

OKLAHOMA LANDMARKS INVENTORY NOMINATION

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

SOURCE OF NOMINATION: Contract Survey

SHARPE MEMORIAL PARK RODEO ARENA AND GRANDSTAND

LOCATION: 2nd and Van Buren Streets, Purcell, Oklahoma 040, McClain County 087

CLASSIFICATION: structure; public; public acquisition--N/A; occupied; unrestricted; present use--recreation

OWNER: City of Purcell, 3rd and Main Streets, Purcell, OK 73080

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION: McClain County Courthouse, Purcell, OK 73080

DESCRIPTION: excellent; altered; original site

Situated on the west edge of the rodeo arena, the grandstand is J-shaped and is constructed of poured concrete. Rising 12 tiers and extending 302 feet, it sets into a hillside and is entered from the top, or street level. A steel pipe fence surrounding the arena and separating it from the grandstand is new, and a wood roof supported by heavy poles has been removed. These changes notwithstanding, the essential integrity of the grandstands remains unimpeached.

SIGNIFICANCE: 1938; architect/builder: unknown

The rodeo arena and grandstands is significant because it reflects the willingness of the WPA to adapt its construction program to unique regional interests. Purcell had a large hinterland devoted to the range cattle industry where the "round-up" was an integral part of daily life and the "rodeo" a principal recreational activity. Other communities chose to build football stadiums with WPA labor, but Purcell elected to construct a rodeo arena and grandstand--one of the few so constructed in the state. WPA officials consented, an act demonstrating the flexibility of the agency's guidelines. Construction also provided job opportunities for unemployed agriculture workers whose economic standing had vanished with the onset of the national depression.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Acreage: less than one acre

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

UTM: A-14 649640 3876580; B-14 649630 3876500

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Lots 1 and 2, 7 and 8, Block 36, Purcell original plat.

PICTURE REFERENCE: 41-a; 41-b