



FIGURE 1.1
SEED-SOWER SKETCH

EXPLORING THE ARCHITECTURE ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

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HONOR'S THESIS

FALL 2019



FIGURE 1.2: BIZZELL MEMORIAL LIBRARY, 1982 EXPANTION



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INTRODUCTION

As the title suggests, this paper presents itself as more than merely a historical account of the evolving architecture at the University of Oklahoma. Indeed, I have spent the past few months diving into how these buildings came about, the transition from the Collegiate Gothic Style into Modern Architecture, as well as the abstract implications of what the architecture says about this university.

Architecture is a peculiar field of study, from my point of view, because I have noticed that designing a building requires more than erecting four stark walls strangled with brick and a small rectangular hole for the door; designing a building is defining a culture. Take a moment to absorb that. Buildings make first impressions of cities, governments, universities, businesses, etc. Therefore, what we build, renovate, and tear down here at the university says everything about what we stand for and what we hope to become.

In the past couple decades, a resurgence of the Collegiate Gothic style has clawed its way back into relevancy and fought for its seat as the style that defines not only the look but also the culture of this university. The worst part is we let that happen. We let the university's PR and marketing teams tell us how we should view our architectural history rather than taking a moment to explore and unpack it for ourselves. Not every building on campus is Collegiate Gothic. As such, we should not allow it to mask the other interesting styles spanning across campus. An important part of historical preservation lies in keeping one's own biases in check. In his article "The Ethics of Historic Preservation," Dr. Erich Matthes describes historic preservation as "fundamentally

concerned with our sense of self and our relationships with others!" To rephrase that, every building has history behind it, so our decisions to preserve and celebrate certain buildings over others relates back not to the history of the building itself, but instead to the cultural significance the building has received from the general populous.

Focusing on the transition from Collegiate Gothic to Modern architecture leads as the driving force behind this paper. Highlighting our own pioneers such as Henry L. Kamphoefner, Richard Kuhlman, and Bruce Goff further accentuates the goal of progression and the desire for student experience over a display of the past. At its heart, Modern architecture seeks to question our perceived boundaries whether physical, social, mental, emotional, or cultural. Therefore, the turning point between Collegiate Gothic and Modern architecture that followed the end of World War II marks as well a turning point in the University's beliefs and values.

NOTES

1. Erich Hatala Matthes. "The Ethics of Historic Preservation." *Philosophy Compass* 11, no. 12 (December 2016): 792.



FIGURE I.3: THURMAN J. WHITE FORUM, OCCE COMPLEX, INTERIOR HALLWAY

PART 1: AMERICAN COLLEGIATE GOTHIC

OVERVIEW

After the Land run of 1889, the white settlers of Oklahoma Territory were eager to establish numerous institutions across the territory in an effort to provide what they would deem “civilization” to the land². So, when the new governmental congress of Oklahoma Territory first took their seats in 1890, they established the capital and three institutions for upper-level education. One of those institutions would become the state university sitting on the piece of prairie in the town of Norman, Oklahoma³. However, the founding of the university did not make the funds for a building appear in the treasury. In fact, the call for an architect did not happen until “Probably. . . December 1891⁴”. Architect H.M. Hadley from Topeka won the Board of Regent’s approval, and in August of 1893, the original university building completed construction, and the doors opened for school⁵.

Of course, the completed building was designed in the Collegiate Classic style, which was based on classical Greek/Roman/Italian Renaissance buildings and typical of the time period for collegiate and governmental architecture because of its ties to early European democracies. Yet, after a horrific fire decimated the original building in 1903, the campus built two new structures with a slightly different architectural approach⁶. The Carnegie Building and Old Science Hall stand out on the university’s campus because of their low-pitched roofs with deep over-hangs, reminiscent to some of the work in Frank Lloyd Wright’s Prairie School approach, combined with a Collegiate Classic style gave

these buildings a unique look at the time, which stands out amongst the definitively Collegiate Gothic buildings that immediately followed⁷. Although these two buildings evoke classical tastes and styling, the minimal approach to lines and ornamentation suggest an early twentieth century modernist style similar to, but predating and not mimicking, the approach of Italian Fascist Architecture in the 1930s. A comparable building would be the the office building on the north side of the Piazza Augusto Imperatore in Rome designed by architect Vittorio Ballio Morpurgo.

Officially, the campus did not regulate a certain style of architecture until the construction of Evans Hall in 1912, perhaps one of the most influential buildings on campus to this day. Before its erection, the OU Regents had a serious meeting about the future look of the campus. After enthusiastic arguments from Vernon Parrington about choosing Gothic over Classical, the Regents consented, and Gothic became the official style for OU’s architecture⁸. This was another (or rather THE other) popular style for universities because while the classical style called for strict regulations on building placements, the gothic approach allowed for a more organic placement of buildings⁹. What both styles have in common, though, is their tie to Anglo-Saxon supremacy. In his article “American Collegiate Gothic,” Professor Glenn Patton of The Ohio State University describes the style as “In opposition to foreign values and ideologies,” which, in Oklahoma Territory, would include the Native



FIGURE 1.4: EVANS HALL, MAIN ENTRANCE

American Tribes and their ways of life¹⁰.

However, it should be clarified that an attack on these early buildings on the grounds of intolerance is not the purpose of this paper. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these slanted ideals were not only common but expected. They are merely products of their time. So, it is important to understand and respect the architecture of this time period regardless of its meaning or conceptual background.

By this point in the paper, the use of the phrase “Collegiate Gothic” rather than the vastly over-marketed “Cherokee Gothic” may have become a source of confusion. With the amount of passion and confidence in which the university promotes the “Cherokee Gothic” as the symbol of the university and representation of its values, one may not think of the phrase as problematic, but unfortunately it is. First and foremost, the word “Cherokee” describes a specific group of people who had nothing to do with Gothic architecture, which originated in 12th Century Europe. The lens given to us to view “Cherokee Gothic” presents a celebration of unity between the natives and the settlers, but another lens to look through presents it as a celebration of assimilation and conquering of indigenous peoples. Therefore, a couple professors have recommended the text of this paper refer to it as “Prairie Gothic” in this paper, including the overseer of this research paper, Professor Luca Guido.

Secondly, the origin of the phrase “Cherokee Gothic” is unknown. Any website, newspaper, administrator, or tour guide will confidently and enthusiastically proclaim famous American architect Frank Lloyd Wright as the originator of the phrase after attending a campus tour in 1952 and falling in love with the library. According to historic audio recordings, this is a misquotation. During Wright’s address—to which can be listened in full on the Gibbs College of Architecture YouTube channel—to students in the Oklahoma Memorial

Union, he had this to say about the Prairie Gothic style:

Somebody asked me of what I thought of- of Gothic on the plains of Oklahoma, and I was reminded of a story I’ve remembered my life long of Old Doctor Johnson, who asked by a very enthusiastic woman, would witness the performances of her trained dog standing on his hind legs and doing various other tricks, if he didn’t think it was remarkable. ‘No, Madam,’ he said, ‘it is not remarkable but the fact that he should have done it at all is remarkable.’ And that’s the way I feel [chuckles] about Collegiate Gothic on the plains of Oklahoma¹¹.

Clearly, Mr. Wright showed a less-than-impressed attitude toward the Prairie Gothic style on campus. So, the label “Cherokee Gothic” falls not only into a misquotation of “Collegiate Gothic,” but also into a misrepresentation of Mr. Wright’s beliefs and values. He goes on in his speech to paint a picture of a soulless, cultureless America that relies on the forms of cultures past without creating anything for itself¹². Though, the speech overall presented an uplifting, call-to-action message in which the future would boast architecture of which to be proud.:

JOSEPH SMAY AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Beginning in the College of Engineering, the School of Architecture at DU got its start under the vision of Joseph Smay. In 1931, the DU Regents officially founded the School of Architecture and named Smay Director¹³. Smay was eager to build a curriculum focused on architecture since he believed a fundamental understanding of architecture distinguished the cultured from the uncultured¹⁴. It was he who drafted the plan for the university's original five-year Bachelor of Architecture program¹⁵. In his article "The Future of Architecture," Smay also names the other programs added since the schools founding had how they integrated curriculum with other colleges on campus. Architecture combined classes from the College of Engineering and School of Art, the Landscape Architecture program combined the previous two with classes in the Department of Botany, and City Planning program combined the previous three with classes in the College of Business¹⁶.

Specifically looking at the architecture program, Smay based his curriculum off the popular Beaux-Arts teachings¹⁷. Beginning in Paris, the Beaux-Arts curriculum focused on the architectural design and construction of the classical world. The main goal was that exercises in drawing and sketching plans, details, sections, etc., would prepare students for a career. These exercises would also serve as a presentation of knowledge in classical proportioning, detailing, and layering¹⁸. Because the official university style was still Prairie Gothic at this point, it makes sense that the School of Architecture would focus on classics and the Beaux-Arts curriculum when instructing its students.

In terms of physical architecture, Smay designed two buildings for the university in the 1930s, Adams Hall for the school of business and Richards Hall

for the school of biology and zoology. An interesting fact about Richards Hall lies hidden in plain sight, integrated within the detailing of the building. Over each entry way, figures of insects and animals adorn the stone arches, letting anyone who should enter know that contained inside is the department of biology and zoology.

BUILDINGS

Below, I have compiled a list of notable buildings from this era arranged chronologically from first-built to last-built. Each contains the year of its initial completion,

years of completed expansions (where applicable), and a short description of its conceptualization and importance to the University.

BEATRICE CARR WALLACE OLD SCIENCE HALL- 1904

Known more commonly to university professors and students as simply "Old Science Hall," this building was one of two built in response to the 1903 fire that burned the original (and only) campus building. In fact, it was paid for by a portion of the insurance money from the fire¹⁹. Today, Old Science Hall is the oldest building on campus. Old Science Hall stands out on the university's campus because of its low-pitched roof with deep over-hangs, reminiscent to some of the work in Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie School approach, combined with a Collegiate Classic style gave this building a unique look at the time, which stands out amongst the definitively Collegiate Gothic buildings that immediately followed²⁰.



CARNEGIE BUILDING- 1904

This is the other building on campus built in response to the 1903 fire. Yet, while Old Science was funded by insurance money, the Carnegie Building was gladly funded by Andrew Carnegie himself after President Boyd asked if he would assist in the campus reconstruction²¹. The architectural approach of this building is in line with that of Old Science Hall.



EVANS HALL- 1912

Another tragic fire in 1907 burned the second main building, the path was paved for Evans Hall to stand as the third structure to claim the title of "Main Building." on the university's campus. Construction of Evans Hall in 1912, perhaps one of the most influential buildings on campus to this day. Before its erection, the DU Regents had a serious meeting about the future look of the campus. After enthusiastic arguments from Vernon Parrington about choosing Gothic over Classical, the Regents consented, and Gothic became the official style for DU's architecture²⁷.



MONNET HALL- 1913

With its gray, stone exterior, Monnet Hall stands out amongst other early university buildings. Monnet was originally built to house the law program²³, which had been confined to the basement of the Carnegie Building, which was converted into classroom spaces after the fire in 1907²⁴.



CHEMISTRY BUILDING- 1916

Balancing out the North Oval as the only other gray, stone building, the Chemistry Building stares across at Monnet Hall in an act of ideal symmetry, reminiscent of Italian Renaissance city planning. The building was originally named Debarr Hall, the founder of the chemistry department; however, the name was changed in 1988 due to Professor Debarr's ties to the Ku Klux Klan²⁵.



ARMORY- 1919

Amidst the frenzy of World War I, so many young men enlisted in the military that educational institutions, including the University of Oklahoma, feared for their future because of their notable loss of finances²⁶. To address this issue, the United States Congress established the Student Army Training Corps (SATC) which allowed Universities to transform into, essentially, military bases where undergraduate men trained for combat²⁷. During this period, the construction of a building dedicated to the function of an armory moved forward, but by the time of its completion, the war had ended. Disbanding in December of 1918, the SATC paved the way for the new ROTC program, which still inhabits the Armory building to this day²⁸.



WHITEHAND HALL- 1921

Formerly known as Albert Hall, Whitehand Hall developed under the original direction of the Free Masons as a male dormitory. At the time of its construction, the only options for on-campus housing were fraternity houses, and this dormitory took a similar approach in that it preferred to house members, but it differed because there was still the option for non-members to live there. Although not officially a campus building at the time, Whitehand Hall stepped off in the right direction in an effort to provide on-campus housing. The University purchased Whitehand from the Masons in 1946³⁰.



FARZANEH HALL AND HISTORIC ROBERTSON HALL- 1925

These two buildings claim the title of first dormitories on the campus of the University of Oklahoma. Hester Hall (today renamed as Farzaneh Hall) and Robertson Hall acted as female dormitories able to house 244 women. While these dorms were welcomed by students, they had their share of controversy thrown from local landlords and landladies from whose businesses they detracted³¹.



OKLAHOMA MEMORIAL UNION- 1928. 36, 51, 95

Not long after the Y.M.C.A. on campus burned horrifically in a fire in 1923, President Brooks and a council of students decided to build a student union where the Y.M.C.A. once stood rather than rebuild it. Sorey Vahlberg drew the architectural plans in 1923, and the union included amenities such as a cafeteria, meeting rooms for student groups, and a bowling alley³². The Union grew into the most important social building on campus as it provided areas for fun and fellowship that previously only cultivated within the Greek Houses on campus³³.



BIZZELL MEMORIAL LIBRARY- 1929, 58, 82

Small and surrounded, the Carnegie Building was no longer sustainable as the university's library. In response to this, the new library was built in a spot where it could be expanded upon as needed. Connecting the library with Evans Hall, in the future, to form a massive courtyard building defined the conceptualization behind this project. And because of this design, the new library also kicked off the start of a new oval facing south³⁴.



RICHARDS HALL- 1935, 71

Designed by Director Joseph Smay, Richards Halls hides in plain sight an interesting piece of architecture, integrated within the detailing of the building. Over each entry way, figures of insects and animals adorn the stone arches, letting anyone who should enter know that contained inside is the department of biology and zoology.



ADAMS HALL- 1936

Designed by Director Joseph Smay, Adams Hall was built to house the growing College of Business, a department which it still houses today. Recently, Price Hall was constructed as an addition to Adams, conservatively keeping the same style and regulating lines that define the proportions for its gothic façade.



PICTURE SOURCES

1.1: Sketch by Author

NOTE: All pictures not cited were taken personally by the author.



FIGURE 1.5: RICHARDS HALL, MAIN ENTRANCE

NOTES

2. David W. Levy, *The University of Oklahoma: A History*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005, 8.
3. *Ibid.*, 13-14.
4. *Ibid.*, 25.
5. *Ibid.*, 25-26.
6. *Ibid.*, 127.
7. *Ibid.*, 127-128.
8. David W. Levy, 2005, 204-205.
9. Glenn Patton, "American Collegiate Gothic." *The Journal of Higher Education* 38, No. 1 (1967): 5.
10. *Ibid.*, 8.
11. Wright, Frank Lloyd, "Frank Lloyd Wright at the University of Oklahoma," 1952, Oklahoma Memorial Union at the University of Oklahoma, Mp4, 1:01:34, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JllkhdeKgFE&t=1739s>.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Luca Guido. "The School of Architecture at the University of Oklahoma." *Renegades: Bruce Goff and the American School of Architecture*. Edited by Luca Guido, Stephanie Pilat, and Angela Person. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019. 29.
14. Joseph E. Smay, "The Future of Architecture," *Sooner Magazine* 7, no. 6, March 1935, 130 & 152.
15. Guido, Luca. 2019. 29.
16. Joseph E. Smay, March 1935, 130.
17. Guido, Luca. 2019. 29.
18. Jean Paul Carlhian, "The Ecole Des Beaux-Arts: Modes and Manners," *JAE* 33, no. 2, 1979, 7-17.
19. David W. Levy, 2005, 127.
20. *Ibid.*, 127-128.
21. David W. Levy, 2005, 128-129.
22. David W. Levy, 2005, 204-205.
23. Historical Building Marker, *Monnet Hall*, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.
24. David W. Levy, 2005, 159.
25. Historical
26. David W. Levy, *The University of Oklahoma: A History. Volume 2*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015, 16.
27. *Ibid.*, 15-16.
28. *Ibid.*, 25
29. David W. Levy, 2015, 52.
30. Historical Building Marker, *Whitehand Hall*, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.
31. David W. Levy, 113-114.
32. "Union Building Nearly Ready," *Sooner Magazine* 1, no. 4, January 1929.
33. David W. Levy, 2015, 109-110.
34. Jesse L. Rader, "Oklahoma's Crown Jewel," *Sooner Magazine* 1, no. 6, March 1929, 185-186.

PART 2: MODERN ARCHITECTURE

OVERVIEW

Around the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, architects began to question what they had always been taught. The world had changed from a place where monarchies ruled and people submitted to one of revolutions where those same people sought for their rulers to be nothing more than common men and women. As a result, the idea that the ordered, symmetrical buildings of the Renaissance and the classical Greeks were superior was thrown away³⁵. Those buildings which once represented a return to democracy now represented oppressive wealth and the static, unchanging power dynamics. Thus, modern architecture challenged the architect to think about designing for the everyday person and the community and allowed architects to create their own styles of creativity.

Increasingly, decent housing stood out as the key motivator for many of these modern architects since many major cities were filthy and overcrowded with slums. Famed modern architect Le Corbusier said it best in his 1924 book *Toward an Architecture* as he contemplated what architecture should be in the modern age: "The problem of the house is a problem of the era. Social equilibrium depends on it today. The first obligation of architecture, in an era of renewal, is to bring about a revision of values, a revision of the constitutive elements of the house³⁶." Revising architectural design does not necessarily entail the metaphorical burning of past ideologies. Rather, it means taking existing knowledge of what works and applying those concepts in new ways so

as to learn from and further expand upon their discovered conclusions.

Though because of their aversion towards classical appearance in design, Modernist buildings initially fell into the infamous void of radical designs with minimal examples around the world, and it was not until the aftermath of World War II that Modern architecture started to climb its way back up the pedestal. It even managed to capture the interest of a few of those firmly set in their gothic ways at the university. In 1941, the Regents challenged Professor of Architecture Henry L. Kamphoefner to study university housing on the east coast and propose his own take on new housing for the campus. Although his proposals were not without backlash, the regents approved his sustainable designs and today the campus still employs the use of Cate Center³⁷. As previously discussed in the quote by Le Corbusier, when the university made the switch from Prairie Gothic to Modern architecture, they themselves signaled a change in values. Deciding to value sustainability and mass-student housing exclaimed that the university no longer cared merely about ego and a display of wealth, but instead they cared about the quality of the environment in which their students learned.

Current housing at the university lacked the square footage to house even ten-percent of the student body (500 out of 6,900 in 1941)³⁸. At this time, conflicting views about the campus style began to wane. Many of the Prairie Gothic buildings on campus were plagued by the



FIGURE 2.1: RICHARDS HALL, MODERN EXPANSION

hot Oklahoma sun. Their windows were painted to keep the spaces cooler, and entire classrooms on the west ends were abandoned because of their extreme heat³⁹. University Director of Architecture J. E. Smay was wary of being "Modern for the sake of being different," while Professor of Architecture Henry L. Kamphoefner saw Modern architecture as a way to address the climate and environment of Oklahoma⁴⁰. Eventually, President Cross created the Campus Planning Committee to be headed by Kamphoefner, whose mission for the group included this statement: "We should prefer to justify the building as an expression and embodiment of the life and structure within rather than as an 'authentic' reproduction or rejuvenation of a past style⁴¹." With that, the role of Modern architecture and its way of thought swung into the campus culture, and the next fifty-odd years would include some of the most awe-inspiring buildings on campus.

Humble and seemingly invisible, Kaufman Hall holds the honor of the university's first Modern building⁴². While it may look simple today, it stood out as new and radical in 1949. Promoting its modernity took place through four key concepts: ribbon windows, lack of ornamentation, asymmetrical facades, and accented interior function. Ribbon windows were a big deal at the time because they showcased the ability for a building to stand with thin steel members rather than massive, load-bearing brick walls. Indeed, the brick on Kaufman serves merely as a veneer. The lack of ornamentation relates to the ideas of Adolf Loos and his view that architecture should create its own display rather than have a display applied to it⁴³. Symmetry tends to convey a sense of perfection, but asymmetry defies the urge to sit still. Finally, staircases normally displayed on the interior, if at all, are instead displayed on the exterior with continuous vertical strips of glass to show anyone on the outside exactly how one may traverse through the building.

Kaufman may seem like just another building today, but it set the stage for what would be years of modern experiments on campus.

Inspired by Bruce Goff and his teachings in the university's School of Architecture, the Oklahoma College of Continuing Education (OCCE) Complex showcases perhaps the most unique design on campus in terms of overall geometric form. Most notable of the buildings in this complex, though, is the Thurman J. White Forum designed by Richard Kuhlman himself⁴⁴. What makes it stand out from any other building on campus is its shape. A series of hexagons cutting into each other revolve in three independent arms around a central core hexagon. As a result, hallway pulse in and out in a rhythm of tension and release as one ponders through them. Building on that, the hexagonal lecture halls portray a more centralized focus than a rectangular space, which is usually point-focused. In addition, shading becomes a key sustainable feature incorporated into the design of the building. Other than the entrances, the windows of the building are all covered by exterior screens made of patterned concrete block. Not only do these keep the heat of the sun from directly piercing the windows, but they also provide privacy in the classrooms where blinds would normally be used.

By far the most radical building at the time on campus, Adams Center materializes an old vision of a Tower City from the early 1920's by the world-renown architect Le Corbusier. He found inspiration in the idea of a Auguste Perret in which a city would be tall but spread out to provide excess garden and vegetative spaces at ground level and thereby blur the lines between nature and city⁴⁵. Typical cities blanket the landscape with buildings and vegetation is visible in pockets where wealthy families had private courtyards. Tower Cities inverse this idea by blanketing the landscape in vegetation and buildings grew out of the pockets⁴⁶. This inverse brought may not

sound significant, but its impact on social concepts and interaction was big. Moving parks to the public spaces symbolized the idea that all people were deserving of nature, regardless of status. Incorporating this design into the dormitories at the university symbolizes a desire for the university to foster student environments based on community and a hope for stimulated interaction in what would become the Walker/Adams Mall.

Kamphoefner and his colleagues Richard Kuhlman and Bruce Goff marched at the front of the university's architectural switch, each making lasting impacts on campus still visible and experiential to present day. Together, they lead not only the charge in creating and designing buildings for the needs of the contemporary university, but also paved the way for a new style of architectural curriculum and education unlike any other.

CHAIRMAN BRUCE GOFF AND THE AMERICAN SCHOOL

"[Bruce Goff is] one of the most talented members of the group of young architects devoted to an indigenous architecture for America."

-Frank Lloyd Wright⁴⁷

Not only was the architecture on the university's campus going through a radical change, but also was the architecture program itself. After serving in the military in World War II, a man by the name of Bruce Goff came to teach architecture here at, and soon after his arrival, he took on the role of chairman of the school of architecture thanks to the vote of the faculty⁴⁸. Goff had never received a formal education himself, despite the wishes of his parents. Indeed, he had written a letter to famous American architect Frank Lloyd Wright on the issue and Wright responded, "If you want to lose Bruce Goff, go to school⁴⁹." At the time, most schools in the nation still modeled their curriculum after the Beaux-Arts education. Following this path of teaching put great emphasis on copying classical European building design because it was believed that those were the only buildings considered art⁵⁰. So, he decided that because he did not agree with that method of teaching, the university would need a new, revamped curriculum. His new idea would later become known across the world as "The American School."

In the early to mid-1940s on campus, Kamphoefner had taken huge strides in favor of modern architecture. He filled the vacated role of Director of the School of Architecture—although he never officially held that title—after Smay left campus. These strides, however, found themselves to be less than appreciated by the general population due to nostalgic connections to the Prairie Gothic and a general bias towards traditions

⁵¹. But while opinions of his work varied, his leadership in progression was invaluable. Indeed, he sought out and encouraged both Kuhlman and Goff to apply for faculty positions at the university for their similar views on architectural modern architecture⁵². Kuhlman ended up becoming the campus architect, designing buildings such as Collings Hall, the towers, and the ever celebrated OCCE complex⁵³.

At a time when the School of Architecture operated under the College of Engineering at the university, Chairman Goff could be found in a small office with a column in the middle in an old army barrack or with his students in their studios⁵⁴. When Goff started, the school of architecture was located on North Campus after its conversion from a military base to an educational facility once World War II ended, but once North Campus made the switch to a research facility, the school moved into the classroom spaces underneath the stadium in 1953 where it remained through the rest of Goff's career and beyond into the 1980s⁵⁵. But regardless of location, Goff's creative vision for structuring the classroom never failed to garner attention. His approach for teaching architecture can be best summed up by the phrase "don't try to remember⁵⁶." This is not an attack on learning the history and theory of architecture, but rather a call to design with the future in mind rather than mimicking what has been done in the past⁵⁷.

Perhaps the best explanation, though, of Goff Curriculum is one told alongside a description of his 1950-53 Bavinger House project and its polarizing take on architectural design. Goff, like Wright, believed in the idea of an organic architecture, one that grew from the features of its contextual landscape. His ideals went even further to suggest structures that could not be placed anywhere in the world but were designed specifically for a singular site⁵⁸. What makes the Bavinger house a superb example of this approach lies in its strong influences

from the vernacular. Oklahoma has roots in what was once Indian Territory, and similar to how the indigenous tribes lived with a close tie to and appreciation for nature, the Bavinger House thrived off of the natural landscape around it. In fact, the division between outdoors and indoors so readily obvious in nearly every building becomes much more elusive as plants, water features, stone walls, paved floors, etc., cross the glass threshold into a space that rejects such separation. The shape of the house, too, with its central, spiral form, calls to mind the traditional tipi of nomadic tribes. These design features were all but unthinkable in the 1950s, yet Goff taught his students not how to become architects, but instead how their own individuality can shape architecture⁵⁹.

The concept of developing individual creativity rather than training young architects proved unique to Goff's school. But because of how unique the school's curriculum was, it remained nameless for decades. Finally, in 1981 a Japanese journal by the name of *Architecture and Urbanism (A+U)* devoted their 134th volume to the school at the University of Oklahoma. In the preface for this issue, Donald MacDonald argued the root of the school lay in an American ethic by stating "this ethic shows up in the democratic willingness of the individual architects to let the indigenous terrain and materials guide their designs, and their willingness to let the spaces that result, labyrinthine though they be, define the project rather than more rigid Cartesian notions⁶⁰." This paved the way to the unofficial labeling of "The American School," as professors at the university still refer to it today.

Although no current buildings on the university's campus find their roots in a Goff design, there were a couple concept buildings with his name behind them that never became physical. For example, the fragmented yet ordered glass walls of the of his 1949 Crystal Chapel concept would have silenced anyone passing

by. Resembling a pyramid interpreted with an origami flair, the building was designed with an emphasis on light both inside and out. Natural light would pour into the space through the all glass walls during the day, but then at night the artificial light would pour out of the all glass walls and across the campus at night⁶¹. In David De Long's 1977 dissertation, he quoted volume 93 of the Architectural Forum where they described the importance of the design of the Crystal Chapel: "For centuries one aspiration of church architecture has been a crystalline purity of emotion based on other-worldly wonder. . . Now in Oklahoma's crystalline chapel worshippers will have the sensation of being miraculously suspended in a prism of warm light. . ."⁶².

What stands out the most in this concept comes in the form of the university's most recognizable material: brick. Although brick could be easily mistaken as the official finish of campus buildings, the truth lies more in the cost of producing brick than in the perceived beauty of it. According to Kuhlman, "we couldn't build a better wall for the money"⁶³. So other than the drastic shape of the Crystal Chapel, one of the reasons the building never saw the ground-breaking ceremony could come down to the expensiveness of that amount of glass.

Another futuristic design by Bruce Goff for the campus, the 1951 Journalism Building concept would have formed into two concentric circles similar to the university Cafeteria or "The Caf" as it is referred to by students. Although, the Caf stands tall with a double volume space on the interior while the drawing for the Journalism Building appears to be only single height enriching it with a more comfortable and earthy feel, which is even further accentuated by the gentle slope of earth berm against the exterior walls. A curious feature about this concept is that the courtyard is not the center of the building. In fact, Goff reimagines the courtyard space as a ring in between a main circular space containing the offices and

classrooms, and a smaller domed central space where the library would serve the students⁶⁴. This technique allows for the courtyard to, in a sense, double the square footage of windows surrounding it, which provides more classroom spaces with natural lighting.

BUILDINGS

Below, I have compiled a list of notable buildings from this era, focusing on works from the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, arranged chronologically from first-built to last-built. Each contains the year of its initial completion, years of completed expansions (where applicable), and a short

description of its conceptualization and importance to the University. In addition, I have included conceptual works which were planned for the university, but never came to fruition.

KAUFMAN HALL - 1949

Kaufman Hall was designed by Professor Kamphoefner in collaboration with Professor Fitzgibbon⁶⁵. Humble and seemingly invisible, Kaufman Hall holds the honor of the university's first Modern building. While it may look simple today, it stood out as new and radical in 1949. Promoting its modernity took place through four key concepts: ribbon windows, lack of ornamentation, asymmetrical facades, and accented interior function.

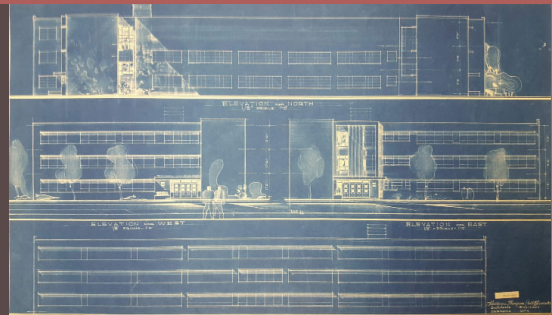


FIGURE 2.2: ORIGINAL KAUFMAN HALL ELEVATIONS

CRYSTAL CHAPEL (CONCEPT)- 1949

The fragmented yet ordered glass walls of the of his 1949 Crystal Chapel concept would have silenced anyone passing by. Resembling a pyramid interpreted with an origami flair, the building was designed with an emphasis on light both inside and out. Natural light would pour into the space through the all glass walls during the day, but then at night the artificial light would pour out of the all glass walls and across the campus at night⁶⁶.

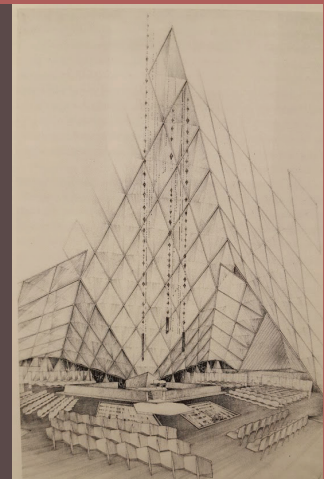
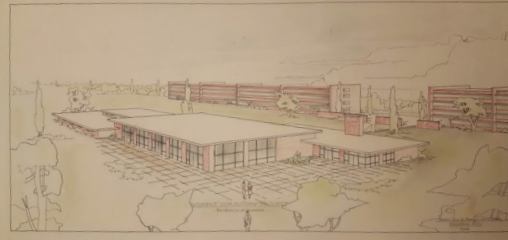


FIGURE 2.3: CHAPEL CONCEPT INTERIOR RENDERING

CATE CENTER- 1949

Built originally as a women's dormitory, Cate Center is one of the four original Modern building proposals from Kamphoefner's Campus Planning Committee that paved the way for modern architecture on campus⁶⁷. Just isolating the plan of one of the Cate Center dorms, there appears to be little difference between it and one of the gothic buildings like Richards Hall. So, it is clear Cate Center evolved as a façade study rather than a form study. Cate sets itself apart from a building like Richards through its careful attention to sunlight. The walls facing East and West only contain small windows to light the corridors and prevent an overwhelming amount of direct sunlight into the space. Conversely, the North and South Façade are emphasized with ribbon windows stretching across the building. On the south, these windows are shaded with awnings designed to allow in the winter sun but not the



summer sun.

FIGURE 2.4: RENDERING OF CATE CENTER CONCEPT

OU JOURNALISM BUILDING (CONCEPT)- 1951

A curious feature about this concept is that the courtyard is not the center of the building. In fact, Goff reimagines the courtyard space as a ring in between a main circular space containing the offices and classrooms, and a smaller domed central space where the library would serve the students⁶⁸. This technique allows for the courtyard to, in a sense, double the square footage of windows surrounding it, which provides more classroom spaces with natural lighting.

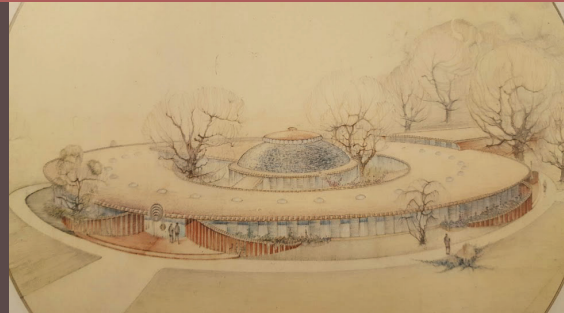


FIGURE 2.5: JOURNALISM BUILDING CONCEPT RENDERING

GOULD HALL- 1951, 66, 2011

Although Gould Hall today (formerly the Geology Building) retains many proportions and design cues of a modern building, the original design portrayed a bit more radical approach. The building was divided into four bar section, two oriented their short sides facing north/south and two oriented their short sides facing east/west. The two oriented north/south were slightly shorter than the two oriented east/west, giving the building a fragmented quality unique two the campus. Although recent renovations have evened all four sections of the building, the original wings to the building are still present.



COLLINGS HALL - 1951

Not only was this the first building on campus designed by Richard Kuhlman, but it was also, according to him, the first building on campus with a forced-air air conditioning system⁶⁹. Collings was designed with a white waffle grid of shading devices on the elevation facing the oval. This has since been covered up with a revival of gothic elements, but a similar system can still be seen on the southern façade of Copeland Hall.



FIGURE 2.6: ORIGINAL COLLINGS HALL FACADE

GITTINGER HALL - 1952

During the postwar boom in construction, Gittinger Hall acted as a part of a master plan with its southern neighbor, Kaufman Hall. The original idea was to have Kaufman and Gittinger form as mirror images of one another and eventually an auditorium would be built in between them⁷⁰. That idea never happened, and this building was demolished in 2016.

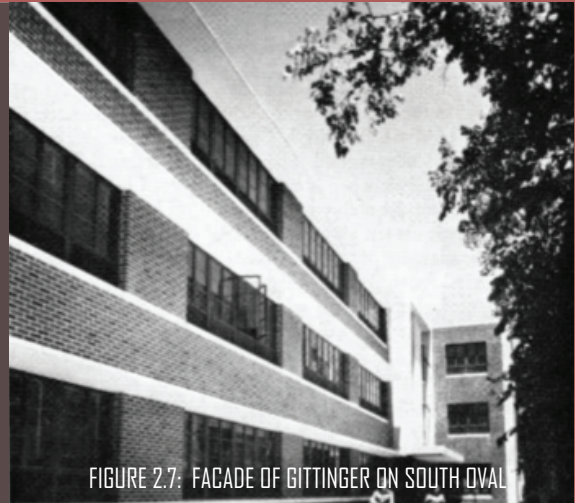


FIGURE 2.7: FACADE OF GITTINGER ON SOUTH OVAL

CROSS CENTER - 1952

While Cate Center took on the role of female dormitories on campus, Cross Center entered the game to become the male dormitories. They follow the same principles of the Cate Center dormitories and are identical in design. These buildings were demolished in 2016.



FIGURE 2.8: ARIAL VIEW OF CROSS CENTER

BURTON HALL - 1952

Named after the founder of the Home Economics program at the university, Burton Hall draws on the themes of organic architecture in a rhythmic play on geometric patterns. Designed by William Stanley Burgett, the building lies tucked away on the edge of campus just south of Catlett⁷¹. Burton stands out on campus because of its walls that slope outward as they go up. In addition, the front of the building comes to a point at Elm Street rather than a flat brick face.



COPELAND HALL - 1958

Once housing the College of Journalism, Copeland Hall still maintains the busy epicenter of the OU Daily newspaper. The building was designed by Kuhlman in a way that communicated with Collings Hall just to the north. On the exterior, windows are accented with black marble that not only breaks up the monotony of the brick, but also breaks the parapet walls as it reaches the roof. Inside the building was designed so classroom spaces could enjoy the natural light on the south side of the building while photography rooms would be placed away from the light on the northern side⁷².



OU CHAPEL CONCEPT - 1959

Amazingly, this concept was actually designed by Frank Lloyd Wright himself at the request of the Fred Jones family. The chapel would have had a triangular plan with entrances at the points. These entrances, though, would have been elevated above the ground and accessible by ramps because the ground level underneath the building was to be a parking lot to save space and preserve more of the landscape⁷³.

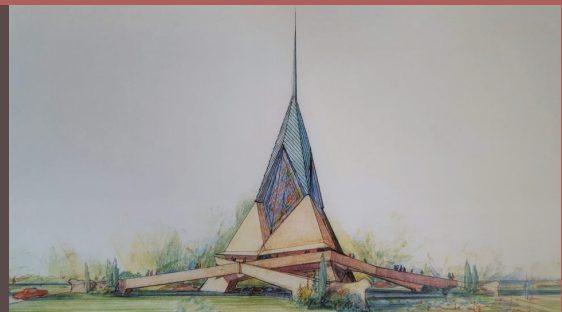


FIGURE 2.9: CHAPEL CONCEPT RENDERING

GOMER T. JONES HOUSE-1959

Originally having the name "Washington House," the Gomer T Jones House was designed by Kuhlman as the new athletic dorm⁷⁴. The overall form of the building is similar to Carson engineering center with its tall, slender egress stair with a white overhang over the front entrance and white vertical shading on the sides. Indeed, this building could pass as a first iteration for Carson, and further research could be conducted. This building has since been demolished.



FIGURE 2.10: ARIAL VIEW OF GOMER T. JONES HOUSE

THURMAN J. WHITE FORUM- 1962

The Oklahoma College of Continuing Education (OCCE) Complex showcases perhaps the most unique design on campus. Most notable of the buildings in this complex, though, is the Thurman J. White Forum designed by Richard Kuhlman himself⁷⁵. What makes it stand out from any other building on campus is its shape. A series of hexagons cutting into each other revolve in three independent arms around a central core hexagon. As a result, hallway pulse in and out in a rhythm of tension and release as one ponders through them.



ADAMS CENTER-1964, COUCH AND WALKER-1966

By far the most radical building at the time on campus, Adams Center materializes an old vision of a Tower City from the early 1920's by the world-renowned architect Le Corbusier. He found inspiration in the idea of a Auguste Perret in which a city would be tall but spread out to provide excess garden and vegetative spaces at ground level and thereby blur the lines between nature and city⁷⁶. Typical cities blanket the landscape with buildings and vegetation is visible in pockets where wealthy families had private courtyards. Tower Cities inverse this idea by blanketing the landscape in vegetation and buildings grew out of the pockets⁷⁷. This inverse brought may not sound significant, but its impact on social concepts and interaction was big. Moving parks to the public spaces symbolized the idea that all people were deserving of nature, regardless of status. Incorporating this design into the dormito-



ries at the university symbolizes a desire for the university to foster student environments based on community and a hope for stimulated interaction in what would become the Walker/ Adams Mall.

FIGURE 2.11: ORIGINAL ADAMS CENTER PERSPECTIVE

GEORGE LYNN CROSS HALL- 1965

Towering above the rest of the South Oval (save for Dale Hall tower), George-Lynn Cross Hall employs the concept of screens to enrich space on lower floors, a concept not used elsewhere on the oval. The screens take the form of pattern concrete blocks, which appear smooth from a distance on the exterior. However, the interior seating areas behind these screens diffuse the sunlight into geometric patterns like those found in the OCCE Thurman J. White Forum.



FINE ARTS CENTER- 1965

Built at a time when the drama department ran their courses in Old Science Hall, the Fine Arts Center stunned the campus. Sooner Magazine proclaimed that its "tasteful design is dramatic"⁷⁸. An interesting feature of Fine Arts Center is its accent of regulating structure rather than regulating windows. On a building like Evan Hall, the windows create the vertical elements on the façade, but on the Fine Arts Center, the columns become the vertical elements. This flips a person's preconceived notion of what a building should be, but still provides them with familiar regulation.



CARSON ENGINEERING CENTER- 1965

Extending awnings hanging over the pathways leading up to Carson display a feat of modern engineering and nod to the aspirations of those students inside. Sooner Magazine described Carson as "Ultramodern in concept. . . designed to provide maximum use of all components. Even the external fluted columns are a working part of the building, carrying the utilities from the roof to each floor"⁷⁹.



DALE HALL- 1967

Drawing inspiration from world-renown architect Le Corbusier, Dale Hall Tower celebrates its functionality by pulling its circulation outside of the main building footprint and connecting the two forms with glass. However, the classroom building takes a different shape by portraying a large concrete mass on top of a brick base and no glass other than at the doors. The two designs utilize different principles yet talk to one another in a way that feels natural. Professor York reveals Dale Hall to be the first building on campus designed by the architecture committee that replaced Richard Kuhlman after his departure as campus architect⁶⁰.



PHYSICAL SCIENCES CENTER- 1969

With its squat, square bottom and tall, slender upper tower, its no wonder this building became commonly known amongst university students and faculty as "The Blender." An article in *The Oklahoman* traces the nickname back to a campus newspaper in September of 1973 where a picture of the building was overlaid with a picture of a blender knob. That same *Oklahoman* article provides insight from the architects and the executive secretary to the OU Regents. The secretary claims the building was not built to be riot-proof, despite popular rumors, and theorizes the lower floor to be windowless due to the buildings central air-conditioning system, which did not require operable windows. In addition, the architects designed the lower floors with cast-in place concrete walls for their easy maintenance and solidity, not to be a bunker⁶¹.



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CONCLUSION

Transitioning from the outdated Prairie Gothic into the Modern design worked well at the University of Oklahoma, and for half of a century, buildings that focused on exaggerating the emotions of the occupants dominated the University's landscape. Later decades not discussed in this paper brought more intriguing structures like the Post-Modern Catlett Music Center and its satirical features, both inside and out, no doubt inspired by architect Robert Venturi and his resentment of perfection⁸². Sarkey's Energy Center also comes to mind, blurring the line between where the building begins and ground plane ends in a fantastic maze of gardens. And of course, the 1980's expansion to the library creates a gorgeous façade, preferring to be viewed from an angle rather than head-on.

However, something strange happened around the turn of the twenty-first century; the university suddenly switched back to the Prairie Gothic style. While the focus of the paper revolves around the switch from Prairie Gothic to Modern architecture, understanding the switch from Modern architecture back to Prairie Gothic provides insights into what each of these styles meant to the university. And interestingly enough, something extraordinarily similar to this switch-back happened in the 19th Century in a city of which many people have heard: Rome.

After the complete unification of Italy in 1871, the new government set out to define an architecture which would unify the past and present of people across the peninsula. What came out of this effort were buildings resembling dramatized and exaggerated versions of classical or Renaissance structures as an attempt to

display the power of the new government and calm the nerves of the general populous⁸³. When the founders of the university began to build European buildings in Oklahoma, they were referencing the architecture and power dynamics in a place with which they were familiar. When the university returned to Prairie Gothic with haughty, hodge-podge buildings like Gaylord, Devon, and Headington Hall, they were referencing not Europe, but early 20th century Oklahoma, a time of conquest and colonialization when Europe was the motherland of civility and ethnic cleansing was a noble achievement. Why a university that prides itself in diversity and inclusivity would attempt to instill within its students a sense of this outdated identity is beyond my comprehension.

What is more astonishing, though, is the approach towards existing architecture. During this same time period in Rome, a series of renovations of older Renaissance, Medieval, and even Classical buildings took place. However, these renovations were done to make these buildings fit better with the narrative of perfection the classics held. For example, some of the tiling in the Pantheon was torn out and replaced because it was not "Roman" enough. The irony here lies in the fact that the Romans installed the original tile, yet because it did not fit the idea of what Rome was, it was replaced⁸⁴. Here in Oklahoma, the university has renovated multiple modern buildings, including Boren, Collings, and Kaufman Hall, to appear more Prairie Gothic. The issue here is the implication that history can be erased and changed. As an education institution, the university should understand that erasing history is incredibly irresponsible on any scale.



FIGURE 2.12: BURTON HALL, INTERIOR LOUNGE

In the end, the university stating that every building on campus is a Prairie Gothic building and forcing the style onto every new construction is a total erasure of most of the campus's history. The university wants to rewrite its own history of the campus in which they control the narrative of identity, and that involves a dedication to concealing a progressive and creative past in favor of one where order is maintained, and artistic vision is suppressed for the sake of anachronistic architecture. Their ego-driven marketing tactics firmly decide the architectural tastes of the students and alumni for them. This directly relates back to historic preservation as previously discussed in the introduction. Valuing one building over another relates to cultural values, and the values of the university appear to align with the taste of gothic over advancements of modern architecture. Frank Lloyd Wright put it best in his 1952 speech in the Union: "Do you all realize that taste is simply a matter of ignorance⁸⁵?" Good architecture cannot be limited to a single style or appearance. Indeed, modern needs require modern solutions, and good architecture must continually progress and evolve to be successful, for as long as we refuse to leave the past, then we will never see the future.

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FIGURE 2.13: DU 1940'S POWER PLANT



The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA



31 FIGURE 2.14: OU OFFICIAL CAMPUS MAP

NUMERICAL

1 Old Faculty Club	27 Gallogly Hall	52 Noble Electron Microscopy Laboratory (2nd floor)	74 Parking Services Office » located on the first floor of Jenkins Ave Parking Facility
2 Boyd House	28 ExxonMobil/Lawrence G. Rawl Engineering Practice Facility	53 George Lynn Cross Hall	
3 Whitehand Hall	29 Sarkeys Energy Center	54 Richards Hall	75 Cate Center 1
4 Catlett Music Center	30 Engineering Laboratory	55 Armory	76 Cate Center 2
5 Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art	31 Facilities Management Complex	56 OU Bookstore » located on the first floor of Asp Ave Parking Garage	77 Cate Center 3
6 Fred Jones Jr. Art Center	32 Nuclear Engineering Laboratory	58 Gaylord Family-Oklahoma Memorial Stadium	78 Cate Center 4
7 Fine Arts Center	33 T. Howard McCasland Field House	59 The Switzer Center	79 Cate Center Dining Hall
8 Donald W. Reynolds Performing Arts Center	34 Lissa and Cy Wagner Hall Student Academic Services Center	60 Jacobs Track and Field Facility	80 David L. Boren Hall The Honors College
10 Physical Sciences Center	35 Price Hall	62 Bud Wilkinson House	81 Sooner Card Office » one is also located inside Oklahoma Memorial Union
11 Chemistry Annex	36 Adams Hall	63 Wagner Dining Facility	82 Adams Center
12 Chemistry Building	37 Bizzell Memorial Library	64 Collums Building	83 Walker Center
13 Burton Hall	38 Ellison Hall	65 Everest Training Center	84 Couch Center
14 Sutton Hall	39 Goddard Health Center	66 Mosier Indoor Athletic Facility	85 Couch Restaurants
15 Beatrice Carr Wallace Old Science Hall	40 Anne and Henry Zarrow Hall	67 Headington Hall	86 Sooner Suites
16 Evans Hall	41 Farzaneh Hall	68 Headington College	87 Jim Thorpe Multicultural Center
17 Carnegie Building	42 Nielsen Hall	69 Dunham College and Headington College Dining Halls	88 OCCE McCarter Hall of Advanced Studies
18 Monnet Hall	43 Lin Hall	70 Dunham College	89 OCCE Thurman J. White Forum Building
19 Buchanan Hall	44 Robertson Hall	71 Henderson-Tolson Cultural Center	90 Boomer Outreach Building
20 Oklahoma Memorial Union	45 Kaufman Hall	72 Observatory and Landscape Department	91 OCCE James P. Pappas Administration Building
22 Jacobson Hall The OU Visitor Center » this is where you check in for campus tours!	46 Collings Hall	73 S.J. Sarkeys Complex Physical Fitness Center	92 Murray Case Sells Swim Center
23 Carpenter Hall	47 Copeland Hall		93 Cross
24 Carson Engineering Center	48 Dale Hall Tower		
25 Devon Energy Hall	49 Dale Hall		
26 Felgar Hall	50 Gaylord Hall		
	51 Gould Hall		

ALPHABETICAL

82 Adams Center	49 Dale Hall	68 Headington College	89 OCCE Thurman J. White Forum Building
36 Adams Hall	48 Dale Hall Tower	67 Headington Hall	
40 Anne and Henry Zarrow Hall	80 David L. Boren Hall The Honors College	71 Henderson-Tolson Cultural Center	20 Oklahoma Memorial Union
55 Armory	25 Devon Energy Hall	60 Jacobs Track and Field Facility	1 Old Faculty Club
15 Beatrice Carr Wallace Old Science Hall	8 Donald W. Reynolds Performing Arts Center	22 Jacobson Hall The OU Visitor Center » this is where you check in for campus tours!	56 OU Bookstore » located on the first floor of Asp Ave Parking Garage
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13 Burton Hall	65 Everest Training Center	66 Mosier Indoor Athletic Facility	73 S.J. Sarkeys Complex Physical Fitness Center
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75 Cate Center 1	26 Felgar Hall	32 Nuclear Engineering Laboratory	14 Sutton Hall
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77 Cate Center 3	6 Fred Jones Jr. Art Center	91 OCCE James P. Pappas Administration Building	59 The Switzer Center
78 Cate Center 4	5 Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art	88 OCCE McCarter Hall of Advanced Studies	63 Wagner Dining Facility
79 Cate Center Dining Hall	27 Gallogly Hall		83 Walker Center
4 Catlett Music Center	58 Gaylord Family-Oklahoma Memorial Stadium		3 Whitehand Hall
11 Chemistry Annex	50 Gaylord Hall		
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47 Copeland Hall			
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85 Couch Restaurants			
93 Cross			

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