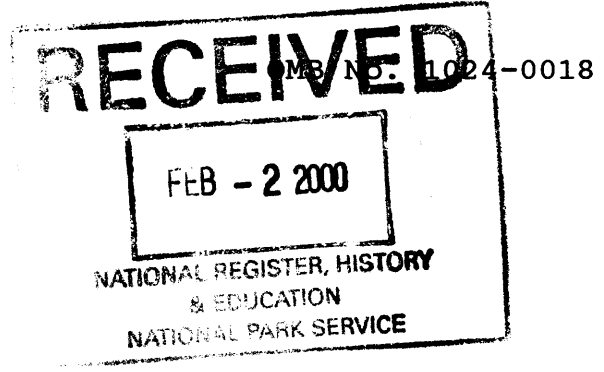


NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool Bath House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 715 S. Morrison not for publication N/A  
city or town El Reno vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Canadian code 017  
zip code 73036

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide X locally. ( N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Bob L. Blackburn 1-24-2000  
Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

           
Signature of commenting or other official Date

      
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register Bob Boland 3/16/00  
     See continuation sheet.  
     determined eligible for the  
National Register  
     See continuation sheet.  
     determined not eligible for the  
National Register  
     removed from the National Register  
     other (explain):     

           
Signature of Keeper Date  
of Action

=====

5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>3</u>	<u>3</u> Total

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

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: sports facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS --  
Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
roof ASPHALT  
walls CONCRETE--clay tile  
BRICK--trim  
other WINDOWS--steel--frames  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

=====  
8. Statement of Significance  
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION  
ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1935-1949  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

=====  
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)  
=====

Significant Dates 1935  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder Arnold Sawallaich, designer  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

=====  
9. Major Bibliographical References  
=====

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

- Previous documentation on file (NPS) N/A  
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

- Primary Location of Additional Data  
 State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Acreage of Property Less than one (1) acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>593870</u>	<u>3931620</u>	3	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
2	<u>N/A</u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	4	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

N/A See continuation sheet.

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

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

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

name/title Dianna Everett Public Historian

organization Consultant to Preservation El Reno, Inc. Date: 1 October 1999

street & number 2510 Countrywood Lane telephone 405-348-4272

city or town Edmond state OK zip code 73003

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

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

name City of El Reno

street & number 101 N. Choctaw telephone 405-262-4070

city or town El Reno state OK zip code 73036

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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El Reno Mun. Pool Bath House  
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SUMMARY:

The El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool Bath House is located at 715 S. Morrison, in American Legion Park, in El Reno, Oklahoma. The pool complex is sited in the west portion of the park, a section of the park that was acquired by the city of El Reno in 1934. The surrounding area was and is residential. The building measures 32 feet by 92 feet, with a 32-foot wide central block and two 30-foot wings. The El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool Bath House is a restrained example of of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style. The load-bearing walls are of fired clay tile stamped with a wavy pattern resembling stucco. The flat roof, more typical of Spanish Eclectic buildings, has a raised and shaped parapet all around, as found in Mission buildings. Both the wings and the central block have a rounded projection in the center of each wall, and the corners are carried upward to the same height as the rounded projection. Fenestration is regular and simple. With the exception of two lower windows on the west side, all openings were originally filled with multi-light hopper windows, most of which are now boarded up. Workmanship is typical of Depression-era construction. The original color of the tiles was copper, now painted a cream color. The corners of the building are textured brick. All of the window sills are brick, in rowlock. The interior of the Bath House still reflects its original functions. The central portion was the entryway, giving access to the locker/dressing room areas that lay in the wings. To the north of the Bath House is a twelve-foot-by-fourteen foot, one-story, clay-tile Concessions Stand that is original to the site. This building, now painted blue, has narrow, horizontal concession windows on south, east, and north and one flush door on the west. A concrete bench, original to the 1935 construction, is counted as a contributing resource. Noncontributing structures within the resource boundaries include a light pole, at the northwest corner of the building, a chain-link fence that extends north and south from the northwest and southwest corners of the building, and a portable concrete bench near the east entrance. Alterations to the Swimming Pool Bath House and Concessions Stand have been minimal. The Bath House doors were replaced at an unknown date. Approximately half of the original steel hopper-style windows have been removed. Downspouts have been removed on the east side. The Concessions Stand has a new door, with a small window. These alterations were performed to both buildings at an unknown date, but post-1991, the time of the pool's closing and subsequent elimination. Both buildings retain sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling to illustrate



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El Reno Mun. Pool Bath House  
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aspects of the historic recreation/entertainment pattern of El Reno, Oklahoma, and to enable the buildings' eligibility under Criterion A, as illustrative of the pattern of El Reno's entertainment/recreation history. As an intact representative of a municipally-built, Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style recreational building, the El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool Bath House is also eligible under Criterion C, as the city's best example of this type and style of building.

DESCRIPTION:

The El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool Bath House is located at 715 S. Morrison, in American Legion Park, in El Reno, Oklahoma. The pool complex is sited in the west portion of the park, a section of the park that was acquired by the city of El Reno in 1934. Legion Park, a recreation area since 1903, was acquired by the city from a private park owner in 1920. The surrounding neighborhood is residential, with houses having been built from the 1930s through the 1960s. The setting remains much as it was historically.

Rectangular in plan, the Bath House is a detached structure measuring 32 feet east to west and 92 feet north to south. The elevations are symmetrical, with thirty-one by thirty-two-foot, one-story side wings flanking a two-story central block. A double thickness of fired clay tile forms the load-bearing exterior walls. Interior walls, which separate the central administrative area from men's and women's locker-dressing-shower areas in the wings, are made of the same material, with a covering of plaster.

In terms of architectural design, the El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool Bath House is a very understated example of vernacular Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style. The flat roof has a raised and shaped parapet all around. On the east and west, the central block has a rounded projection in the center, and the corners project upward to the same height as the rounded projection. This design element is replicated on the north and south sides of the central block as well as on all three sides of the one-story wings. The overall roofline makes the building appear somewhat like a battlement and remotely resembles the roofline of the entrance to the Moorish-style Alhambra, in Spain.

Fenestration is regular and is the building's main visual characteristic,

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other than shape. In the west elevation there is one single-panel, wood, central door accessing street-side parking. Above the door is a cast-concrete panel bearing the words "EL RENO/MUNICIPAL/19 POOL 35". The panel is bordered by textured brick header coursing. The door is flanked by double-opening, vertical, 2x3 light, steel casement windows flanked by three-pane side lights; these windows are boarded up. Each wing originally had three small, hopper-style, steel windows; now, however, there are no window units in the north wing's openings, which have been boarded up and secured with two vertical steel bars. In the south wing, the steel units are still in place, and two are boarded up. The lower window openings are also secured with diamond-pattern steel mesh.

The north and south elevations are identical, having four small, six-light, hopper-style steel windows on the first floor and two on the second. On the north, the lower window units have been removed and the windows boarded; the easternmost two have two horizontal steel bars. In the north-side upper floor there are two original window units, boarded up from behind. On the south side the upper openings are identical to those on the north; on the lower floor all of the window units remain, and three are boarded up from behind and covered by diamond-pattern steel mesh.

The east elevation faces the pool area. In the central block, on the ground floor, is a double-door, now infilled and covered by a steel grate, flanked by two single doors, now infilled. Above the center door is a cast-concrete panel bearing the words "EL RENO /MUNICIPAL/19 POOL 35". The panel is bordered by textured brick coursing. Centered high up in the wall is a very small window opening that is boarded. The east-side central door functioned as an exit from the pool area to the central administrative area, and the single doors gave egress from the men's and women's dressing areas. The north and south wings each have three openings, all originally filled with the small, six-light, steel hopper windows. All are boarded from behind, and in the north wing only one of the original units remains; the other two openings each have two horizontal steel bars. All three of the south wing openings have two horizontal steel bars.

Workmanship is typical of Depression-era construction. The simple clay-tile blocks are decorated with a stamped, wavy design meant to resemble stucco. The original color of the tiles was copper, now painted a cream color. The corners of

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the building are brick. with a very rough face. All of the window sills are brick, in rowlock. The coping, atop the parapet, is rounded and is sealed with concrete. In the central block, the north and south corners have metal downspouts, and there are four openings for downspouts in the east wall. Four openings in the west wall still have metal downspouts. These appear to be original.

The interior of the Bath House still reflects its original functions. The central portion was the entryway and administrative area, giving access to the locker/dressing room areas that lay in the wings. Each wing had areas for lockers and dressing booths as well as lavatory/toilet areas. Lavatory fixtures remain in the south wing, and wire-mesh "lockers" remain in the north wing. A shower area in front of each east-side door made sure that prospective swimmers "cleaned up" before entering the pool. The upper story of the central area, accessed by ladder, served as a storage room.

To the north of the Bath House is a twelve-by-fourteen-foot, one-story, clay-tile Concessions Stand that is original to the site. This building, now painted blue, has narrow, horizontal concession windows on south, east, and north and one single panel-door, with a two-light aluminum-frame window, on the west. A concrete bench, original to the 1935 construction sits about halfway between the two buildings. As it was built in 1935 (according to contemporary sources), it is counted as a contributing resource. Noncontributing structures within the resource boundaries include a light pole, at the northwest corner of the building, a chain-link fence that extends north and south from the northwest and southwest corners of the building, and a portable concrete bench near the east entrance.

When surveyed and reported to the State Historic Preservation Office in 1988, the swimming pool complex was intact and functioning, with typical swimming pool equipment and park equipment intact (refer photographs accompanying "Survey of El Reno and Canadian County," Historic Preservation Survey Inventory Form, July 1988, Files, Oklahoma SHPO). The entire complex originally measured approximately 200 feet north-south and 170 feet east-west, encompassing the Bath House, a grassy entry area on the west, a wide concrete pool surround, the 150-foot-by-75-foot pool, grassy areas to the west, east, and south of the pool surround, and the

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Concessions Stand in the northwest corner of the complex. (See fig. 1.) Today, however, most of these elements have been eliminated. The pool has been filled with dirt and grassed over; only the lip of the pool remains visible in spots. There are no swimming-pool related structures (ladders, towers, diving boards, and so forth); a 1935 "bandstand," or covered bleacher area, no longer sits north of the pool; brick-and-concrete picnic tables once placed north of the building are gone. About a fourth of the original concrete benches remain around the perimeter of the pool surround. Only two sets of small concrete supports remain to indicate placement of diving boards. In the southeast corner of the site, hidden behind a row of overgrown cedar trees, are two dilapidated concrete picnic tables, one with concrete benches. Because of the attenuation of resources, therefore, the boundary of the nominated property has been drawn to include only the two intact buildings that remain to give evidence of the recreation/entertainment context. A passing stranger would not immediately identify the area as a swimming pool complex; it looks more like a park. Only upon close inspection can one determine the outline of the pool and the possible placement of other structures. A chain-link security fence presently surrounds the pool area to the east of the Bath House.

ALTERATIONS:

Alterations to the Swimming Pool Bath House and Concessions Stand came in after 1991. The Bath House doors were replaced at an unknown date. Approximately half of the original steel hopper-style windows have been removed. Downspouts have been removed on the east side. The Concessions stand has a new door, with a small window. These alterations were performed to both buildings at an unknown date, but post-1991, the time of the pool's closing and subsequent elimination.

Despite these changes, the Bath House and Concessions Stand retain integrity of location and setting, that being a residential neighborhood and large park. Both buildings retain sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling to illustrate the historic recreation/entertainment pattern of El Reno, Oklahoma, and to enable the buildings' eligibility under Criterion A, as illustrative of the pattern of El Reno's entertainment/recreation history. As the only representative of a vernacular application of Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival and Spanish Eclectic architectural elements, the building also is eligible under Criterion C, as the city's only example of these combined styles.

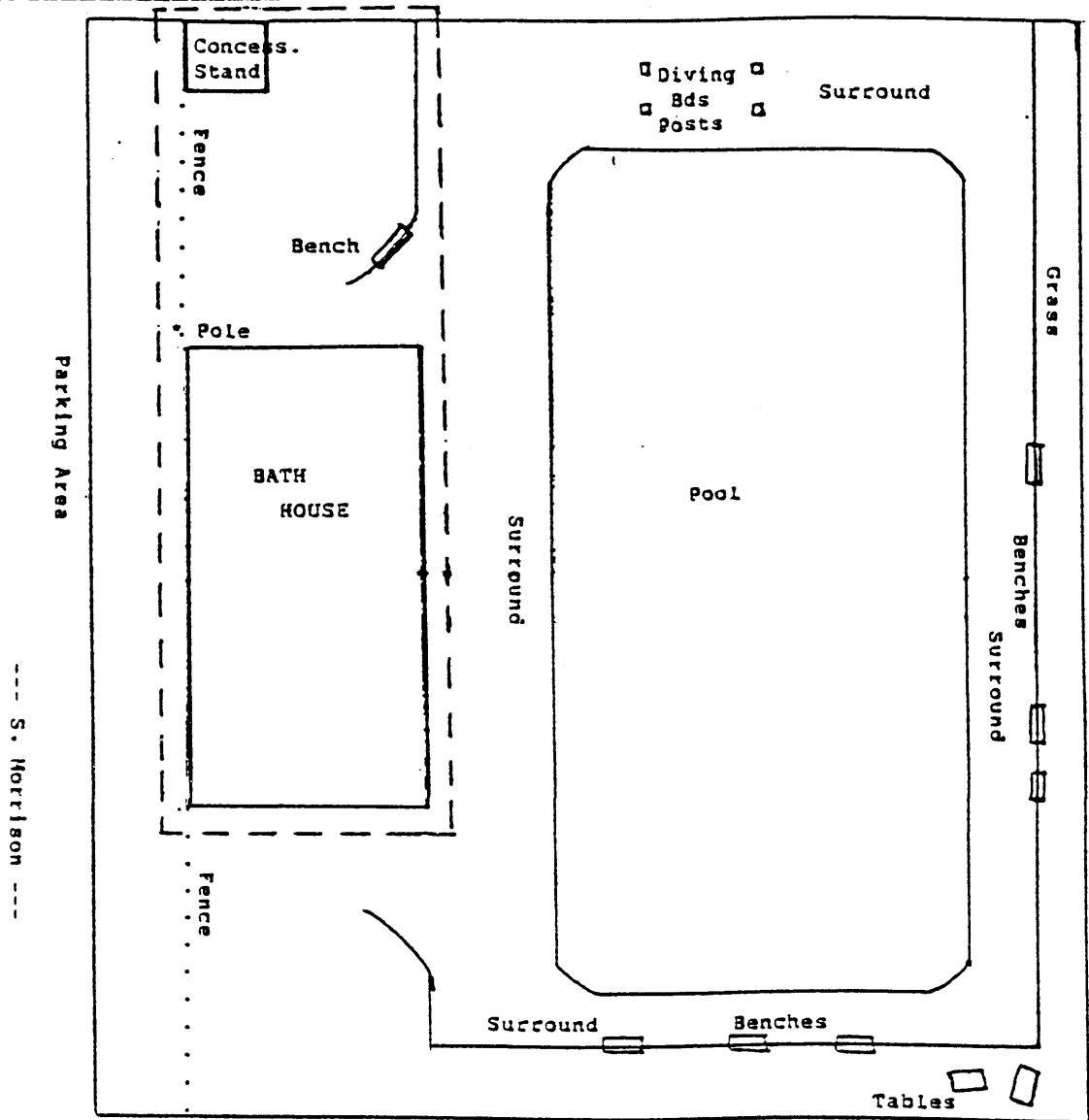
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El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool BATH HOUSE  
715 S. Morrison  
El Reno, Canadian Co., Oklahoma

Not to Scale

----- dashed line = boundary of nominated property

Figure 1

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SUMMARY:

The El Reno Municipal Pool Bath House, constructed in 1935 in Legion Park, the city's largest recreation area, represents an historical pattern within the context of Recreation/Entertainment for El Reno, Oklahoma. Legion Park was the second of six city park projects developed in the years 1901-1949. Legion Park, formerly Peach's Park, had initially been privately developed c. 1903 but was allowed to decline even after the city acquired the property in 1920. The area remained relatively undeveloped until the inception of the pool project in 1933-34. The pool and Bath House were funded by city bonds, totalling a \$25,000 expenditure, and by FERA funds, totalling \$12,000. City workers and local FERA workers combined efforts to build the pool complex, with FERA labor used for excavation of the pool. The pool and Bath House opened June 1, 1935 and provided the citizens with their first public swimming pool. The municipal pool complex remained the city's premier recreation facility for El Reno citizens until 1991. The El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool Bath House and the associated swimming pool area represent El Reno's early commitment to providing safe public recreation and entertainment areas. While the Bath House was not the focus of the project in 1935, today it is the only intact resource within the property. The pool has been filled in with earth, in the interest of public safety. Nevertheless, the pool complex today appears much as it did in 1935. The pool's concrete-walk surround remains, as do the posts for the diving boards and the steel ladders. Twenty concrete benches, and 5 sets of posts for other benches, also remain in place. The El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool Bath House retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, as an important representative of the pattern of El Reno's recreation/entertainment history, and under Criterion C, as a unique local representative of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

The community of El Reno, Oklahoma, was formed in 1889, its creation coinciding with the Land Run of 1889, which opened the Unassigned Lands of central Oklahoma to settlement. El Reno's Grand Street was the west boundary line of the Unassigned Lands, and thus the town developed first on its "east side." In 1892, with the opening of the Cheyenne-Arapaho lands, which lay west of the Unassigned Lands, the west side of El Reno developed. The town was essentially laid out by the Oklahoma Homestead and Townsite Company.(1)

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El Reno grew and prospered in its first years. Stores, newspapers, and other amenities developed as the population increased. On June 11, 1890, the town was incorporated and by 1900 the population numbered 4,120. At statehood in 1907 the number had swelled to 5,370, and by the end of the decade the town was home to nearly 8,000 Oklahomans.(2) During 1907-1908, 13 new residential areas, with a combined total of 281 residences, were constructed and occupied.(3) By 1930 the town's population had risen to 9,384.(4)

The town was a service center for a surrounding region of agricultural enterprise. El Reno was a market place for selling crops--primarily cotton and wheat-- and for transporting those and other products out to a wider regional and national market and for transporting manufactured goods into the local market. The arrival of the Rock Island Railroad, shortly after the town's establishment, provided the important transportation link.(5) Commercial and industrial enterprises thrived. These included the standard agriculture-oriented retail businesses, such as seed stores and implement dealers, as well as "light industry" that included mills and grain elevators; a foundry and machine shop that manufactured stoves; an automobile factory that produced the "Auto Buggy"; and a china plant.(6) An expanding population and industrial development provided a tax base to meet the needs of a growing community. By 1908 the amount of taxable property was an estimated \$2.9 million.(7) Economic activities continued to expand through the 1920s and 1930s, despite the onset of the Great Depression.

During the community's first two decades many civic projects improved the quality of life for El Reno's citizens. El Reno local government created an infrastructure that incorporated a fire department, gas and electric light systems, paving, and a modern sewer system. A street railway provided local transportation. In 1907-1908 the citizens constructed a new courthouse for Canadian County and a new city hall for El Reno. Education also received attention with the establishment of a public library (with new building funded in 1904 by the Carnegie library program) and new buildings for the town's public school system. Parks and recreational facilities also appeared.(8)

RECREATION/ENTERTAINMENT CONTEXT:

El Reno citizens, like other Oklahomans, spent their much of their leisure time outdoors, either at home or in one of the city's parks. Around 1900, Bellamy

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Lake, also known as Reno Lake, resulted from the construction of a dam on a waterway west of town. (Today this is known as Adams Park, a city-maintained facility since 1941.) Peach's Park, a privately-owned facility established c. 1903 by local merchant Sam Peach, was sited on the west side of town, on S. Reno, at Peach's Lake. Over the ensuing decade Peach's Park's recreational opportunities grew to include a ball diamond, a vaudeville building, a dance pavilion, a scenic railroad, a skating rink, a merry-go-round, and boating.(9) By 1910 the city government had also developed one public park, on the east side of Williams between Woodson and Rogers.(10) In the 1910s the city's recreation facilities also included a private natatorium.(11)

By 1931 the community had established other recreation areas. The Canadian County Fair Grounds had been established a mile southeast of town. The city built Dunbar Park (on Grand in the north part of town) and Bronson Park (in the city's southeast section).(12) In addition, in April 1920 the city had purchased Peach's Park, soon renamed American Legion Park, at 600 S. Reno. Improvements to Legion Park included construction of a new baseball diamond in 1928 and the city's first and only municipal swimming pool in 1935.(see fig.2) By 1949 the number of city-maintained parks had risen to six.(13)

During the late 1920's, the El Reno community had begun to feel the need for a publicly supported, city-maintained swimming pool. In the Spring of 1928, a bond election was held to raise funds to construct a pool in Legion Park and plans were drawn for a pool, bath house, and filtration system. The project, however, did not materialize and the onset of the Great Depression in late 1929 further delayed the city's plans.(14)

In Canadian County, as elsewhere in Oklahoma, the Depression affected all aspects of life. The effects of the nation's financial collapse were felt more deeply in other parts of Oklahoma; nevertheless, Canadian County's citizens also relied on help from the federal government to get them through the crisis.(15) The first federal aid program, the Civil Works Administration, established by act of Congress on November 8, 1933, set up unemployment relief in the form of work projects. Administrator Harry L. Hopkins was authorized to expend funds from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (established May 12, 1933) and from the Public Works Administration (Title II of the National Industrial Recovery Act of 16 June 1933.) An estimated four million unemployed were projected to receive assistance through this program (CWA was terminated in March 1934 and





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its activities taken up by the FERA, after spending \$933 million on nearly 180,000 work projects). By December of 1933 Canadian County had 812 CWA employees, and reached a maximum of 1,468 by January 1934.(16) Among the recreation-oriented projects conducted with CWA funds and by CWA workers were improvements to Dunbar Park and lighting in Legion Park athletic field, which employed 38 men.(17) Plans for a public pool were resurrected as well.

In December 1933 the El Reno City Commission viewed municipal swimming pool designs submitted by Oklahoma City architects Hawk & Parr, ordered additional plans, and decided to apply to the CWA for \$9,000 of \$12,000 needed to build a municipal swimming pool. Unsuccessful in securing immediate federal funding, the commission set an April 1934 date for a bond election to raise city funds, now estimated at \$25,000.(18) El Reno's mayor Roy Leas stated emphatically that the city would get any federal assistance available, in order to assure that the city paid the lowest cost possible to build the pool. The bond approved by a vote of 527 to 397, plans proceeded in May 1934.(19)

At the same time, the FERA replaced the CWA. The FERA was authorized to hire 250 workers, many of whom would go to work on the municipal swimming pool project very soon. By December 1934 excavation work was under way.(20)

Over the next three years city funds and federal aid improved other park facilities in El Reno. FERA workers and, later, WPA workers, worked steadily on Legion Park, gravelling the roads around the park, building a new baseball grandstand, and constructing tennis courts to the east of the pool. City workers built the Bath House and the concession building at the swimming pool complex.(21) By the onset of World War II Legion Park was one of the finest public parks in central Oklahoma.

RECREATION/ENTERTAINMENT SIGNIFICANCE:

Construction work for the El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool and Bath House began in December 1934 when the city received FERA approval of the project. Plans for both pool and Bath House were drawn by City Engineer Arnold Sawallaich. Labor for excavating a 75-foot-by-150-foot pool would be provided by FERA, and the city would provide materials for the pool and for a 30-foot-by-90-foot Bath House. Local sources noted that "the \$25,000 bonds voted last April will not be adequate

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to complete the job as planned unless FERA labor is used, but with the help of the relief workers, a pool worth approximately \$35,000 is planned."(21) Excavation for the pool began December 15, 1934, by an FERA crew of 20 men. In March City Engineer Arnold Sawalliach finalized plans for a 30-by-88-foot Bath House, which was to be funded by bond money. In April the city voted to add a concrete bandstand at the north end of the pool and concrete benches around the perimeter. Additions raised the cost of the project to \$35,000. Two FERA crews were working on the pool excavation and were pouring the concrete liner and associated structures by early April. The Bath House was constructed in May, and plumbing and filtration equipment were contracted by private companies. In total, the city expended \$25,000, with the FERA providing \$12,000 in labor.(22) On May 21 City Manager C. C. Holden announced that "El Reno's new \$37,000 municipal swimming pool . . . will be dedicated" on June 1, and construction proceeded on time to the completion of the facility.(23)

The elaborateness of the June 1, 1935 dedication program gives a clue as to the significance of the new recreation facility for the community. Festivities included a morning period for public inspection of the pool and formal dedication activities at 1 p.m. Other activities included a concert by El Reno High School's band, a baseball game, and diving exhibitions by the state champion divers from Oklahoma City.(24)

More than a year earlier, in April 1934, encouraging the public to vote for the bond, the editor of the *El Reno Tribune* had noted that "a modern swimming pool in Legion Park would round out a civic center unequalled in this section of Oklahoma. With the new athletic field and other park developments El Reno would have a real community center which should be a source of pride to every citizen. . . . A modern swimming pool and recreational center would benefit the community financially and otherwise. . . . there are advantages to the youth of the community which are readily apparent to every father and mother. . . . We believe a municipal swimming pool for the children of El Reno will be another step up the ladder of true community progress."(25) The efforts of taxpayers, city workers, and local men who received employment from the FERA resulted in the development of an outstanding public facility, a true community project that would benefit El Reno for generations.

In 1935 the town celebrated the opening of the pool for a second time by reactivating a tradition of holding a Fourth of July celebration in Legion Park, a practice that had lapsed during the Depression years. Activities included

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free admission to the pool, a "high and fancy diving" exhibition, and a "bathing beauty" contest (for both women and men, adults and children). In the 1930s a team of swimmers from El Reno went on the water polo "circuit" and provided entertainment to citizens of El Reno and Oklahoma City. For decades, Red Cross swimming instruction took place at the pool every summer, and several generations of El Reno youth spent much of their summer vacation entertaining themselves at the pool. The pool continued to be the primary city-funded recreation facility in El Reno, as well as the city's only public swimming pool, until 1991. In that year the pool was closed because of maintenance problems.(26) The city opened a new Municipal Swimming Pool in Legion Park, north of and in line-of-sight of the original 1935 pool complex.

The El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool Bath House and the associated swimming pool area represent El Reno's early commitment to providing safe public recreation and entertainment areas. While the Bath House was not the focus of the project in 1935, today it is the only intact resource within the property. The pool has been filled in with earth, in the interest of public safety. Nevertheless, the pool complex today appears much as it did in 1935. The pool's concrete-walk surround remains, as do the posts for the diving boards and the steel ladders. Twenty concrete benches, and 5 sets of posts for other benches, also remain in place. The El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool Bath House retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, as an important representative of the pattern of El Reno's recreation/entertainment history.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT:

Non-residential and commercial buildings of El Reno, Oklahoma, generally represent traditional styles of architecture.(28) The Commercial Style prevails in a downtown that offers several good examples of relatively pristine commercial buildings dating from the early twentieth century. The El Reno Carnegie Library, which is a public building dating from 1904, is Classical Revival in style. El Reno's public school buildings include the 1911/1926 Late Gothic Revival El Reno High School, as well as one 1939 WPA-built school that represents a simplified Modernistic style. Residential architecture includes one example of Spanish Eclectic style, in a neighborhood near the swimming pool.

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The El Reno Municipal Swimming Pool Bath House is a very restrained example of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style, popular in the United States from 1890 into the 1920s. The Mission style is characterized by low-pitched, hipped, tiled roofs with rooflines that are interrupted by raised, shaped parapets and stucco walls.(27) Alluding to these stylistic elements, El Reno's city engineer designed the El Reno Swimming Pool Bath House with a flat roof and raised parapet. The exterior walls, while made of clay tile, have a stamped, wavy pattern that looks like a heavy and raked application of stucco. On east and west, the central block has a shaped parapet in the center, and the corners project upward at the same height as the shaped parapet. This design element is replicated on the north and south sides of the central block as well as on all three sides of the one-story wings. The overall roofline makes the building appear somewhat like a battlement, remotely resembling the roofline and entrance to the Moorish-style Alhambra, in Spain, without the colonnade.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

In El Reno, this particular set of references to Hispanic architectural styles of Europe and the United States is unique to the El Reno Swimming Pool Bath House. Surveys of El Reno reveal only one other building that offers elements of Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style. That is the El Reno Rock Island Depot, 400 W. Wade St.(NR-83002078) which was listed under Criterion A. This building has a hip roof, originally with tile covering, open, unboxed eaves, and an eaveline interrupted by a raised, shaped parapet.

The El Reno Swimming Pool Bath House is the only public building in El Reno that uses the shaped parapet and faux stucco walls of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style. The architecture of the Bath House is essentially unaltered from its original appearance. As the town's only adaptation of this style to public architecture for recreation purposes, the building is significant and is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C, Architecture.

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1. *History of Canadian County* (El Reno: Canadian County History Book Association, 1991), 25, 88-91; H. Merle Woods, *The El Reno That Was* (El Reno, Okla.: El Reno (Oklahoma) American, 1978), 1-20.
2. *History of Canadian County*, 94-95.
3. Walter G. McComas, "The Growing City of El Reno," *Sturm's Oklahoma Magazine* 7 (No. 1, Aug.-Sept. 1908): 78.
4. *History of Canadian County*, 95.
5. McComas, "El Reno," 76; Woods, *The El Reno That Was*, 24-25.
6. McComas, "El Reno," 78; *History of Canadian County*, 95.
7. McComas, "El Reno," 76.
8. *Ibid.*, 76-78; *History of Canadian County*, 92, 95.
9. *History of Canadian County*, 93; *El Reno (Oklahoma) American*, 23 May 1907, 28 April 1949; *El Reno (Oklahoma) Democrat*, 2 September 1909; "History of Legion Park," in "El Reno City Parks, & Recreation Areas," comp. Carolyn Barker (clipping book, Vertical File, El Reno Public Library), n. p.
10. "1910 El Reno City Directory," in *El Reno City Parks, & Recreation Areas*, comp. Carolyn Barker (clipping book, Vertical File, El Reno Public Library), n. p.
11. *El Reno (Oklahoma) American*, 10 August 1916, 31 August 1916, 14 September 1916, 21 July 1926.
12. "1928 El Reno City Directory," in "El Reno City Parks, & Recreation Areas," comp. Carolyn Barker (clipping book, Vertical File, El Reno Public Library), n. p.

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13. "History of Legion Park," in "El Reno City Parks, & Recreation Areas," comp. Carolyn Barker (clipping book, Vertical File, El Reno Public Library), n. p.; "Street & Building Guide, El Reno, Oklahoma, 1931," in *ibid.*; *El Reno (Oklahoma) Tribune*, 8 May 1949.

14. *El Reno (Oklahoma) American*, 8 March 1928, 29 March 1928, 8 August 1929, 15 August 1929, 5 September 1929; *El Reno (Oklahoma) Democrat*, 16 August 1929.

15. *Daily (Oklahoma City) Oklahoman*, 29 September 1935.

16. *El Reno (Oklahoma) American*, 30 November 1933, 7 December 1933, 29 December 1933, 11 January 1934.

17. *Ibid.*, 21 December 1933, 4 January 1933, 1 February 1933.

18. *Ibid.*, 7 December 1933, 14 December 1933; *El Reno (Oklahoma) Tribune*, 1 April 1934.

19. *El Reno (Oklahoma) American*, 2 April, 1934, 5 May 1934, 17 May 1934.

20. *Ibid.*, 5 May 1934, 13 December 1934, 27 December 1934.

21. *Ibid.*, 3 January 1935, 28 March 1935, 20 May 1937.

22. *Ibid.*, 6 December 1934 (quotation), 22 November 1934, 20 December 1934, 4 April 1935, 7 March 1935, 21 March 1935, 11 April 1935, 9 May 1935, 21 May 1935, 26 May 1935, 30 May 1935; *El Reno (Oklahoma) Tribune*, 31 May 1935, 2 June 1935.

23. *El Reno (Oklahoma) Tribune*, 21 May 1935.

24. *Ibid.*, 6 June 1935; *El Reno (Oklahoma) American*, 6 June 1935.

25. *El Reno (Oklahoma) Tribune*, 1 April 1934.

26. *Ibid.*, 6 June 1935, 14 June 1935; *El Reno (Oklahoma) American*, 27 June 1935, 8 June 1944, 24 May 1951; *El Reno Tribune*, 14 April 1991; "History of Legion Park," in "El Reno City Parks, & Recreation Areas," comp. Carolyn Barker (clipping book, Vertical File, El Reno Public Library), n. p.

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27. Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 408-411, 416-418; John C. Poppeliers, et al., *What Style Is It?* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1983), 24-29; Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), 213-216, 225-22

28. "Survey of El Reno and Canadian County," July 1988, Files, Oklahoma SHPO.



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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Beginning at the southwest corner of the Bath House, proceed 5 feet due west, to the point of beginning; from this point, proceed 5 feet due south; turn east (left) and proceed 42 feet due east; turn north (left) and proceed 142 feet due north; turn west (left) and proceed 42 feet due west; turn south (left) and proceed 137 feet due south to the point of beginning, having described an enclosed rectangle measuring 42 feet by 142 feet.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

These boundaries include the El Reno Swimming Pool Bath House and the associated Concessions Stand, both of which are intact and contributing resources, and are drawn to exclude the former swimming pool area.