

Helena National Guard Armory
Name of Property

Phillips County, Arkansas
County and State

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Helena National Guard Armory

Other Name/Site Number: Helena Community Center; PH0428

2. Location

Street & Number: 511 Miller St.

Not for Publication: NA

City/Town: Helena-West Helena

Vicinity: NA

State: AR County: Phillips Code: AR0107 Zip Code: 72342

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public-local

Category of Property: Building

Helena National Guard Amory
Name of Property

Phillips County, Arkansas
County and State

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing Noncontributing

1 ___ buildings
___ ___ sites
___ ___ structures
___ ___ objects
1 ___ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National
Register: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: "An Ambition to be Preferred: New Deal Recovery Efforts and
Architecture in Arkansas, 1933-1943"

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act
of 1986, 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. ___ See continuation
sheet.

Colleen Matthews 11/22/06
Signature of certifying official 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.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Helena National Guard Amory

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5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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 Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DEFENSE Sub: arms storage

Current: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Art Deco

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Metal and Asphalt
walls Brick other

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

SUMMARY:

The Helena National Guard Armory at 511 Miller St. is a one-story, brick-masonry structure constructed in 1937 and designed in the Art Deco style of architecture.

ELABORATION:

The Helena National Guard Armory at 511 Miller St. is a one-story, brick-masonry structure constructed in 1937 and designed in the Art Deco style of architecture. It rests on a continuous cast-concrete foundation.

RECEIVED

NOV 22 2006

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

The south, or front, façade exhibits the Art Deco style strongly, with one story brick sections topped with concrete courses flanking the central area, which is characterized by a vertical emphasis including two towers and four pilasters along a pointed-arch roofline. The two one-story corner sections are fenestrated with a single six-over-six double-hung window each. The central arched section is inset, and a single door pierces the east and west faces of the one-story sections respectively. Separated by the pilasters, from west to east are a set of double doors, a single door and another single-door. On the second floor, a pair of four-pane hopper windows fenestrate between the second and third pilasters (commencing from west to east), three five-pane hopper windows fenestrate between the third and fourth pilasters, and another pair of four-pane hopper windows fenestrates between the fourth and fifth pilasters.

The east façade, from south to north, is fenestrated by six double-hung, six-over-six windows. The rear section of the building protrudes slightly, and the location of a former doorway, probably for an overhead door, is filled with concrete blocks – probably the only alteration to the exterior of the building.

The north, or rear, façade simulates the pointed arch design of the front of the building. From east to west, it is pierced by two double-hung, six-over-six windows, an overhead garage door, and two separate single doors.

The west façade is fenestrated with eleven double-hung, six-over-six windows.

The Helena National Guard Amory exhibits remarkable integrity, with the only obvious alteration to the building being the one overhead door opening that has been filled. Even with that, it remains a remarkable example of the Art Deco style of architecture and clearly reflects its original and intended use, the storage of military arms and equipment.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): NA

Areas of Significance: Military

Period(s) of Significance: 1937 to 1957

Significant Dates: 1937-1957

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Works Progress Administration

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

SUMMARY:

The Helena National Guard Amory is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with

local significance for its association with the history of the Arkansas Army National Guard and the Works Progress Administration and under **Criterion C** with **local significance** by virtue of its status as the best example in Phillips County of an Art Deco-style armory.

ELABORATION:

On October 25, 1935, the Arkansas Central Office of the Works Progress Administration approved WPA Project #2-54-6-501, which authorized \$11,123 for construction of a new National Guard armory in Helena to house Battery G, 206th Coastal Artillery, though it took close to a year before construction began. That did dampen the enthusiasm of the people of Helena, however, especially when they learned that the new structure would be available for the full use of civic organizations and public institutions in addition to the local National Guard outfit, though the *Helena World* reported that the new building “was not to be commercialized nor rented to private concerns who make a profit from the use of the building.” In addition, the newspaper noted, the WPA agreed to pave the 500 block of Miller Street because National Guard regulations stipulated that all armories must be located on paved streets.

The site for the new armory was purchased from the Arkansas Utilities Company in mid-May and excavation of the foundation of the structure commenced on October 16, 1936; at that time, the *Helena World* reported that the total project cost would be \$30,000. That total included \$5,000 that was to be raised by local citizens, a task with which the local Chamber of Commerce would struggle throughout the spring and summer of 1937. On December 20, 1936, the *World* reported that the foundation was laid and construction was beginning on the superstructure, and on January 20 the newspaper reported that “Workmen have started erecting steel trusses for the roof of the building.”

Construction halted during February as the Mississippi River threatened to flood and thousands of people from throughout the Arkansas Delta fled to higher ground, but by March 8, the *World* reported that “bricklayers and carpenters are busily engaged on the structure.” The last reference to the Helena National Guard Armory in the newspaper was on June 10, 1937, when it reported that the local Chamber of Commerce had accepted title to the armory lot that day, signifying that the local financial obligations had been met, and that completion was expected in the next few weeks. The armory served the National Guard until 1978, then was turned over to the City of Helena, which designated it the Helena Community Center in March 1982, a function it continues to serve to this day.

The Helena National Guard Armory was home to Battery G, 206th Coast Artillery, which was formed in 1936 and served in Alaska’s Aleutian Islands during World War II. Following the war, the building housed Battery A, 455th Field Artillery Battalion from 1945 to 1956, followed by Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 206th Field Artillery from 1956 to 1967. That unit was reorganized into part of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 153rd Infantry in 1967 and was housed at the armory until its 1978 closure.

The Helena National Guard Armory stands today as a reminder of the state’s military heritage and as a living memorial to the men and women who have stood ready to serve in state and national emergencies and is a reminder of the important role the Works Progress Administration played in helping the country recover from the Great Depression. It is also an excellent example of the Art Deco-style aesthetic sometimes exhibited in armories designed by the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression.

The Helena National Guard Armory is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** for its association with the history of the Arkansas Army National Guard and the Works Progress Administration and under **Criterion C** with **local significance** by virtue of its status as the best example in Phillips County of an Art Deco-style armory.

9. Major Bibliographical References

WPA Central Office Files, 1935-1937, Arkansas History Commission

Helena World, September 4, September 28 and December 20, 1936; January 8, 14 and 20, March 8 and June 10, 1937.

Steve Rucker, Arkansas National Guard Museum, e-mail to author, August 25, 2006.

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 -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A 15 495231 3774996 B
C D

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of a line 20 feet southeast of the southeast corner of the building and the north edge of Miller Street commence due north 200 feet; thence commence westerly for 120 feet along a perpendicular line; thence commence due south along a perpendicular line for 200 feet to the northern edge of Miller Street; thence commence due east for 120 feet along the northern edge of Miller Street to the point of beginning.

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Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes all of the property associated with this resource that retains historic integrity.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Mark Christ/Community Outreach Director

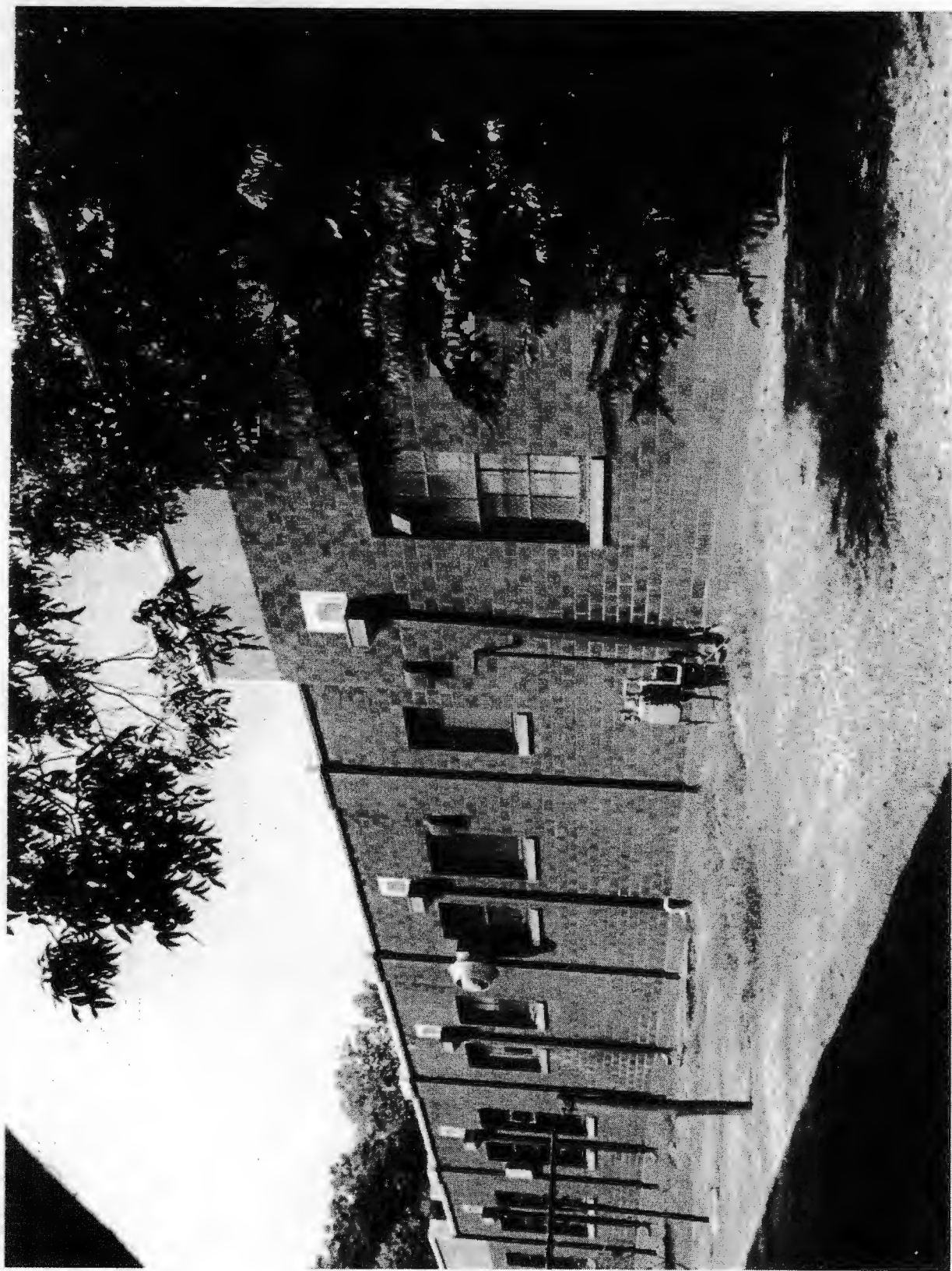
Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: August 11, 2006

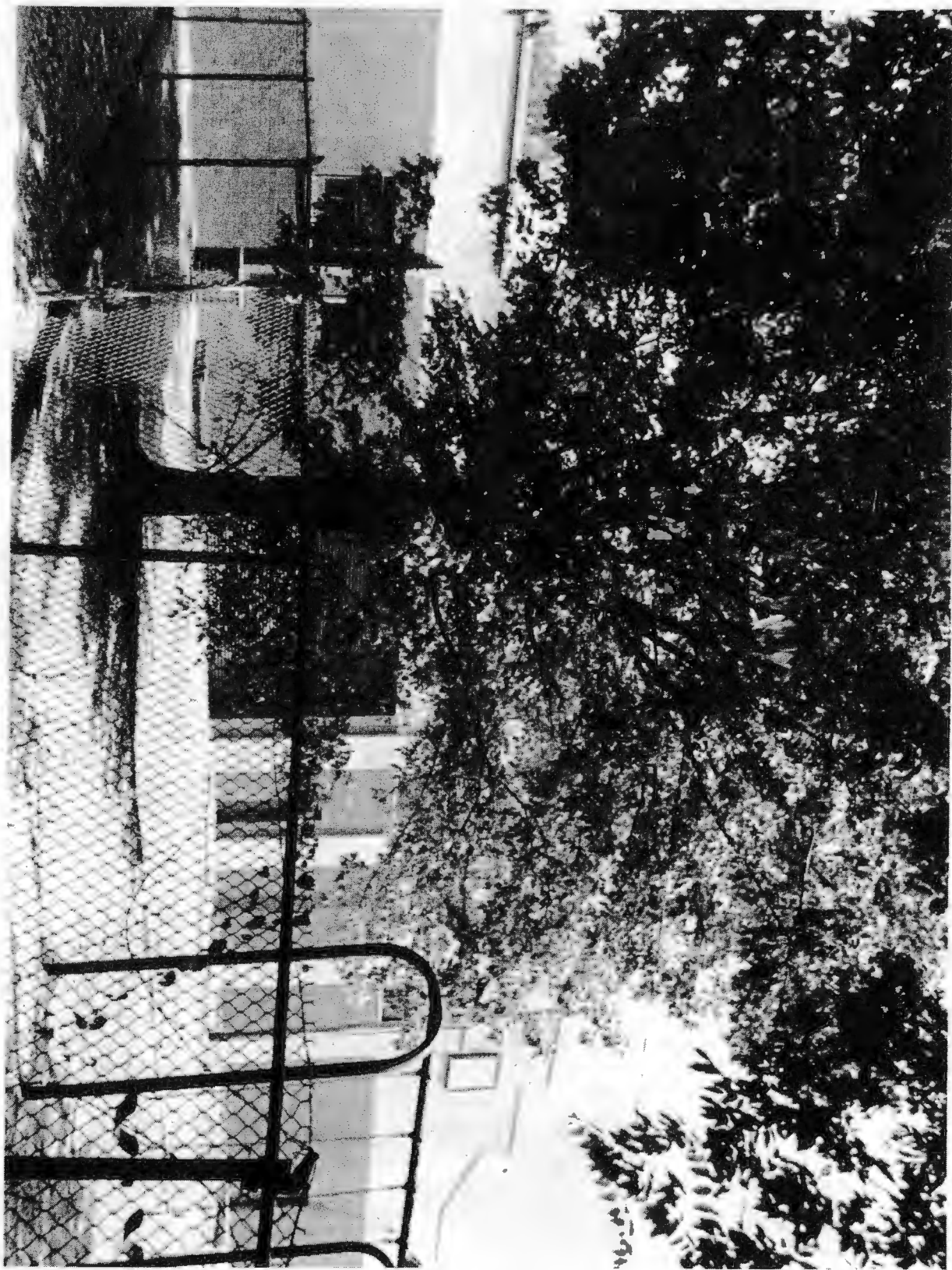
Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR ZIP: 72201









Helena National Guard Armory Helena-West Helena, Phillips Co, AR

15/721326/3823522

1460 000 FEET
(MISS.)

34° 30' 30" N
90° 31' 30" W

19

120

420 000 FEET (MISS.)

35° 12'

123

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1977. Field checked 1978. Map edited 1982

Projection: Mississippi coordinate system, west zone (transverse Mercator)

10,000-foot grid ticks based on Mississippi coordinate system, west zone and Arkansas coordinate system, south zone

15



CONT
NAT/NA

