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## *Portraits of Historic Norman*

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



1 Moore-Lindsey House  
(Cleveland County Historical Museum)  
508 North Peters

2 Norman Post Office  
(Norman Public Schools Professional  
Development Center)  
207 East Gray

3 Sooner Theatre  
101 East Main

4 Cleveland County Courthouse  
201 South Jones

5 Santa Fe Depot  
Abner Norman Drive at Comanche

6 Norman Public Library  
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207 East Gray

7 Oscar B. Jacobsen House  
(Jacobsen Foundation)  
609 South Chautauqua

8 President's House  
(Boyd House)  
407 West Boyd

9 Alpha Chi Omega  
Sorority House  
(Casa Blanca)  
103 West Boyd

10 Bizzell Library  
University of Oklahoma

11 Beta Theta Pi  
Fraternity House  
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12 Patricio Gimeno House  
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A Norman Historic District

B DeBarr Historic District

C New Deal Resources District  
(Norman City Park/Abe Andrews Park)

D Chautauqua Historic District

E Miller Historic District

*The past is present in*

# Norman's Historic Districts

## *Norman Historic Preservation District*

The Norman Historic Preservation District represents the commercial core of the town as it was established with the Oklahoma Land Run of 1889. The original tents and wooden buildings were replaced within a matter of a few years and the present brick and stone structures have stood since the



last decade of the nineteenth and the first years of the twentieth centuries. The 100 and 200 blocks of East Main as well as the Interurban site were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. These structures range in age from 1890 to 1971. At least

eight were erected before 1900. Many of the buildings on the south side of the 100 block date from the years immediately following the 1902 fire that leveled all but the two easternmost buildings. Another serious fire explains why half of the 200 block on the south dates from the 1920's. Along the way are examples of most of the popular commercial building designs, from the brick fronts with pressed iron cornices and cartouches to the elaborately ornamented brick facades and classically pillared marble institutions.

## *DeBarr District*

The DeBarr Historic District is an early twentieth century residential neighborhood adjacent to the northern boundary of the University of Oklahoma. It encompasses approximately six blocks and consists

of 138 structures, of which 99 are contributing elements. Bungalow is the predominate style of architecture, although other styles such as Prairie



School, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival can be found.

Constructed between 1907 and the beginning of World War II, the district is a display of the living quarters available to both students and faculty in the early years of the University of Oklahoma. The DeBarr Historical District was placed on the National Register in 1991.

## *Andrews Park/New Deal Resources District*

The Norman City Park was formally established with the filing of the official town plat in the early 1890's. Since that time, the Norman City Park has served as an outdoor gathering place for residents and tourists. Using the new Deal Programs of Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930's, the park was improved by the construction of an amphitheater, wading pool, and bathhouses. By late August 1937, the local newspaper noted that "From a barren, unattractive plot of ground dotted with unsightly frame buildings, the Norman City Park has been transformed into one of the most attractive and highly appreciated recreation spots in this part of the state."

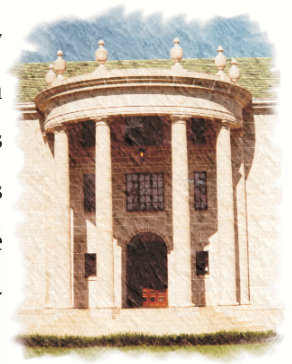


The WPA amphitheater is the highlight of the park's New Deal Resources. Located on the west side of the park, the amphitheater forms a half circle. Built of native stone with a compatible, rose colored, concrete cap the structure is typical of WPA constructions of this nature.

The park continued to thrive and in 1956 was renamed Abe Andrews Park in honor of the retiring Park Superintendent who nurtured the grounds for over thirty years. The Andrews Park/New Deal Resources District was placed on the National Register in 2000.

## *Beta Theta Pi Fraternity House*

Like most major universities in America there are many fraternities and sororities at the University of Oklahoma. Many of these organizations constructed elegant houses in the 1920's during a period of economic growth and university expansion. The Beta Theta Pi fraternity house was constructed from 1927 to 1929 and incorporates a limestone exterior with steel casement windows and tile roofing. Designed by local architect Harold Gimeno, this structure is the only example of Early Classical Revival by Gimeno. The most prominent architectural element is the semi-circular portico that extends the entire height of the front facade.



## *Gimeno House*

In 1927, Harold Gimeno designed and oversaw the construction of a home for his parents, Patricio and Margaret Gimeno. The Patricio Gimeno House was one of many that Harold Gimeno both designed and constructed. Skillfully expressed with rich ornamentation, this structure is the best local example of Spanish Colonial Revival domestic architecture and a particularly notable example of Gimeno's work. Moreover, it is the only known residence in Oklahoma to incorporate the work noted local artist Patricio Gimeno. Adjacent to the Gimeno House is another Spanish Colonial Revival Style residence also designed by Gimeno.



*Ledbetter-Taylor House* Designed in 1947 and constructed in 1948, the house is related to a series of designs by noted architect Bruce Goff based on composite plan geometry. The Ledbetter-Taylor House was one of his first designs completed after WW II, and was the subject of a large amount of local and national attention. The house has many unique and imaginative elements, such as the use of sawtooth rhythm on the facade, inset glass ashtrays, and the contrast of geometric forms with the natural undulating curves of the sandstone wall that partially surrounds the garden. Set against this naturalistic free form of assemblage of stone, lush plantings and water, the front of the house forms an enormous contrast. Two large circular aluminum disks are located on the front of the house and are suspended by cables from steel pipe frames rising above the house. These disks serve as the carport and entrance and are constructed with exposed metal trusses on the underside in a radial pattern. (This house is a private residence and is not open to the public.)

*Bavinger House* Eugene Bavinger, an art professor at the University of Oklahoma, and his wife, Nancy, commissioned noted architect Bruce Goff in March 1950 to design their house on a wooded site several miles east of town. Completed in 1955, the Bavinger House has been the subject of many articles and books on modern architecture for several decades. The Bavinger House is considered one of the masterpieces of Goff and includes all of the characteristics defining his compositional pattern. The plan geometry of the house is a logarithmic spiral built out of rubble sandstone inset with blue-green glass cullets with irregular glazed openings. The multi-level house is surrounded by gardens constructed of flagstone defining randomly shaped ponds of water, planters and pathways leading to the house. The house spirals 50 feet into the air with the pattern of circular platforms for specific functions arrayed within the larger spiral space and the cable-suspension system connecting the warped plane roof to the central mast. The Bavinger House is one of the best and most original Bruce Goff designs. (This house is a private residence and is not open to the public.)

# Take a closer look at this Portrait of Norman's Historic Past

## 1 Moore-Lindsey House

William S. Moore constructed the Moore-Lindsay House in 1899. It is the best example of the late Victorian, Queen Anne architectural style to be found in Norman. Typical features of this style are varied exterior coverings, such as clapboard and shingles, iron work on the roof, towers, spindle work porches, decorative wood trim, and stained glass windows. This home represents a growing affluency that was taking place in Norman shortly after the settlement in 1889. This area was the city's first exclusive residential district, nicknamed "Silk Stocking Row." The Moore-Lindsay House currently serves as the Cleveland County Historical Museum.



## 2 Post Office

Constructed in 1932, the United States Post Office is an excellent example of a federally designed Classical Revival style government building. Located on the north side of downtown Norman away from other nearby government buildings, the federal building is distinguished from adjacent buildings by its imposing style and setting. The United States Post Office in Norman served the community well from its construction until 1965 when the new Post Office was constructed two blocks to the west. Named to the National Register in 2000, this structure continues to serve the citizens of Norman as the Norman Public School's Professional Development Center.



## 3 Sooner Theatre

The Sooner Theatre opened in 1929, the first movie theatre in the region to show "talking pictures." Local architect Harold Gimeno spared no expense, and construction costs of \$200,000 - astronomical at that time - allowed for the commissioning of 252 hand-painted designs by Patricio Gimeno, the architect's father, for the Spanish Gothic building. The three-story limestone building features massive hand painted beams, recesses and moldings, stained glass windows and chandeliers, and a Spanish coat of arms motif.

Although a new trend in theatres led to its closing in 1975, local citizens were just beginning to realize what a gem they had. Since the first phase of the restoration in 1982, the Sooner Theatre of Norman has continued to make renovations to preserve the building's integrity and improve it for current use. Although not presently used as a movie theatre, it is used for various community productions and performances.



## *Cleveland County Courthouse*

Completed in 1940, the building was designed by Walter T. Vahlberg and constructed using monies provided by the federal government's Public Works Administration. Although the form of the Cleveland County Courthouse adheres very closely to the Classical Revival style, the building is classified as Art Deco due to the prominent Art Deco style ornamentation. The combination of Art Deco style ornamentation and Classical Revival form was popular in the late 1930's/early 1940's for public buildings, particularly those funded with PWA monies.



## *Santa Fe Depot*

The Santa Fe Depot constructed in 1909 typifies the county seat type of depot. Designed in a vernacular interpretation of the Mission Revival style, the depot has a cross-gabled clay tile roof with curvilinear parapets incorporating the Santa Fe logo. The Santa Fe Railway Company played a principal part in the early development and settlement of Norman. In 1886, the Atchison, Topeka, Santa Fe Railway Company selected "Norman's Camp" as a station site. The following year, the company platted a townsite, using the boundaries established by the United States Land Office Survey in 1872, and filed the plat with the U.S. Department of Interior.



## *Norman Public Library*

The Norman Public Library is a good example of a municipal library built in the 1920's. Designed in the Italian Renaissance style and typical of early twentieth century library buildings, the Norman library is a relatively simple building that exudes a classical style and fine interior finishes. As the town library, the building provided a critical means of educational opportunity for all Norman residents. In addition to enhancing the available educational opportunities, the public library also served as an important community center. Constructed in 1929 and serving as the library until the mid 1970's, the building is now home to the Norman Senior Citizen's Center. The Norman Public Library was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000.



## *Jacobsen House*

Constructed in the summer of 1918 this structure is historically associated with Oscar B. Jacobsen who, as director of the University of Oklahoma's School of Fine Arts, revolutionized the course of art study for the university. The Jacobsen House is a simplified example of an eclectic Italian Renaissance style that was popular in the United States from the 1890's to the 1930's. In a one-story structure, this style is unusual. The architectural significance of the Jacobsen House rests in its simple understated elegance. This building blends classical and traditional design elements in a light color scheme to create quantities of open space in a small one-story structure. The structure is presently home to the Jacobsen Foundation and is open to the public.



## *President's House*

Built in 1906 as the private residence of David Ross Boyd, the house became the official residence of university presidents in 1914. Between 1914 and 1922, the house was remodeled to fit the new attitude of the university. The house is significant in that it represents a shift in the university's image from that of a mediocre school to that of a respected university of academic quality. The Neoclassical Revival style reflected a sense of tradition, permanence, and classical learning. Solid genteel, and comfortably conventional, the "University of Oklahoma's White House" might well serve as a symbol of Sooner State intellectual life. For more than three quarters of a century, from its corner site overlooking the campus, it has housed the president of the state's primary learning institution of higher learning.



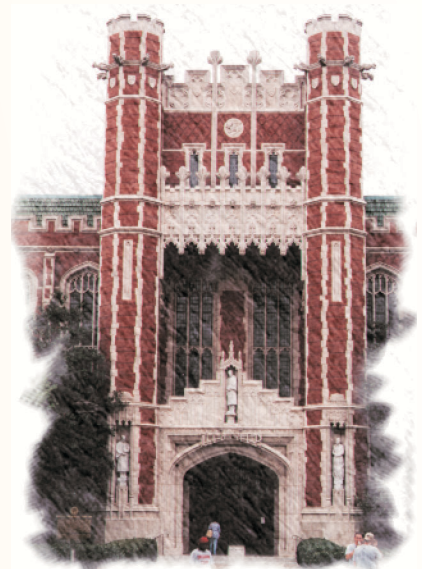
## *Alpha Chi Omega Sorority House*

When completed in 1925, the Alpha Chi Omega Sorority House complimented the many structures located in the Campus Corner area. At that time the most distinctive and cohesive physical attribute of Campus Corner was the predominately Mission Revival style of many of its commercial buildings. The terra cotta tile roof, tile-capped chimneys and prominent curvilinear pediment reminiscent of a bell tower are all trademarks of the Mission Revival Style. Rehabilitated in 1989 and converted into executive office space, the Alpha Chi Omega Sorority House is the best remaining example of the Mission Revival style once prevalent in the Campus Corner area.



## *Bizzell Library*

The University of Oklahoma's Bizzell Library is prominently located on the north end of the Van Fleet Oval quad area. Completed in 1928, the Collegiate Gothic structure features window tracery, shaped parapets, elaborate cornices and balustrades combined in a number of ways. The significance of this structure goes beyond its architectural features. Bizzell Library stands as a milestone in the history of school desegregation for its association with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma Board of Regents* (1950). The segregation event that occurred at the library, which led to this court case, became the climax of the NAACP's plans between 1930 and 1950 to overturn the "separate but equal" doctrine in public education by demanding equality in graduate and professional schools.



## *Chautauqua Historic District*

The architecture and environment of the Chautauqua Historic District represent a unique time period in Norman's history. The stately residences reflect the character of the university deans and faculty and other prominent individuals who assisted in the development of the city. The mature trees which line Lahoma and Chautauqua reveal Norman's dedication to turn a town on the prairie into a garden setting. In this six-block district almost every architectural style prevalent during the first quarter of the



century is represented. It is this variety, which also characterizes the heritage of Norman and western settlement, that is significant in this district. While no one style dominates, each building, the traditional front yard landscapes, and the sidewalks blend together to create this unique neighborhood.

By the end of World War I, Norman was firmly established and the University of Oklahoma was continuing to grow. Farmland on the west side of the campus was converted to lots and blocks and this neighborhood became a popular place for the faculty to build houses. The Chautauqua Historic District forms the core of this neighborhood.

The Chautauqua Historic District is located in the middle of a tree-lined residential neighborhood which was primarily constructed between 1920 and 1940. Development of the neighborhood began on the northern edge near Symmes in the early teens, although the majority of the area was developed in the 1920's. The predominant style of architecture in the district is the Bungalow; however, the Colonial Revival style is also quite prevalent. Other styles include the Tudor Revival style, the Spanish Eclectic style, and Italian Revival style, the Neoclassical style, the Prairie style, and one example of the Queen Anne style.

This residential neighborhood is historically significant for its long-term association with the faculty and staff of the University of Oklahoma. Since the mid-teens, and particularly through the 1920's, the university deans, directors, and department chairmen, faculty, and staff have bought homes along Chautauqua, Lahoma, Elm and College Avenue in order to be within close walking distance to campus. The Chautauqua Historic District was adopted as a local district in 1995.

## *Miller Historic District*

"There is no room for argument on the proposition that the Classen-Miller addition to Norman, which will be placed on the market next week, offers some of the finest residential lots...in the city." February 26, 1903 - Norman Transcript

Full-page ads ran for several weeks and expounded the virtues of the area. It was noted for its convenient location to the business section of the city, the railroad, and the University. The area was well drained, the streets were graded, and trees had been planted. "It will be an ideal place for a home." The price of the lots ranged from \$30 to \$75.

While construction began immediately after the addition opened, it was not until after 1928, following World War I, that the entire neighborhood fully developed. During the 1920's, the Classen-Miller Addition, which was replatted in 1922, began developing as an exclusive

neighborhood for University faculty and business leaders. The majorities of the



residences were one or two stories in height and reflected the popular styles of the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A variety of architectural styles popular during the period are represented in the Miller Historic District. Residences designed in the Bungalow/Craftsman style, Tudor Revival style, Colonial Revival style, and National Style are found in this district.

The period from 1900 through 1940 was one of great residential growth in Norman. The historical significance of the Miller Historic District is two-fold: the district is significant for the role it played in this urban development of the City of Norman, and it is also significant for its excellent collection of eclectic residential architecture built between 1920 and 1938 remain standing, and approximately 90 percent of which retain their architectural integrity. The Miller Historic District was adopted as a local district in 1997.