

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

FEDERAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Chandler Armory
other names/site number Chandler National Guard Armory

2. Location

street & number Mickey Clarkson Avenue & First Street Not for publication
city, town Chandler Vicinity
state Oklahoma code OK county Lincoln code 081 zip code 74834

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] Jan. 29, 1991
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.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. **Entered in the National Register**
 See continuation sheet. [Signature] 3/14/91
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DEFENSE/arms storage

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Works Progress Administration

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls STONE/sandstone

roof ASPHALT

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY:

The Chandler Armory is a single-story, rectangular shaped building (140' x 125') that was constructed of native sandstone between 1935 and 1937 by the Works Progress Administration. The armory is located north of Chandler, Oklahoma's central business district on a triangular parcel of land. It is bordered to the north by First Street and diagonally to the south and east by Mickey Clarkson Avenue (U.S. Highway 66). The building sits on a small hill facing east. To the west of the armory is a fenced off parking lot for school vehicles and Lion's Field Ballpark. The Chandler Armory has two distinct sections, a flat-roofed east section and a barrel-roofed west section. Both sections of the roof are covered with rolled asphalt. The roughly squared, regular coursed sandstone masonry is an excellent example of WPA architecture in Oklahoma. The use of recessed stonework and projecting pilasters gives the building a vertical emphasis and suggests an Art Deco influence.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION:

The public entrance to the building is on the east elevation. This elevation features the central entrance flanked by a series of narrow, multiple-light hopper windows. The entrance area is highlighted with a projecting, pediment-shaped portal. Wide sandstone piers approximately eight feet high flank either side of the elevated, recessed entrance which is composed of the original wood paneled doors. Embedded in each pier is an artillery shell. Wide pediment-shaped pilasters above the piers feature vertical rusticated lines, lending a fluted appearance. There are eleven window openings on this elevation. Two of these, one on either side of the entrance are four-over-one, narrow, fixed windows with steel muntins. The other nine windows are either three-over-five or two-over-five multiple-light units, the lower portion of which are hopper windows. These nine windows have rough-cut sandstone sills. The stonework above the windows is recessed. This gives the building a vertical emphasis. At the south end of this elevation is a cornerstone with the inscription: "State Armory/Built By Works Progress Administration/1936/ W. S. Key/State Administrator."

The north and south elevations reveal the two-part nature of the building. The east half of the building has a flat roof and the west half has a barrel roof with a semi-circular shaped parapet. On the north elevation,

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the parapet is flanked on either side by a projecting pediment-shaped pilaster and the south elevation parapet is flanked by pediment-shaped castellations.

The five original, overhead garage doors on the north elevation give evidence to the building's former use as a drill hall and truck storage and maintenance facility. The four wood paneled garage doors on the east half of the building opened up to the truck maintenance facility. A similar door on the west half of the building opened up to the drill hall. To the left of this door are two, three-over-six steel framed hopper windows. Between these windows is an entrance that retains its original wood paneled door. Above the door is a multiple-light transom. To the right of the overhead door are three, three-over-six steel framed hopper windows. All of the window openings have rough-cut sandstone sills. At the east end of this elevation is a projecting, pediment-shaped pilaster.

The west elevation has nine window openings with rough-cut sandstone sills. All of the windows are three-over-six multiple-light hopper windows with the exception of the far right window which is a three-over-five multiple-light hopper window. Towards the center of this elevation are two entrances that retain their original wood paneled doors. Above each door is a multiple-light transom. The only alterations to this elevation are the insertion of circulating fans between the lights of some of the windows or transoms.

The south elevation has six multiple-light hopper windows similar to those on the other elevations. All of these have sandstone sills. The stonework above the two windows near the east end of the building is recessed. As on the front elevation, this detail gives the building a vertical emphasis as does the projecting corner pilaster.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION:

The interior of the building is divided into two distinct areas. The eastern half originally contained the offices, a locker room, classrooms, ammunition vault, tool room, and truck storage and maintenance room. This portion of the building is divided by a central hall constructed of large blocks of regular coursed sandstone. The blocks have a hand-chiseled finish. The western half of the building contains the drill hall. On the south end of the hall is an elevated stage. Flanking the stage are wide, sandstone pilasters with details similar to the pilasters at the front entrance. Underneath the stage is a long, narrow room that was used as a rifle range. The original wood floor of the drill hall has been replaced with concrete. A contemporary newspaper account reveals that the drill hall's roof was "constructed of half-inch cellutex insulation and five-ply built-up felt and asphalt laid on metal sheeting which is supported by steel trusses." The same article reported that all rooms where materials were stored had concrete roofs covered with felt asphalt.¹ The steel trusses are still visible in the drill hall.

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The Chandler Armory retains a high degree of its architectural and historic integrity. With the exception of the drill hall floor, some alterations to the battery office, and the insertion of fans in some of the west elevation windows, the Chandler Armory is essentially unaltered.

ENDNOTES

¹Lincoln County (Oklahoma) Republican, 24 February 1937.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ECONOMICS
MILITARY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1935-1940

Significant Dates

1937

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nolan, Bryan W., Supervising Architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SUMMARY:

The Chandler Armory is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the Works Progress Administration of the 1930s. Under this federal program, local construction projects were devised as a way of creating jobs for unemployed laborers and stimulating the local economy with the infusion of payroll money and the purchase of local materials (when possible) to complete the project. The armory was also important as the home of Battery F, Second Battalion of the 160th Field Artillery of the Oklahoma National Guard, 45th Infantry Division. The Chandler Armory also is significant as an excellent, intact example of WPA architecture and is therefore eligible for the Register under Criterion C. The native sandstone and craftsmanship displayed in this building reflect the ideals of the WPA program.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was created in May 1935 during the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was designed as a means to provide meaningful employment to those workers, mostly unskilled laborers, who were without jobs as a result of the economic depression of the 1930s. The program was discontinued in 1943 with the economic recovery associated with the United States' involvement in World War II. By June 1943, the federal government had allocated over 10.75 billion dollars on the program and more than 185 million dollars of this total was expended in Oklahoma.

WPA projects were to be "socially desirable, financially sound, and of [a] permanent nature."¹ To receive federal funds, a project had to meet three criteria. First, it had to be useful; that is, it had to fulfill a need within the community such as a new school, road improvements, or as in this case, an armory. Second, it had to be sponsored by a public body such as a school district, a city, or a county. The sponsor had to contribute

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Accomplishments: Works Progress Administration for Oklahoma, July 1, 1935 - March 1, 1937. Oklahoma City: Works Progress Administration, 1937.

Baird, W. David. "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)." Stillwater, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State University, 1987.

The Chandler (Oklahoma) News-Publicist. May 1935 through March 1937.

Franks, Kenny A. Citizen Soldiers: Oklahoma's National Guard. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983.

Historical Annual: National Guard of the State of Oklahoma, 1938. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Army and Navy Publishing Company, 1938.

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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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	4	6	9	2	0	9	0	3	9	5	3	6	1	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan L. Allen

organization Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office date October 3, 1990

street & number Wiley Post Historical Building telephone 405-521-2491

city or town Oklahoma City state Oklahoma zip code 73105

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part of the total cost, usually between ten and twenty-five percent, which typically was done through the contribution of locally available materials. Third, ninety percent of the laborers had to come from employable persons who were on the relief rolls.

One of the biggest, most visible, and popular WPA programs in Oklahoma was the armory building projects. By March 1937, one hundred and twenty-six armories had been built or were near completion throughout the United States. Fifty-one of these were in Oklahoma.² When the program ended in 1943, fifty-four armories had been constructed and fifty-three reconstructed or improved throughout the state.³

On June 20, 1935, The Chandler News-Publicist stated that Chandler was almost assured a new armory. Of the armory building program in general, the newspaper quoted Oklahoma Congressman Josh Lee as saying, "The armories would serve as community centers, replace old and inadequate structures now being used in many places by the guard, create work for thousands of unemployed laborers, and serve as a permanent improvement for each city in which they are constructed."⁴ By late August, Captain Louis G. Hurst, commander of the local guard unit, had received the plans for the armory. The city chose to locate the building in the old city park at the juncture of First Street and U.S. Highway 66.

Work on the project began in October 1935 with the quarrying of the native sandstone at the D. Powers farm northeast of Chandler. Ground-breaking for the building was held on November 19, 1935. Although a local newspaper estimated that the armory would be finished by the spring of 1936, it was not completed until the late winter of 1937. On March 1, 1937, the armory was officially dedicated with a community-wide celebration complete with a parade, open house, laying of the cornerstone, a banquet, and a dance with music provided by the WPA swing band from Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

Because Chandler was located in a largely rural county, the construction of the armory provided a much needed influx of money into the city's economy. Although more money was expended on farm-to-market roads and other road improvements in Lincoln County, as of late October 1936, the Chandler Armory was the largest single "building" project in the county. By that date, the federal appropriation for the building was \$36,520.⁵ With the inclusion of the city's contributions for the project which included the site and part of the expense of transporting the material, the total value of the building was estimated to be \$50,000.⁶ This expenditure of money not only helped individual families but also benefited the local merchants and material suppliers.

To provide as much work as possible for those listed on the relief rolls, WPA projects were designed to be labor-intensive. Local newspaper accounts attest to the labor-intensive nature of the work on the Chandler Armory.

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During the early phase of the construction, approximately 250 men were working at the quarry in order to keep the laborers at the jobsite supplied with enough material. Staggered crews of fourteen men were employed on the jobsite. The staggering plan was used in order to provide employment for all eligible workers. At the jobsite, the stone was dressed and hoisted into place by hand. Not only the stonework, but also the work on the drill hall floor required a great deal of hand labor. More than 156,000 wood blocks were cut on the jobsite and set in place with hot asphalt and surfaced with linseed oil and turpentine. As the project neared completion, twenty-nine men were working on the building.⁷

The Chandler Armory served as the home of Battery F, Second Battalion, of the 160th Field Artillery of the Oklahoma National Guard. Oklahoma Guard units had been a part of the 45th Infantry Division since 1923. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Guard was used extensively during civil disturbances, to aid in relief of natural disasters, and to carry out the orders of the state's governors. In August, 1935, Battery F, Second Battalion included 58 men and five officers.⁸ The WPA armory provided the unit with a modern facility and replaced an earlier armory. The interior contained a drill hall measuring 78' x 113', classrooms, ammunition vault, garage, and tool room. In the basement was the rifle range. The armory allowed the unit to achieve a greater level of military efficiency and preparedness as well as providing a secure place for the storage of the unit's equipment. This preparation would become of vital importance with the outbreak of World War II. As a vital component of the 45th Infantry Division, the Oklahoma National Guard was mobilized in September, 1940 and saw active duty in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Chandler Armory is an excellent example of WPA architecture in Oklahoma. The project superintendent for the building was Verne O. Mathews, a local contractor. The use of the native sandstone exemplifies the WPA's goals of using local material when possible and keeping the design simple enough for unskilled laborers. The central interior hallway bears witness to the labor-intensive nature of the stonework at the Chandler Armory. The walls of the hall are composed of large blocks of regular coursed sandstone with a hand chiseled finish. The use of the native sandstone as well as the building's barrel roof with a one-story, flat-roofed extension to the east reflects the physical environment instead of an urban-rural dichotomy.⁹ The Chandler Armory is also significant because it is relatively unaltered. It retains the majority of its original doors, in particular the wood paneled exterior doors and overhead garage doors, original room configurations and ceiling heights.

Bryan W. Nolan, an architect and major in the Guard, was the supervising architect for Oklahoma's WPA armory building program. The armories were

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constructed for either one, two, or four units. This dictated the size and design of the building. The Chandler Armory is similar to other Oklahoma armories housing one unit. The standardization of designs accommodated the skill level of a work force with little or no construction experience yet was of a labor-intensive nature in order to provide work for as many men as possible. The designs were flexible enough to allow for variations such as the physical orientation of the building. Other variations included the use of locally available materials such as brick or stone. As in the case of the Chandler Armory, thirty-three of the fifty-one armories constructed by mid-1937 were of locally available stone. The other eighteen were of brick.¹⁰

The period of significance for the Chandler Armory is 1935 to 1940. These years delineate the period beginning with the construction of the armory in 1935 and ending with the mobilization of the Oklahoma National Guard in 1940.

The Chandler National Guard unit moved out of this armory and into a new facility in 1972. Since that time, the city of Chandler leased the building to various local enterprises. Currently, it is vacant. Local preservationists are working with the city to develop adaptive uses for the facility. The inclusion of the Chandler Armory in the National Register of Historic Places would give recognition to the armory's historic and architectural significance to the community.

ENDNOTES

¹The Chandler (Oklahoma) News-Publicists, 25 July 1935.

²Accomplishments: Works Progress Administration for Oklahoma, July 1, 1935 - March 1, 1937, (Oklahoma City: Works Progress Administration, 1937), 38.

³U.S. Work Projects Administration, Oklahoma: Final Report of Activities and Accomplishments, (Washington, D.C., 1943), 2.

⁴The Chandler News-Publicist, 20 June 1935.

⁵Ibid., 29 October 1936.

⁶Lincoln County (Oklahoma) Republican, 24 February 1937.

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⁷Ibid., 12 February 1936, 24 February 1937; The Chandler News-Publicist, 7 January 1937.

⁸The Chandler News-Publicist, 15 August 1935.

⁹W. David Baird, "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)," (Stillwater, Oklahoma: Oklahoma State University, 1987), 13.

¹⁰Accomplishments: Works Progress Administration for Oklahoma, 38.

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Lincoln County (Oklahoma) Republican. May 1935 through March 1937.

U.S. Work Projects Administration, Oklahoma: Final Report of Activities and Accomplishments. Washington, D.C., 1943. (Typewritten manuscript, Documents Section, Edmon Low Library, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma.)

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A parcel of land commencing at a point 180 feet east of the NW corner of a tract known and platted as the City Park, in the original town of Chandler, Lincoln County, Oklahoma, thence south 150 feet, thence due east to the west right-of-way line of U.S. Highway No. 66, thence northeast along the west side of said right-of-way line to a point where said right-of-way line intersects the north line of said tract known as the City Park, thence west to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

These are the property boundary lines legally conveyed by the City of Chandler to the State of Oklahoma, acting as Trustee for the Oklahoma National Guard, in 1936 and recorded in the County Clerk's office, Lincoln County Courthouse, Chandler, Oklahoma. The boundaries described above have historically been associated with the property.