

(Expires 5/31/2012)

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COVER

## National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

X	New Submission	Amended Submission
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**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

**Midtown Brick Box Apartments 1910-1935, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

### B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

## The Evolution of Multiple Family Dwellings in Oklahoma City 1889-1955

Oklahoma City's Territorial Period: 1889-1907

## The Oklahoma City's Housing Boom 1900-1910

### Midtown Housing in the 1920s

## Midtown Housing from the 1930s to 1945

## From Flats to Modern Apartment Living in Midtown: 1900-1935

**C. Form Prepared by**

name/title Cathy Ambler, Ph.D., Preservation Consultant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date January 2012

street & number 1129 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street telephone 918 584 3655

city or town	Tulsa	state	Oklahoma	74120
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e-mail      [cambler@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cambler@sbcglobal.net)

### **D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

( ) See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*[Signature]*  
Signature and title of certifying official

Date July 25, 2012

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

9/12/2012  
Date of Action

## Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

### Page Numbers

#### E. Statement of Historic Contexts

(if more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)

##### The Evolution of Multiple Family Dwellings in Oklahoma City 1889-1955

Oklahoma City's Territorial Period: 1889-1907

The Oklahoma City's Housing Boom 1900-1910

Midtown Housing in the 1920s

Midtown Housing from the 1930s to 1945

From Flats to Modern Apartment Living in Midtown: 1900-1935

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#### F. Associated Property Types

(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

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#### G. Geographical Data

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#### H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

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#### I. Major Bibliographical References

(List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

I	1-4
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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

## Midtown Brick Box Apartments 1910-1935

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**Introduction**

The Midtown area is important in Oklahoma City's history – it is one of the town's earliest residential areas. Only thirteen years after the city was founded, electric street car transportation through Midtown promoted the construction of hundreds of houses and multi-family properties where once first generation houses stood. Today it is between the downtown core on the south and elite Heritage Hills on the north. Through the mid-1940s and until just after World War II, it remained a viable residential location for many city residents, although wealthier home owners had moved northward long before into more exclusive areas. Pressure from the creeping business core into Midtown, the eventual decline in the quality of housing, and the spread of suburbs after the war, ended its attraction as a desirable place to live. The boundaries of Midtown are defined as NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Classen Boulevard, NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and N. Broadway. The map shown in Figure 1 shows the boundaries of the Midtown neighborhood. The area today is marked with bright red vertical signs to distinguish the area.<sup>1</sup>

Midtown has a variety of historic single and multi-family dwellings. The extant flats, duplexes and apartments are but a few of the impressive number that once were in the neighborhood. These multi-family dwellings are significant in the city's housing history because their presence helps convey social implications of where different groups wanted, needed, or could only afford to live. They also reflect the changing nature of the city's residential patterns as the area evolved from having both white and blue collar workers, to a residential area for mostly the working class. The area housing also represents a period in the city when public transportation was a critical factor for new residents making housing area choices. For Oklahoma City during its periods of extreme growth, multiple family dwellings were a significant component of Midtown residential life. The city grew at such rates during certain periods, that to provide each family with a private residence was not only impractical, but economically unrealistic.

At the transitional end of purpose-built<sup>2</sup> multiple dwellings within Midtown from 1910 to 1935, are the Midtown Brick Box Apartments which are locally significant and eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. They are examples which help document the historic development and growth of the Midtown area of Oklahoma City. They represent a portion of the historic context identified in Section E of this multiple property form for the Evolution of Midtown Multiple Family Dwellings in Oklahoma City 1889-1955 for community planning and development. The Midtown Brick Box Apartments 1910-1935 are also eligible for their architecture because they represent the architectural trends in brick box apartment dwellings from 1910 to 1930.

<sup>1</sup> "Markers to help Visitors Locate Midtown District," *The Oklahoman*, July 18, 2007. "Midtown" is not a historic name for this area – it has been used only recently to provide a name for this area. These boundaries are historical to the midtown neighborhood. To the north is Heritage Hills, an exclusive area with no apartment buildings; to the east is Broadway which divides streets between east and west and borders the railroad; to the south is the business district; to the west, Classen is a major highway which separates midtown from the areas west of this street. Figure 1 is derived from Google Maps.

<sup>2</sup> As other authors note, "purpose-built" means that these buildings were constructed to be apartments, and do not just happen to house many families or many people within a housing unit. It is a specific building type. See Emily Hotaling Eig and Laura Harris Hughes, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Form, "Apartment Buildings in Washington D.C. 1880-1945," July 1, 1993, Section E1. District of Columbia Planning Department, Washington D.C., and Sally F. Schwenk, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Form, "Historic Colonnade Apartment Buildings of Kansas City, Missouri," October 2003, Section E1-2.



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**Antecedents for the American Apartment House**

There are generally agreed upon sources for the development of American multi-family dwellings. Numerous multiple property nomination forms for apartment buildings concur that apartment living came to the United States from European housing, not just France, but other areas as well. In Scotland, for example, "flats" or apartments had been constructed since at least the sixteenth century; some historians would argue even earlier.<sup>3</sup> The Romans erected thousands of apartments in Rome (*appartimenta*, the source of the word "apartment") that were typically three to four stories in height and may date to 300 B.C. Over time, humans have shared accommodations for protection and mutual society. In the history of Western Europe, upper classes lived together often sharing space according to social and economic circumstances.<sup>4</sup>

Most Americans were not use to sharing residences with others when apartments were first discussed and constructed in large cities. In the 1830s, infamous multi-family dwellings in U.S. cities like New York were the tenements associated with the lower class. Tenements were crowded and often dangerous living conditions, and thus for the middle and upper classes, any acceptance of living in multi-family settings took time and new ideas and positive images about apartment living.<sup>5</sup>

A combination of factors including economics, housing shortages and booming populations, led to a dire need of acceptable rental housing within metropolitan areas throughout the United States.<sup>6</sup> Growing population and limited property for new construction meant that workers had to live either in the suburbs if they could afford to, or live in more dense environments to be near transportation and work opportunities. Author John Stilgoe observed that before apartment houses, the middle class often had to move to the suburbs to find adequate housing because there was no affordable housing in cities; they moved to the suburbs often not by choice but by necessity. It was impossible to find decent affordable shelter in a sensible affordable flat.<sup>7</sup> The need for housing in the post-Civil War era encouraged architects and developers to consider the stacked houses, or "French Flats" which were commonly associated with Paris. Affordability and convenience eventually won over America's middle class despite their reluctance to live together with others in the same building.

Developers addressed the concerns of potential apartment residents by giving them a better living model. With hot water heat, gas lights, and fully equipped bathrooms with hot and cold running water, such technological breakthroughs were added to a list of enticements.<sup>8</sup> With modern conveniences and nearby public transportation, apartments finally met the public's demands for privacy and a notion of their own "home".<sup>9</sup> Apartments provided housing not only for families, but also for many professionals, widows and single men and women. Once the elevator came fully into service in the 1880s, luxury high-rise apartments finally became

<sup>3</sup> Eig and Hughes, *ibid.* Also see Schwenk, *ibid.*, E2, and Simone Monteleone Moffit, "Garden Apartments, Apartment Houses and Apartment Complexes in Arlington County, Virginia: 1934-54," Section E2. Also see James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell, "Houses of Homes: The Origins of Apartments," *Old House Journal*, November/December 1994, 225-29, and Andrew Alpern, *Luxury Apartment Houses of Manhattan: An Illustrated History* (New York, New York: Dover Publications, 1992), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Hawes, *New York, New York: How the Apartment House Transformed the Life of the City (1869-1930)*, (New York, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), 20-21.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>6</sup> Moffitt, *ibid.*, E2.

<sup>7</sup> John Stilgoe, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1988), 153-154.

<sup>8</sup> Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1981), 136-139.

<sup>9</sup> Massey and Maxwell, *ibid.*, 27. Also see Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Alone Together: a History of New York's Early Apartments* (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 104-105.

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desirable even for the well-to-do in New York.<sup>10</sup> Without the elevator, the height of many apartments was limited from two- to four-stories.

Regardless of their initial disregard, multi-family dwellings, or purpose-built apartments, spread across the United States. In Washington, D.C., the first apartment was constructed in 1857;<sup>11</sup> in New York, 1870, and in Chicago, the 1880s. In the 1880s, apartments spread to many smaller cities, and eastern city antecedents helped determined apartment appearances, although apartments can have their own regional attributes based on local needs and tastes. Kansas City's colonnaded apartments, for example, are a regional form; Boston has "triple deckers", and Chicago has "six-flats." In Oklahoma City, incomers brought with them their ideas about proper housing from their own past experiences which included single family houses, apartments, flats and duplexes.

**The Evolution of Multiple Family Dwellings in Oklahoma City 1889-1955**Oklahoma City's Territorial Period: 1889-1907

Oklahoma City's settlement period is unlike almost any other. Most other Midwestern towns developed more slowly, often growing on town plats near river, railroad and road transportation corridors. Oklahomans prefer to say that Oklahoma City was "born grown" because it came into being almost overnight. Oklahoma City was sited in the Unassigned Lands within Indian Territory which was home to the Five Civilized Tribes. The Unassigned Lands was a large portion of public land where tribes had no claims, and thus it attracted non-Indian outsiders who wanted the land opened for settlement.

Because the Five Civilized Tribes supported the Southern cause in the Civil War, the Reconstruction Treaties of 1866 punished them by forcing them to allow rights-of-way for railroad companies to lay track through their lands to reach the Unassigned Lands. Once the railroads were present they became a wedge encouraged by non-Indian outsiders to pressure the U.S. government to allow settlement.

One of the railroad companies within Indian Territory was the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (Santa Fe) which arrived in 1887. Though the railroad could move in and out of Indian Territory, there were no sources of revenue to support it within the Unassigned Lands. The Lands had no legal settlement, no trade, and no farmers who needed to ship their cattle or agricultural products by rail. The railroad supported opening the Unassigned Lands to settlers hoping that agricultural endeavors would assure future income for the railroad company. Under continuing pressure from the public, and when the United States Army had to end several illegal attempts to enter the territory, President Benjamin Harrison opened the area to the first Oklahoma land run on April 22, 1889. Prior to the run, the site of Oklahoma City had seven Santa Fe buildings, which the railroad called "Oklahoma Station".<sup>12</sup>

About 50,000 land seekers participated in the land run on April 22, 1889; about 12,000 entered into the area that would become Oklahoma City near Oklahoma Station at noon. Because the government had not provided for law enforcement or a means to organize a town, two different groups immediately and intently worked to lay out streets and lots for the town site; but they did not work together and their two town plats did not match. To resolve the disparities and to prevent a resurvey of the northern town site, two 320-acre town plats were established: Oklahoma City and South Oklahoma City. While they would be combined into one town by 1890,

<sup>10</sup> Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 66.

<sup>11</sup> This was one living unit per floor, still meaning "flat". See Schwenk, *ibid.*, E3.

<sup>12</sup> John R. Calhoun, "Automobile Alley Historic District," National Register Property (NRIS # 99000351), 1999, Section 8, 22.



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the differences between these plats were established during the founding days of Oklahoma City and their juncture would remain visible where the streets joined from one to another at Reno Avenue.<sup>13</sup>

By nightfall on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Oklahoma City site was covered with tents and the town's new residents began immediately to build wood-framed buildings.<sup>14</sup> A week after the run, rapidly constructed impermanent wood commercial buildings aligned Main Street. By May, prefabricated commercial buildings from Michigan were among the store fronts hosting a variety of businesses. A February 22, 1890, Bird's Eye View of Oklahoma City shows Oklahoma City looking from the northeast to the southwest just ten months after the community was established (see Figure 2). There were no trees in the town other than those near the Canadian River which are seen at the top of the print.

The Birds Eye in Figure 2 shows the spread of the community with housing in the Midtown area. These can be seen in the print foreground, with houses that had already reached to NW 7<sup>th</sup> Street, west to N. Walker, and East to N. Broadway. In 1890, the town population was approximately 4,000.<sup>15</sup> The Bird's Eye and Photo 1 show the first generation of housing – wood-framed and hastily constructed.<sup>16</sup>

In ten months however, the town had established a housing pattern that would be followed for decades to come. While the topography is not evident from the Bird's Eye view, topography helped determine early housing locations. South Oklahoma City lay more on bottom land which sloped toward the Canadian River. The northern portion of the town rose gradually above the bottoms to about seventy-five feet.<sup>17</sup> Topography also affected the location of railroad tracks – often found in flat or flood plains which enhanced the ease of construction. Many homes and businesses were built near them in South Oklahoma City – these would bear the brunt of a disastrous 1923 flood.

The railroads also split the city into sections. The Santa Fe ran North/South just east of Broadway. The Choctaw Coal and Railway Company (later Rock Island) laid its East/West tracks in 1891 down the alley between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets, in effect, the railroads cut the town into quadrants. The placement of the railroads often meant that housing locations for the poor or African American citizens were near their tracks. By 1894, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Oklahoma City* had already recorded "negro" shanties located by the Choctaw Railroad, and just south of the tracks at N. Hudson and NW 1<sup>st</sup> Street were two nearby small African American churches.<sup>18</sup>

Thanks to town boosters, the Frisco Railroad came to Oklahoma City, and its East/West tracks were completed in 1898. The KATY (Missouri, Kansas and Texas) arrived in Oklahoma City in 1902, and the Oklahoma City and Western in 1903.<sup>19</sup> The railroads influenced the location of manufacturers, lumber yards, and a host of other commercial endeavors, and they located especially near track sides. By 1900 Oklahoma

<sup>13</sup> Bob Blackburn, *Heart of the Promised Land: An Illustrated History of Oklahoma County* (Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1982), 50.

<sup>14</sup> The Santa Fe Railroad could provide a steady supply of lumber for construction.

<sup>15</sup> Blackburn, *Heart of the Promised Land*, *ibid.*, 71.

<sup>16</sup> This photo is published in Blackburn, *Heart of the Promised Land*, *ibid.*, 47. The photo is from the Oklahoma Historical Society. In 1894 housing is present in both the north and south portions of town and most were one-story dwellings.

<sup>17</sup> St. Anthony's Hospital was also located at a high point in the Midtown area. An area known hill, "Blue Hill", is approximately at the Murrah bomb site.

<sup>18</sup> *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Territory 1894*, Sheet 4.

<sup>19</sup> Bob L. Blackburn, Arn Henderson and Melvena Thurman, *The Physical Legacy: Buildings of Oklahoma County 1889-1931* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Southwestern Heritage Press, 1980), 6. The book was published for the Oklahoma County Historical Society.

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City, now in Oklahoma Territory, was the region's foremost processing and distribution center because of these railroads.<sup>20</sup>

The only known shared accommodations in 1894 outside of hotels were boarding or rooming houses and these were located both north and south of the Choctaw tracks. It is interesting to note that *Sanborn Maps* in 1894 also recorded specific boarding houses for women.<sup>21</sup> First generation residential resources began to improve, however, and by 1898, one of the more wealthy portions of the town was in the Maywood Addition, once part of the Military Reserve (Military Hill), north and east of the Santa Fe tracks.<sup>22</sup> The addition's houses were second generation and much more refined and elegant.<sup>23</sup>

In the ten years between 1890 and 1900, the city's population increased by 141.8 percent, from 4,151 to 10,037.<sup>24</sup> With a healthy agricultural economy, Oklahoma City residents began to do well and the commercial area experienced a building boom. The city's growth and wealth prompted the first generation of Main Street's wood buildings to be replaced with new brick ones, especially between 1898 and 1906.<sup>25</sup> With so many new incomers, the demand for housing meant that the city continued to expand housing areas through new plats in the Midtown area past NW 7<sup>th</sup> Street to NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>26</sup>

The Midtown area was a primary residential area near downtown and the increase in the number of families living there created demands for a school. The city built two large public schools in 1895, Emerson was one and its initial student population was 800.<sup>27</sup> It was located at 714 NW 7<sup>th</sup> Street at one of the highest points north of downtown and the school overlooked the commercial core.<sup>28</sup>

Another significant building was constructed in 1899, St. Anthony's Hospital, located at NW 9<sup>th</sup> Street and N. Dewey. The Midtown area was filling not only with wood-framed houses, a school and hospital, but also by 1900, a church, Catholic school and a small fire station the corner of N. Hudson and W. Park Place (Columbus Avenue at the time). The presence of such institutions and services was a response that indicates a growing neighborhood's community needs.

### The Oklahoma City Housing Boom 1900-1910

<sup>20</sup> Roy Stewart, *Born Again: An Oklahoma City History* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Fidelity Bank, 1975), 147. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Territory*, 1894, Sheet 3. Blackburn, *The Physical Legacy*, *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> One of these is just north of the Choctaw tracks and three more are NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and west of Hudson. It is unclear why these were specified for women boarders; one speculation was they were houses of prostitution; another is that in case of fire there was notice of where women were located.

<sup>22</sup> The military reserve was used during the first days of the town's founding by the United States Infantry to preserve order.

<sup>23</sup> Blackburn, *Heart of the Promised Land*. *ibid.*, 78. Lot prices are revealing as well. In the Midtown area in 1902 lots were selling for approximately \$200 to \$300. In Maywood, they were selling at the "best block in Maywood" for \$900 for a large double lot. See *The Oklahoman*, March 11, 1902.

<sup>24</sup> Population figures within the document up to 1940 come from "A Report Upon the Comprehensive City Plan: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 1947, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Blackburn, Henderson, and Thurman, *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>26</sup> *The Oklahoman*, *ibid.* In 1902 houses were advertised specifically as "high lots near Emerson School." Also see Calhoun, *ibid.*, Section 8, 23.

<sup>27</sup> Janette Isabel Mahar, "Social Changes in Oklahoma City from 1889 to 1930." Master's Thesis, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1933, 21.

<sup>28</sup> This school burned in 1907 and was replaced the school extant today.

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The first decade of the twentieth century would prove to be one of extreme city growth. The population between 1900 and 1910 exploded from 10,037 to 64,205, an increase of 539.7 percent, and with such growth Oklahoma City experienced severe housing shortages. This unprecedented growth was stimulated by the city's position as a wholesale and distribution center, whose presence encouraged other companies to locate in the city. Statehood in 1907 had removed several legal and political disadvantages of territorial status, and with the potential for increased investments in the city, new companies and two meat-packing plants moved to the city that employed thousands of workers.<sup>29</sup>

Hotel living options during this time, though, were very limited. In 1903, there were no apartments, flats or other types of multi-family dwellings listed in the 1903-4 city directory. There were nineteen hotels and thus for many incomers, hotels and boarding houses were their best option for housing. There were also furnished rooms, but only seventy-eight people advertised they had rooms available in the entire city.<sup>30</sup> Housing had improved by 1909 because thirteen more multi-story hotels had opened in all parts of town.<sup>31</sup>

In 1902, the establishment of the electric streetcar system further established the Midtown area as of the city's main areas of residence. A street car line was first proposed in 1898 by John Shartel, a large land holder in Oklahoma City. In 1904, he then teamed with Anton Classen, also a large land holder, to create the Metropolitan Railway Company, later renamed the Oklahoma City Railway Company.<sup>32</sup> In the first nine months of service, six and one-half miles of track were laid, and by 1906, the rail system carried over three and one-half million passengers.<sup>33</sup> By 1909, trackage totaled thirty-two miles.<sup>34</sup>

The street car route initially went from Main Street north on N. Broadway (double track), and west on Main to Western Avenue. It went again from Main north on both Walker (double track) and Classen to NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street and from NW 13<sup>th</sup> to N. Broadway. Significantly much of the route was from downtown through the Midtown area which is shown in Figure 3.

The streetcar line expanded to serve the growing population, and most of the city track was in place by 1916. There was a street car strike in 1911, and Charles F. Colcord emphasized how heavily it was used; that before the strike was over, people got "very tired of walking".<sup>35</sup> Photo 3 is a view from N. Walker's double line looking south in 1934.

The street car system was likely the single most important growth factor in early Oklahoma City because industrial and residential growth followed the line.<sup>36</sup> In the Midtown area, residents were no more than three blocks to street car transportation, and its presence was an attractive draw for living in Midtown.

Thirty-five plats were registered from 1891 to 1910 just in Midtown. They show an extraordinary level of activity as properties were divided and subdivided for new residential dwellings. See Figure 4.

<sup>29</sup> Blackburn, *Heart of the Promised Land*, 103.

<sup>30</sup> John F. Worley and Co.'s, *Directory of Oklahoma City for 1903-4* (Dallas, Texas: John F. Worley and Co., Publisher, 1903), 416-417 and 420-421.

<sup>31</sup> Blackburn, Henderson and Thurman, *ibid.*, 22.

<sup>32</sup> "Oh What a Ride, Bricktown Street Car, History of Oklahoma City Street Cars." This brochure was in the "Oklahoma Cities - Oklahoma City" vertical file at the Tulsa City/County Public Library on January 13, 2012.

<sup>33</sup> William D. Welge, *Oklahoma City Rediscovered* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 15.

<sup>34</sup> Blackburn, *Heart of the Promised Land*, *ibid.*, 90. Also see Allison Chandler and Stephen D. Maguire, *When Oklahoma Took the Trolley* (Glendale, California: Interurbans, 1980), 12.

<sup>35</sup> Terry L. Griffith, *Oklahoma City: Statehood to 1930* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 75.

<sup>36</sup> Stewart, *ibid.*, 162.



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Janette Isabel Mahar wrote a master's thesis in 1933 and studied residence locations in Oklahoma City in 1903, 1910, 1920 and 1930, for African Americans, blue collar or working class (those who made their income through work with their hands; who worked with things and made things), and business class or white collar workers (composed of business and professional workers).<sup>37</sup> Her comparisons among the years are significant because they document residential patterns in Oklahoma City, in Midtown, and how they changed. She began in 1903 when the first city directory was published, and used city directories for later dates as well. In 1903, her results found that for African Americans, almost three-fourths lived within a block of the railroad tracks although a few lived in the Midtown area, likely as domestics. The white collar workers lived north of Main Street, and blue collar lived primarily south of Grand Avenue. Second Street was established as a residential dividing line between the north and south portions of the city for her study. Two-thirds of the white collar group lived north of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and more than two-thirds of the blue collar lived south of it. In Midtown, if NW 5<sup>th</sup> Street had been chosen as the southern boundary instead of NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and NW 16<sup>th</sup> Street as the north boundary, there were three times as many white collar workers as blue living north of 5<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>38</sup> The study meant that in 1903, white collar workers lived north of the business district within much of the Midtown area. Blue collar workers were still more likely to be close to either downtown or manufacturing and mills south of the business core.

These findings are supported by John Calhoun who wrote in the National Register Nomination for "Automobile Alley", (NRIS # 99000351) that:

"As the city grew, the original zone of houses began to deteriorate and the working class located their dwellings outside the initial residential area but within short distances of their place of employment. Seeking newer and improved housing, the middle to upper classes further extended the town by creating a strictly residential area towards the outer limits of the working class section. As the city continued to prosper, the upper classes moved to suburban areas lying just outside the incorporated boundaries."<sup>39</sup>

Over the next ten years, residential patterns in Midtown would continue to remain in flux.

There were no purpose-built multi-properties in the Midtown area in 1903 listed in city directories or shown on *Sanborn Maps* from 1894, 1896, or 1896.<sup>40</sup> By 1906, the maps showed three wood-framed flats in Midtown at 701-703 N. Harvey, 609 N. Robinson, and 135-7 NW 5<sup>th</sup>. *Sanborn Maps* recorded Midtown's multiple dwellings at this time in two ways: boarding houses and flats. The word "boarding" was printed on such dwellings, and flats were wood-framed, and either two- or three-story.<sup>41</sup> Flats in Oklahoma City were often found as "doubles" or two attached buildings. See Figure 5 which shows a 1906 three-story double on NW 5<sup>th</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Mahar does not call these by "blue and white collar workers". However, these are more common terms today for those who work with their hands versus those who do not. She does not distinguish between middle and upper class either which is less helpful when separation occurs later between these classes within Midtown. Her study must be viewed as generalized trends. Categories would perhaps be defined more specifically today, but they give a profile of where individuals lived.

<sup>38</sup> Note this includes all of Oklahoma City, not just the Midtown area although she breaks down areas. In Midtown she defined an area in it from NW 5<sup>th</sup> included the area from the Santa Fe tracks, west to the 700 block on the west. See Mahar, *ibid.*, 29-30. She used a 1000 person sample of city residents in each decade of the study.

<sup>39</sup> Calhoun, *ibid.*, Section 8, 23.

<sup>40</sup> Worley, *ibid.*, 398.

<sup>41</sup> Boarding houses were not purpose-built multi-family dwellings, but flats and duplexes are.

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Street. Each floor had two residences so there were four flats in a two-story, or six flats in a three-story building.

New flats drew the attention of *The Oklahoman* because the newspaper discussed the construction of flats in a 1903 article titled, "The Era of Flats". The paper noted, "There comes to Oklahoma City a new departure in building that is altogether modern and very convenient – flat, apartment, terrace – what you will."<sup>42</sup> The article suggested that flats might be reasonable investments; that if they were constructed close to downtown they might bring a return on their construction costs; but, at the same time, it would remain to be seen how they could compete with a detached house "with its great volume of sunshine, pregnant with life and health." The writer observed that flats were being constructed in several parts of town, near downtown (likely Midtown) and in the more luxury area of Maywood.<sup>43</sup>

If one can construct a mental picture of Midtown in c. 1906, it would contain a view of houses from nearly downtown to past NW 13<sup>th</sup>, with housing as far north as NW 36<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>44</sup> There were scattered houses closer to Classen on the west, and still patches of open space. Commercial endeavors within Midtown were limited but a gravel and tar company, four store fronts, a livery, lumber yard, and a hay and feed warehouse were present in the area. Public entities were the Number 3 Fire Station, Emerson School, St. Anthony's Hospital, and three churches. The building frenzy from the population boom between 1900 and 1910 continued as the city transformed itself with added new businesses in a city that was now the state capital.

In Ms. Mahar's comparison of the city's residential patterns between 1903 and 1910, African Americans remained concentrated on the east side of the city, and north and south of the Canadian River. Eighty-two percent of the white collar class remained living in the northern part of the city but now were concentrated around 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The center of the blue collar class was near 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Certain streets, 14<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, only had white collar residents which indicates that the better-off had moved further north of Midtown, and blue collar workers had moved a bit further into its southern portion.<sup>45</sup>

A unique small historic district in Midtown today represents some of the once more well-to-do housing that was within the northern portion of Midtown. The Maney Historic District (NRIS# 79002008) has three houses constructed in the Classen Marquette Addition of Midtown at N. Shartel and NW 11th, the first of Anton Classen's plats (1902). The Maney home, c. 1904, is one of the now rare territorial homes still extant. Just north of this Midtown area was Heritage Hills. It had been platted in six residential additions between 1900 and 1910. Most of these plats were recorded as strictly residential additions with minimum restrictions on construction costs, setbacks, and limitations that specified one residence per lot, thus preventing the influx of multi-family dwellings.<sup>46</sup>

Midtown in 1910 became an area for multi-family dwellings because they were in demand. New residents wanted to be near public transportation, but many residents could not, or did not want to invest in a single family home. Midtown's location was mostly in Ward 3 where there were fewer houses than families living

<sup>42</sup> January 13, 1903.

<sup>43</sup> "The Building Described," February 22, 1903.

<sup>44</sup> Cynthia Savage, "Sieber Grocery and Apartment Hotel," National Register Nomination (NRIS #05001001, 2005, Section 8, 22.

<sup>45</sup> Mahar, *ibid.*, 31-33.

<sup>46</sup> Bob Blackburn, "Maney Historic District (NRIS# 79002008), 1979. Also see Tim Turner, "Heritage Hills Historic and Architectural District", National Register Nomination (NRIS #79002006), 1979, Section 7, 0.

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there, thus it tended to be the location of new flats, apartment houses and duplexes.<sup>47</sup> The city's population influx and changing demographics also began to change the appearance of Midtown. The demand for housing and the movement of more working class northward into the area changed it from almost all single-family dwellings to an area with many multi-family dwellings.

### Midtown Housing in the 1920s

The city in the years from 1910 to 1920 continued to prosper for the most part. During this decade, the State Capitol building was under construction and finished in 1919. Ford Motor Company constructed an assembly plant in 1916 and assembled cars in the city until 1927. After World War I, Oklahoma City's economy continued to change as wholesalers intensified their activities; and the city added iron and steel plants, and turned out pottery, furniture, clothing and electrical equipment.

Between 1910 and 1920, Oklahoma City's population grew another 103 percent from 91,295 to 195,389. In Mahar's comparison of residential locations in 1920, she found that African Americans were less scattered than they were in 1910 although most still lived on the east side. Nine times as many blue collar workers as white lived south of Reno, and four times as many white collar workers than blue lived north of 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Almost twice as many blue collar workers than white lived between 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Reno Avenue.<sup>48</sup>

For the period 1920 to 1930, Mahar found that eighty percent of white collar workers lived north of 10<sup>th</sup> Street, forty percent of blue lived south of Reno. More than three-fourths of blue collar workers, in contrast to only one-fifth of the white lived south of 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Her study continued to confirm that white collar workers moved northward within the city over the decades, as did blue, and blue collar workers tended to remain within a general proximity to their places of work.<sup>49</sup> What Mahar also establishes is the residential patterns changed within areas but not very quickly. Once a pattern was established for each group, they were maintained with some movement within an area, but there were no radical changes.

Despite a national recession in 1920-21, most Oklahoman's enjoyed some of the nation's prosperity in the 1920s. The reasonable cost of automobiles made them more available to the middle class. *The Oklahoman* articles in Figure 6, promoted the great "state of the city" in, "The 1920 to 1930 Was the Golden Era! and "Oklahoma City Grows".<sup>50</sup>

In the 1920s, Midtown was a neighborhood for renters. The 1920 U.S. Census reported that of the total 5910 homes in Ward 3, 4313 or over seventy percent were rented.<sup>51</sup> The city builders had tried to keep up with the demand for housing and they constructed an abundance of apartment buildings into the 1920s. An

<sup>47</sup> Mahar, *ibid.*, 33. A small northern portion of Midtown was part of Ward 1, where there was a higher percentage of homes to families. It is worth note, however, that Ward 3 was not too far removed from several other wards. The 1910 census noted that for the whole city, there were only eighty-five percent as many dwellings as families.

<sup>48</sup> Mahar, *ibid.*, 35.

<sup>49</sup> Mahar, *ibid.*, 36.

<sup>50</sup> <http://dougdawg.blogspot.com/2009/08/golden-era-1920-to-1932.html#1920-1930> (referenced January 20, 2012).

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Censuses 1920, "Summary for the United States, by Divisions and States, Composition and Characteristics", Page 51, Table 24, "Ownership of homes for counties and places having 10,000 inhabitants or more, 1920." A very small portion of Midtown was in Ward 1 in 1924 with most of it from NW 10<sup>th</sup> Street north. In Ward 1, the total homes numbered 5229 of which 1801 were rented. Also see "Voters in Ward One – Register," *The Oklahoman*, October 15, 1924. "Ward Three – Register Today!," *The Oklahoman*, October 17, 1924. Note also that Ward 3 also included the downtown area, so some hotel residents would have been considered in that count.



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*Oklahoman* article observed that from 1920-22, more than 300 apartments had been built in the city.<sup>52</sup> City directories and *Sanborn Maps* also provide data about multiple dwelling living in Midtown in the late nineteen-teens and early 1920s.<sup>53</sup>

In 1900 there were no apartments, flats or duplexes, but by 1917, city directories listed thirty flats and apartments within Midtown.<sup>54</sup> Even more revealing though is data from the 1922 *Sanborn Maps* which show that in Midtown there were two duplexes, six rooming or boarding houses, one hundred and thirteen flats, of which eighty-eight were wood-framed, twenty-three were brick-veneered and two were stuccoed.<sup>55</sup> The maps considered the Midtown area between NW 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, a "congested district".<sup>56</sup>

The city directories and *Sanborn Maps* have discrepancies in numbers that can be explained by how the directories and *Sanborn's* classify buildings. On *Sanborn Maps*, flats were marked with an "F", and apartments had the name "apartments" written across the building footprint.<sup>57</sup> Duplexes were shown with a "D" on each side of a connected dwelling. "Flat" was applied to buildings of more than two floors with a single family per floor.<sup>58</sup> In comparison, city directories listed properties as the owner's identified them. In 1917 city directory owners were more likely to call their properties "flats" than they did in 1927, for example.<sup>59</sup> Regardless of these differences in naming or how multi-property buildings were counted, the number of multiple family dwellings had increased significantly in Midtown by 1922.

One important factor affecting late 1920s growth in Oklahoma City and in Midtown was the discovery of oil in 1924. The discovery again attracted new city residents. By the first half of 1926, eighty new businesses brought in 200 new families.<sup>60</sup> By the end of 1929, one hundred sixty-one oil derricks were scattered across the city.<sup>61</sup> Announcements of a new field in 1928 brought thousands more people to the city.<sup>62</sup> The oil field was the Mid-Continent, one of the largest oil fields in the United States. Oklahoma City was more centrally located than any other large city in the Mid-Continent field. The city's position was centered among other new

<sup>52</sup> "Have Landlords Gone Crazy—Or Renters Still 'Blind?'," April 27, 1922. The article notes that most are four units.

<sup>53</sup> In 1919 there were enough renters in the city that they formed a Tenants Association of Oklahoma. The group complained that landlords were raising monthly prices at an exorbitant rate. The city did adopt an ordinance that forbade profiteering. See W. F. Kerr and Ina Gainer, *The Story of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: The Biggest Little City in the World* (Chicago Illinois: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1922), 469.

<sup>54</sup> *Polk's Oklahoma City Directory*, 1917, 945.

<sup>55</sup> The earlier Sanborn maps did not cover as much area as the 1922 map did, however, even in the area covered, there were no multi-family dwellings.

<sup>56</sup> *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for the City of Oklahoma City*, 1922, Sheet 0b

<sup>57</sup> Sanborn Map Company, "Description and Utilization of the Sanborn Map," (New York, New York: Sanborn Map Company), 1940, 12.

<sup>58</sup> Hare and Hare, City Planning Consultants, "Report of the City Planning Commission Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 1930," 27. Automobiles registered in the city in 1921 were 19,167. Other patterns are evident in 1922 that more two-story houses are present, fewer outhouses, and more alley garages.

<sup>59</sup> "Flats" seem to indicate a different class of housing than "apartments". *The Oklahoman* comments on both apartments and flats. In October 25, 1904, the newspaper notes that modern apartments were being constructed in the fashionable district of "north-town". On January 16, 1905 *the Oklahoman* calls for the construction of more brick flats. Advertisements in a January 11, 1911 *Oklahoman* note that there are all modern apartments were located within flats for rent. Perhaps "apartment" had a connotation of modern living with more amenities than the term "flat" did. Perhaps "flat" began to signify a building with more age.

<sup>60</sup> Stewart, *ibid*, 226.

<sup>61</sup> Terry L. Griffith, *Oklahoma City: Statehood to 1930* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 23.

<sup>62</sup> Stewart, *ibid*., 212-214.

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oil fields, therefore it became a nexus of intensive oil development.<sup>63</sup> Oil was instrumental in helping Oklahoma City sustain moderate growth during the Great Depression, when population growth slowed between 1930 and 40. The decade saw only a 10.3 percent increase from 185,389 to 204,424.

In the 1920s, Midtown area swelled with incoming new residents: roomers, boarders and families packed together in rented spaces. Individuals would rent space and sub-lease within their own space, or take in boarders or roomers. House owner-occupants were making money from renters, subsisting on such income. On the odd side of the 1100 block of N. Hudson for example, every house was rented, although the ratio of renters to owners could vary in each Midtown block. Regardless, new residents were absorbed in a variety of ways, though many housing units appeared to be overflowing with occupants. Comparisons within census records help illustrate changes from 1920 to 1930 as residential dwellings filled with renters.

In 1920, for example the McNeese family lived at 411 NW 11<sup>th</sup> Street. John and his wife, two daughters and a son had one boarder and an African American servant. In 1930, a daughter owned the house and she and her sister, had taken in five boarders, three women and two men. The sisters were teachers, and among the boarders were a mail clerk, teacher, and a nurse.<sup>64</sup>

1930s housing only continued to demonstrate the crowding; for example, a two-story house at 311 NW 12<sup>th</sup>, had one family renting the first floor and another renting the second, and the second family rented space to a roomer. At 323 NW 12<sup>th</sup>, a two-story dwelling was rented by a family who took in nine roomers. The house at 415 NW 10<sup>th</sup> was an owner-occupied two-story house, but within were two families, four roomers and two African American servants.<sup>65</sup> The 1920 and 1930 census recorded a depth of information that would not be obvious in other resources. Without the census data, it would be difficult to grasp how high the density was in the Midtown neighborhood during the 1920s and 1930s.

A significant business corner in Midtown also began to evolve at NW 10<sup>th</sup> and Walker in the 1920s. A small ice cream manufacturer (Kaisers) and three storefronts to the northeast helped create synergy for other businesses to locate nearby. The location was just to the east of St. Anthony's hospital. In 1926 the Plaza Court (NRIS #80003290) construction began north of Kaisers and opened for business in 1927.<sup>66</sup> It was the first shopping center outside of the downtown area and a florist, furrier and drugstore were long term tenants. John Thomas, owner of the Crescent Market near the downtown street car terminal, opened another Crescent Market in the Plaza Court. The Plaza Court was home to various other businesses and the street car line on Walker made it easy for riders to stop and shop. The market served the not only Midtown neighborhood shoppers but its Mission and Spanish Eclectic architecture provided an attractive air of elegant shopping for those living in Heritage Hills.

At Northwest 11<sup>th</sup> and Walker, just north of the Plaza Court, the seven-story Osler Building was constructed in 1928. This building was built specifically to house physicians, many of whom were associated with the University of Oklahoma Medical School, and the building's architecture was also Mission and Spanish Eclectic. The building further defined N. Walker as a commercial/business area. In 1928 the city council called a

<sup>63</sup> Leo L. Robertson, "Geographical Changes Resulting from Oil Development in Oklahoma City and Vicinity," Master's Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1937, 3-4.

<sup>64</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> Census of the United States, 1920 Enumeration District 125, Supervisor's District 5, Sheet 6B; 15<sup>th</sup> Census of the United States 1930, Enumeration District 85-86, Supervisor's District 5, Sheet 11A,

<sup>65</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> Census of the United States, 1930. Enumeration District 56-86, Supervisor's District Number 5, Sheet 7a and 7b.

<sup>66</sup> Not long after Plaza Court was constructed, Spanish Village became a shopping also in 1928 at NW 30<sup>th</sup> and N. Dewey.



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meeting of property owners together from NW 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss adding Walker Avenue to the business district.<sup>67</sup> The 1930 Hare and Hare plan would eventually establish zoning for the Midtown area.

In the 1920s, other changes rapidly occurred which begin to alter the residential sense of Midtown. Besides the intrusion of automobile businesses north along Broadway in the early 1910s and 1920s; the 1910 Central High School and the Masonic Temple (c. 1922) were now large entities in the neighborhood. Commercial activities also had increased on other north/south neighborhood streets besides N. Walker. Midtown's churches, schools and several hospitals<sup>68</sup> were joined by seventy-nine other commercial entities such as a bakery, ice station, woodworking shop, chiropractic college, laundries, dry cleaners, filling stations, undertakers, garages, auto storage facilities, mattress manufacturing, furniture repair, plumbing shops, bottling works, and an ice cream factory. The houses once lining N. Broadway had been replaced by businesses moving out from the business core.

Midtown Housing from the 1930s to 1945

Oklahoma City in 1930 had a new planning document written by the Kansas City firm of Hare and Hare. The firm's city report noted that while there was a natural tendency to build in areas adjacent to the central business district, there was considerable business construction already (in Midtown) between N. Walker and the Santa Fe tracks as far north as NW 10<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>69</sup> Figure 7's black dots show the continued spread of businesses that had moved into Midtown between 1927-1931. Figure 8 from the 1930 Hare and Hare report shows Midtown's commercial locations and apartments – businesses are in the black areas lining N. Hudson, Broadway and other streets, and the dots on the figure are multiple family dwellings scattered over the area.<sup>70</sup>

Both figures show the now well-established housing and commercial trends in 1930s Midtown. Businesses had displaced housing almost entirely along Broadway; businesses had moved up N. Hudson from downtown to NW 10<sup>th</sup> Street displacing residences. The 1930 plan that Hare and Hare proposed for Midtown zoning only sustained the existing trends and proposed the area zoning for apartment houses and a business district. Figure 9 shows the Midtown area zoned for businesses in the darkest areas and apartments in gray. Residential areas that were to be maintained for single family dwellings are white.

The demand for Midtown apartments in post-World War II era nearly ended and today there are no extant brick box apartments from the post war period. Midtown's demographics had changed; for example, there were fewer children living in Midtown after World War II. Emerson's student population was at its highest in 1929 during the rush of renters into the area, but in 1947-8 student population had been cut by more than half.<sup>71</sup> Central High School which drew on a larger area than just Midtown lost students as well. Central's population in 1947-48 was about the same as it had been in 1919-20. Car ownership had created the ability for Midtown residents and new city incomers to move to more suburban areas. In a short nine year period, from 1921-1930, car ownership changed dramatically (Figure 10) and owning a car meant that one could live just about

<sup>67</sup> "40-Acre Tract may be added to the City's Area," *The Oklahoman*, December 13, 1928.

<sup>68</sup> By the 1920s Midtown neighborhood was home to three other hospitals: Oklahoma State Baptist (at N. Dewey and Walker Avenues, and Northwest 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets, constructed c. 1916, later known as Oklahoma City General Hospital),<sup>68</sup> Polyclinic Hospital (209 Northwest 13<sup>th</sup> Street, c. 1929)<sup>68</sup> and Wesley Hospital (310 Northwest 12<sup>th</sup> Street, constructed c. 1927).<sup>68</sup> The well-to-do had left the Midtown area, moving further out to wealthy suburban enclaves such as Nichols Hills.

<sup>69</sup> Hare and Hare, *ibid.*, 19. Kessler was hired in 1920 to write a plan for the Oklahoma City but died in 1923. Hare and Hare were hired in 1928 to finish the Kessler Plan. See *The Oklahoman*, March 20, 1923, and February 22, 1928

<sup>70</sup> The report does not distinguish between flats, duplexes and apartments.

<sup>71</sup> City Planning Commission, "Schools and Parks for Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, April 1949, Tables 3 and 5.



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anywhere one could afford and still get to work.<sup>72</sup> The increased availability of automobiles is reflected in the decline of street car riders. From 1931 to 1935, Oklahoma Railway Company's revenues declined to their lowest and the company began shifting to buses. The Depression and 1938 recession caused the company to go bankrupt and reorganize in 1939. The company did well during World War II because residents did not use their cars very often because of the gasoline shortage; regardless, by 1947, electric street car service ended and the company switched to busses.<sup>73</sup>

The Great Depression did affect Oklahoma City as it did other U.S. cities but not as directly until later in the 1930s decade. Oklahoma City in 1930 still looked like it was in the middle of a building boom when fifty-eight new industries and more than 400 smaller firms opened for business near downtown.<sup>74</sup> When the economy slowed, the depression's effects were compounded by the Dust Bowl climate and many people from more rural areas came to the city looking for work. In fact, the city continued to grow at a rate of about 5-10,000 per year.<sup>75</sup> This created once again a great need for affordable housing. Many of those needing work found assistance through multiple New Deal relief projects.<sup>76</sup>

In 1941, Midwest Air Depot was constructed (Tinker Air Force Base). It created nearly 15,000 new civilian jobs, and when the Douglas Cargo Plane plant was constructed in 1943, it created an additional 23,000 jobs. Along with the air depot and plane plant, other support manufacturing, suppliers, and sub-contractors also moved to the Oklahoma City area. Together their presence began to help the city out of the Depression.

Housing was critically short again during World War II. An *Oklahoman* article observed that war workers were having a hard time finding furnished apartments.<sup>77</sup> After the war, the shift of new housing however was not into the Midtown area, rather further to the south of the city, nearer employment locations.<sup>78</sup>

Post World War II economic recovery meant that many Oklahoma citizens could also drive their automobiles again once gas restrictions were lifted. They were better off financially and could move into new suburban post-war housing areas which exploded away from the main city core. Even businesses located away from downtown. By the 1960s, shopping centers such as Shepherd Mall, Mayfair Place and Windsor Hills were constructed near large residential areas and downtown's significance waned. The movement out of the city also affected Midtown because it was now a less desirable residential area. Housing stock was some of the oldest in the city, and much of it was in poor condition.

Both the 1947 Harland Bartholomew and Associates report in "The Comprehensive City Plan in June 1947, and the "Oklahoma City Comprehensive 1949 Plan", just reconfirmed that Midtown was almost entirely rental, with owner/occupancy rates of less than twenty percent.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Hare and Hare, *ibid.*, 27.

<sup>73</sup> Chandler, *ibid.*, 16-18.

<sup>74</sup> Blackburn 142.

<sup>75</sup> Howard L Meredith and George H. Shirk, "Oklahoma City: Growth and Reconstruction 1889-1930" *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 55, Fall 1977, 293-308 full article – this cite pg. 306.

<sup>76</sup> Oklahoma City had its own Hooverville with approximately 6000 living there in 1931. The city eventually moved them to a Community Camp. Blackburn, *ibid.*, 146.

<sup>77</sup> "Housing Need Still Critical," *The Oklahoman*, June 12, 1943.

<sup>78</sup> Stewart, *ibid.*, 248-249.

<sup>79</sup> Harland Bartholomew and Associates, "A Report Upon the Comprehensive City Plan, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 1947. Plate 22 Owner Occupancy 1940, 39.

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The 1949 Comprehensive Plan was specific about the future of the Midtown area, suggesting that it should be developed with new multiple family dwellings.

“from the standpoint of the community as a whole it would certainly seem reasonable and logical to develop multiple dwellings in the more centrally located residential sections. This is the area contains the great majority of these uses at present date. These older residential areas are most conveniently located and the city would greatly benefit if they were to be developed completely with multiple dwellings providing a good standard of open space, light and air.”<sup>80</sup>

In the post-World War II period, *Sanborn Maps* show signs of extreme change in the Midtown – a whole block had been cleared, and many empty lots were available for parking or future development. Change would continue as businesses replaced much of the neighborhood housing.

### From Flats to Modern Apartment Living in Midtown 1900 to 1935

Between 2009 and 2011, three intensive level surveys were undertaken in Oklahoma City that covered Midtown’s residential housing area. The results showed that of the several hundred multiple family dwellings once in the area between 1900 to c. 1955, there were very few remaining. Today, houses are scattered across the Midtown area with a small enclave of early houses in an area residents call the Cottage District.<sup>81</sup> It is south of St. Anthony’s Hospital and roughly bordered by N. Classen and N. Walker Street, NW 6<sup>th</sup> and NW 9<sup>th</sup> Streets. Some houses and multi-family dwellings in this area remain from the territorial era.

Midtown’s earliest multiple dwellings, flats predominated as a purpose-built form. Flats were stacked housing, with residents living one above another. Some flats, however also had rental units constructed within perhaps as a response to the rush of new incomers during the 1920s. Good examples of two remaining territorial flats from 1906 are at 812 and 814 NW 7<sup>th</sup> in Photos 4 and 5.

These two-story wood-framed flat-roofed units were constructed in c. 1906, and have nearly identical floor plans. The owner occupied the first floor (1120 sf) and the second floor flats contained two rental units.<sup>82</sup> Other Midtown flats were similar to the plans in Figure 11 which *The Oklahoman* described. Photo 6 shows a flat at 908 NW 8<sup>th</sup> Street with similar attributes as the newspaper plans prescribed. The downstairs entry in the front elevation; the second floor flat’s entry stairs are at the rear. *The Oklahoman’s* particular plan proposed indoor plumbing, however which many early Midtown flats did not have.<sup>83</sup>

Photo 6 shows a hipped-roof building, wood-framed with the side elevation extensions replicate those shown in Figure 11. Midtown also had duplexes, and Photo 7 shows a territorial-era example at 907 NW 9<sup>th</sup>. The living

<sup>80</sup> “The Comprehensive City Plan, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma,” 1949, 24.

<sup>81</sup> “SOSA, Midtown, Oklahoma City,” <http://www.freesosa.com/> (Referenced January 16, 2012). If one uses Google Earth to look at the Midtown area, the Cottage area is distinguished by its trees; otherwise there is no other heavy grouping of trees in Midtown.

<sup>82</sup> The photo is courtesy of Bradley Winn, and information about these units is from Randy Floyd AIA owner of these two flats, e-mail dated January 10, 2012. At the time of construction, residents would likely have had outhouse in the rear of the lot. A Public Sewage Board was not created until c. 1919. See Stewart, *Ibid*, 155.

<sup>83</sup> Outhouses are noticeable on Sanborn Maps through 1906 and even on the 1922 maps although much less frequently. They were usually near the alley at the rear of lots.

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spaces were side-by-side with the left unit entry near middle of the front elevation and the right entry near the side elevation.<sup>84</sup>

Luxury flats were not unheard of. The 1904 Classical Revival style Marion Flats at 110 NW 10<sup>th</sup> Street were designed by architect E. Coady. The building only maintained its six large flats for eight years and then it became a 40-room European style hotel. Victoria Flats, c. 1910, no longer extant, was also very impressive at the corner of NW 9<sup>th</sup> Street and N. Broadway. See Photos 8 and 9.

At times *The Oklahoman* uses the terms "flats" and "apartments" interchangeably and sometimes not.<sup>85</sup> As early as 1904, the newspaper began to notice the construction of "apartments", especially in the fashionable district of "north-town."<sup>86</sup> Nearly at the same time in 1905, the newspaper called for the construction of more "flats".<sup>87</sup> In 1909 the newspaper described a twenty-room "apartment house" that was constructed for four families with five rooms each, which appears also be a flat.<sup>88</sup> Regardless, the general understanding of multi-family dwellings seems to be evolving from two, four and six family flats (sometimes with apartments), to the recognition that "apartments" could be a specific type of building in which there could be more than one living unit per floor. The newspaper recorded in 1911 that apartment buildings were being constructed in the "fashionable areas of town." With advances in technologies for kitchens and the baths, apartment building often provided "modern living". It is likely as early flats aged, they became dated, buildings without amenities such as indoor plumbing.<sup>89</sup>

A "modern" apartment could offer tenants luxuries and conveniences generally beyond the reach of the average middle class family. In New York, for example by 1901, apartments were offering phone service, central heating, filtered water, hot-water heaters, refrigeration, storage rooms, laundry machines and clothes drying equipment. Such an array of modern equipment was rarely available to private home owners, except the wealthiest -- apartments made modern life accessible to the middle class.<sup>90</sup>

In Oklahoma City, the 1910s appear as a cross-over period for new multiple family dwellings; flats were still under construction, but some were brick instead of wood.<sup>91</sup> Wood flats were still mostly two-story, new brick flats were two- and three-stories had some had names like the "Cline, Czarina, and Larimore." Many of these would later be called apartments, but they were constructed in a flat form originally. The Cline (c.1910) was a brick box building with six flats, the Czarina had six, and the Larimore four. The names provided an identity, not only for a building, but an association with social class, conveying status to one's friends and acquaintances. The 1918 city directory listed fifty-seven named apartments; thirty-four were in Midtown, but the list did not count the many other nameless purpose-built wood-framed duplexes and flats that were also there.

<sup>84</sup> This unit also shows signs of change to accommodate more than two families because there are exterior stairs to the second floor, which would have allowed the right side of the duplex to use their second floor for rental space.

<sup>85</sup> "The Ziegler Flats will Cost \$45,000, Superb Apartment House will Soon Adorn Broadway," *The Oklahoman*, September 24, 1905.

<sup>86</sup> "Real Estate and Building," October 25, 1904.

<sup>87</sup> "Brick Flats Needed," January 16, 1905.

<sup>88</sup> August 1, 1909

<sup>89</sup> Harland Bartholomew and Associates, "A Report Upon the Comprehensive City Plan, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma," June 1947, notes that there were still many dwelling units without private baths in 1940. See Plate 24, 40.

<sup>90</sup> Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990, 201.

<sup>91</sup> *The Oklahoman*, January 2, 1910, observed that most there were a number of contracts for new flat construction but good apartment houses were in short supply and much needed.



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One other multiple family dwelling type appeared in 1910 -- family hotels or family apartments. Hadden Hall is an extant early family hotel and there were many others.<sup>92</sup> The distinction that separates family or apartment hotels from other similar properties is difficult to define but for this multiple property form the purpose-built flats and apartments are the focus of interest; not boarding houses, or apartment hotels, although they did help provide for important housing needs. These apartment hotels offered transient and long-term lodging and often had restaurants and personal services such as maids, clothes cleaning and beauty or barber shops.<sup>93</sup> Many hotels, such as the Skirvin Hotel (NRIS# 79002010) also had long-term tenants in apartments as did the Sieber Apartment Hotel (NRIS# 05001001).<sup>94</sup> Owners often used whatever terms seem to attract lodgers or renters. Two more extant residential hotels in the Midtown area were constructed in 1933 and one in 1936: the Rockwall, the Townhouse and the Century Apartment Hotel.<sup>95</sup>

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While Oklahoma City was trying to keep up with demand for housing within the Midtown area, wood-framed flats were still being built such as 613 NW 6<sup>th</sup> Street, a one-up and one-down shown in Photo 10, but new brick flats and apartments were also constructed and share certain physical characteristics. Exteriors are contemporary in appearance with the new apartment houses. Both housing types distinguish themselves by having a popular revival or bungalow/craftsman architectural styles.

Of the few multiple dwellings that are extant from 1910-1920, two are Brick Box Apartments: 230 NW 8<sup>th</sup> (Czarina) and at 230 NW 10<sup>th</sup> Street, the Cline. The Czarina has a commanding classical revival front elevation.<sup>96</sup> See Photos 11 and 12. The Cline is a unique early Prairie style.<sup>97</sup>

The Brick Box Apartments have a particular form and appearance: they are brick box- or rectangular- shaped, two to four stories and have flat roofs. They are not large, having from four to twenty-four apartments. Their front façade where the primary entrance is located faces the street with the body of the building lengthwise on the lot. A narrow street façade helped the builder use most or all of the lot.

In 1929, *The Oklahoman* commented on the spread of these apartment houses; that they were a good sign of steady growth and that builders knew what type of apartments were in demand. "The old-fashioned four-family flat has passed because the modern apartment dweller demands the utmost in convenience and the latest in architectural design."<sup>98</sup>

<sup>92</sup> *The Oklahoman* December 12, 1909. The article noted the construction of Hadden Hall by Rees Parry. Nearby was the Woodward Family Hotel, and the Brown Family Hotel at 414 N. Broadway.

<sup>93</sup> Savage, Section 8, 23.

<sup>94</sup> One might guess that these apartment hotels were seen as more short-term for new families moving into Oklahoma City. They could stay while looking for more permanent home; or those coming in and out of the city at various times could live in a hotel apartment without committing to other long term housing.

<sup>95</sup> The Century was originally an apartment building but converted to an apartment hotel in 1936. Its location across from St. Anthony's hospital is still a prime location for temporary visitors.

<sup>96</sup> One 1910-20 building at 330 NW 10<sup>th</sup> has a classical revival front elevation. It was not original to the wood four flat building, but likely the result of a 1941 remodel.

<sup>97</sup> The building has mixed characteristics but its overhanging roof and long narrow marquee tend to pull the building into the ground.

<sup>98</sup> "City's Economic Foundation Soundest in Nation," *The Oklahoman*, May 5, 1929.

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The Midtown apartments constructed especially between the 1920s to mid-1930s were different from wood-framed flats. They advertised "modern", up-to-date accommodations with pleasing architecture. Most have names like the "Priscilla", "Rosemary", "Claremont", "Florence", "Palo Duro" and "Walford". See Photos 13, 14, 15, and 16. Examples of brick box apartments from the 1930s are the Mayfair (1931), Altamere (1930), Ina Mae (1930) and Francis (1935). They are also similar to those constructed in 1910 and the 1920s. See Photos 17 and 18.

Some of the brick box apartment houses worked to distinguish themselves by the services they offered in order to attract a white collar tenants. For example the Palo Duro, Walford and Mayfair offered maid service, and paid tenants' utility bills.<sup>99</sup> The Mayfair and Pansy offered garages at the rear near the alley; and the Mayfair advertised itself as a "luxury apartment house."<sup>100</sup> Many of these apartments are also located in the northern portion of Midtown, when in the 1920s, four times as many white collar workers lived there than blue. These apartments would have served better-off white collar workers well.<sup>101</sup>

Architectural Styles<sup>102</sup>

These brick box apartments can be found in a range of eclectic architectural styles popular in the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s. As Virginia and Lee McAlester's *Field Guide to American Houses* notes, the eclectic styles cover a range of architectural traditions.<sup>103</sup> The eclectic styles copy earlier traditions that originated in Europe and New World colonies. They began to appear in the United States in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century as U.S. architects trained abroad and brought home new ideas about how American houses should look.

An initial wave of modernism also appeared in the form of Craftsman and Prairie styles, but after World War I, styles shifted back to the eclectic period styles, though Craftsman and Prairie styles remained extremely popular in domestic buildings.

Inexpensive new technology also allowed brick to be applied to wood-framed buildings and eclectic styles could be replicated much more easily on common buildings. This meant that they appeared on all types of buildings: houses, commercial buildings and apartment houses. Eclectic, Prairie and Craftsman styles

<sup>99</sup> Other apartments offered maid service, but are no longer extant. Several other apartments just offered to pay utility bills.

<sup>100</sup> Another apartment at 309-11 NW 9<sup>th</sup> Street may have offered garages beneath flats, but if they were once extant, they no longer.

<sup>101</sup> A sample of residents of the Florence apartment building in 1930 showed among others a stenographer, Oklahoma Gas and Electric cable splicer, a pharmacist, and a printer. *Polk's Oklahoma City Directory, 1930*, 918. The Walford in 1940, was home to two engineers, two stenographers, two clerks, a detective, and two salesmen among others. *Polk's Oklahoma City Directory, 1940*, 955. W. B. Skirvin's daughter lived in the Mayfair in 1979-80. Several names listed living in the Florence and Walford were cross-referenced with their names in the city directory's alphabetical list which also showed their occupation. The Mayfair was home to the campaign manager to Governor E. W. Marland.

<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately, there is little information about the involvement of architects in Midtown's multiple dwellings. There are three architects that worked with either flats or apartments in Midtown as reported by *The Oklahoman*. L. H. Lewis advertised that he wanted bids for flats to be constructed in 1904. But Lewis disappears from the architects list in the 1912 *Warden's Oklahoma City Directory*. A. J. Williams is reported to have constructed a three-story apartment on N. Broadway, which was a combination of storefronts and living space above. F. E. Fagerquist was an architect for four storefronts with housing above at the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Hudson in 1910 and he is listed in the 1912-13 city directory but is not in 1917. The 1931 Mayfair was designed by George W. Swisher. Most often *The Oklahoman* reported that "architects are involved" or "the architects involved," thus indicating that there were some who designed multiple dwellings in Midtown.

<sup>103</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1991), 319.

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remained in fashion especially on domestic structures from the 1910-30s, just during the period of construction for most of the Midtown Brick Box Apartments.

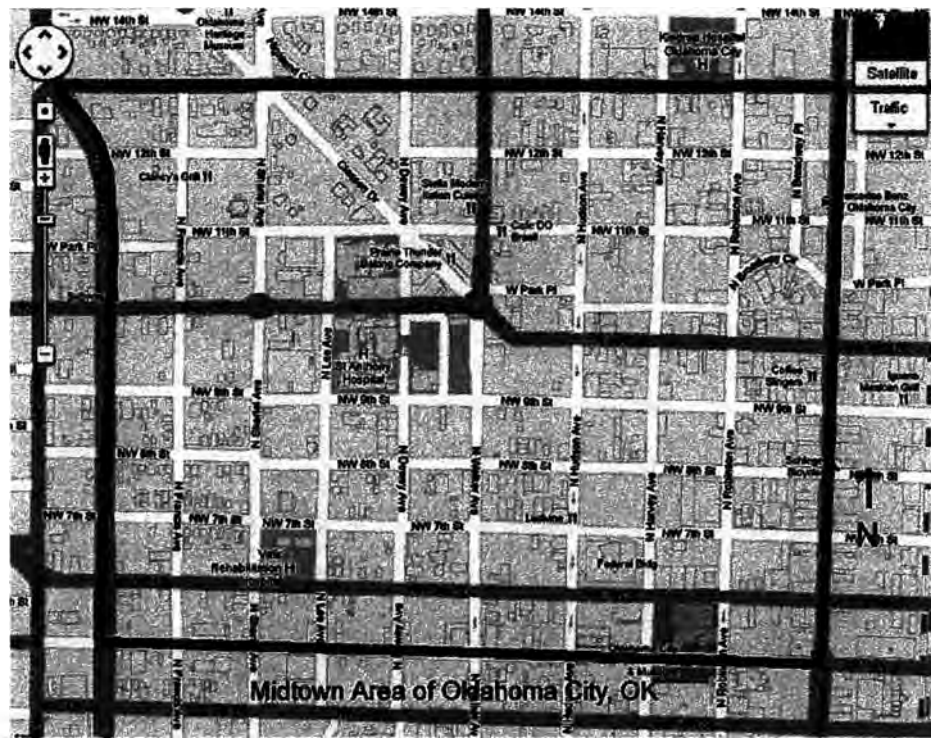


Figure 1: Midtown Area



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Figure 2: 1890 Bird's Eye View of Oklahoma City Looking South West  
From the Midtown Area in the Foreground



Photo 1: Oklahoma City Looking South

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Emerson School



Photos 2 and 3:

St. Anthony's Hospital



Figure 3: Electric Street Car Line through Midtown

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Photo 3: Street car Line along North Walker at NW 6<sup>th</sup> Looking South in 1934

Oklahoma City Original Extension	1891	Gault's Second	1901
Gault and Johnson	1898	Northwest Addition	1901
McClure's	1898	Renstrom's Addition	1901
Brushas Addition	1898	Blanchard Addition` 1902	1902
Edward's Boulevard Addition	1898	Classen's West Highland Addition	1902
Vendome	1898	Classen Marquette Addition	1902
Florence	1899	Classen's Highland Parked	1902
Harrahs Addition	1899	Desoto Addition	1902
Scotts Addition	1899	Sykoff and King Subdivision	1902
Dale Addition	1899	Colcord Heights	1903
Dale Amended	1900	Tools Subdivision	1903
Gault's	1900	Wilkenson's Subdivision	1906
Overholsters and Rice	1900	F. P. Johnson Addition	1906
Brushas Second Addition	1900	Rosenthal	1907
Brushas Subdivision	1900	Washburn's Subdivision	1908
Gault's Blocks 9 and 12	1900	Pecks	1908
Gault's Block 14	1900	Lynd's Subdivision	1910
Owen and Welsh	1900		

Figure 4: Plats Filed in the Oklahoma City Midtown Area 1900-1910.



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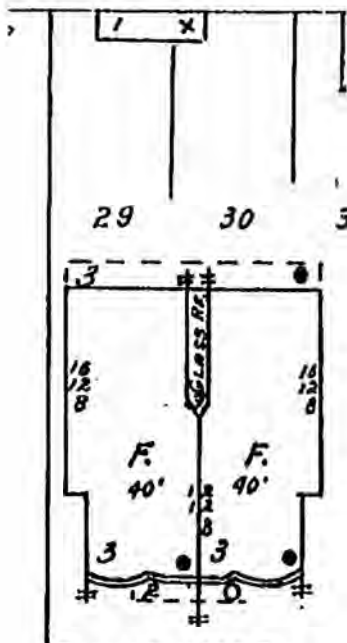


Figure 5: 1906 Flat

The Oklahoman; Date: 1930 Jun 29; Section: None; Page Number: 9

## Oklahoma City Grows

(See page 14, section C, for visual proof.)

WHILE Oklahoma City's population was doubling in the last decade, this period from 1920 to 1930 was also a "golden era" for business growth, reflected especially in building permits.

Monthly permits now are large as yearly totals for many years prior to 1910 in Oklahoma City history. Turn to section C, page 14, and see a group of the huge office and public buildings which have raised the city's skyline with new construction or additions in the last decade.

Population for 1920 of 182,845 and building permits for last year alone totaling \$24,374,100 show the trend toward a higher business skyline and a greater city.

Since the mark of \$113,455,279 in building permits was registered for 1920-20 inclusive, the permits for the first half of 1930, more than \$10,000,000, are not far short of the city's total for the first ten years of the present century.



The Oklahoman; Date: 1930 Jun 29; Section: None; Page Number: 55



Figure 6: The Oklahoman Newspaper Articles, June 29, 1930.

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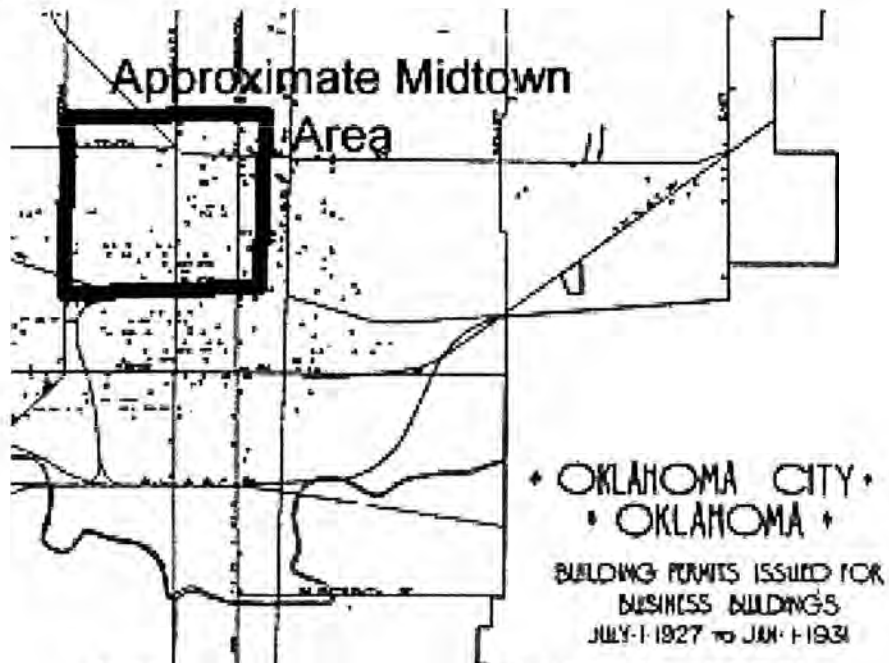


Figure 7: New Businesses in Oklahoma City, 1927-31.

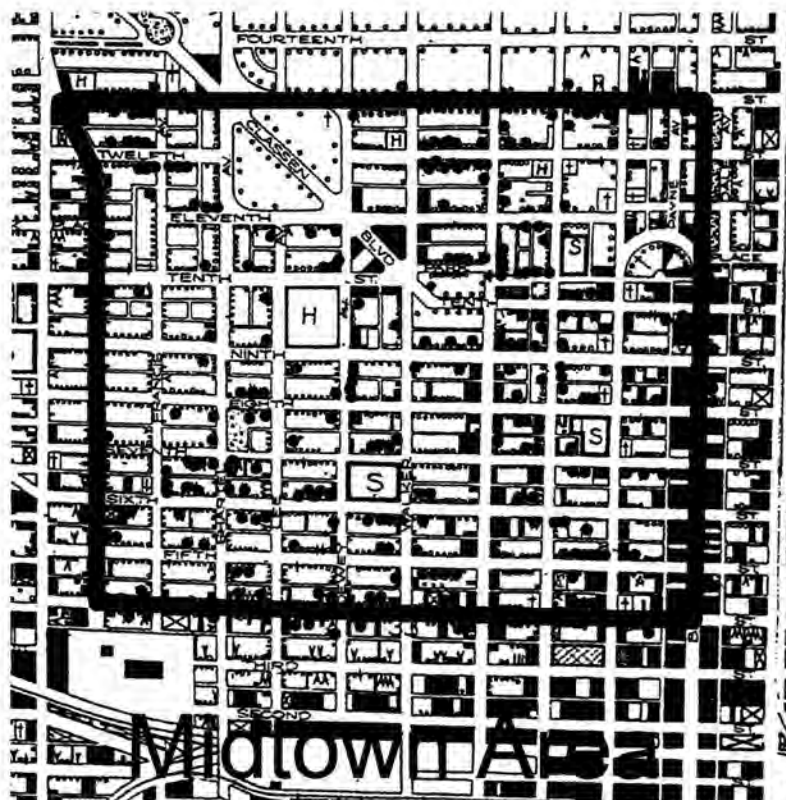


Figure 8: 1930 Midtown Apartments and Commercial Areas.

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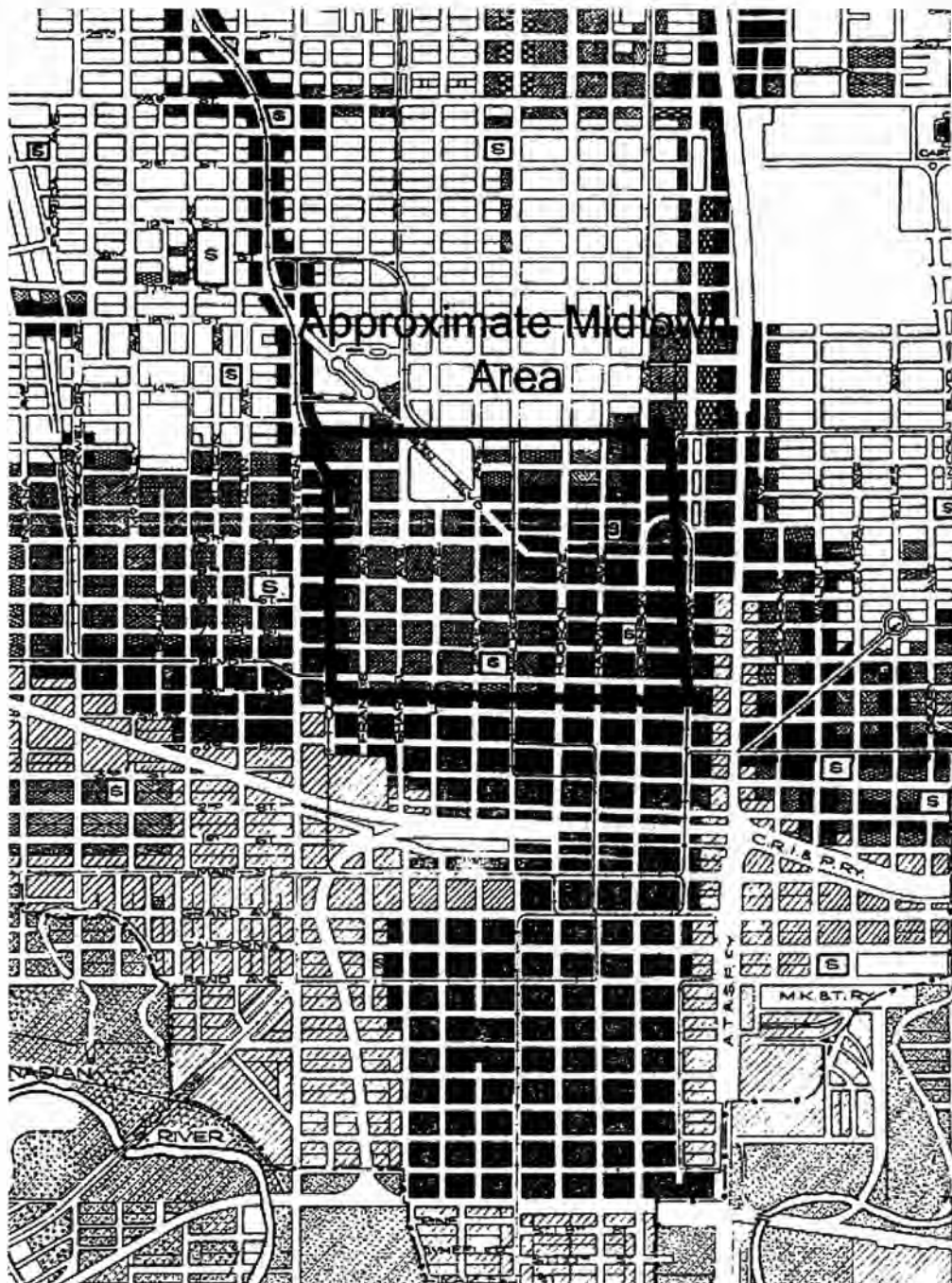


Figure 9: 1930 Hare and Hare Proposed Zoning for the Midtown Area.



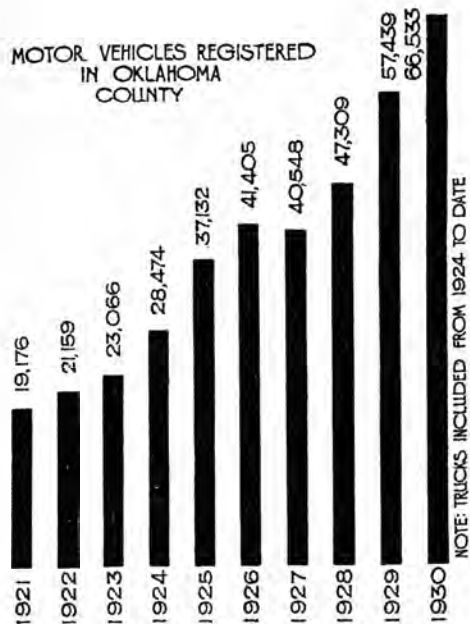
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*This chart shows that the number of automobiles in Oklahoma County in 1930 is about three and one-half times as many as in 1921.*

Figure 10: Auto Registration Figures 1921-1930.

Photo 4 and 5: 812 and 814 NW 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

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Figure 11: *The Oklahoman* December 11, 1910.Photo 6. c. 1907 908 NW 8<sup>th</sup> Street Flat.

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Photo 7. c. 1907 907 NW 9<sup>th</sup> Duplex



Photo 8 and 9. Marion Flats (Hotel)<sup>104</sup> and Victoria Flats (not extant).

<sup>104</sup> This photo is located at <http://blog.newsok.com/okccentral/2010/09/28/will-the-hotel-marion-be-lost-to-history/> (referenced January 21, 2012).



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Photo 10: 613 NW 6<sup>th</sup> Street, c. 1915.



Photos 11 and 12: Czarina at 230 NW 8<sup>th</sup>, c. 1910, and the Cline, 230 NW 10<sup>th</sup> Street, 1910.

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Photos 13 and 14: 605 NW 6<sup>th</sup> Street, c. 1920 and the Iroquois, 900 NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street, c. 1920.



Photos 15 and 16: Claremont, 425 NW 12<sup>th</sup> Street, C. 1925, and Pansy, 909 NW 12<sup>th</sup> Street, c. 1920.



Photos 17 and 18: Mayfair, 1315 N. Broadway Place, 1931 and Altamere 625 NW 6<sup>th</sup> Street, c. 1930.

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**F. Associated Property Types**

(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

I. Name of Property Type: **Midtown Brick Box Apartments 1910-1935, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

## II. Description:

The purpose-built Midtown Brick Box Apartments, 1910-1935, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma are constructed specifically as multiple dwellings. These buildings retain sufficient integrity in their historic characteristics to enable their identification as a property type. They are defined by these characteristics:

- Brick wall cladding
- Eclectic architectural styles: Tudor, Classical Revival, Prairie School, Spanish/Mission, Bungalow Craftsman
- Box or rectangular shape
- Front facing on street
- At least four units, and no more than twenty-four
- Two to four stories in height
- Flat-roofed
- Within Midtown boundaries
- Constructed between 1910 and 1935
- Regaining sufficient architectural integrity and historic characteristic to enable identification with the property type – including the primary façade appearance and preferably, though not necessarily, the basic configuration of the original plans delineating public halls and apartment units or historic alterations thereof.

## III. Significance

The Midtown Brick Box Apartments are locally significant and eligible for the National Register under Criterion A as examples of multiple dwellings that convey the historic development and growth of the Midtown area of Oklahoma City. They represent a portion of the historic context identified in Section E of this multiple property form for the Evolution of Midtown Multiple Family Dwellings in Oklahoma City 1889-1955 in Community Planning and Development. They help present the city's social history in the transition of residential living areas for white and blue collar workers, and ideas about what was acceptable housing for both. They are a transitional end of purpose-built multiple dwellings within Midtown between 1910 and 1935. They reflect a response to demands for housing during the 1910-30s as technologies changed to allow brick veneers to be applied to almost any wood-framed building. The Midtown Brick Box Apartments were a distinct alteration in the Midtown area from previous forms of multi-family dwellings such as wood-framed duplexes or flats for two- or four- or six families. The Brick Box Apartments are significantly different providing amenities such as closets, bathrooms, and services that were not often found in flats. Still close to the street car system, some offered parking to those with cars. They provided "modern" amenities such as steam heat, tiled bathrooms, refrigerators, gas ranges and many were furnished and carpeted with rugs; often all utility bills were paid. The



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Midtown Brick Box Apartments 1910-1935 are also eligible for Criterion C, architecture, because they reflect architectural trends from 1910 to the mid-1930s as they appear on apartment dwellings.

#### IV. Registration Requirements

To be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the characteristics and qualities must be sufficiently illustrated and the degree of integrity required must be sufficient to support a building's significance within Section E's historic context. Aspects of integrity to be considered include location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, associations with established historic context and the ability to convey feelings relation to its associative, artistic and/or informational value.

Generally this requires that the Brick Box Apartments retain architectural composition, ornamental details, and original materials to the primary exterior elevation. Because the property type is defined by brick walls, box or rectangular shape, flat roofs, and primary orientation to the street, the retention of these defining elements and their component parts is required. Due to the age of these building and their continued use, a certain degree of deterioration or loss of historic material is to be expected. Reversible alterations, such the loss or removal of ornamental detailing, replacement of doors, window sashes and framing elements are common and do not necessarily diminish a building's contribution to the historic context. In particular, loss of original window sashes and exterior doors is common. These buildings have been in use for multiple decades as housing that has had to meet city codes regarding health and safety requirements.

Interior changes, including the loss of ornamental detailing and trim, specific architectural elements and rearrangement of floor plans may not be significant to the building's contribution to the historic context if the defining exterior design elements, location, setting, siting or contribution to the streetscape remains intact. Some apartment buildings may retain intact interior public spaces such as entry areas and hallways, and architectural features of these intact spaces should add weight to the significance of an apartment to be listed under Criterion C.

For a building to be listed individually under Criterion A:

- The building should retain significant portions of the original exterior brick primary façade
- Significant character-defining elements should remain intact;
- Alterations to the building should be reversible and the historic character of the property could be easily restored;
- Additions are confined to the rear elevation and should be executed in a manner that respects the materials, scale, and character of the original building design and if removed, the essential form of the building remains intact;

Change or lack of maintenance should only slightly weaken the historic feeling or character of the building

For a building to be listed individually under Criterion C:

- The majority of the building's opening on the primary façade should be unaltered or altered in a sensitive and appropriate manner, using similar material, profiles and sizes of original building elements.
- The exterior brick masonry should remain intact and exposed;
- Significant character-defining decorative elements should be intact;
- Design elements intrinsic to the building's architectural style should be intact;

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- The overall feeling or character of the building for the time period in which it was erected should be intact and,
- Changes over a period of time in materials should be sympathetic and compatible to the original design.

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This Multiple Property Documentation Form includes twenty-five brick box apartments in an area bounded by NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, N. Broadway on the East, the NW 4th Street on the South, and Classen Boulevard on the West in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County. This area today is referred to as "Midtown", which was an early residential area in the city.

There are other brick box apartments in Oklahoma City, but they have different neighborhood historic contexts. The boundaries chosen for Midtown are historically appropriate: Heritage Hills bounds Midtown on the north. Its ten plats were restricted thus almost eliminating the possibility of multi-family housing. Broadway on the east borders the Santa Fe tracks, and Broadway separates east and west portions of town. The business core provides the southern boundary, and Classen Boulevard is on the west. Classen is a significant large and divided street which severs Midtown completely from any connection to other areas west of the boulevard.



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**H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

This multiple property documentation for "Midtown Brick Box Apartments, 1910-1935, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma," is based on three intensive level surveys that were completed for the City of Oklahoma City between 2009 and 2011. In addition to the information generated from these surveys, the results were field checked again in January of 2012 in a windshield survey. The survey area was reexamined for apartments that had possibly been overlooked or that had been demolished since the surveys were completed. The apartments' location, physical condition and architectural/historic integrity were confirmed through this windshield survey. The Preservation Planning Department of the City of Oklahoma City provided copies of the data from the three surveys, including databases, survey forms and photographs, and these provided the foundation for this multiple property documentation form. Larry Johnson, local historian and librarian at the Oklahoma City Public Library provided access to primary documents such as early city plans and early books on the history of the city, and checked vertical files for possible information on the Midtown area. The *Chronicles of Oklahoma* was searched for other research material written about Oklahoma City specifically from 1890 to 1950 as were book bibliographies, and bibliographies from other reference materials. Bradley Winn is authoring a book on Midtown for Arcadia Publishing to be published c. 2013, and he provided a map and several recent photographs. John Belt, also a local historian, was helpful in discussing the term "Midtown," which is not a historic name for this old residential area. Oklahoma History Center provided digital images that are used in this documentation.

National Register documentation for several Oklahoma City historic districts provided background information which aided in research on the Midtown area. These included: Maney Historic District, Heritage Hills Historic District, Plaza Court, Osler Building (pending approval as a listed property), Automobile Alley Historic District, Sieber Grocery and Apartment and Jefferson Park Historic District. One of the most helpful documents in understanding the area around Midtown were Parts 1 and 2 of the "Intensive Level Survey of the Central Park, Jefferson Park and Paseo Neighborhoods, 1994." Another extremely important resource was Janette Isobel Mahar's study of residential patterns in Oklahoma City from 1903 to 1930. Without this document it would have been very difficult to understand migrations of white and blue collar workers in Midtown, or the reasons why the area changed its demographics. There is very little written on housing in the Midtown area and a search of the Oklahoma Historical Society's digital photo archive produced few results. The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> U. S. Census records were also significant to understanding the extremely congested area that Midtown became during extreme population growth and the large number of multiple dwellings that resulted. This area of Oklahoma City is the oldest housing areas, dating from the early settlement days. This area of Oklahoma City has received little attention historically because the housing stock remaining is old and some is in poor condition. Also the neighborhood as a whole has changed considerably over the past few decades.

Two other important multiple property documentation forms were helpful: "Apartment Buildings in Washington D.C. 1880-1945," written by Emily Hotaling Eng and Laura Harris Hughes. Their definition of "purpose built" apartments has served not only the documentation form on Midtown apartments, but other multiple property document forms as well. Sally Schwenk's form for "Historic Colonnade Apartment Building of Kansas City, Missouri," used Eng and Hughes' definition of "purpose built." Schwenk's form is also an excellent example of a well-written document and provided a model for the multiple property documentation form for the Midtown Brick Box Apartments, 1910-1935, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

**List of Brick Box Apartments in Midtown<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> This list may not be exhaustive.

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NAME	ADDRESS	PLAT NAME	YEAR BUILT
	800 NORTHWEST 8TH STREET	NORTHWEST TO OKLA CY	c. 1910
CLINE HOTEL	230 10 <sup>TH</sup> STREET	FLORENCE ADDITION	c. 1910
CZARINA APARTMENTS; LARIMORE BUILDING	230-32 NW 9th and 920 N. Harvey	FLORENCE ADDITION	c. 1910
LITHO NEGATIVE & PLATE BUILDING (2012 name)	330 10 <sup>TH</sup> STREET	GAULT'S SUBDIVISION	c. 1915
	605 NORTHWEST 6TH STREET	EDWARDS ADDITION	c. 1920
ALTAMERE APARTMENTS	625 NORTHWEST 6TH STREET	EDWARDS ADDITION	c. 1930
THE BROWN	910 NORTHWEST 13TH STREET	CLASSENS MARQUETTE	c. 1920
IROQUOIS	900 NORTHWEST 13TH STREET	CLASSENS MARQUETTE	c. 1920
WALFORD	518 NORTHWEST 12TH STREET	CLASSENS MARQUETTE	c. 1920
COLLINS BUILDING; COLLINS LAW OFFICE; LAW CENTER (2012 name)	915 ROBINSON AVENUE	FLORENCE ADDITION	c. 1921
PRISCILLA APARTMENTS	407 09 <sup>TH</sup> STREET	EDWARDS BLVD ADDITION	c. 1922
ROSEMARY	712 NORTH FRANCIS AVENUE	NORTHWEST TO OKLA CY	c. 1925
MEMORY LANE APARTMENTS	509 07 <sup>TH</sup> STREET	BEIDLER HEIGHTS ADDITION	c. 1925
SOUTHWEST SCENIC STUDIOS BUILDING (2012 Name)	309- 311 09TH STREET	GAULT'S SUBDIVISION	c. 1925
CLAREMONT	425 NORTHWEST 12TH STREET	VENDOME SUB MCCLURES	c. 1925
BEASLEY BUILDING	901 NORTHWEST 13TH STREET	KINGS ADDITIONS	c. 1926
ALVETTA	512 NORTHWEST 12TH STREET	CLASSENS MARQUETTE	c. 1930
FLORENCE	429 NORTHWEST 11TH STREET	VENDOME SUB MCCLURES	c. 1928
PALO DURO	409 NORTHWEST 11TH STREET	VENDOME SUB MCCLURES	c. 1929
ALVETTA	512 NORTHWEST 12TH STREET	CLASSENS MARQUETTE	c. 1928
PANSY	909 NORTHWEST 12TH	CLASSENS MARQUETTE	c. 1920
ALTAMERE APARTMENTS	625 NORTHWEST 6TH STREET	EDWARDS ADDITION	c. 1930
INA MAE APARTMENTS	812 NORTH LEE AVENUE	BRUSHAS ADDITION	c. 1930
MAYFAIR APARTMENTS	1315 NORTH BROADWAY PLACE	DALE ADDITION	c. 1931
THE FRANCIS	1217 NORTH FRANCIS AVENUE	CLASSENS MARQUETTE	c. 1935

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**I. Major Bibliographical References**

(List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

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Calhoun, John R. "Automobile Alley Historic District," National Register Property NRIS # 99000351), 1999. Available from the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation website.

Savage, Cynthia. "Sieber Grocery and Apartment Hotel," National Register Nomination NRIS #05001001, 2005. Available from the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation website.

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**Newspapers**

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"Beautiful Building Spots," March 11, 1902.

"The Era of Flats," January 13, 1903.

"The Building Described," February 22, 1903.

"Real Estate and Building, October 25, 1904.

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"F. E. Fagerquist, Architect," August 1, 1909 (box ad).

"Building Operations," December 12, 1909.

"Building Rush will Continue During 1910," January 2, 1910.

"Hints for Prospective Builders," December 11, 1910.

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"Houses and Flats for Rent," January 17, 1911.

"Have Landlords Gone Crazy—Or Are Renters Still "Blind"," April 27, 1922.

"George Kessler Dies Suddenly in Indiana; Planned Parks Here," March 20, 1923.

"Voters in Ward One – Register," October 15, 1924.

"Ward Three – Register Today!," October 17, 1924.

"City Engages Engineer for Planning Job," February 22, 1928.

"40-Acre Tract may be added to the City's Area," December 13, 1928.

"City's Economic Foundation Soundest in Nation," May 5, 1929.

"Housing Need Still Critical," June 12, 1943.

"Markers to Help Visitors Locate Midtown District," July 18, 2007.

**Master's Theses**

Mahar, Janette Isabel. "Social Changes in Oklahoma City from 1889 to 1930." Master's Thesis, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1933. Interlibrary loan through the Tulsa City/County Public Library

Robertson, Leo L. "Geographical Changes Resulting from Oil Development in Oklahoma City and Vicinity," Master's Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1937. Interlibrary loan through the Tulsa City/County Public Library

**Photos**

Oklahoma Historical Society Digital Archives

**Other**

Floyd, Randy. Ms. Floyd is an architect and owner of two territorial flats. E-mail with Cathy Ambler January 10, 2012.

Winn, Bradley. Mr. Winn provided via CD two photos of early territorial flats, c. January 9, 2012.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: COVER DOCUMENTATION

MULTIPLE Midtown Brick Box Apartments 1910-1935, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OKLAHOMA, Oklahoma County

DATE RECEIVED: 07/27/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 09/12/12  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 64501154

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N  
NEW MPS: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

\_\_\_ ACCEPT \_\_\_ RETURN \_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Multiple Property Submission (MPS) cover documents the distinctive development patterns associated with one of Oklahoma City's oldest residential neighborhoods—Midtown. Oklahoma City's expansion as a major wholesale and distributing center in the first decades of the twentieth century resulted in significant housing shortages. As a result, close in neighborhoods such as Midtown, served by multiple street car lines, witnessed substantial new housing construction in the form of multi-family residences of various types, including wood frame flats and duplexes, and more substantial brick box apartment buildings. Once a dominant construction form in the neighborhood, the brick box apartments are now a rapidly disappearing property type illustrating the significant evolution of residential development in the community

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Cover

REVIEWER Paul B. Lusignan DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date 9/12/2012

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

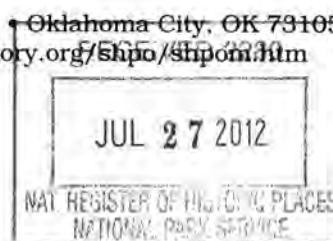
If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Oklahoma Historical Society**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**

*Founded May 27, 1893*

Oklahoma History Center • 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive • Oklahoma City, OK 73105-7917  
(405) 521-6249 • Fax (405) 522-0816 • [www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm](http://www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm)



July 20, 2012

Ms. Carol Shull  
Acting Keeper of the Register  
National Park Service 2280, 8th floor  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

We are pleased to transmit one National Register of Historic Places nomination, one update for a previously listed National Register of Historic Places property and one Multiple Property Documentation form for Oklahoma properties. The documents are for the following properties:

The Mayfair, 1315 North Broadway Place, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County  
Grobin Davis Mound Group, McCurtain County, Oklahoma  
Midtown Brick Box Apartments, 1910-1935, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County

All members of the Historic Preservation Review Committee (state review board) were present for the public meeting at which each of these nominations was considered and the recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer was formulated. Therefore, the member possessing the requisite professional qualifications for evaluation of each nominated property participated in the recommendation's formulation.

We look forward to the results of your review. If there may be any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either Lynda S. Ozan of my staff or myself.

Sincerely,

Melvena Heisch  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer

MKH:lso

Enclosures