

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL REGISTER  
LISTED

NATIONAL REGISTER  
LISTED

JUL 03 '97

JUL 03 '97

1. Name of Property

historic name Sallisaw High School

other names/site number Old Sallisaw High School

2. Location

street & number 200 West Creek St. not for publication N/A  
city or town Sallisaw vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Sequoyah code 135  
zip code 74955



=====  
6. Function or Use  
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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education Sub: School  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Work In Progress Sub: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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7. Description  
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Moderne  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete, Limestone, Sandstone  
roof Asphalt, Metal  
walls Brick  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

=====  
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

Economics

Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1939-1940

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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8. Statement of Significance (Continued)  
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Significant Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Architect/Builder Joseph I. Davis, architect  
Works Progress Administration, builder

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

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

- Previous documentation on file (NPS)  
 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Geographical Data  
=====

Acreage of Property Approximately two acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>15</u>	<u>337440</u>	<u>3925000</u>	3	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
2	<u>N/A</u>	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>		4	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

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 Patrick Zollner, Architectural Historian

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date January 13, 1997

street & number 407 E. 14th St. telephone (501) 374-2612

city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72202  
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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)

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
Sallisaw High School  
Sequoyah County, Oklahoma

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

name Old Sallisaw High School Association, Inc.

street & number P.O. Box 1416 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Sallisaw state OK zip code 74955

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Sallisaw High School  
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county and State

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**Summary**

Sallisaw High School is a single-story brick school building that was constructed by the Works Progress Administration from 1939 to 1940. The building is built upon an unusual V-shaped plan and features a round entrance tower at the point of the "V." Noteworthy interior details include hardwood floors, plaster walls, and the original curved glass-and-wood trophy case. Alterations to the building consist primarily of the addition of aluminum-frame casement windows and the addition of some wood panelling and dropped ceilings inside. Currently, the building is being restored for eventual use as a community center and museum.

**Description**

Constructed from 1939 to 1940 by the Works Progress Administration, Sallisaw High School is a single-story V-shaped brick building with a partial basement that was built on the site of the previous school. The former school, which was erected in 1908, was razed in 1938; however, approximately one-third of its building materials were salvaged and utilized in the new construction. A new continuous foundation of concrete and sandstone faced with rough-faced, coursed limestone from the earlier school was laid for the existing building. Buff brick-faced, load bearing walls were then erected.

The entrance tower is located at the northeast corner of the block and contains three aluminum-frame, single-leaf doors with one-over-one aluminum frame transoms that are taller than the entrance doors. "Sallisaw High School" is depicted in two rows of raised metal letters in the band between the transom lintels and the brickwork comprising the entablature of the tower. The very shallow-pitched, twelve-sided, conical roof is sheathed with metal over wood decking.

Abutting the entrance tower are the two nearly identical end walls which form the irregular base of the "V." These walls are narrow in width and are each fenestrated by a slender four-over-four, aluminum-frame window. The northern wall contains a marble plaque inscribed with "Erected 1940" and lists the school board members, superintendent, and architect. The southern wall contains a similar marble-trimmed granite marker as a memorial to Argyle Quesenbury (1839-1925).

The northern wing elevation is fenestrated by ten groups of windows (two groups of four windows, eight groups of three). All but two window groups are positioned in the long center section which projects a few feet from the main body of the wing. When originally completed, this wing adjoined the existing sandstone

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auditorium which was completed in 1938 by the WPA. The auditorium burned in 1974, was rebuilt the following year and the connecting hallway removed in 1988 for fire insurance purposes. As a result, the auditorium is no longer attached to the school building. A concrete wall and a boarded-over double-leaf doorway now constitute the western elevation of the northern wing. The southern, or interior, elevation of this wing is punctuated with eight window groups and contains the basement level boiler room windows. All are boarded over at the present.

Although longer in length, the southeastern wing is similarly composed and features window groups of two, three, and four windows. The southwestern end elevation contains a double-leaf entrance on the basement level and a pair of windows directly above. The northwestern, or interior, elevation of this wing is comparable to its northern wing counterpart but with the addition of matching basement level window groups.

When originally completed, the high school was adjoined to the existing sandstone auditorium which was completed in 1938 by the WPA. A short enclosed hall connected the north wing of the high school to the east elevation of the auditorium. The auditorium burned in 1974, was rebuilt the following year and the connecting hallway removed in 1988 for fire insurance purposes, thereby detaching the school from the auditorium.

Significant Interior Features

The interior of the high school features original hardwood floors, plaster walls, acoustical-tiled ceilings, and wood door and window facings salvaged from the 1908 school. The entrance tower consists of interior brick walls and a concrete floor. After entering the tower, one is presented with the original wood and curved-glass trophy case at the point of the interior "V." Alterations to the interior occurred in the 1970s and consist primarily of the installation of a dropped ceiling, application of wood panelling in the halls, and the subdividing of a few of the larger classrooms.

**Alterations**

Alterations to the exterior consist primarily of the replacement of the original multiple-pane, double-hung, wood-frame windows with the current aluminum frame windows in 1973. The original wood doors of the entrance tower were replaced by the aforementioned aluminum-frame substitutes in 1968.

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Located at the southwest corner of Creek and Walnut Streets, Sallisaw High School is currently undergoing restoration for future use as a museum and civic meeting place.

The building retains a remarkable degree of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, and conveys the feeling of its past environment.

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**Summary of Significance**

Sallisaw High School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the Works Progress Administration and Criterion C for its architectural significance as an example of the Art Moderne style. Under Criterion A the school is significant for its direct association with the Works Progress Administration in Sallisaw. As the largest and last project completed by the WPA in Sallisaw, the construction of the high school provided a substantial boost to the depressed local economy. Sallisaw High School is also significant under Criterion C as an unusual example of the Art Moderne style.

**Historical Background**

Sallisaw is located in east central Oklahoma in a valley drained by Sallisaw Creek, from which the town received its name. The most accepted history regarding the origin of the name Sallisaw indicates that it is derived from the French word, "salaison," which translates to "salt provisions." According to this version, an early French hunting expedition killed a number of bison in the vicinity of the creek and subsequently salted the meat for transportation. As a town, however, Sallisaw originated as an outgrowth of Childers Station, an important stage stop on the Muskogee-Fort Smith route. The station, consisting of a store and post office, was most likely established c. 1870 and was owned and operated by John and Nancy Swimmer Childers, who were Cherokees.

The present town of Sallisaw was platted in 1887-1888 by Argyle Quesenbury and Captain W. W. Wheeler in conjunction with the arrival of the Arkansas Valley Railroad. The land was developed from the Indian allotments of the descendants of John Foster Wheeler. Among his descendants were Captain W. W. Wheeler and Harriet Wheeler, who married Quesenbury in 1867. A post office was established on December 8, 1888 in the railroad depot, and Sallisaw was incorporated in 1898, a few years after the arrival of the Kansas City and Southern Railroad. With transportation now afforded in all directions, the future of the new town was assured.

The educational history of Sallisaw has its beginnings with the National School for the Cherokees, which was established shortly after 1888. Educational opportunities for the other children were limited to private schools or tutors. By 1900, a need for a public school system was realized. A "School Committee" was selected and a tax levied to fund the school, which was organized in a small two-

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room building in 1901. H. L. Nicholas served as the first superintendent, and Mrs. W. L. Curtis was hired as the assistant teacher. A two-story frame building was constructed in 1902 to house the expanding student body, and in 1904 a high school was opened on the second floor of the building. Earlier in 1900, Professor T. L. Bates, a prominent educator from Chelsea, had moved to Sallisaw with the intention of establishing a high school; however, the lack of a suitable building apparently foiled this first attempt at higher education.

The first seniors graduated in 1908, but the high school had already outgrown the six year old frame building. A \$20,000 bond was approved by the citizens of Sallisaw, and work commenced on a new three-story masonry facility in the spring of 1908. Once completed, the new school was named for Argyle Quesenbury, who had donated land for the school. This school served the town for thirty-two years.

**Historical Significance**

The Depression affected Sallisaw much like any other town in the country. During the 1930's, the Works Progress Administration was able to provide some relief. The city applied for WPA assistance in such diverse projects as street paving, a golf course, and a swimming pool. By October, 1935, 541 Sequoyah County men were employed by the WPA in sixty projects. Three months later, the number of men had risen to 813, which was the full quota for the county. Projects included farm to market roads, low water dams, sewing rooms, swamp drainage, farm ponds, and curbs and other street work. The last, and perhaps the grandest, WPA project in Sallisaw was a new high school building, which was requested by the school board in August 1939. The third floor of the existing 1908 school building had been condemned, and the building was deemed unsafe.

The new building was to cost \$65,000; however, the WPA provided \$42,716 for the construction, and the local board raised \$14,613 in funds. This project employed 105 men for eight months. The high school opened in 1940 and was used as such until 1988 when a new facility was built on the west side of town.

On February 16, 1995, the Old Sallisaw High School Association purchased the vacant building. Since 1988, the school has locally been known as the "Old Sallisaw High School" to differentiate it from the current Sallisaw High School. A fund raising drive was initiated in April of this year, and restoration work has been initiated. When completed, the former school will be used as a community center and museum.

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**Architectural Significance**

With its V-shaped plan and distinctive round entrance tower, Sallisaw High School is an unusual and distinguished example of the late Modern Movement period. The entrance tower, curved trophy case, and minimalist buff-brick exterior are characteristics of the Art Moderne subtype of the Modern Movement style; however, the V-shaped plan is suggestive of a local design solution. The significance of the school building is further enhanced by virtue of it being the only extant example of the Art Moderne style in Sallisaw.

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**Bibliography**

Boze, Sue. Information, including photographs and original architect's plans, submitted to author, August, 1995.

Mayo, Jim. *Sallisaw Historical Highlights: A Pictorial History of Sallisaw, Oklahoma, 1888 - 1993.* \_\_\_\_\_: Cookson Hills Publishers, Inc., 1993.

Old Sallisaw High School Association, Inc. *Old Friends' Favorite Recipes.* Collierville, TN: Fundcraft, 1995.

Strebeck, Earl. Information, including research from the Sequoyah County Historical Society archives, local newspaper research, and interviews with former Sallisaw High School teachers and administrators, submitted to author, December, 1995.

The Sequoyah County Historical Society. *The History of Sequoyah County, 1828-1975.* \_\_\_\_\_: Taylor Publishing Co., 1976.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

A part of Block 52 of the Original Town of Sallisaw, Sequoyah County, Oklahoma described as follows: Beginning at the NE corner of said Block 52, then Southwesterly along the East line of Block 52 372.80 feet to the SE corner of Block 52, then Northwesterly along the South line of Block 52 68.46 feet, then North perpendicular to Creek Avenue, 237.99 feet to the North line of Block 52, then Easterly along the North line of Block 52 295.00 feet to the point of beginning.

**Verbal Boundary Justification**

This boundary contains the historic high school and surrounding associated property but excludes the adjacent auditorium, which no longer retains its historic integrity and is still owned and utilized by the Sallisaw Public School system.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 97000614

Date Listed: 7/3/97

Sallisaw High School  
Property Name

Sequoyah  
County

OK  
State

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Poland  
Signature of the Keeper

7/24/97  
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

The documentation does not support "Education" as an area of significance under Criterion A. The appropriate areas of significance for this property are: Architecture and Economics. This was discussed with Cindy Savage of the OK SHPO.

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DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

RECEIVED  
SEP 03 '97  
BY SHPO



Sallisaw High School

