

PRESERVATION OKLAHOMA NEWS



April 2007 Volume XIII No. 3

Skirvin Hilton Opens



When the Skirvin Hotel, downtown Oklahoma City's landmark hotel, closed its doors in 1988, there was little hope that it would ever again function as a hotel. There were glimmers of hope that it would at least be adapted for a new use, but numerous proposed redevelopment schemes failed to move beyond the talking stages. The National Register listed hotel was placed on Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.'s very first Most Endangered Historic Places list where it remained until the City of Oklahoma City stepped up and purchased the building and had a contract with the developers of the Skirvin Hilton.

In 2003 Skirvin Partners LLC, Marcus Hotels and Resorts of Milwaukee, and Hilton established their plan for the Skirvin's revitalization. Because the

City of Oklahoma City acquired the hotel with federal funds and because the federal and state rehabilitation tax credits were key to the project's financial feasibility, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) worked closely with the developers and their architects, Kahler Slater, to insure the work would meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

Construction work began in early Fall 2005 with a deadline for completion coinciding with the dates of the Big 12 basketball tournament. Major work items included replacement of much of the roof, installation of new plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems, installation of 900 new windows, and complete interior rehabilitation. To respect

the historic integrity of the building, the original corridors were left in place, but guest rooms were reconfigured.

The Venetian Room and Continental Room on the hotel's top floor again reflect the elegance of the Skirvin's past. Special attention was given to the retention of other historic spaces and fabric, such as the 29 hand-carved Bacchus busts accented with gold leafing, the lobby's arched wooden entry ways and tile floor (dating from 1911), art deco tile in the Skirvin's Park Avenue Grill (dating from the 1920s expansion), and the historic lobby elevator doors.

On Monday, February 26, 2007, the Skirvin Hilton
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Historic Plaster Repair.....by Catherine Montgomery, AIA

Of historic interior finishes, flat plaster seems to be the most endangered. The Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings place a premium on the retention of remaining historic fabric, including flat plaster. The philosophy behind this position is based on the retention of historic authenticity and acknowledgement that spaces with historic plaster were intended to have a finished appearance. Our challenge remains in educating building owners and designers of the importance of historic plaster retention and repair. Many find that their historic building has damaged and deteriorated plaster, and find underlying brick an attractive alternative, either exposed in total or partially by leaving remaining plaster in a deteriorated state. Others will commit great expense to deliberately removing plaster and revealing underlying brick. While brick is a wonderful material, the presence of a plaster finish confirms that it was not intended to be revealed. Indeed, a plaster finish confirms that a finished appearance was desired and valued. Some buildings, usually intended for more utilitarian purposes like warehouses, did not have a plaster finish. However, even in warehouses, the office spaces were often

finished with plaster walls and ceilings.

The character of flat plaster can be described as a uniform texture and monolithic appearance. Preservation appropriate options for addressing damaged and deteriorated plaster can be related to extent of the damage and deterioration. If damage is intermittent and constitutes less than 20% of the total plastered surface, then repair with new plaster is the best option and perhaps the most cost effective. If damage is substantial, 50% of the plastered surfaces or more, then it would be appropriate and cost effective to install a new monolithic finish of lightly textured, painted gypsum board (drywall). If the building has several rooms and the amount of damage per room varies, a combination of these treatments may be appropriate.

Preservation options should also consider the relative importance of historic spaces. If the spaces and the plaster finish are characteristically special, then plaster restoration should receive extra consideration and effort including elaborate molded plaster details and subtler details like rounded corners. Examples of spaces with primary historical importance include the sales area of a grocery

or other retail merchant, hotel and office lobbies, public waiting areas, auditoriums, main corridors, and the like. Historical service areas (storage rooms, mechanical rooms, loading dock and delivery rooms) with deteriorated plaster finishes might receive minimal plaster repair in favor of a uniform painted finish for remaining plaster and exposed brick as long as these areas are intended to remain inaccessible to the public. It is important to note that each building should be evaluated for its own unique history, existing conditions and details.

To learn more about historic plaster join us for a special session at the statewide preservation conference regarding the investigation and documentation of historic plaster and paint on Friday morning, June 8. The session will be presented by Jeff Greene of EverGreene Studios of New York. EverGreene's most recent Oklahoma projects include plaster restoration at the Hilton Skirvin and interior finishes evaluation at the Overholser Mansion, both in Oklahoma City. In the meantime, see "Preservation Brief #21, "Repairing Historic Flat Plaster Walls and Ceilings" at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief21.htm> for additional information..

Skirvin Hilton Opens

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opened its doors during a very special ceremony. The \$55 million rehabilitation evidences the importance of public/private partnerships and real teamwork in successful historic preservation projects and that historic preservation is a legitimate tool for community revitalization.

The significance of the Skirvin to Oklahoma City was emphasized by every speaker during the opening ceremonies, from Mayor Mick Cornett who recalled his high school prom at the hotel to City Councilperson Willa Johnson who worked as an elevator operator in the hotel for a summer and many others.

The Skirvin Hilton Hotel project clearly demonstrates that historic preservation works. The historic fabric and spaces that evoke the memories of community residents remain and work necessary to accommodate the needs of a modern, first-class hotel were accomplished in time for all of those basketball players and fans. The SHPO knows that readers will appreciate the Skirvin rehabilitation and invites you to attend the special statewide preservation conference session about the project. David H. Plank, Associate, Kahler Slater, Milwaukee, will deliver the presentation in Guthrie on June 6.

If you would like to receive email notices regarding preservation related grants, workshops and upcoming events, please forward your email address to:
info@preserveok.org

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Endangered Places 2007

On January 31, Preservation Oklahoma and the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office announced the 2007 Oklahoma's Most Endangered Historic Places. This annual list was established as a way to bring public attention to Oklahoma's diverse historic resources. This year's list includes:

Archeological Sites

Statewide

Oklahoma's archeological resources embody a rich heritage of human experiences and cultural identities. They tell us about people from the past and establish important connections to the present. These artifacts can be found everywhere, from a backyard to a freshly plowed field, making them particularly vulnerable to looters.

Boley Historic District

Boley

Established in 1903 as a settlement where African-Americans could escape oppression and govern themselves, Boley continues to preserve the legacy of the economic and political freedom achieved by its early pioneers. Its downtown historic district lacks the economic reinvestment needed for it to flourish.

Cemeteries

Statewide

Cemeteries are among the most valuable of our historic resources. They can reveal information about historic events, religion, lifestyles, and genealogy. Unfortunately, cemeteries are in danger due to vandalism and insensitive development.

Chilocco Indian School

Kay County

Chilocco was an Indian boarding school established to educate children of the nomadic tribes of western Oklahoma. The school grew from one building in 1884 to 35 buildings in 1907. The school offered both

academic and vocational instruction. A new use must be found for the campus to be saved.

Eagle Park (Quanah Parker Star House and the Indian Baptist Church)

Cache vicinity

Once operated as an amusement park, Eagle Park consists of several buildings, including Star House and the Indian Baptist Church. Star House was built for Quanah Parker, an Indian chief turned statesman. Without protection, this Oklahoma history will be lost.

Former Pawnee Indian Boys Dormitory

Pawnee

The Pawnee Indian Boarding School was one of the many federally funded boarding schools built for the purpose of assimilating Indian children into the mainstream United States culture. The boys dormitory was built in 1909, and closed with the rest of the school in 1958. It has since remained unused and suffers from water damage.

Judge H.L. Fogg Residence

El Reno

This home was remodeled between 1901-1904 for Judge H.L. Fogg. Due to high utility costs, renovation expenses and lack of qualified tradesmen, large rural homes such as these face an uncertain future.

Masonic Orphanage

Darlington

This three story concrete dormitory was built by the Masons as part of the orphanage they established in 1910. It closed in 1922 with the relocation of the Masonic Home to Guthrie, and it is threatened with demolition unless a new use can be found.

Mid-Century Elementary Schools

Blackwell

The four Blackwell Elementary Schools of
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Archeological Sites



Boley Historic District



Cemeteries



Chilocco Indian School



Eagle Park



Masonic Orphanage



Judge H.L. Fogg Residence



Former Pawnee Indian Boys Dormitory

Plans Finalized For 2007 Statewide Preservation Conference

Plans have been finalized for *Preservation Is a Capital Idea: Oklahoma's 19th Annual Statewide Preservation Conference* which will be held in historic downtown Guthrie. So, be sure to mark your calendars for June 6-8, 2007, for this special celebration of Oklahoma's heritage and its preservation.

Conference highlights include the keynote session (Thursday, June 7) featuring Peter H. Brink, Senior Vice President, Programs, National Trust for Historic Preservation. His presentation is entitled *Preservation Matters!*.

A few other special conference sessions include Deborah Slaton, Senior Consultant, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., Northbrook, IL, and author of the recent *Preservation Brief*

about historic structures reports, discussing the importance of sound preservation project planning (Wednesday, June 6); *Historic Window Seminar: Practical Information about Windows, Evaluating Significance, Assessing Condition, and Determining Appropriate Treatment* (Friday, June 8) conducted by Neal A. Vogel, Principal, Restoric, LLC, Evanston, IL, and Brooks Gentleman, Re-View, Kansas City, MO; and Jeff Greene, President, EverGreene Painting Studios, Inc., New York, NY, and consultant on the Skirvin Hilton Hotel and the Marland Mansion presenting *Investigation and Documentation of Historic Finishes, Plaster and Paint* (Friday, June 8).

One of several special events is Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.'s luncheon (Thursday, June 7)

featuring Donna Ann Harris, Principal, Heritage Consulting, Inc., Chicago, presenting *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses*. Based on her recent book on this topic, Ms. Harris will provide some very practical advice and stimulating discussion. Later that afternoon she will lead *Making Community Heritage the Focus of Main Street: A Workshop for Downtown Revitalization Program Managers*.

Watch your mail in late April for the conference registration brochure. You may also contact Melvena Heisch, Deputy SHPO, at 405/522-4484 or mheisch@okhistory.org or visit <http://www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm>.

New Historic Preservation Research Resource

The resources available for research of Oklahoma historic buildings has been given a tremendous boost. The recent online publication of a finding aid for the John William Kirschner Collection in the Research Division of the Oklahoma Historical Society has significantly increased those research capabilities. This collection expands the scope of the 343 known Oklahoma Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps by the addition of 1,021 fire insurance rating booklets describing 731 Oklahoma towns over a period ranging from 1896-1958. The booklets were published annually by the Oklahoma Inspection Bureau which was part of a national network of similar entities

working under the auspices of the National Board of Fire Underwriters.

These fire insurance rating booklets are keyed to the Sanborn and other fire insurance maps. Each booklet was issued in a specific year for a specific town and contains street names, lot and block numbers, owners, business activity, building heights, type of construction by code, and the fire insurance rating of buildings in that town. Although the explanation of construction by code designation (stone, brick, wood, roof type, etc.) is not always included in individual booklets, the information is available in state overviews elsewhere in the collection.

The Hirschner Collection offers several advantages over the Sanborn maps. Certainly ease of use and compactness is one, but the most important aspect involves revisions to buildings. Revisions in Sanborn maps are glued over the original drawings allowing only the latest view of the building. Revisions in the booklets are glued in at the spine providing access to a detailed history of structural change, ownership, and use of the building in question. Public access to this important resource was made possible thanks to the volunteer efforts of historian Dr. Bobby Weaver and is certain to help speed and expand the work of historic preservation.

National Trust Awards Grants to Oklahoma Projects

The Southwest Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation administers the Preservation Services Funds for Oklahoma. Congratulations to the following list of most recent recipients:

Town of Boley received \$1500 to produce a detailed evaluation of their historic water tower.

City of Vinita received \$3000 to produce a feasibility study to help determine space allocation, structural requirements and

cost estimates for the rehabilitation and restoration of their Courthouse.

Preservation El Reno received \$1500 in anticipation of working with Redlands Community College and the State of Oklahoma to restore and rehab the Masonic Orphanage Building in Darlington.

Saline Preservation Association received \$3000 to produce detailed architectural documentation of the Saline Courthouse and adjacent Springhouse.

El Reno Carnegie Library received \$4500 for roof structure reinforcement for the library building.

Oklahoma City Foundation of Architecture received \$1000 to help produce a book to celebrate central Oklahoma's architecture over the past 100 years.

For more information about the Preservation Services Fund program, contact Denise Alexander at denise_alexander@nthp.org

SHPO Announces May Workshops

The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office is pleased to announce its May workshop series. The sessions will be held May 9-11 in Carnegie Hall, 215 West Broadway, Elk City, OK. The workshops are free and open to the public, but we ask that you register by 5:00 pm, Wednesday,

May 2. To register contact Shea Otley at 405/521-6249 or sjotley@okhistory.org.

Registered architects who attend these workshops can earn American Institute of Architects Continuing Education System (AIA/CES) learning unit hours. For further

details about the credits, contact Catherine Montgomery, Historic Preservation Architect, at 405/522-4479 or catherinem@okhistory.org.

If you have questions about any of the workshops, contact Melvena Heisch, Deputy SHPO, at 405/522-4484 or mheisch@okhistory.org.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE AND DESCRIPTIONS:

May 9 (9:30am-12:00noon) ***The Section 106 Review Process: Introduction and Overview***

The half-day workshop provides the basics about Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and how the process works in Oklahoma. Specific topics include who is responsible for Section 106 compliance, when does Section 106 apply, what is the State Historic Preservation Office's role in the process, what other agencies are involved, what is a historic property, and what happens when a project will affect a historic property. The workshop is designed as a stand-alone session and as a companion to *Determination of Eligibility under Section 106*. Participants should also consider attending *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.

May 9 (1:30pm-5:00pm) ***Determination of Eligibility under Section 106***

The session provides a step-by-step description of how to document standing structures for the State Historic Preservation Office's review. Specific topics include a discussion of the National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation, how to complete the *Historic Preservation Resource Identification Form*, photograph requirements, what a determination of

eligibility means, how differences of opinion about eligibility are resolved, and when consultants may be helpful to agencies in preparing documentation for the Section 106 process. The session is designed as a stand-alone workshop or as a companion to *The Section 106 Review Process: Introduction and Overview*. Participants should also consider attending *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.

May 10 (9:30am-5:00pm) ***Working with the National Register of Historic Places***

The National Register of Historic Places is the foundation of the SHPO's programs, and a basic understanding of the register is essential for those involved in historic preservation at all levels of government and in the private sector. The workshop provides detailed information about the National Register criteria, what listing means, the rights of property owners in the nomination process, tips for preparing successful nominations, and much more.

May 11 (9:30am-12:00noon) ***Federal and State Tax Incentives for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings***

In this workshop participants will learn about the federal and state investment

tax credits for certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. A detailed discussion of the *Historic Preservation Certification Application*, Parts 1, 2, and 3 will guide owners and developers in successfully preparing the information needed for the State Historic Preservation Office to review the project and for the National Park Service to certify it. This session is designed as a stand-alone workshop or as a companion to *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.

May 11 (1:30pm-5:00pm) ***Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings***

The half-day workshop features a thorough discussion of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation*. Generally referred to as *The Standards*, these commonsense principles are widely used in the historic preservation field. Whether you are involved in a rehabilitation project for the 20% federal and 20% state tax credits, planning a rehabilitation project funded with federal assistance, serving on a local historic preservation commission, or just wanting to know the best approach to rehabilitating your historic private home, you will find this session invaluable. It is designed as a stand-alone workshop and as a companion to *Federal and State Tax Incentives for Rehabilitation*.

Archaeology Day is Coming!

The Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center is planning its Second Annual Archaeology Day on May 12, 2007, from 9am to 5pm. Visitors will enjoy re-enactors depicting the 1834-1838

occupation of Fort Coffee, lectures from archaeologists and special guided tours of Spiro Mounds.

Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center is

located 3 miles east of Spiro, Oklahoma on Highway 9/271.

For more information, contact Dennis Peterson at (918) 962-2062 or spiomds@ipa.net

Endangered Places 2007

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Huston, Washington, Parkside and Northside were the first project of the renowned architectural firm of Caudill, Rowlett and Scott. These neighborhood schools are in danger of being abandoned and replaced with a mega-school on the edge of town.

Route 66 Motels

From Sayre to Miami

Mom-and-pop motor courts, tourist cabins, restaurants and neon signs are all part of the legacy of the Route 66 motels that sprang up in the 1920's. Today, many have gone out of business and suffer the indignity of abandonment.



MidCentury Elementary Schools

Wheelock Academy

Millerton vicinity

Wheelock Academy was founded in 1832, shortly after the forced migration known as the Trail of Tears. Alfred and Harriet Wright, New England missionaries, made their way west with the Choctaws. Together, they developed a sophisticated educational program at Wheelock. Lack of funding and deterioration threaten this national landmark.

Wichita Falls and Northwestern Depot

Altus

Established to move merchandise and agriculture products into and out of Oklahoma

Territory, the Altus Depot stands as a symbol of the railroad's integral role in the growth of Altus and Oklahoma Territory. The Depot is threatened due to neglect and a lack of funds.



Wichita Falls and Northwestern Depot



Route 66 Motels



Wheelock Academy

National Register Nomination Grants Round 2 Deadline Reminder

The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reminds readers about its annual matching grants to state, local, and tribal governments and nonprofit organizations for the preparation of National Register of Historic Places nominations. The SHPO reserved \$10,000 of its FY 2007 Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) allocation from the U. S. Department of the Interior for award in two grant rounds. Applications and detailed instructions are available from the SHPO. The deadline for Round 2 applications is 5:00pm on June 1.

Each grant is limited to \$900.00, and the applicant must provide a nonfederal, cash match of at least \$600.00. Grant recipients will use the funds to retain an appropriately qualified professional to complete preparation of an individual property nomination for the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register is the catalogue of our nation's significant buildings, structures, sites, districts, objects, and landscapes important in our past. While listing in the National Register is not a guarantee of preservation or of financial assistance, it is one of the most important

components of the preservation strategy for any significant property. The designation provides increased public awareness of these irreplaceable resources, provides limited protection for them, qualifies property owners for federal tax credits under certain circumstances, and may qualify the property owner for grant assistance when such programs are funded.

To obtain a National Register Nomination Grant Application or further information about the National Register, contact the SHPO at 405/521-6249 or visit our website at www.okhistory.org/shpo/shpom.htm.

"Ask the Archeologist" in Newkirk

Dozens of "arm chair" archeologists shared their found treasures with Dr. Lee Bement and Dr. Richard Drass from the Oklahoma Archeological Survey at the University of Oklahoma. Among the hundreds of resources identified were points, fossils and mammoth teeth.

Many thanks to Karen Dye at the Newkirk

Main Street Authority for hosting "Ask the Archeologist." This event was part of the Oklahoma's Most Endangered Historic Places program, a shared project of Preservation Oklahoma and the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office. If you would like to host a similar event in your community, contact Heather Seifert at info@preserveok.org.



Dr. Richard Drass examines Points

Tribal Leaders Accept National Register Certificates for Chilocco

On March 4, certificates acknowledging the inclusion of the Chilocco Indian Agricultural School in the National Register of Historic Places were presented to leaders of the Tribes who own the former BIA boarding school. Melvena Heisch, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, participated in a ceremony hosted by the Council of Confederated Chilocco Tribes and the Chilocco Alumni Association. More than 300 former students, employees and persons for whom Chilocco holds a special place attended the ceremony. The ceremony, highlighted by traditional songs, was held on the campus, surrounded by the historic stone buildings that comprise the school.

Chilocco, closed by the BIA in 1980, has been empty since 1999. The school was added to Preservation Oklahoma's Most Endangered Historic Properties list in 2004. The Council of Confederated Chilocco Tribes is working on a master

plan for the campus in hopes of returning it to a viable use that both honors the memories of the students and looks forward for the benefit of the tribes. On September 8, 2006, the campus was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The listing of the campus at the national level of significance can be used as a tool for the future rehabilitation of the facility.

The State Historic Preservation Office is pleased to be a partner in the placement of the school in the National Register and in assisting the tribal owners in any future plans.



Tribal Leaders and SHPO Representatives at National Register Presentation

For his tireless efforts in promoting the preservation of Chilocco, Brett Carter, board member of Preservation Oklahoma, was presented a plaque and a blanket by Dan Jones of the Ponca Tribe.



Bret Carter honored at Event

Preservation Awards 2007

Nomination Form Deadline is May 15, 2007

Preservation projects happen ONLY because of the efforts of local citizens across our state. Preservation Oklahoma would like to applaud the work of these individuals and groups whose tenacity, courage and determination are the backbone of successful preservation projects across Oklahoma. We are eager to compile our 2007 Preservation Awards recipients, and would like to solicit your assistance. Help us identify candidates whose work in historic preservation is noteworthy by returning the completed form below.

Two awards will be given:

- 1) The Award for PUBLIC LEADERSHIP.
- 2) The Award for ADVOCACY.

The Preservation Awards will be presented at Preservation Oklahoma's Annual Meeting, June 7, 2007 in Guthrie.

Name of Candidate: Individual or Group _____

Award Category (Public Leadership or Advocacy) _____

Candidate's address _____

Candidate's telephone or email _____

Name of person/group nominating candidate _____

Nominator's telephone or email _____

On a separate piece of paper, in 150 words or less, please describe why you believe this candidate should receive this award. Feel free to attach additional sheets of paper, and Letters of Recommendation.

Please return this form to: Preservation Oklahoma, 405 NW 15th, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73103
Need more information? Email info@preserveok.org

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Tulsa

Anna Eddings
Norman

Jane and Pete Holcombe

Oklahoma City

Konrad Keesee

Oklahoma City

Lillian Taylor

Ponca City

Vernacular

Jane and Wayland W. Bowser

Norman

Martha and LeRoy Fisher

Stillwater

Join Preservation Oklahoma today

and become a member of the Statewide Preservation Network.

Preservation Oklahoma's goal is to encourage the preservation of Oklahoma's historic places through advocacy, education and leadership.

As a member, you become part of a vital network of individuals and organizations working to rebuild communities, strengthen neighborhoods, restore historic properties...*you become part of Oklahoma's future.*

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from (if gift)

- Victorian \$10,000 or more
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- International \$500 - \$999
- Colonial Revival \$250 - \$499
- Arts and Crafts \$100 - \$249
- Vernacular up to \$100

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