

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Listed in National Register 10-20-2010

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Phillipsburg Community Building

other names/site number 147-85

2. Location

street & number 425 F Street not for publication

city or town Phillipsburg vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Phillips code 147 zip code 67661

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

SEE FILE

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

 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 the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	Total

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

New Deal-Era Resources of Kansas MPS

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social: Meeting Hall

Government: City Hall

Recreation: Auditorium

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social: Meeting Hall

Government: Government Offices

Recreation: Auditorium

Commerce / Trade: Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals: Late Gothic Revival / Collegiate Gothic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Stone: Limestone; Concrete

walls: Stone: Limestone

roof: Asphalt

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary

The Phillipsburg Community Building was built in 1936 and 1937 as a Works Progress Administration project. The building is constructed of limestone quarried south of Glade, Phillips County, Kansas. This 9,200-plus square foot, two-story building faces south and is located at 425 F Street. It is situated at the northeast corner of Phillipsburg's downtown square and sits diagonal across the street from the Phillips County Courthouse. It is one block north of US Highway 36 on 4th Street.

Narrative Description

Exterior

Short limestone retaining walls frame the elevated areas of lawn and landscaping around the front and side of the building. A concrete sidewalk leads up to the building's main entrance on the south elevation. A set of concrete steps is flanked by two limestone wing walls that are topped with concrete. To the left of the front steps is a flagpole. There is a modern signboard situated in the lawn facing south toward F Street.

The building features two principal masses that form a T-plan: the front, two-story section has a rectangular footprint and a flat (asphalt) roof with a parapet and the rear two-story gymnasium section has a barrel roof and stepped parapet on the rear elevation. The exterior of the building is relatively unchanged from its original appearance except for window replacement in the front section and the installation of an accessibility ramp on the front of the building. The parapet wall is topped by smooth-cut stone coping.

There is a double-door central entrance on the front (south) elevation. The modern metal and glass doors are set within a projected bay that features a one-and-a-half story Collegiate Gothic-style stone surround. Above the entrance on the second floor is an original Collegiate Gothic-style window. This entrance bay features minimal stylistic references on this otherwise vernacular building. The flanking bays are slightly set back from the entrance bay creating a symmetrical appearance. The flanking bays include eight windows each – four on the first story and four on the second story. The windows have replacement metal frames, and the openings are framed with a smooth-cut limestone.

The west (side) elevation faces Fourth Street. The southern two-story section includes eight windows – four on each story. There is a basement entrance along this side elevation. The west-facing rear section features five bays defined by buttresses. Each bay features a single tall 42-light metal window with two operable hoppers. The window openings are framed with a smooth-cut limestone. There are two ground-level entrances in the rear section on the west elevation: one in the southernmost bay and the other in the northernmost bay.

The north (rear) elevation features four evenly spaced buttresses, a centered entrance that is slightly elevated and accessed by concrete steps, and exposed basement windows on either side of the staircase. There is a stepped parapet wall along the roofline.

The east (side) elevation faces an alley. The front two-story section includes seven windows – four on the first story and three on the second story. There is a stone staircase with metal railings and supported by tall stone piers that provides access to the second story. The east-facing rear section features five bays defined by buttresses. Each bay features a single tall 42-light metal window with two operable hoppers. The window openings are framed with a smooth-cut limestone. There are two ground-level entrances in the rear section on the east elevation: one in the southernmost bay and the other in the northernmost bay.

Interior

Upon entering the building through the main entrance on the south elevation, one is within the central hall with offices on either side that leads down a set of steps to the main auditorium.

The front office just inside the entrance on the east side is currently the Driver's license Examiner's office, which originally served as the library. The west side of the hall is currently the American Red Cross office, which was originally the City Hall office. Just past the offices, an east-west corridor provides access to two ADA-compliant restrooms. The women's restroom on the right and men's is in the left corridor.

Just to the end of the hallway on the left side, in the main entry, there is a staircase leading up to the large second-floor community room and meeting room. This space was originally designated as the American Legion hall. At the top of the stairs is a small landing and to the left is a small non-functioning bathroom and two doorways that divide the upstairs into a kitchen and meeting room on the right, and the community room (approximately 3000 square feet), through the left doorway.

The main central hall inside the first-floor entrance leads down a set of steps into the large gymnasium. The enormous space is defined by a stage at the north end and eight large metal windows on the east and west walls. At the time of this writing, the auditorium walls and ceiling are covered with false ceiling panels and grid framing, but these are being removed to reveal the original limestone structure. The original wood floor was removed many years ago due to damage, and a rubber floor is now in its place. The space can accommodate volleyball and basketball practices and games with built-in sockets for volleyball poles and basketball goals on the north and south ends.

The bottom half of the auditorium walls have a stucco finish. There are two doors to the exterior on either side of the auditorium to the east and west. The auditorium has a barrel roof. At the north end of the auditorium is the stage, which was boarded up many years ago so it could be used as storage space. The stage floor and structure is intact.

Entrances to the enclosed stage area are on either side of the stage. Once through these doors, the stage is accessed by a staircase. There are doors to the exterior on either side of the stage, and staircases into the basement on either side of the building. The basement consists of the locker room area, which is currently empty and has had considerable water damage in recent years. The plaster on the basement walls is crumbling from years of water problems.

Back at the building's main entrance, just before entering the auditorium, there is a staircase leading to the basement beneath the south section of the building. At the bottom of these stairs to the right is a space currently used for storage by the American Red Cross, which originally included the furnace room, cloakroom, vault, city jail, and coal room. To the left of the staircase one enters the club room through a wood double door or enters the bathroom and storm shelter. Modifications to basement spaces include wood paneled walls and dropped ceilings.

Integrity

The majority of alterations to the building have been interior cosmetic changes that are easily reversible, such as paneled walls and ceilings in the basement and gymnasium and the enclosed stage. The building is structurally sound, but has experienced water damage to along the northwest wall due to drainage problems. Some of the metal-framed windows are broken, rusted, and have lost glazing. The exterior fire escape at the southeast side of the building needs to be addressed due to structural concerns, insufficient handrails, and an inadequate exterior emergency door.

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)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- _____
Social History
- _____
Entertainment / Recreation
- _____
Government
- _____
Architecture
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1936-1960

Significant Dates

1936-1937

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Owassa Jennings, architect

Period of Significance (justification)

The Phillipsburg Community Building was a Works Progress Administration project approved and constructed during the years 1936 through 1937. It continues to serve its original purpose as a Community Building. The period of significance is extended to 1960 – fifty years ago.

Statement of Significance

Summary

The Phillipsburg Community Building (built 1936-1937) in Phillipsburg, Kansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the "New Deal-Era Resources of Kansas" multiple property listing, and is an example of the Civic property type as defined by the multiple property documentation form.

It is nominated under Criterion A for its local significance in the areas of Government, Entertainment / Recreation, and Social History. The building was constructed as part of the New Deal-era Works Progress Administration (WPA) program, which employed area residents. Once opened, the building served three important community functions as a city hall, city library, gymnasium space for performances and sporting events, and meeting place for local clubs and organizations.

Additionally, the Phillipsburg Community Building is nominated under Criterion C for its local significance in the area of Architecture. It was designed by a local architect Owassa Jennings and constructed of local stone quarried south of Phillipsburg. It exhibits the characteristics of local craftsmen and features a subdued Collegiate Gothic style typical of schools and other public buildings in Kansas during the early and middle twentieth century.

Narrative

New Deal Historic Context¹

The Works Progress Administration was created by executive order on May 6, 1935 using 1.4 billion dollars in funding from the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, which had been approved on April 8, 1935. Initially, the agency was designed as a temporary measure and funding was renewed annually. The WPA focused on employing large numbers of people through locally sponsored projects as well as through projects for state and federal agencies. Chief Administrator Harry Hopkins established a series of regional offices to coordinate efforts between the federal administration and the administrator for each state. The WPA was divided into two divisions. The first division, the Division of Engineering and Construction, oversaw manually constructed projects. These fell into several categories: 1) Municipal Engineering Projects; 2) Airport and Airway Projects; 3) Public Building Projects; 4) Highway and Road Projects; 5) Conservation Projects; 6) Engineering Survey Projects; and 7) Disaster Emergency Activities. Under the WPA more than 650,000 miles of roads were constructed or improved and over 125,000 buildings were erected or repaired, almost one-third of which were schools. Other types of buildings impacted by the program included libraries, auditoriums, gymnasiums, offices, hospitals, penal institutions, dormitories, firehouses, garages, storage facilities, armories, barns and stables.

Through the WPA, Kansas realized many new public buildings and recreational facilities, including 58 community buildings like the one in Phillipsburg. The construction of the Phillipsburg Community Building employed about 150 area residents during the two-year project.

Because the New Deal programs were designed to provide jobs and to remove people from the welfare rolls, resources were often constructed in the most labor-intensive manner possible. Hand labor was used as frequently as possible, even when more time and cost-efficient mechanical methods were available. The predominant building materials used in an individual community reflected the resources most easily accessible to that community. Where stone was abundant, the construction featured stone. The designs of New Deal resources vary from simple utilitarian forms to vernacular, and occasionally high style, examples of architectural styles. Civic, educational, and larger institutional buildings often employed designs that combined the formal symmetry of classical architecture with popular styles of the period including Craftsman and the

¹ The following context is taken from Elizabeth Rosin, Jon Taylor, and Cathy Ambler, "New Deal-Era Resources of Kansas" National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 2002), E19-20. Accessed online at: www.kshs.org/resource/national_register/MPS/New_Deal_Era_Resources_Kansas_mps.pdf

various revival styles.² The Phillipsburg Community Building was built of stone from a local quarry using local labor. It exhibits the characteristics of these craftsmen and features a vernacular Collegiate Gothic architectural style.

Property History

The Phillipsburg Community Building was built during the Great Depression as a project of the WPA, which was established by the federal government and the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935 to provide relief to the unemployed. After months of planning and approval processes by local, county and state governments, quarrying of the rock began in November of 1935 and construction of the community building began in early March of 1936. The local newspaper reported this project to be “the biggest WPA project in the sixth district, involving an expenditure of \$107,205, exclusive of the rock quarrying project to provide building stone.” It was to house the “largest auditorium between Lincoln and Hays.”³ Local architect Owassa J. Jennings worked on the project,⁴ Dr. Guy Innes served as the project superintendent, and H. C. Townsend was the foreman.⁵

The WPA employed 74 men to quarry rock beginning in November of 1935 at the quarry south of Phillipsburg near Glade, Kansas. A crew of 58 men began excavating at the building site in February of 1936,⁶ and construction of the 90' x 150' building began March 24, 1936. Local newspapers promoted this as one of the largest community buildings in northwest Kansas, and it would consist of a large auditorium with bleachers, stage, dressing room, toilet and shower facilities, a library, and city hall office. The local newspaper reported that the “nearly 20,000 square feet of floor space assures ample room for every conceivable community building purpose.” It would be “divided into serviceable rooms, a splendid stage, Legion hall, city rooms, and a gigantic auditorium” that will “meet civic needs in Phillipsburg for a generation to come.”⁷

The community building was formally dedicated on Tuesday, October 26, 1937. More than 500 area residents crowded into the new building to witness the ceremony. State highway director (and former WPA official) Evan Griffith gave the dedicatory address in which he noted, “It is almost unbelievable that a structure of this magnitude could have been completed with local labor almost exclusively – labor that otherwise would not have found employment...Everyone is willing to cooperate to provide work for those who have always worked and want to work.”⁸ Local officials recognized those who worked on the project. Festivities continued throughout the day with a carnival and dance.

The city hall offices, police department and public library operated out of the first floor of the newly opened community building for many years. Long-time librarian Bess Stuckman worked out of an office on the first floor where the Driver’s License Examiner’s office is today. Across the hall from the library and the city clerk’s office was a sort of local museum that is no longer in the building. The library moved out of the building in 1972, and the police and city hall offices were removed in 1988. The High Plains Mental Health office moved into the first floor in 1972, where it remained until 2003.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the living quarters for the local marshal, Bill Fauver, were located in the basement, where a small jail was located. This basement space later became the club rooms where local groups and organizations could meet. The original cabinets with nameplates are still extant. The community also used this basement area for garage sales, birthday parties, community dinners, Tupperware parties, etc.

The community building became a place where area residents gathered for all sorts of activities. The large, second-floor meeting room was where the American Legion held their regular meetings. When they quit

² Ibid., F-32.

³ *Phillips County Review*, 29 February 1936.

⁴ *Phillips County Review*, 1 August 1935.

⁵ *Phillips County Review*, 5 March 1936.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Phillips County Review*, 8 April 1937.

⁸ *Phillips County Review*, 28 October 1937.

meeting in the building in the early 1970s, other organizations, such as the Odd Fellows' and Rebekah's, began meeting there. In the 1940s and early 1950s, school dances after local basketball and football games were held there, and local Boy Scouts used the space for their meetings.

Larger gatherings, parties, and dances also took place in the auditorium where big-name bands would play at dances on Friday and Saturday nights. Attendees could check their coat as they entered. Many adults and kids recall roller-skating on Thursday nights at the community building, which took place for many years from the 1930s through the mid-1970s. Bud Bills, who was reportedly fun to watch skate, was in charge of checking out skates to participants.

Local businesses and families could reserve space in the facility to host events. The co-op refinery used to host family Christmas parties there complete with food and entertainment. Additionally, they bought a gift for their employees' children and put it beneath a Christmas tree in the building. These parties provided some good memories of the close relationship of employer and employee at the refinery.

Other activities held at the community building over the years include Cub Scout pinewood derbies, a voting place, health fairs, book sales sponsored by the friends of the library, dance recitals, and athletic practices and events (even a high school boxing event in the 1940s). High school basketball games were held in the gymnasium, as the high school's facility did not have seating for onlookers. Women's volleyball games were popular. Verne Ritter planned and was in charge of a talent show that was well attended. The Charme club held a fashion show and style revue. Today, the gymnasium space is used for indoor exercise and walking.

A memorable event for many locals was held at the community building on Monday, January 18, 1943, when 400 area families purchased the Townsend market and it became the co-op food store. Advertisements in the local newspaper read, "You have used co-op gasoline, now there is co-op foods." A program with music and entertainment was held at the community building and children accompanied by their parents received free ice cream. The event was free, so attendees were pressed to go early and get a good seat. This took place during the World War II years in times of rationing and sacrifice.

The 4-H fair was held in the auditorium where there was plenty of space for displays. The local Lions Club set up a large tent outside and provided a food stand. During the week of the annual Phillipsburg rodeo, a carnival was put up around the building to everyone's enjoyment.

Conclusion

About 150 area workers were employed by the Works Progress Administration to quarry the stone and construct this 9,200 square-foot community building. Over the past seventy-three years it has stood as an important local icon in downtown Phillipsburg and serves as a symbol of an important period in local and national history. Today, the Phillipsburg Community Building continues to serve the community as a location for indoor recreation, the location for a five-county American Red Cross office, and an office for the State Driver's License Examiner's Office. The local Heritage of Perpetual Endowment (HOPE) Foundation is currently overseeing a fundraising campaign for the rehabilitation of the community building.

The building is nominated as part of the "New Deal-Era Resources of Kansas" multiple property listing under Criterion A for its local significance in the areas of Government, Entertainment/Recreation, and Social History and under Criterion C for its local architectural significance.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Phillips County Review, 25 June 1935.

Phillips County Review, 1 August 1935.

Phillips County Review, 5 September 1935.

Phillips County Review, 7 November 1935.

Phillips County Review, 29 February 1936.

Phillips County Review, 5 March 5 1936.

Phillips County Review, 2 July 1936.

Phillips County Review, 8 April 8 1937.

Phillips County Review, 14 October 1937.

“Dedication Ceremony – Phillipsburg Community Building” Tuesday October 26th, 1937.

Phillips County Review, 28 October 1937.

Rosin, Elizabeth, et. al. “New Deal-Era Resources of Kansas” National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 2002. Accessible online at: www.kshs.org/resource/national_register/MPS/New_Deal_Era_Resources_Kansas_mps.pdf

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: Kansas Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____ N/A _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 14 472390 4400640
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located at 425 F Street in Phillipsburg, Phillips County, Kansas. The tract description is as follows: Lots One (1), Two (2), Three (3), Four (4), Five (5), Six (6), Seven (7), Eight (8), Twenty five (25), and the West 16 ft. off Lot Twenty four (24), all in Block Six (6) Range Five (5) in the Original Town of the City of Phillipsburg, Kansas.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the parcels historically associated with the Phillipsburg Community Center.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tammy D. Merklein
organization HOPE Foundation date 5-24-2010
street & number 171 8th Street telephone 785-540-4100
city or town Phillipsburg state KS zip code 67661
e-mail _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Phillipsburg Community Building
City or Vicinity: Phillipsburg
County/State: Phillips County, KS
Photographer: Sarah Martin, Kansas Historical Society
Date Photos taken: February 10, 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 12: South (front) elevation, facing N
- 2 of 12: East (side) elevation, facing NW
- 3 of 12: East (side) elevation showing exterior staircase, facing W
- 4 of 12: West (side) elevation, facing SE
- 5 of 12: North (rear) and west (side) elevations, facing SE
- 6 of 12: Interior, main entryway from south side of building, facing S
- 7 of 12: Interior, second floor at the top of main stairs
- 8 of 12: Interior, second-floor auditorium space, facing E

- 9 of 12: Interior, gymnasium, facing SE
- 10 of 12: Interior, gymnasium stage, facing N
- 11 of 12: Interior, east wall of gymnasium, facing NE
- 12 of 12: Interior, stage area adjacent to gymnasium, facing W

Property Owner:

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name City of Phillipsburg, C/O Mayor Fred Robinson
street & number 934 2nd Street telephone 785-543-5234
city or town Phillipsburg state KS zip code 67661

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 listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Figure 1: Phillipsburg Community Building – Rendering published in the Phillips County Review, July 2, 1936

