

OKLAHOMA LANDMARKS INVENTORY NOMINATION

Oklahoma Historic Preservation Survey, Oklahoma State University, 502 Math-Science Bldg., Stillwater, OK 74078

SOURCE OF NOMINATION: Contract Survey

COMMERCE HIGH SCHOOL AND GYMNASIUM

LOCATION: Commerce and Cherry Streets, Commerce, Oklahoma 040, Ottawa County 115

CLASSIFICATION: building; public; public acquisition--N/A; occupied; unrestricted; present use--educational

OWNER: Board of Education, Commerce Public Schools, 420 D Street, Commerce, OK 74339

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Ottawa County Courthouse, Miami, OK 74354

DESCRIPTION: excellent condition; altered; original site

The Commerce High School building is rectangular (136' x 103') and constructed of red bricks. The roof over the classrooms is flat, while over the gym it is hipped with a deck. Parapets characterize both. The front entry is recessed and framed by poured concrete pilasters and a lintel that reaches the roof line. Window openings have brick sills and now contain new, fixed metal encased windows. The front entry has also been enclosed with glass doors and sidelights and covered by a new porch supported by steel pipe. The alterations do not impeach the architectural integrity of the structure. The structure, however, was initiated by the Oklahoma Emergency Relief Administration and finished by WPA labor.

SIGNIFICANCE: 1935; builder/architect: unknown

The significance of the building is in its economic contribution to the community of Commerce at a time when the lead and zinc mines of the region had fallen on hard times and miners were destitute and on relief. Construction of the building provided wages for more than 20,000 man hours of labor that were infused into the local economy and enabled workers to feed their families and maintain their self respect. Additionally, the building has been an important educational resource for the community, continuing with this service until the present time. Perhaps it is also notable that it is the building in which Mickey Mantle went to high school.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Acreage: less than one acre

Quadrangle: Picher, Okla.
1:24,000/7.5 min.

UTM: undetermined

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: From the intersection of Cherry and Commerce streets go south 200 feet, east 240 feet, north 200 feet, and west 240 feet.

PICTURE REFERENCE: none