

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

St. Joseph Convent and Academy

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

West edge of

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Guthrie

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

No. 6

STATE

Oklahoma

VICINITY OF

CODE

40

COUNTY

Logan

CODE

083

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

☒ EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Guthrie Public Works Authority

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall

CITY, TOWN

Guthrie

STATE

Oklahoma

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Logan County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Guthrie

STATE

Oklahoma

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Special St. Joseph Convent Survey

DATE

1976

FEDERAL ☒ STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Oklahoma Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☒ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED (largely)
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Completed in 1892, St. Joseph Retreat (see name in stone, Photo No. 1) is a four-level (with basement) structure, roughly 100 x 48 feet in size. The foundation (basement level) is of natural sandstone blocks, 16-18 inches thick. They carry the next two levels - of red brick. The top story is a fine mansard, roofed with decorative metal shingles. Gone today (it is not known when) are the pyramidal towers over the east and south entrances, the profusion of bulbous brick chimneys, and the Victorian porch on the east.

The north section was added in 1905. It is unusual in that its second and third story windows on the west are generally Gothic in style while their counterparts on the east have an Eastern, almost Islamic appearance. Feature of both east and west gable is a pair of oval windows ~~with~~ that intersect at right angles to create a cross. The overlapping section of these windows opens.

Ceilings originally 16 feet in height, have now been lowered throughout the building for heating and cooling purposes. All stairways have the original carved wood banisters. Carved wooden door frames ornament the basement rooms where the Sisters once lived. Wainscoting is found throughout the building.

St. Joseph Retreat looks today much as it did when built, with the changes noted above. Though obviously neglected and somewhat dilapidated in appearance, it remains essentially sound, structurally. The Sisters, with local preservationists, hope that it can be preserved, perhaps even restored, so that it may once again, in some capacity, contributed to the enrichment of life in Oklahoma as it did for more than three quarters of a century.

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☒ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☐ ARCHITECTURE	☒ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☒ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1892-1965

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Joseph Foucart, Architect (?)
J. T. Brickmap, Builder

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

If a good social history of Oklahoma is ever written, the Benedictines, both men and women, will command an important chapter. They pioneered Indian Territory, pushed back frontier ignorance with superb education, and brought a sense of decency and justice that helped tame those turbulent times.

*in 1975 So wrote Editor Frosty Troy of The Oklahoma Observer in 1976 during the Nation's Bicentennial. Few Oklahomans would disagree. Male Benedictines pioneered Catholic mission work among the Indians in 1876. They established Sacred Heart, a school that grew eventually into present St. Gregory's College in Shawnee, placed in the National Register.*The Benedictine Sisters - three of them - arrived in Guthrie, O. T. in 1889, just five months after Oklahoma Territory was opened to settlement. St. Mary's school was opened immediately. By 1892 the entire order - another 23 sisters - had arrived (from Creston, Iowa) and St. Joseph Reatreat had been constructed. It is this tall, gabled, red brick structure, with a section added onto the north in 1905, for which National Register is also sought with this nomination.

St. Joseph's Academy opened in 1897, a boarding school for girls with classes for both the elementary grades and high school. It was the only such Catholic school in the new Oklahoma Territory. (Sacred Heart was in Indian Territory.) The campus occupied only a corner of the 308-acre farm operated by the Sisters. There were orchards, and a herd of pure-bred Holstein cattle. The Sisters produced all their own poultry and beef, milk and butter, vegetables and fruit.

As the needs of the students grew, the school grew to meet them. In 1917 a regular four-year college curriculum was begun. The name became Oklahoma Catholic College for Women, affiliated with Catholic University, Washington, D. C. The first parochial school in Oklahoma had become the new state's only Catholic college - fully accredited and offering B.A., B.S., ED degrees.

Classes were taught for women of all ages and grades for 30 years. Then in 1949 the name was changed once again - to Benedictine Heights College. New housing facilities were added. And that fall the school became co-educational. Men, however, were day students only. Within five years the once wholly female school had its

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

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first male president. He began a move to update and expand the facility - a move that led, ironically, to the transfer of the school from Guthrie to bigger, more affluent Tulsa. The actual transfer came in 1965. The Sisters sold the property to the City of Guthrie for \$150,000. The Motherhouse moved to Tulsa and a three-quarter-century era on the frontier had ended.

In Guthrie the Sisters had watched a town of tents and crude shacks grow into a brick-paved Victorian showplace. They had watched the birthing of Oklahoma as the Constitutional Convention met a few blocks away to plan the fusing of the twin territories into the 46th state. They had seen the capital slip away from Guthrie to Oklahoma City, the development and changes brought by World War I and World War II.

Through it all, however, the convent remained essentially a teaching mission. From 1892 to 1962 the Sisters staffed St. Joseph's in Guthrie, from 1894 to 1924 the Langston Parish School. Over the years they opened and/or operated a score and more parish schools over the state. In 1979 St. Joseph Convent will begin a year-long celebration of its Centennial. Although they started in Iowa and now live in Tulsa, the Sisters will focus their attention on Guthrie, their home for most of that time. The Centennial will extend into 1980 to coincide with the world-wide celebration that year of 1500 years of Benedictinism.

*

Since the late 1960s St. Joseph's facilities have accommodated a federally funded Job Corps program. And this makes St. Joseph Retreat, the oldest significant Catholic structure remaining in Oklahoma, a part of what is believed to be the nation's only city-owned Job Corps Center.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Debo, Angie, Oklahoma, A Guide to the Sooner State, Norman, University of Oklahoma, 1942
Pratt, L. K., History of Guthrie, Oklahoma, M. A. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1930
The Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City: August 8, 1949; December 11, 1949; February 23, 1954; March 26, 1954; May 29, 1955

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY C. one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Guthrie South

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5 minute

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 639000 3970529

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

S/2 SE/4 Sec. 12, T 16 N, R 3 W

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

Oklahoma Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

DATE

November 1976

TELEPHONE

405/884-5456

STATE

Oklahoma

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Harry L. Rouse M.D.

DATE

3-8-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION



St. Joseph Convent & Academy