

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER
1975

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Hightower Building

other names/site number NA

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2. Location

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street & number 105 N. Hudson not for publication NA

city or town Oklahoma City vicinity NA
state Oklahoma code OK county Oklahoma code 109
zip code 73102

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. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

1-24-02
Date

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 _____
_____ 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> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register NA

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

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: Office Building/Department Store

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: Office Building

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:
Classical Revival
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN
MOVEMENTS: Skyscraper

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK

other STONE: Limestone

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

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8. Statement of Significance

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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)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1929

Significant Dates 1929

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10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property 1.2

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>634300</u>	<u>3925950</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u> </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.)

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Jo Meacham

organization Jo Meacham Associates date September 1, 2001

street & number 2300 NW 17th Street telephone 405-524-7000

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73107

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Additional Documentation
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage
or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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

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

name Hightower Properties, LLC

street & number 105 N. Hudson telephone 405 236 0483

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73102
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Hightower Building
Oklahoma County, Oklahoma

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Summary

The Hightower Building, designed by J.W. Hawk and J.O. Parr, is a ten-story building in downtown Oklahoma City. Originally a three-story building, built in 1920, an additional seven stories added in 1929 by the F.P. Johnson family. The base of the building is two stories in height with ground floor storefronts and a wide entablature that separates the second floor from the shaft, or main body of the building. The middle section - the shaft - includes seven stories and is sheathed with brick. The upper portion of the building incorporates the tenth floor and the attic/parapet. This portion is clearly delineated with an elaborate cast stone beltcourses and decoration. During a 1959 remodeling of the ground level, a three-story building on the west side was incorporated as part of the Hightower Building complex. The Hightower Building is an excellent, local example of a concrete and steel framed skyscraper with a Classical Revival design motif. It escaped the devastation of Urban Renewal, a fate that claimed many of its neighbors. Despite alterations to the storefronts and the replacement of windows, the exterior and interior of the balance of the building remains intact.

Description

The Hightower Building, designed by Hawk and Parr, is a ten-story commercial building on the northwest corner of Main Street and Hudson Avenue in downtown Oklahoma City. It began life as a three story building, constructed in 1920, but came into its present configuration in 1929. Attached to the west side of the building is a three-story building dating to around 1925 that was refaced in the 1950s using materials similar to those on the ten-story building. The two were incorporated into one building by internal changes as well as the facade treatment. The Hightower Building (including the annex) is one of two buildings on the block and runs the width of the block from north to south on the east end. The remaining building is located on the west end of the block. Parking lots separate the two buildings. There were never any other intervening buildings.

Interior

The building is rectangular with a central elevator shaft. The offices are located on the perimeter of each floor. The main entry is centrally located on the east side of the building and accesses a marble clad lobby.

The interior of the lobby has retained its original configuration and most of the original wall and ceiling materials. Originally the lobby was used for small shops. Each space had interior windows into the lobby area. These spaces remain evident, however, the windows have been covered. Some original woodwork and doors remain in place.

The lobby has coffered ceilings with elaborate plaster detailing. The centerpiece is a vaulted, coffered, plaster ceiling that runs the length of the bank of elevators. This ceiling is hand painted with a floral design and has the

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Hightower Building
Oklahoma County, Oklahoma

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original, hanging, metal light fixtures. The remainder of the ceiling has square coffers with an egg and dart molding and dentils. In addition, there is a large, plaster relief with a cartouche flanked by figurines. The floors are covered with marble and the walls have marble wainscoting.

There are four original elevators that remain in place and are operated by elevator operators. The Hightower Building elevators are the only manually operated elevators remaining in Oklahoma City.

Most floors have a small lobby outside the bank of elevators. These are less ornate than the first floor. Details include marble wainscot and terrazzo floors. Some floors have remained intact and have marble-lined hallways and the original woodwork and doors. Some original ceramic water fountains remain in the hallways.

The Exterior

Following the prototypical "skyscraper" format as first popularized by Louis Sullivan, the exterior of the building is divided into three parts and is commonly called a "three-part vertical block building." Based loosely on the Renaissance era Italian *pallazo*, this building type has three distinct zones and is similar to the divisions of the classical columns. These include the base, the shaft, and the capital. The Hightower Building utilizes Classical elements in its design vocabulary.

The base of the building is two stories in height and is sheathed with limestone. The first floor is punctuated with a single entry on the east elevation and a series of storefront windows. The south and east elevations, at the base, were altered ca. 1956 and the original cast stone columns were sheathed with smooth limestone. The clerestories located above the storefronts were also sheathed with limestone. The storefront locations remain the same. The second floor, also part of the base but divided from the first floor by a wide frieze, had a series of Chicago-style divided by the original ornate cast stone columns. Above the second floor windows is a large, cast stone entablature that divides the base from the shaft. The street names, Hudson and Main, are engraved on the entablature at their respective corners.

On the north elevation, the original cast stone columns that divide the storefronts and the clerestory windows remain. The ground floor is divided into five bays and there is a set of double entry doors on the west end in the last bay.

The middle portion of the building - the shaft - is seven stories in height and is sheathed with brick laid in a running bond and divided into three bays by flush brick and cast stone pilasters. On the east elevation, which includes the entry,

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Hightower Building
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the end bays contain single windows between two, vertical rows of cast stone with capitals. These are inset flush with the brick, the contrasting colors adding definition and emphasis to the vertical division of space. On the corners of the building there is a slender, double column of cast stone with identical capitals that extends from the third floor to the ninth floor. Between the two end bays are seven sets of paired, single windows. The design is similar on the north and south elevations, except there are only three sets of paired, single windows between the end bays. The third floor windows, at the bottom of the shaft, are identical to the second floor windows, Chicago-style with fixed central paned flanked by hung windows. The remaining windows are single windows with cast stone sills.

The capital portion of the building consists of the tenth floor and a large, elaborately detailed cast stone parapet that defines the attic. The ninth and tenth floors are divided by a wide, cast stone beltcourse and cornice that appears to rest atop the pilasters. The windows on the tenth floor are similar to the other floors except the outermost windows are flanked by single, cast stone pilasters with capitals. Above the tenth floor is a wide, cast stone parapet. The parapet has rows of cast stone divided by small cast stone pilasters. Above the three rows of stone is a final course with a rounded, oblong design.

A three-story building, acquired in 1956, is attached to the west elevation of the building. Shortly after it was purchased, the south elevation was changed to resemble the larger building. The first floor and second floors are identical to the Hightower Building. The third floor has a band of windows set between two brick columns with a band of limestone forming the parapet. This building extends from Main Street on the south, along the entire length of the west elevation. The west elevation is brick with no openings.

The north facade of this annex faces Colcord Street and is set back from the north facade of the ten-story building. The facade contains a single entry door and a storefront with a metal mansard style awning. The upper two stories have single window openings with metal casement windows. There is a metal grid work applied to the brick facade. The three-story building accessible at each floor to the Hightower Building. There is a metal gate set within brick columns between the two buildings. This gate leads to a stairway that runs to the basement.

The roof of the building is flat and it has asphalt sheathing.

Alterations

A three-story building, the Shops Building (circa 1920-1921), was originally located on this site. In 1929, an additional seven stories were added to the original three stories by the Hightower family. For several years following, the building owners continued to update the exterior of the ground floor businesses. Originally, the north, south, and east elevations were a series of doors and storefronts divided with cast stone columns. Above the storefronts were bands of

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Hightower Building
Oklahoma County, Oklahoma

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clerestory windows. A flat, wood and metal awning surrounded the three exposed sides.

Later, ca. 1945, the flat awning was removed and replaced with a series of operable canvas awnings. The kickplates below the storefront windows and at the base of the cast stone columns were covered with marble. The southeast storefront - Van Dyke's - was updated and the clerestories over this large corner store were covered with carrara glass and used as a sign plate.

During the late 1940s, the remaining storefronts on the south and east elevations were altered and smooth limestone panels were used to sheath the original columns and the clerestories. The north elevation remained unchanged.

During the 1950s, the corner storefront - Van Dyke's - was renovated to match the limestone storefronts. In 1956, the three-story building on the west side of the Hightower Building was purchased by the Hightower family. The exterior of the south elevation of this building was altered to resemble the existing Hightower Building's appearance, creating a uniform facade on the south and east sides.

On the interior, some hallways and offices on the upper floors have been altered, however, several floors remain unchanged and the first floor public spaces, especially the grand elevator lobby, remain virtually intact from the 1929 design.

During the 1980s when central air conditioning was installed, the original wood double-hung windows were removed and replaced with metal, fixed windows and a mechanical room was placed on the roof.

Although some alterations have been made to upper floor interiors and the original windows have been removed and replaced, the overall design, with smooth brickwork and classically-inspired, cast stone details, retain the original architectural design and integrity. It remains the only "skyscraper" of the 1920s era that utilizes the Classical Revival motif in Oklahoma City.

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Hightower Building
Oklahoma County, Oklahoma

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Summary

The Hightower Building, completed in 1929, was built by F. P. Johnson, a successful Oklahoma City businessman. It is an excellent example of the Classical Revival style of architecture as applied to a modern steel and concrete skyscraper in Oklahoma City and is significant under Criterion C. Constructed anew in 1929 from an original three story building that was built in 1920, the ten story Hightower Building, designed by Hawk and Parr was an anchor to the Main Street business district. Hawk and Parr were prominent Oklahoma City architects during the first half of the twentieth century and were responsible for designing many other Oklahoma City downtown buildings as well as commercial and institutional buildings across the state.

Overview

The Hightower Building, located on the northwest corner of Hudson and Main Street in downtown Oklahoma City, was originally constructed as a three-story commercial building in 1920-1921. A 1920 Oklahoma City telephone directory lists the building as under construction. In 1921, the Oklahoma City directory listed 105 N. Hudson as the Shops Building with each of the three floors partially occupied. In 1923, the building occupants included the Safe-Cabinet Company, Victor Safe and Lock, the Elliott Addressing Machine Company, and the Dalton Adding Machine Company on the first floor. The State Chamber of Commerce also occupied an office suite in the building. Over the years a variety of tenants were listed in the city directories including doctors, dentists, lawyers, a beauty shop, and credit companies.

On July 6, 1929, the Daily Oklahoman stated in an article, "Hightower Building Offices Soon Ready," that the former Shops Building would be ready to occupy in early March. It also said that the "outside brick work to raise the building from three to ten stories (had) been completed and interior work (was) being rushed." After 1929, the city directories also cross-listed the address of the building with 401-407 W. Main. The architect for the building was Hawk and Parr and the contractor for the seven-story 1929 addition was Campbell and Price. The consulting engineer was Hans von Unwerth. The cost of the seven-story addition was approximately \$350,000.

The owner of the building was F.P. Johnson, president of the First National Bank and Trust Company of Oklahoma City. Johnson was a very successful and well-known Oklahoma City businessman. After his death in 1944, the building remained in the family. Johnsons' only daughter died in 1931 and eventually his grandson, Frank Hightower, inherited the building.

The building had been purchased by the Johnson family to be used as an office building with shops on the first floor. Early tenants included dentists, lawyers, oil companies, insurance companies, and trade associations. Over the years a variety of retail shops were located on the ground floor.

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Hightower Building
Oklahoma County, Oklahoma

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In 1954, the Hightower family purchased a three-story building on the west side of the Hightower Building. This building runs the full length of the west elevation with two fronts: one facing Main Street and one facing Colcord Street. The building was purchased for \$145,000. The building was an excellent example of the Late Gothic revival, or "Collegiate Gothic," style of architecture. The Johnson's plan was to incorporate this building into their own, and in order to do so, elected to alter the facade to match the Hightower Building. The exterior of the Main Street facade was sheathed with materials similar to the 1950s appearance of the Hightower. The frieze between the 2nd and 3rd floors was carried over and pilasters were incorporated into the new brick facade. The exterior of the Colcord Street facade was fitted with a single door and a storefront window. This served as the entrance to the Hightower specialty store.

From 1956 until 1982, the annex building was home to a specialty store and gift shop. This shop was owned by the Hightower family and imported china, linens, silver and other luxury items. The entrance was through the three-story building on the west side of the main building. The Cellar Restaurant opened in the basement of the building in 1956 and remained in operation until 1984.

Architectural Significance

The Hightower Building was designed by Hawk and Parr, one of Oklahoma City's prominent architectural firms during the first half of the twentieth century. Originally the building was a three-story commercial building with storefronts on the ground floor and two upper floors with offices. These three floors were used as the base of the building and an additional seven floors were added.

A report prepared in 1928 by Hans von Unwerth, the consulting engineer for the project, concluded that the three-story building was structurally capable of accepting additional floors. The three-story building had a basement and was constructed of reinforced concrete. The engineer suggested that the new construction should be steel joists supported on concrete girders and columns with a two-inch concrete slab on metal lath. This would rest on top of the joists. The new walls were to be four inch brick with eight inch tile backing.

The building was near completion in 1929, however, work continued for several years. Tenants were moved into finished spaces on the upper floors and renovation of some of the exterior ground floor stores continued through the early 1930s.

The style of the building is reflected in the Classical detailing and the three-part Classical division that helps the building resemble a column. The public space on the ground floor was designed as the "base;" the attic or service space at the top served as an elaborate crown or "capital;" and the intermediate stories or office space was the "shaft." Each of the three building parts were decorated with ornamentation. This style of tall

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Hightower Building
Oklahoma County, Oklahoma

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building was popular from 1885 through the early 1930s. "Skyscrapers" used various vocabularies, from the Art Nouveau inspired Sullivanesque style to the Art Deco style just hitting its peak in popularity. Hawk and Parr chose to use Classical elements in their design for the Hightower Building.

The Hightower Building is an excellent example of this Classical Skyscraper style. The base, which is two stories in height, is sheathed with cast stone and limestone and forms a solid foundation for the building. The shaft is distinguished by a change of materials. Its elongated form is emphasized with the ribbons of vertical cast stone that delineate the buildings's corners and set apart the end bays. The capital is intricately detailed with rows of delicately designed horizontal and vertical cast stone features.

Designed by Hawk and Parr and built at the height of the economic boom of the late 1920s, the Hightower Building is an excellent example of a Classical Revival style skyscraper. Other buildings of note in Oklahoma City designed by Hawk and Parr include the Tradesman's National Bank Building (NR 1980), the Harbour-Longmire Building (NR 1980). The Harbour-Longmire and Tradesman National Bank Building are also ten story buildings. The Tradesman has a heavily rusticated base and a projecting cornice. It is more true to the Sullivanesque style. The Harbour-Longmire Building is located ½ block west of the Hightower, on the south side of Main. It has an eclectic stylistic vocabulary, with Gothic elements dominating.

For the most part, the taller buildings of the late 1920s and early 1930s in Oklahoma City followed the new Art Deco style, utilizing stylized geometric and floral ornamentation in a variety of materials. The best example of this style is the 35 story First National Bank building on Broadway, a limestone skyscraper highlighted with brushed aluminum panels. Other buildings, like the Pioneer Telephone Building on North Broadway (NR 1980) and the Cotton-Exchange Building on North Harvey (NR 1980) utilize liberal amounts of terra cotta in their design.

The Hightower, in addition to being one of the best Classical-inspired skyscrapers, is also a survivor. Main Street was once a hub of commerce, its blocks crowded with theaters and tall commercial buildings. During the late 1970s, the Urban Renewal Authority clung desperately to a "revitalization" plan that called for the wholesale destruction of older commercial buildings in downtown Oklahoma City. The IM Pei plan* called for a new downtown, the end

* The IM Pei Plan was a long-term planning document commissioned by the City of Oklahoma City. In short, it called for the demolition of much of the existing infrastructure and the creation of new amenities, including a "galleria" shopping center, a convention center, and a botanical garden. Much of the plan was carried out - especially in terms of land clearance. However, many planned construction projects never came to

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Hightower Building
Oklahoma County, Oklahoma

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result being the loss of many historic buildings, including the Classically-
inspired Haliburton building that sat across Hudson Street from the Hightower.
The Haliburton was nine stories in height and sheathed in limestone.

The loss of so much of the fabric of downtown Oklahoma City puts a premium on its
historic resources. The devastate blocks of Main Street are highlighted by the
Harbour-Longmire Building and the Hightower Building. They and the other, smaller
buildings on the block remain an island in a sea of parking lots. Despite the
loss of original windows and the sheathing of much of the first floor in
limestone, the Hightower remains the best Classically-inspired skyscraper in
Oklahoma City, and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under
Criterion C.

fruition, leaving gaping holes in the streetscape.

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Hightower Building
Oklahoma County, Oklahoma

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Bibliography

F. P. Johnson and Frank Hightower personal archives.

Blackburn, Bob. The Physical Legacy: Buildings of Oklahoma County, 1889-1931.
Southwestern Heritage Press. Oklahoma City Historical Society. 1980

Daily Oklahoman. July 6, 1929.

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Oklahoma City Sanborn Insurance Maps. 1922, 1945. University of Oklahoma.
Bizzell Library.

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Hightower Building
Oklahoma County, Oklahoma

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Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Block 63, Oklahoma City Original Townsite, Oklahoma City,
Oklahoma.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes those lots that contain the Hightower Building and the
adjacent, attached three-story building.



Hightower Building



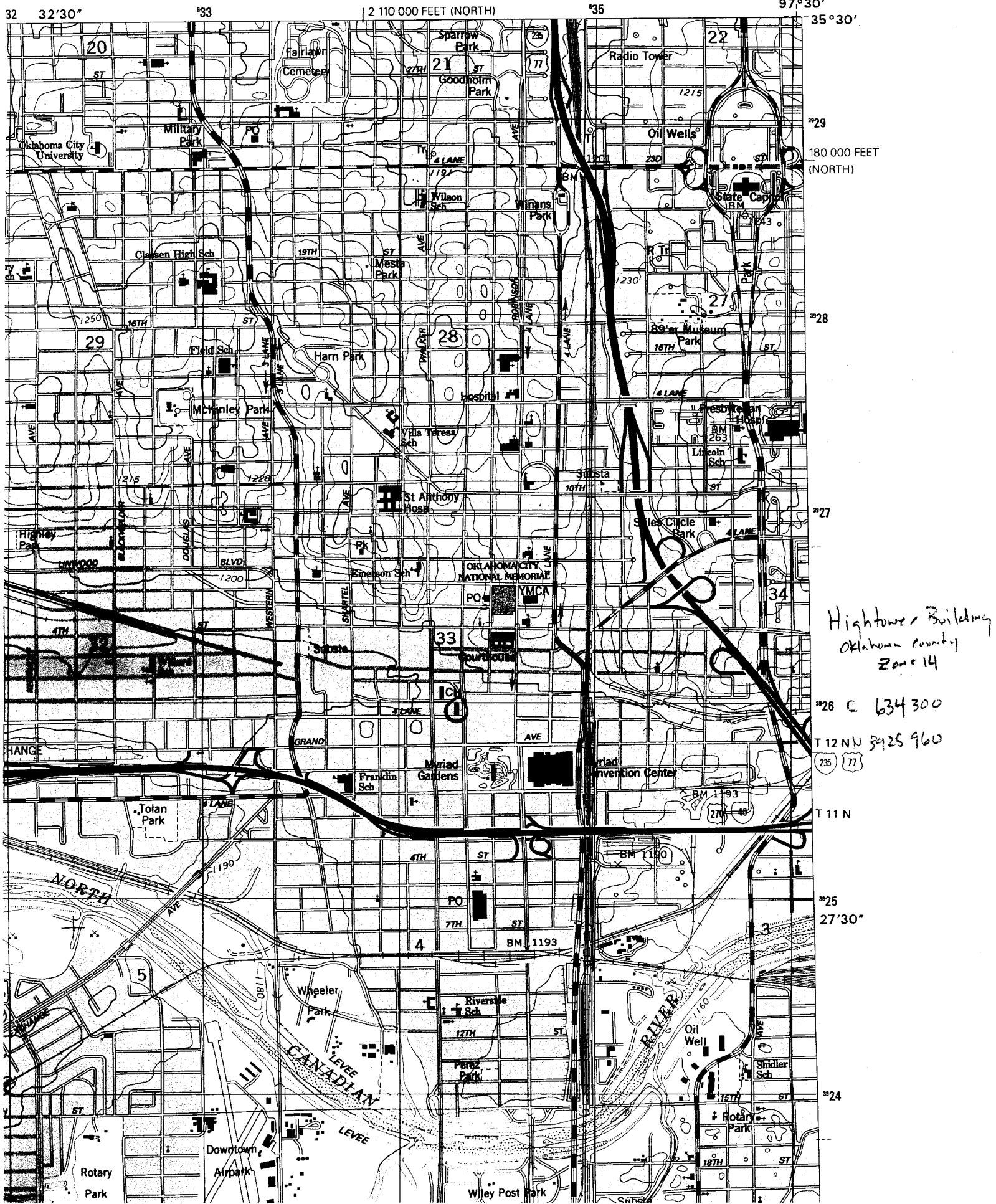


Hightower Building

OKLAHOMA CITY QUADRANGLE

OKLAHOMA

7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Hightower Building
Oklahoma County
Zone 14

#26 E 634 300

T 12 N U 3425 960

(235) (77)

T 11 N

#25
27'30"

#24