

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR 1-21-04

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building

other names/site number Arkansas City Hall, Site #MI0138

2. Location

street & number Walnut and Third streets

not for publication

city or town Texarkana

vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Miller code 091 71854

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination
request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets
does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Carolee M. ...
Signature of certifying official/Title

11/20/03
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the
National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the
National Register.

removed from the National
Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Railroad Era Resources of Southwest Arkansas, 1870-1945

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/government office

GOVERNMENT/fire station

RECREATION AND CULTURE/auditorium

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/government office

GOVERNMENT/fire station

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/

Late Gothic Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls STONE

roof METAL

other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture, Entertainment/Recreation, Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1927-1954

Significant Dates

1927-1954

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

Witt, Seibert & Halsey, Architect

Stewart McGehee Construction Company, Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Checkboxes for previous documentation on file (NPS).

Primary location of additional data:

- Checkboxes for primary location of additional data.

Name of repository:

Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building
Name of Property

Miller County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property Less than one.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>403361</u>	<u>3698535</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet

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 Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date October 13, 2003
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

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.)

Property Owner

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

name City of Texarkana, Arkansas
street & number 216 Walnut Street telephone
city or town Texarkana state AR zip code 71854

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SUMMARY

The Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building is located at the eastern corner of Walnut and 3rd streets in downtown Texarkana. It is constructed out of gray stone and rests on a continuous stone foundation. The building is divided into three parts with the auditorium occupying the large center section of the building. The two smaller side wings are occupied by the city government offices and the fire station. The building is covered in a metal mansard roof. The architects for the building, Witt, Seibert, and Halsey, chose a combination of the Collegiate Gothic and Art Deco styles for the design, and it remains a good example of the styles.

ELABORATION

The Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building is located in downtown Texarkana at the eastern corner of Walnut and 3rd streets. It is about two-and-one-half blocks from the Arkansas/Texas state line. Since the building was built in 1927-1930, it has served as the municipal hub of the city. The building's three sections house the auditorium in the large center section, and the city government offices and fire station in the two flanking wings. The building also houses the city jail.

The building is constructed out of gray stone and rests on a continuous stone foundation. It currently has metal, tripartite, Chicago-style windows in most of the openings that replaced the original multi-paned windows. A metal mansard roof currently covers the building, which replaced the original terra cotta tile roof.

Front/Northwest Façade

The left section of the front façade contains the fire station for the city. The first floor of the section contains three roll-up garage doors providing access to the three garage bays where the fire engines are stored. Above the three entrances are the words "TEXARKANA," "FIRE," and "DEPARTMENT." Medallions with fire fighting related motifs are present above the words. Each of the three bays on the second floor contains a metal, tripartite, Chicago-style window.

The central portion of the building contains the auditorium space. The first floor of the façade contains a central entrance with metal and glass entrance doors. A sixteen-paned fanlight window is present above the entrance. The entrance is flanked on each side by a set of former entrances that contain two wood doors with nine-panes of glass in them. Each of the former entrances is also surmounted by a sixteen-paned fanlight window. The central entrances are flanked on each side by a slight projection in the wall that contains a bronze plaque. The left plaque contains a dedication to the soldiers of Miller County who served in World War I, and the plaque on the right contains information on the architect and builder of the building as well as information on the city officials at the time of its construction.

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The second floor of the auditorium contains three sets of French doors with ten panes of glass in each door. Each pair of doors has a semi-circular fanlight with spider-web glass pattern above it. In front of each set of doors is a small iron balcony with decorative spindles. From left to right, the iron balconies have the letters A. M. A., which likely stand for Arkansas Municipal Auditorium. The third floor of the auditorium space contains three pairs of eight-paned metal casement windows.

In between the third floor and top floor of the auditorium are three sets of decorative stone panels, one devoted to "CIVIC DUTY," one devoted to "JUSTICE," and one devoted to "PROSPERITY." The top floor of the auditorium contains three sets of windows in the center portion. Although they all originally had stained-glass in them, only the center two windows retain it. The other windows have single-panes of clear glass. In the projections that flank the center section, the top floor contains a single window with a single pane of clear glass. A decorative urn is placed in front of each of the recessed windows.

The right section of the building contains the city hall offices. The bottom floor contains three bays, each with a metal, tripartite, Chicago-style window. In between the first and second floors, like on the fire station façade, are medallions with government related motifs. The second floor also has three bays with a metal, tripartite, Chicago-style window that is taller than the windows on the first floor.

Side/Southwest Façade

The southwest façade is the main façade for the city hall portion of the building. The city hall portion of the façade is seven bays wide. The central bay on the first floor contains the main entrance to city hall. The entrance projects slightly from the façade and contains a set of two metal and glass entrance doors with a semi-circular pane of glass above. The central entrance is flanked on each side by three bays, each with a metal, tripartite, Chicago-style window. In between the first and second floors, as on the front façade, all of the bays, except for the center one, have medallions with government related motifs. The second floor contains seven metal, tripartite, Chicago-style windows that are taller than the windows on the first floor.

The southwest façade of the auditorium space, which is visible to the left and above the city hall façade, has three single eight-paned windows to the left of the city hall portion of the building. They are located on the second through fourth levels. Above the city hall façade are four locations for stained-glass windows at the top of the façade.

Rear/Southeast Façade

The left side of the rear façade is the city hall portion of the building. The main floor of the building, which is accessed by a raised stone porch, has a single metal-framed, double-hung, two-over-two window followed by an entrance. To the right of the entrance is a pair of metal-framed, double-hung, two-over-two windows

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followed by another entrance with two metal-framed, double-hung, two-over-two windows to its right. The second floor of the city hall on this façade has no fenestration.

The rear façade of the auditorium section of the building accesses the jail. The bottom floor contains a recessed entrance on the left side followed by a single window. Another recessed entrance is to the right of the window, and it is followed by an entrance that is not recessed. The four levels above that contain six windows with metal bars oriented towards the right side of this section. Each floor also contains a single metal-framed, double-hung, two-over-two window on the left side of the section.

The rear façade of the fire station portion of the building contains a stairway on the far left side providing access to the main floor. To the right of the stair is a ramp that leads to a recessed garage entrance allowing access to the main fire engine garage from the rear of the building. On the top floor, above the recessed garage entrance, is a pair of metal-framed, double-hung, two-over-two windows. To the right of the recessed garage entrance on each of the levels are pairs of metal-framed, double-hung, two-over-two windows.

Side/Northeast Façade

The northeast façade of the building is mainly comprised of the side of the fire station. The side façade of the fire station is eight bays wide. The left two bays contain three levels due to the sloping nature of the site. The southern-most bay has a pair of metal-framed, double-hung, two-over-two windows. The next bay moving north has an entrance on the first level and a pair of metal-framed, double-hung, two-over-two windows on the top level. The middle level has no fenestration, but has a metal stove pipe coming out of it. The rest of the bays on the façade, which have only two levels are fenestrated with pairs of metal-framed, double-hung, two-over-two windows.

INTEGRITY

The Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building has good overall integrity. The two main alterations to the exterior of the building are the replacement of the windows and the replacement of the roof. Although the windows have been replaced, the current windows maintain the size of the original openings. With respect to the roof, it has maintained the historic form of the roof. Even with the alterations, the building is still the governmental center of Texarkana, Arkansas, and is easily recognizable when compared to photographs taken shortly after the building's construction in 1927-1930. Today, the building remains an excellent example of the blending of the Collegiate Gothic and Art Deco styles of architecture.

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SUMMARY

The Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of government in Texarkana, its associations with the growth of Texarkana that paralleled the growth of the railroad in the region, and for its associations with entertainment and recreation in the city. The auditorium in the building has served as a recreational and cultural gathering place for this community during much of the twentieth-century. In addition, the building was built for use by Texarkana as a fire station, jail, courtroom and city offices. The construction of the building in the late 1920s was also a response to the growth of Texarkana as a result of the growth of the railroad industry in the vicinity. The Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building is also being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion C** as an unusual example of a building designed combining the Art Deco and Collegiate Gothic styles of architecture. The Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building, is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property listing "Railroad Era Resources of Southwest Arkansas, 1870-1945" in conjunction with the historic context "Railroad Era Resources of Southwest Arkansas (Lafayette, Little River, Miller and Sevier Counties), 1870-1945."

ELABORATION

The early history of Texarkana is intimately linked to the development of the railroad in the area. The city of Texarkana grew out of construction camps that were established at the western end of the Cairo & Fulton railroad line and the eastern end of the Texas & Pacific line. The officials of both railroads recognized that the terminus would be an ideal place for a town site, especially since the two lines were constructed using two different gauges, and required that railroad cars be shifted from one line to the other for several years. As a result, on December 8, 1873, the Texas & Pacific began selling building lots on the Texas side, and shortly afterwards the Cairo & Fulton followed suit in Arkansas.

The fact that Texarkana was an important railroad junction caused the city to grow rapidly as railroad traffic grew in the area. By the 1920s, Texarkana was a major railroad center in the region, and this was evidenced by the construction of the Texarkana Union Station (NR listed 10/19/78) from 1928 until 1930. The growth of the city in the late 1920s that paralleled the growth of the railroad brought about the need for a new municipal building.

The City of Texarkana, Arkansas, decided to build a municipal building that would be a multipurpose building to serve four separate functions for its citizens – city hall, fire station, auditorium, and jail. The architectural firm of Witt, Seibert, and Halsey of Texarkana was hired to design the structure, and they used the unusual combination of the Collegiate Gothic and Art Deco styles for the building. Although the Collegiate Gothic style had been popular throughout the 1920s, the Art Deco style was just gaining in popularity at the time the building was built.

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Built over a three year period by the Stewart McGehee Construction Company beginning in 1927, the first section opened in June 1928, as the municipal auditorium. The jail, city hall and fire station were opened at later dates, with completion in 1930. The entire structure was located in the central commerce area of the twin cities located on the state line between Texas and Arkansas.

At that time this building was built in 1927-1930, there was no theater, concert stage, or audience space for 1,000 people in the city. While Texarkana has always been a twin city in both Texas and Arkansas, the Municipal Building served the entire community population in the twin cities for performing arts and a gathering place for civic functions. With its city hall, jail and fire station functions, it was uniquely designed to be multipurpose for the Arkansas-side residents.

Community-wide, the auditorium was the primary place for dance recitals, piano recitals of students of Frances Braden and guitar students of Cora Cook, theater productions by the Tex Rep group, as well as school productions. Fashion Shows for the ladies were sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and held in the auditorium.

During the World War II era, the railroads through Texarkana were significant in bringing large numbers of visitors and military troops through the area. This auditorium became an important stage for emerging vocalists and musicians and variety shows to entertain the travelers. In 1942, Louis Armstrong appeared, as well as some of the noted Big Bands like the Jay Franks Band. Hotels near the auditorium thrived during this era including a ballroom atop the tallest hotel in town, Hotel Grim.

By the early 1950s the music scene was changing and the Big Bands were being replaced with the new "rock and roll" music emerging from the Country & Western genre, often referred to as "rockabilly". Starting in 1954, some very significant young performers were onstage at the auditorium, including several performances by Elvis Presley. During his early career, he traveled between Nashville, Tennessee (the Country & Western recording music center), Memphis, Tennessee (an important area for rhythm and blues artists) and Shreveport, Louisiana, to the Louisiana Hayride (a very popular Country & Western variety show broadcast to a large region on radio). Because of the strategic location of Texarkana to those cities and the audiences available due to the railroads and surrounding communities, Texarkana was a popular stop-over for young performers, such as Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Hank Snow, Roy Acuff, Jimmie Ed Maxim Brown, George Jones, Floyd Cramer, Johnny Horton and Roy Orbison. A story during that time relates a time in the 1950s when Elvis was to perform but was delayed by a car fire on his trip here. A local talent, "Cheesy" Nelson took the stage that night and was later praised by Elvis, saying "you can go far in this business." Dr. Nelson remained in Texarkana and became the Texarkana College president for 30 years.

In 1956, local musicians were evolving as new jazz and "rockabilly" backups to visiting artists. The Auditorium became the first place in Texarkana for a mixed-race stage performance in Texarkana.

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A significant event, called the "The Evolution of Jazz," featured a band with a local black trumpeter, Artis L. Brewster, who was at that time only known in the Texarkana area. In 1946, his segregated black high school baccalaureate was held in the auditorium. For quite some time local talent put together weekly shows slated as "the Big T Jamboree" in the auditorium. Among those young talents were Pat Cupp, (later Rock and Roll Hall of Fame guitarist), Bill Manning (drummer) and Jerry Atkins (saxophonist). The auditorium remained a center of Texarkana's cultural life until it was closed in the mid-1970s.


Although the auditorium closed in the mid-1970s, the building has served as the fire station, city hall, and jail since it was fully opened in 1930. Although renovations have taken place on the interior, the integrity of most of the exterior architectural features has been maintained. Only the windows and the terra cotta tile mansard roof have been replaced, both done at an unknown date.

Significant renovations were done from the late 1960s through the late 1980s in various parts of the building. In 1968, the court room in the city hall was renovated into the city board room by John E. Moore, Jr., or Moore and Thomas Architects in Texarkana along with Q. W. Hargrove, Consulting Engineers from Shreveport, Louisiana. In 1977, the architectural firms of Herb Crumpton, Architect, and Reinheimer & Associates, along with Howie and Howie, Consulting Engineers, designed a false floor in the auditorium at the level of the stage to create office space in the lower level (which would be the basement level of the City Hall area). These newly expanded offices were then in the areas of the auditorium dressing rooms and orchestra pit. In 1988, the City Engineer was responsible for renovations, creating fire station offices by expanding into the first floor of the front part of the auditorium.

The Municipal Building has been a center in the life of Texarkana for over 70 years. Although the auditorium has been closed, it is hoped that the space can be restored and returned to its place as one of the great cultural venues in Texarkana. Even with the auditorium not in use, the building remains the governmental center of the community, and a great example of the Art Deco and Collegiate Gothic styles of architecture

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with the development of government in Texarkana, its associations with the growth of Texarkana that paralleled the growth of the railroad in the region, and for its associations with entertainment and recreation in the city. The auditorium in the building has served as a recreational and cultural gathering place for this community during much of the twentieth-century. In addition, the building was built for use by Texarkana as a fire station, jail, courtroom and city offices. The construction of the building in the late 1920s was also a response to the growth of Texarkana as a result of the growth of the railroad industry in the vicinity. The Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building is also being nominated to the National Register under **Criterion C** as an unusual example of a building

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designed combining the Art Deco and Collegiate Gothic styles of architecture. The Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building, is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property listing "Railroad Era Resources of Southwest Arkansas, 1870-1945" in conjunction with the historic context "Railroad Era Resources of Southwest Arkansas (Lafayette, Little River, Miller and Sevier Counties), 1870-1945."

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Architectural plans for the building and its renovations.

Atkins, Jerry, et al. Interview with Judy Walter. 5 August 2003.

Sai, Prashansa. "Municipal Auditorium Restoration in Works." *Texarkana Gazette*, 28 August 2002.

Wright, Robert (City Manager of Texarkana, Arkansas). Telephone conversation with Judy Walter. 2003.

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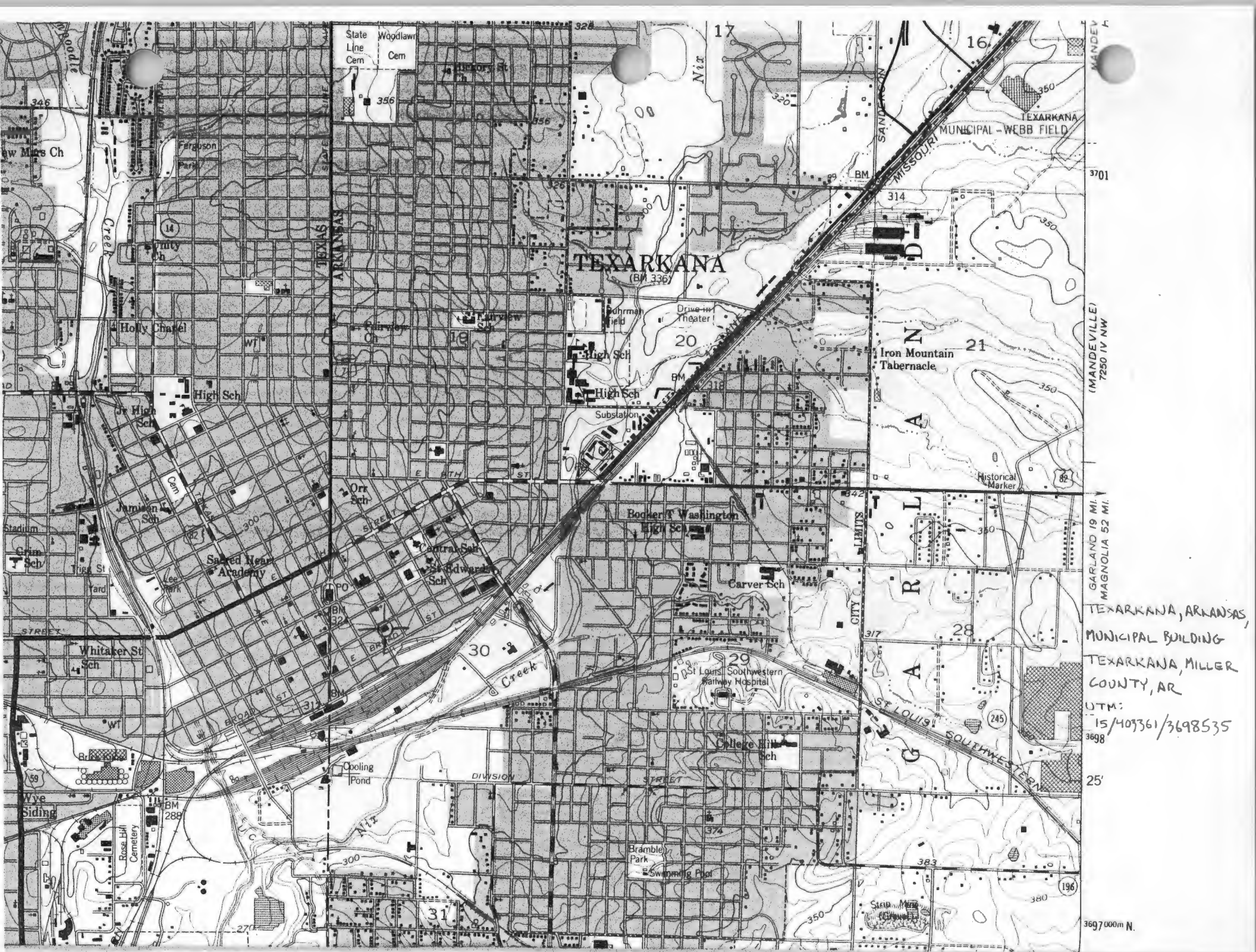
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 16, 17, 18 of Block 70, original town of Texarkana, Arkansas.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary contains the land that is currently associated with the Texarkana, Arkansas, Municipal Building.



MANDVILLE
7250 IV NW
GARLAND 19 MI.
MAGNOLIA 52 MI.
TEXARKANA, ARKANSAS,
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
TEXARKANA, MILLER
COUNTY, AR
UTM:
15/403361/3698535
3698
25'
3697000m N.

