supplies and equipment in exchange for state financing of armory buildings. As part of this reorganization, the MNG grew in total strength and was reorganized into seventy-three units stationed in 36 communities. Worthington was the home of two of these units, Company F of the recently created Fifth Infantry Regiment (later renamed the 205th Infantry) and a Quartermaster detachment. The growth and reorganization of the Guard led to the construction of many new armories. The legislature authorized \$650,000 for 23 new armories during 1921 and 1922 alone, and by January 1923, had completed \$443,358 of construction.¹⁶ A large new armory in Worthington was among the projects.

Worthington gets a new armory and community building

In the early 1920s, Worthington was a thriving and ambitious town with a population of about 3,500.¹⁷ Both the city leaders and the local National Guard officers saw the statewide building program as an opportunity to obtain a building that would not only serve the needs of the local guard units but of the city as well. In fact, there was intense competition among cities to win an armory for their community.¹⁸ With the support of the city leaders, Worthington's campaign for a new armory was led by Captain Glen Eggleston, commander of Company F, and Lieutenant Fr. J. L. O'Connor, chaplain of the Fifth Infantry. The statute authorizing the armory building program of the Board of Armory Supervisors limited appropriations to \$25,000. Nevertheless, Worthington officials succeeded in winning a \$50,000 appropriation by asserting that there were two units stationed in Worthington--Company F of the Fifth Infantry and a local detachment of

¹⁴ Kunz, 134. Lew Hudson, *From New Cloth: The Making of Worthington* (Worthington: American Legion Auxiliary, 1976), 78.

¹⁵ *History of Nobles County in the World War* (Pipestone, the Leader Publishing Co, 1919), unpaginated.

¹⁶ From the 1923 *Minnesota Legislative Manual* quoted by Murphy, 69.

¹⁷ The exact figure from the 1920 census was 3,481, which was more than 1,000 more than the figure from the 1910 census.

¹⁸ Michael J. Burns, 19.

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Quartermaster Corps, which was headquartered in St. Paul.¹⁹ The city was only required to provide the land for the new armory and deed it to the state.

In February 22, 1922, the *Worthington Globe* announced that the city council had passed a resolution to issue bonds not to exceed \$10,000 to purchase a suitable site. With the city's new armory now an "assured fact," the newspaper published the architect's floor plans and provided a detailed description of the building, which was characterized not just as an armory but as a "real community building." Citizens were urged to see the bond issue not as an assessment but as an investment in Worthington, especially since the town would obtain the use of a \$50,000 building in return for its \$10,000 contribution. The paper noted that the design of the building included public restrooms for "farmer ladies and men," club rooms for the American Legion and its auxiliary, and a drill hall and balcony, which would serve well for public gatherings, county trade shows, and the like.²⁰

The plans had been drawn up by Carroll E. Lewis from the Minneapolis firm of Lang, Raugland and Lewis. This firm was active in armory construction after World War I, designing armories at Benson and Stillwater in 1921, and Dawson, Worthington, Moorhead, Hastings, Luverne and Faribault in 1922. Lewis, who was an engineer, acted as "field representative and liaison with the communities for most of the firm's armory work."²¹ In addition to armories, the firm specialized in office buildings, banks, churches, and other institutional buildings. After Lewis left the firm in 1930, his partners Oscar Lang and Arnold Raugland continued to design commercial buildings and churches into the 1950s, including the Greyhound Bus Terminal in 1937, a notable example of Streamline Moderne design in Minnesota.²²

In March 1922, the city agreed to purchase the Worthington Hotel at the corner of 9th Street and 3rd Avenue for \$8,500, and to pay all taxes on the property until it could be turned over to the state. In April, the newspaper announced that the hotel, originally called the Loveless Hotel after the man who built it in 1872, had been razed and its lumber and furnishings salvaged.²³

Meanwhile, the Board of Armory Supervisors sold the old armory on 11th Street for \$6,000, and upon receiving the deed to the property for the new armory, issued funds to begin construction.²⁴

¹⁹ Given the fact that the Quartermaster detachment in Worthington was very small, it may be that some other factors led to the doubling of the state funds available for the building.

²⁰ "Plans for the New Armory," *Worthington Globe* (hereafter *WG*), February 23, 1922, 1

²¹ Michael J. Burns, 73.

²² Alan Lathrop, *Minnesota Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 135, 180.

²³ "Hotel corner is Armory Site," *WG*, March 30, 1922, 1; "Old Landmark is now Razed," *WG*, April 20, 1922, 1. This initial purchase included two lots with 25 foot frontage on 9th Street, plus the vacating of a 15-foot wide alley, together providing 65 feet of frontage on 9th Street, all of which would be used by the front facade of the head house. Later, the state bought additional property east of the armory along 9th Street. This additional property would eventually be used for the garage addition.

²⁴ "J. S. Frank Purchases Armory," *WG*, March 16, 1922, 1; Letter from Board of Armory Supervisors to M. J. Desmond, Deputy State Auditor, April 14, 1922. Armory Files, Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

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By May, the state had accepted the bid of the Minneapolis construction firm of Fred R. Combs Co. for \$51,975 and the contractor had submitted a bond in that amount.²⁵ This represented almost \$2,000 more than the amount the state expected to pay, and it is not clear if the city or the state made up the difference.

The building was completed at the end of the year, but the opening celebration did not occur until February 12, 1923. On that evening, about 1,000 people packed the drill hall to witness a ceremony presided over by Father O'Connor, the Fifth Infantry chaplain. In attendance for the event was Brigadier General W. F. Rhinow, the Adjutant General of the MNG; Col. W. W. Fulton, the commander of the Fifth Infantry; an officer from the Quartermaster Corps; and the secretary of the Board of Armory Supervisors. According to newspaper reports, the audience occupied the drill hall floor and the two side balconies, while the speakers addressed the crowd from the center of the front balcony, flanked by the Worthington Concert Band on one side and the Worthington Choral Union on the other, both of which provided entertainment. Father O'Connor told the crowd that he hoped that the armory would not only serve the training needs of the Guard but also become a "real community club." This was echoed by the mayor, A. J. Goff, who praised the spirit of cooperation between the city and the National Guard. There were also speakers representing the American Legion, the Grand Army of the Republic, and the Spanish American War Veterans. R. B. Rathburn, the superintendent of state banks, gave the principal address, and the evening concluded with a dance in the drill hall.²⁶

An all-purpose community center

The local newspaper routinely referred to the new building as the "armory and community building," reflecting the local feeling that the building was intended for the citizens of Worthington as well as the National Guard.²⁷ This was also the attitude of the Adjutant General, who wrote in his 1924 report that "armories fill a great need in the life of the community, serving as community center, auditorium and gymnasium."²⁸ The variety of events held in the building during its first several months of service, some even before the February 12, 1923 dedication, testifies to the community's adoption of the new venue.

The very first event was a community New Year's Eve celebration featuring a dance on "the best dancing floor in the city," plus card playing in the first floor rooms of the head house. This event raised funds to enhance the community features of the building.²⁹ Shortly after New Year's Day, several local churches held a "community rally" to celebrate the new building and community

²⁵ The bond is in the Armory Records file of the Office of the Adjutant General papers at Minnesota Historical Society.

²⁶ "Worthington's Fine New \$62,000 Armory and Community Building is Dedicated with Appropriate Ceremonies," *WG*, February 18, 1923, 1 and 5.

²⁷ See for example, "Worthington's New Armory and Community House," *WG*, September 8, 1922, 1. The newspaper use both the terms "Community Building" and "Community House."

²⁸ *Biennial Report of the Adjutant General, Minnesota National Guard, 1923-1924* (St. Paul: Office of the Adjutant General, 1924), 11.

²⁹ "Give Community Party New Years," *WG*, December 21, 1922, 1; "Many at Armory Opening," *WG*, January 4, 1923, 1.

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spirit generally, with group sing-alongs and speeches. In attendance was David Combs, representing the firm that built the armory, who was thanked for his fine work.³⁰ On a Sunday afternoon in February, Rev. Charles Cullen Smith, a traveling evangelist, told an audience of almost 400 men in the armory the story of Win McClure, an Iowa railroad man renowned for his drunkenness who was saved by his chance attendance at a Salvation Army meeting.³¹ On Memorial Day of 1923, the Armory was the scene of a memorial service for all of Worthington's war dead. Following the service, the Guard unit and the mourners proceeded from the armory down 3rd Street to Lake Okabena for a ceremony honoring those who died at sea. Finally, the procession visited both the Protestant and Catholic cemeteries.³²

The biggest event of the armory's inaugural months was the Nobles County Poultry and Grain Show, held in the armory from January 23 to 26, 1923. The newspaper reported that nearly 1,000 birds were displayed in cages in the drill hall, breaking the record for the largest show ever. This was due, the newspaper commented, to the new armory, "where comfort, capacity and fine lighting facilities make for the ideal place."³³ The show concluded with a joint concert of the Worthington Band and the Worthington Choral Union. In a painstaking first page review of the performance, the newspaper's cultural critic noted that the "acoustical properties are excellent" in the new armory's drill hall.³⁴ The poultry show became an annual event in the armory (See Figure #7).

The drill hall was also an important basketball arena, where local district tournaments were held (See Figure #6). One resident recalls the Harlem Globetotters appearing in the drill hall. Local residents also recall seeing professional wrestling and boxing matches in the drill hall, as well as Golden Gloves boxing. Other residents recall rock concerts, including major national acts like the Ronettes and Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels performing there in the mid-1960s. Groups like the 4-H, the Boy Scouts and the Cub Scouts held events in the armory (See Figure #6). Residents remember taking gun safety courses in the Guard's rifle range, as well as competing in firearm contests there. They also recall queuing up at the armory to get polio vaccination shots, and later, the polio vaccine in sugar cubes.³⁵

Since 1939, Worthington has hosted its annual King Turkey Day, a fall festival that has attracted large crowds and visiting dignitaries. The main event is a massive parade featuring many bands and floats led by a gaggle of turkeys (Figure #8). The armory served as the venue for two events that are Turkey Day traditions. In the morning, thousands were served a free pancake breakfast at the armory, with the serving line set up in the garage addition. In the evening, the drill hall was the venue for the Turkey Day dance. The poster for the 1950 dance is shown at Figure #6. The featured speakers included Governor Orville Freeman in 1955, Senator

³⁰ "Community Rally in New Armory," *WG*, January 11, 1922, 1.

³¹ "Large Audience Listens to Smith," *WG*, February 22, 1923, 1.

³² "Memorial Day is Duly Celebrated by Honoring Graves of Dead Heroes," *WG*, May 31, 1923, 1, 4.

³³ "District Exhibit Record Set," *WG*, January 25, 1923, 1.

³⁴ "Music Entertains a Good Crowd," *WG*, February 1, 1922, 1.

³⁵ Here and below, I rely on the memories of local residents collected on the Nobles County Historical society Facebook page.

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Estes Kefauver, the vice-presidential candidate on the ticket led by Adlai Stevenson, in 1956, and Senator Eugene McCarthy in 1960, Senator Hubert Humphrey in 1965, and Senator Robert Kennedy in 1966.³⁶ The local press estimated that about 80,000 people viewed the parade in which Kennedy rode in an open limousine.³⁷ Worthington celebrated its 77th annual King Turkey Day in 2016.

In addition to serving as the administrative headquarters, supply depot, and training center of two National Guard units, the armory also served other military functions. In 1925, for example, it hosted the Fourth Annual Reunion of the 136th Infantry Regiment. The 136th was the name given to the Second Infantry Regiment of the Minnesota National Guard after it was federalized in 1917.³⁸ The 136th spent a year at Camp Cody in New Mexico and was shipped to France too late to see action. Nevertheless, the veterans of the 136th valued their experience enough to attend annual reunions. The armory was also at the center of the World War II mobilization. On the eve of the war, Battery F of the 215 Coastal Artillery Battalion was the Guard unit stationed at Worthington. On January 6, 1941, it was mobilized and a few days later marched from the armory to the train station. After training in California, it was sent to the Aleutian Islands to guard against Japanese aggression.³⁹ The armory was also the embarkation point for men drafted into the army by the Selective Service. Shown in Figure #5 are local inductees leaving for basic training from the armory in 1942, with City Hall in the background. After World War II, the MNG reorganized again, and the Worthington unit was then designated as Company I of the 3rd Battalion of the 135th Infantry.⁴⁰ In 1950, this unit was mobilized for the Korean War.⁴¹ Local residents also note that the Selective Service system had its office here during the Vietnam War, and that young men had their pre-induction physicals in the armory.

The Guard evolves

The periodic reorganizations of the MNG meant that the particular unit stationed in Worthington changed from time to time. The modernization of the guard also changed its space needs. Because the Worthington unit came to own trucks and other equipment that had to be stored and maintained, the state added the one-story garage to the southeast side of the building in 1941. Although the mission of the Worthington unit changed from infantry to artillery and back to infantry again, the armory continued to serve as an important center for the MNG in southwestern Minnesota for seventy years.

After the end of prohibition, veterans groups like the VFW and the American Legion generally moved out of local armories to establish independent posts where they could serve

³⁶ "Night Parade to Open '56 Turkey Day," *Daily Globe*, September 17, 1956, 1.

³⁷ David Ross, "Kennedy was Highlight of Very Big Day," *Daily Globe*, September 19, 1966, 3.

³⁸ *The Reveille*, an eight page newspaper which served as the call to the reunion, published in Worthington, MN 1925. Copy at the Nobles County Historical Society.

³⁹ Hudson, 78.

⁴⁰ *Guide to the Re-organization and Re-activation of the Minnesota National Guard* (St. Paul: Office of the Adjutant General, 1947), 19.

⁴¹ Hudson, 79.

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liquor. In Worthington, for example, the American Legion began fundraising in 1943 and bought a former church building in 1947.⁴² Subsequently, the state leased space to the federal government, for example, to the Selective Service System (the local draft board) and to armed forces recruiters. Later the Civil Air Patrol had its office in the armory, and the local police departments rented the shooting range for training.

In 1992, the Department of the Army in Washington mandated that the MNG reduce its troop strength from 10,800 to 10,000. As a result, the MNG developed "Operation Plan Viking Force," a large restructuring and downsizing that involved the deactivation of two battalions, one of which was the 2nd Battalion of the 135th Infantry headquartered in Mankato. This battalion included the 64 men of Detachment 1 of Company A, the unit stationed in Worthington at that time. The plan also called for closing 12 armories, including the one at Worthington.⁴³ The MNG stated a number of reasons for decommissioning the Worthington Armory, including the lack of expansion space, the building's need for repairs, upgrades, and handicapped accessibility, and a projected decrease in the local area's recruiting population.⁴⁴

Minnesota law required that the state offer a decommissioned armory first to the city and then to the county in which it was located for the price of \$1. In the event that a city or county became the owner, the state would provide a grant of up to \$25,000 to prepare the building for reuse.⁴⁵ In September 1992, the city of Worthington exercised its option and advertised for proposals for the reuse of the building. Three parties expressed an interest, and the city chose Eugene Kovacs, a local businessman, who proposed to adapt the armory as a commercial space. It took until 1994 for the state to convey the property to the city and for the city to then convey the property to Kovacs. In the meantime, he rented the armory from the state and began to seek tenants for the various parts of the building.

The MNG decision to decommission armories in 1992 triggered the involvement of the Minnesota Historical Society, pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Minnesota Historic Sites Act. In compliance with federal law, the MNG hired consultants to survey the armories built between 1919 and 1929, including the Worthington Armory, and develop a context study.⁴⁶

This study concluded that pre-World War II armories can be divided into three groups based on date of construction. In the first group are the twenty armories built before World War I. They are generally brick and stone constructions reminiscent of medieval castles, with crenellated

⁴² Al Goff, ed. *Nobles County History* (Worthington: Nobles County Historical Society, 1958), 231.

⁴³ *Operation Plan Viking Force: The reorganization, inactivation, transfer, restationing of units of the Minnesota Army National Guard: Environmental Assessment* (St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Military Affairs, 1992)—available only at the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, State Capitol.

⁴⁴ Jill Callison, "Area Armories Closing," *Daily Globe*, March 7, 1992, 1.

⁴⁵ 1992 Minnesota Session Laws Chapter 511, Section 49-51.

⁴⁶ Michael J. Burns with Steve Martens, *Minnesota National Guard Armory Expansion between World War I and the Great Depression (1919-1929)*, a Review and Compliance Project prepared for the Minnesota Army National Guard Facilities Management Office, January 10, 1994. There is also a separate survey form: Steve Martens, "Worthington Armory," *Minnesota Architecture-History Form*, August 1993.

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cornices, corner towers, and fortress-like entrances. The Winona Armory (1916), whose battlements were recently restored, exemplifies this first group.⁴⁷ The bulk of armory construction, however, including the building of the Worthington Armory, occurred during the second period, from 1919 to 1929, the era when the National Guard was expanding and reorganizing. In those years, the state of Minnesota built 25 armories in partnership with cities and towns, primarily in the northern/northcentral and the southwest/west central regions, the areas of most recent settlement. These “middle period” armories display some characteristics of historical styles, primarily medieval and Romanesque, but the designers were more interested in providing for the multiple functions of the buildings than in referencing historical precedents. For this reason, these armories represent a “transitional” period in armory construction. The third group includes the five armories built during the 1930s. They tend to reflect Art Deco design features, and of these the most notable is the Minneapolis Armory.⁴⁸

As a result of the Section 106 review, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) requested that the state convey the armory to the City of Worthington subject to a preservation easement. This easement required the city, or any subsequent owner, to consult with the Minnesota Historical Society prior to any modification to the property. If the SHPO determined that the proposed action might affect the historic nature of the property, the owner would be required to complete any changes consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. Britta Bloomberg, Minnesota’s Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, wrote to Eugene Kovacs in 2008 informing him that the armory was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and of the preservation easement created when the state conveyed the property to the city.⁴⁹

Kovacs managed the property as the “Armory Business Center” until selling to the county for \$228,000 in May 2015. Since then, the county has conducted a wide-ranging planning process on the reuse of the building. Several local organizations have submitted proposals, and the county has solicited the input of several architects. The county has determined that it needs to make an investment in the mechanical systems and in alterations to make the building more handicapped accessible. The Nobles County Historical Society in particular has asked the county

⁴⁷ This armory has been the home of the Winona county Historical Society since 1973.

⁴⁸ Burns, 8-10. In response to the draft version of this report, Britta Bloomberg noted in an October 20, 1993 letter to the MNG that the SHPO thought that the draft report established the appropriate framework for evaluation in that it defined the armories built between 1919 and 1929 as a “transitional” group of buildings. She stated that the SHPO concluded that the White Bear Lake, Worthington and Dawson armories are “among the best representatives of the period” and therefore potentially eligible for the National Register. This letter is in the SHPO files for Nobles County. In 1995, the armory in Dawson was added to the National Register. See Susan Granger and Kay Grossman, “Dawson Armory and Community Building,” *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form*, 1995.

⁴⁹ Letter from Britta Bloomberg to Eugene Kovacs, May 30, 2008. The SHPO easement file for this property contains this letter, the original deed and easement, and a form documenting a site visit on October 11, 2011. Unfortunately, the SHPO was apparently not informed when one of Kovacs’ tenants, the gymnastics club, made the changes to the drill hall noted in Section 7.

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to adapt the armory building for its use.⁵⁰ In the meantime, some of the former tenants, including the gymnastics team, continue to use the building.

A distinctive example of a “middle period” armory

The Worthington Armory is an intact example of Minnesota’s middle period armories. Most of these armories were built in 1921 and 1922 as part of the Guard’s rapid expansion after the world war. Until P. C. Bettenburg took over as the Guard’s in-house architect in 1923, a small group of firms, including Lang, Raugland & Lewis, won the commissions to design these armories. These firms sought to meet the programmatic requirements of both the Guard and the local community within the parameters of a site chosen and supplied by the municipality, usually in the downtown district. Because the MNG was building many armories within a short period to time with limited funds, the architects of the middle period armories took a pragmatic approach. Stylistically, the middle period armories were either medieval revival buildings suggestive of castles or restrained Romanesque Revival buildings with the characteristic rounded arches. In both cases, however, they tended to be less massive and foreboding than the fortress-like armories of the first period. Reinforced concrete sheathed with brickwork was the norm. Stone was used sparingly to accent brickwork.⁵¹

The architects had to provide space for the local guard units’ administrative offices, drill halls, shooting ranges, mess halls, kitchens, lockers, shower rooms, and storage areas for equipment, arms, and ammunition. They also had to provide offices and club rooms for veterans groups. Finally, they had to make sure that the building, especially the drill hall, would meet community’s civic and recreational needs. Perhaps because the buildings served multiple functions, middle period armories tended to have a distinct separation between the administrative areas (the head house) and the much larger and clearly dominant drill hall, which also served as the community’s auditorium, dance hall, exhibition hall, and gymnasium. Generally, the head house rooms were arranged symmetrically around a wide central entrance hall, and the drill hall was situated in line with the axis of the front hall, with the axial line running from the front entrance to the rear of the drill hall. The drill halls tended to have barrel-vaulted or gabled roofs supported by a steel truss system.⁵²

In Worthington, the architects were given a narrow corner lot in the downtown district upon which to create a multipurpose armory. The building they designed made use of every available square foot. Although the building fit snugly on the lot, they left room for a distinct and visible separation between the head house and the much larger drill hall. The two segments of the building are connected by a 12 foot wide passageway that is lower than either the drill hall or the head house. This passageway has a separate entrance on 3rd Street that allows the public to access the drill hall without passing through the administrative offices. The axis line of the wide

⁵⁰ Currently, the Nobles County Historical Society and the Nobles County Art Center occupy the lower level of the War Memorial Building. The Worthington Public Library occupies the upper level.

⁵¹ Murphy, 69.

⁵² Burns, 14-15.

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entrance hall of the head house continues through the entrance of the drill hall and continues to the rear wall, bisecting the space. The drill hall was designed as a basketball arena, and in fact, was used that way from the beginning. A balcony on three of the four sides augmented spectator seating on the drill hall floor.

The primary facades reflect a restrained and very late use of Romanesque Revival styling, especially in the decorative arched hood over the main entrance and the arched windows on the 3rd Street side. The building possesses intricate and highly ornate brickwork, especially the blind arches over the lower windows and the main entrance on the front facade. Although barrel vaulted roofs were more common in armories, some of the middle period armories have the gabled roofs of the Worthington Armory.

Conclusion

In 1922, the State of Minnesota built the Worthington Armory and Community Center to house the local Minnesota National Guard units and also to provide Worthington with a center for its social, cultural, and recreational life. Until the MNG left the armory in 1992, it continued to be an active Guard post, the home base of Company A of the 2nd Battalion of the 125th Infantry headquartered at Mankato. The Worthington Armory and Community Center also continued to function as a venue for community organizations into the late twentieth century. For example, the annual pancake breakfast, which is a traditional part of the King Turkey Day festivities, continued to be held there through 1992 as was the Chamber of Commerce's "Wild Turkey Shoot Out," a prominent basketball tournament. The school district, the Civil Air Patrol, and the police department also continued to use the building for events and classes, among other things. The building served the community for 70 years and for this reason it is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Military and Entertainment/Recreation.

The building is a well-preserved example of Minnesota's middle period armories and it therefore eligible for the National Register in the area of Architecture under Criterion C. It has the distinguishing features of this architectural type including its Romanesque Revival style, the clear separation of the head house and the dominant drill hall, and the axis line connecting the two portions of the building. Working within a constrained site, the architects employed a rounded clay tile roof, parapets rising above the gables, exposed rafter tails, decorative brick work, and a decorative arched door hood to give this building its own distinctive look.

The period of significance begins in 1922 with the construction of the building. Because the building continued to serve as an active Guard base and the hub of social life until 1992 the period of significance ends in 1967, as the passage of fifty years is the minimum threshold for considering the eligibility of a property for the National Register.

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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
Preservation Easement File
Letter of Britta Bloomberg to Minnesota National Guard, October 20 1993
Letter of Britta Bloomberg to Eugene Kovacs, May 30, 2008
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 Other: Nobles County Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NO-WOC-008

10. Geographical Data **Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 15 Easting: 290430 Northing: 4832620

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

Lots Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, and Eleven in Block Nine, along with the vacated alley between Lots Seven and Eight, the vacated alley between Lots Nine and Ten, and the northwesterly ½ of the vacated alley between Lots Ten and Eleven, all in Block Nine, Original Plat, the City of Worthington, Nobles County, Minnesota.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the city lots historically associated with the property.

Worthington Armory and Community Building
Name of Property

Nobles County, Minnesota
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Greg Gaut
organization: Historic Preservation Consultant
street & number: 1235 Yale Place #408
city or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55403
e-mail: GregGaut@gmail.com
telephone: 612-200-9494 date: March 14, 2017

Additional Documentation

- A **USGS map** indicating the property's location and
- **Sketch Map**
- **Photo Log**

Name of Property: Worthington Armory and Community Center

City or Vicinity: Worthington County: Nobles State: Minnesota

Photographer: Greg Gaut Date Photographed: February, 2017

Photo #1: (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0001)

Front (northeast) facade of head house, camera facing southwest.

Photo #2: (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0002)

Northwest facades of head house and connecting passageway, camera facing southeast.

Photo #3: (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0003)

Southeast facade of head house, camera facing northwest.

Photo #4: (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0004)

Northwest facade of the drill hall, camera facing east.

Photo #5: (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0005)

Rear facade of drill hall, camera facing northeast.

Photo #6: (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0006)

Southeast facade of drill hall and southwest facade of garage, camera facing north.

Photo #7: (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0007)

Northeast facade of garage addition, camera facing southwest.

Photo #8 (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0008)

The double doors separating drill hall from head house, camera facing northeast. The hallway of the head house can be seen through the doors.

Photo #9: (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0009)

View of the drill hall from the entrance hallway, camera facing southwest.

Photo #10: (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0010)

Entrance and front balcony of drill hall, camera facing northeast.

Photo #11: (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0011)

The mess hall in the basement of the drill hall camera facing west.

Photo #12: (MN_Nobles Co_Worthington Armory_0012)

The rifle range in the basement of the drill hall, camera facing southwest.

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Worthington Armory
and Community Building

Name of Property

Nobles County, Minnesota

County and State

Historic Images and Floor Plans

(Note: all historic photos are from the Nobles County Historical Society unless otherwise noted.)

Figure #1: Photo of Armory and Community Building taken from the courthouse tower with former jail and sheriff's house in foreground, and Lake Okabena in background.

Figure #2: An early photo of the new Armory and Community Building.

Figure #3: An early photo of the front façade showing brickwork design and hood over front entrance.

Figure #4: An early photo of a MNG exercise showing roof trusses and basketball backboards.

Figure #5: News photo of draftees leaving the Armory and Community Building in 1942.

Figure #6: Artifacts from Nobles County Historical Society archives, including a basketball tournament poster from 1924, a program from a 4-H banquet in 1936, and the poster from a Turkey Day dance, circa 1950s, all events in the Armory and Community Building.

Figure #7: News photo of a poultry show in the Armory and Community Building in 1926.

Figure #8: News photo from the *Worthington Daily Globe* showing club members in the garage of the Worthington Armory and Community Building assembling "King Turkey" for a 1947 parade float.

Figure #9: Floor plans prepared by the Minnesota National Guard's Facilities Management Service around 1990. The functions of each space reflect usage in the latter part of the Guard's tenure in this building. Given that the streets in Worthington run on a diagonal to the cardinal points of the compass, the "North" directional marker on the diagram is incorrect. These drawings were part of an environmental assessment mandated by law as part of the Guard's effort to dispose of this property. The document can be found in the Armories file of the papers of the Adjutant General at the Minnesota Historical Society. The key to the number system in the plans follows on the next page.

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National Park Service

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Worthington Armory
and Community Building

Name of Property

Nobles County, Minnesota

County and State

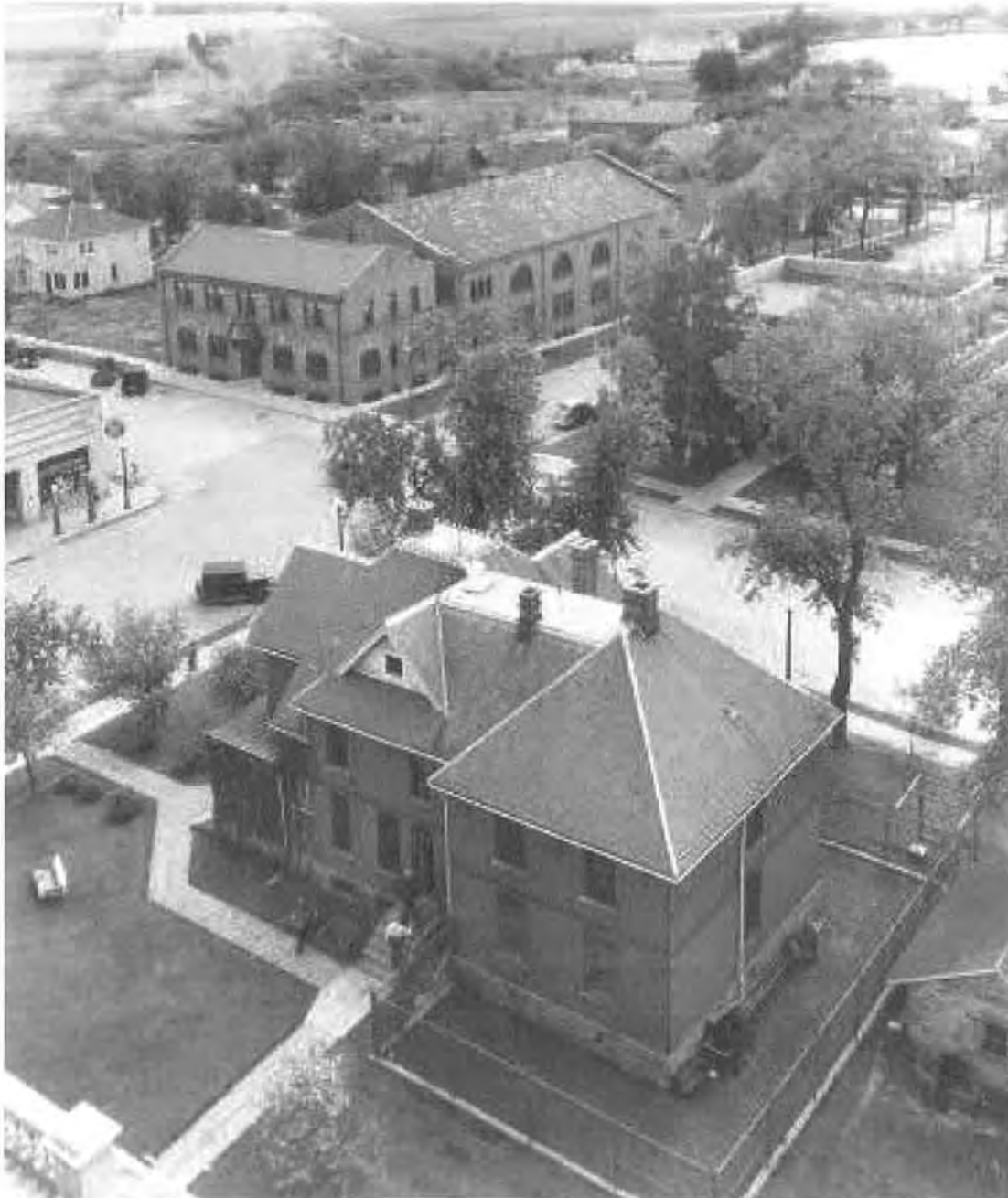


Figure #1

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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Worthington Armory and Community Building
Name of Property
Nobles County, Minnesota
County and State



Figure #2



Figure #3

United States Department of the Interior
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Worthington Armory
and Community Building

Name of Property

Nobles County, Minnesota

County and State



Figure #4



Figure #5

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National Park Service

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Worthington Armory
and Community Building

Name of Property

Nobles County, Minnesota

County and State

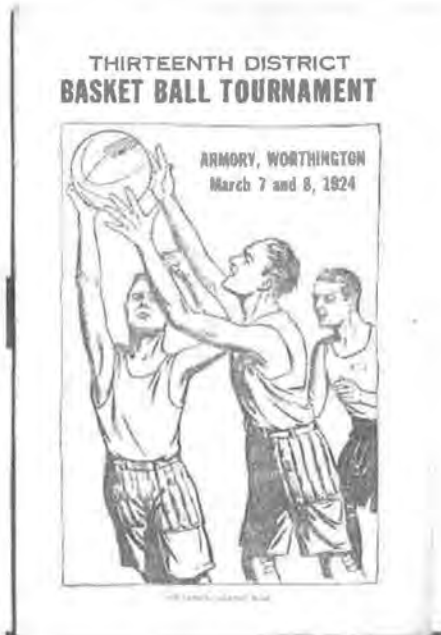
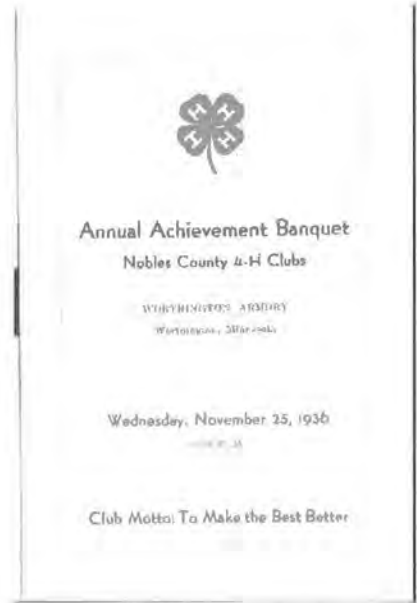


Figure #6

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Worthington Armory
and Community Building

Name of Property

Nobles County, Minnesota

County and State



Figure #7



Figure #8

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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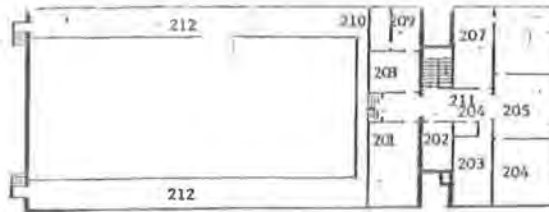
Section number Additional Pages Page 7

Worthington Armory
and Community Building

Name of Property

Nobles County, Minnesota

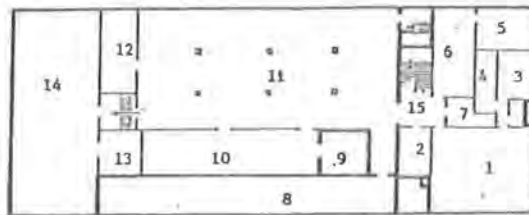
County and State



SECOND LEVEL PLAN



MAIN LEVEL PLAN



LOWER LEVEL PLAN



DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION DIVISION
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT OFFICE
CAMP WIPLEY
LITTLE FALLS, MN 56348-0348

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN WAS
PREPARED BY ME OR UNDER MY DIRECT
SUPERVISION AND THAT I AM A
REGISTERED ARCHITECT UNDER THE LAWS
OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.
DATE: _____ REG. NO. _____

WORTHINGTON
SCALE: 1" = 32'-0"

SHEET NO.
1

Figure #9

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Worthington Armory
and Community Building
Name of Property

Nobles County, Minnesota
County and State

Key to the floor plans

Lower Level Plan

1. Men's Locker
2. Boiler Room
3. Men's toilet
4. Men's shower
5. Facility maintenance
6. Physical fitness
7. Women's toilet
8. Shooting range
9. Vault
10. Unit storage
11. Mess Hall
12. Kitchen
13. Storage
14. Shooting range
15. Corridor

114. Garage
- 115-116. Storage

Second Level Plan

201. Classroom
202. Men's toilet
203. Office
204. Classroom
205. Classroom
206. Office
207. Office
208. Office
209. Office
210. Office
211. Corridor
212. Balcony

Main Level Plan

101. Drill hall
102. Office
103. Office
104. Office
105. Custodian
106. Corridor
107. Office
108. Women's Toilet
109. Office
110. Office
111. Club Room
112. Troop Aids
113. Table/chair storage

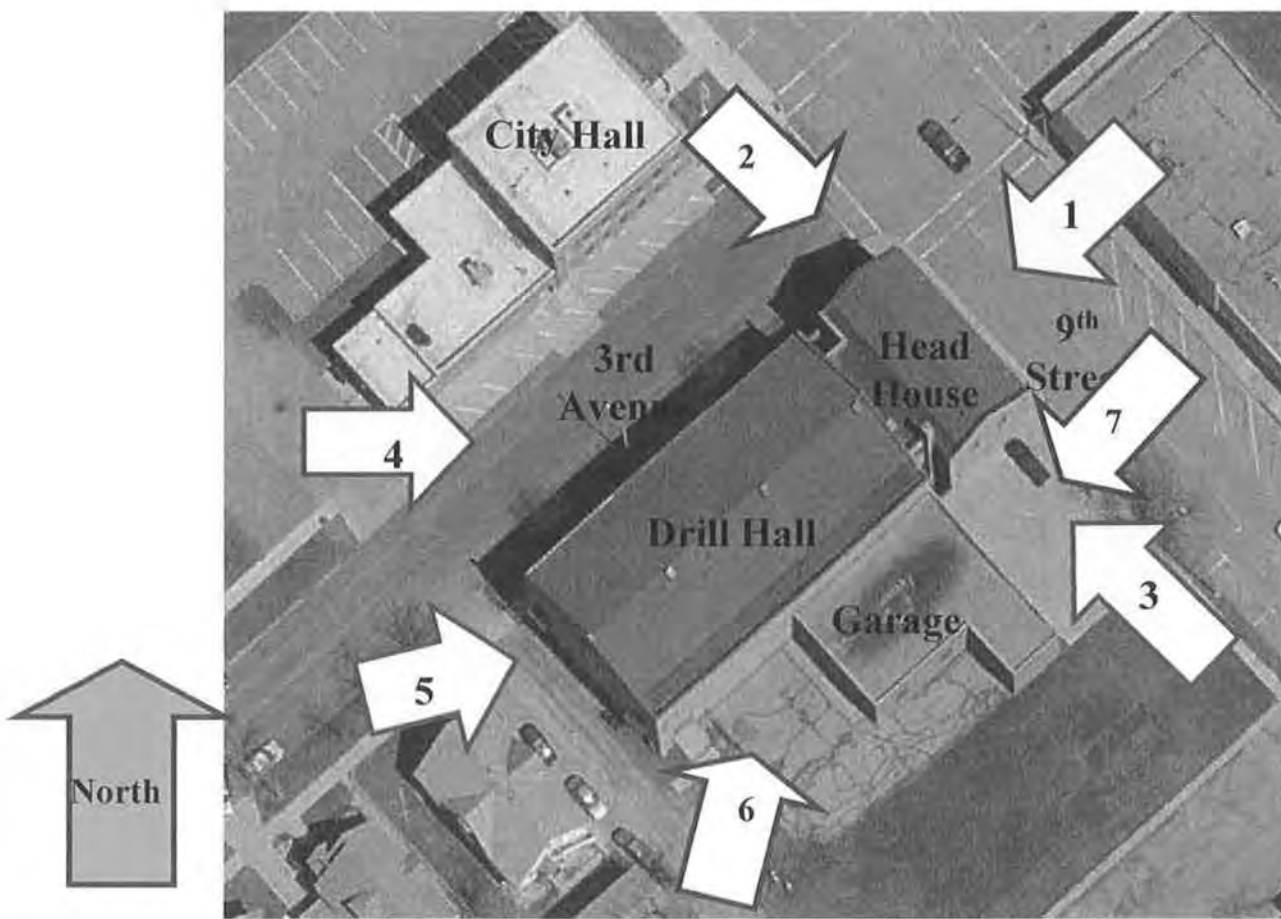
United States Department of the Interior
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Google Map showing camera directions of exterior photos



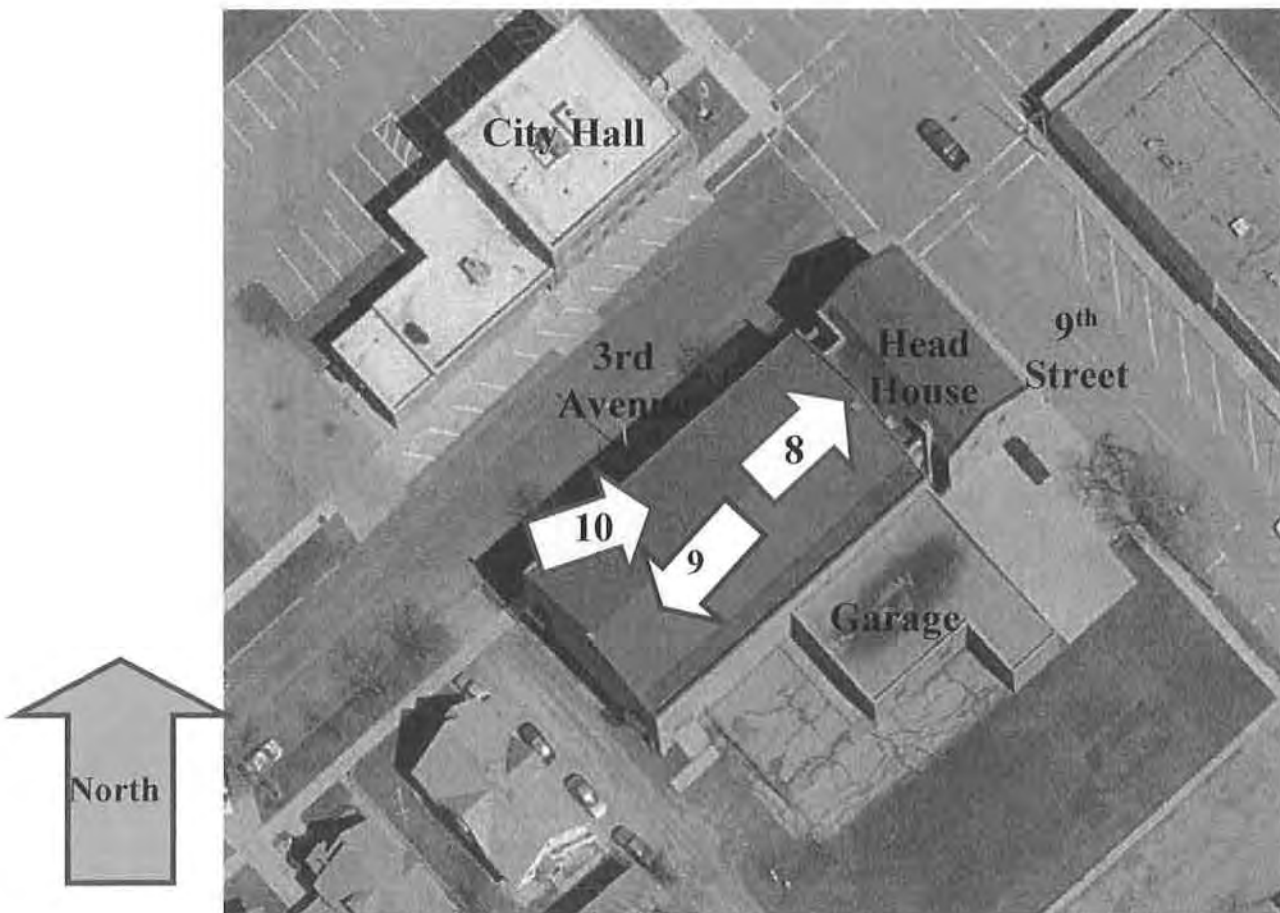
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Worthington Armory and Community Building
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Google Map showing camera directions of interior first floor photos





The
ARMORY
BUSINESS
CENTER

1902















Gymnastics
Life
THE REST IS JUST DETAILS
1010
WORTHINGTON

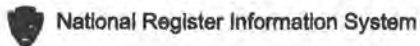
WORTHINGTON GYMNASTICS











Evaluation/Return Sheet For Single/Multi Nomination

14 4 of 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Worthington Armory and Community Building

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: MINNESOTA, Nobles

Date Received: 10/12/2017 Date of Pending List: 11/14/2017 Date of 16th Day: 11/29/2017 Date of 45th Day: 11/27/2017 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100001844

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

X Accept Return Reject 11/27/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer: Roger Reed Discipline: Historian

Telephone: (202)354-2278 Date: 11/27/17

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

<< Back

Minnesota Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Blvd West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102
651-259-3451



TO: Paul Loether, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Ginny Way

DATE: October 5, 2017

NAME OF PROPERTY: Worthington Armory and Community Building

COUNTY AND STATE: Nobles County, Minnesota

SUBJECT: National Register:
 Nomination
 Multiple Property Documentation Form
 Request for determination of eligibility
 Request for removal (Reference No.)
 Nomination resubmission
 Boundary increase/decrease (Reference No.)
 Additional documentation (Reference No.)

DOCUMENTATION:

Original National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
 Multiple Property Documentation Form
 Continuation Sheets
 Removal Documentation
 Photographs
 CD w/ image files
 Digital Map
 Sketch map(s)
 Correspondence
 Owner Objection
The enclosed owner objections
Do Do not constitute a majority of property owners

STAFF COMMENTS: