NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

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 _ __ Lake Overholser Bridge _____

other names/site number ___ _____ _____

2. Location

street & number: North Overholser Drive, ½ mile west of North Council Road
not for publication: N/A
city or town: Oklahoma City vicinity: N/A
state: Oklahoma code: OK county: Oklahoma code: 109
zip code: 73132

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

MAR 03 '04

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide _X__ locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

1-20-04

Signature of certifying official Date

_Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

_____ _____
Signature of commenting or other official Date

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

___ private
_x_ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

___ building(s)
___ district
___ site
_x_ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
__1__	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
__1__	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register __0___

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) __ Oklahoma Route 66 Historic Resources, 1926-1970_____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: _ TRANSPORTATION_____ Sub: __ road-related (vehicular)_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: _ TRANSPORTATION_____ Sub: __ road-related (vehicular)_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
__ Other: Mixed Truss Bridge _____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
foundation __ CONCRETE _____
roof ___ N/A _____
walls ___ N/A _____
other ___STEEL _____

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

8. Statement of Significance

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

__x_ 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.

__x_ 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.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

____ C a birthplace or a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

____TRANSPORTATION _____
_____ ENGINEERING _____
_____
_____
_____

Period of Significance ___1924-1958_____

_____
_____

Significant Dates _1924, 1925, 1926, 1958 _____
_____
_____

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
_____ N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation ___ N/A _____
_____
_____

Architect/Builder __ General Construction Company __
_____

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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
_x__ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
_x__ Other
Name of repository: __ Oklahoma Department of Transportation _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _ less than two acres _____

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_14_	_624203E	_3930729N_	3	__	_____	_____
2	__	_____	_____	4	__	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title____ Michael Cassity _____

organization __ Michael Cassity Historical Research and Photography _ date __ August 7, 2003_

street & number_304 West Albuquerque _____ telephone_ 918 451-8378 _____

city or town __ Broken Arrow _____ state _OK_ zip code __74011_____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)
name __City of Oklahoma City _____

street & number_ _200 N Walker, 3rd Floor _____ telephone _405-297-2345 __

city or town _ Oklahoma City _____ state _ OK ____ zip code _ 73102 _____

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Description

Located on the west side of Oklahoma County as Route 66 leaves the greater Oklahoma City metropolitan area heading west, the Lake Overholser Bridge is a mixed truss bridge of impressive design and proportions. The bridge enables traffic to cross over the North Canadian River as it empties into the Oklahoma City municipal reservoir, Lake Overholser. Constructed in 1924 and 1925, this bridge represented a significant engineering accomplishment that has lasted to the present and that for three decades served Route 66. The main road, a modern divided highway, and an alternate bridge now pass immediately to the north and this bridge now carries only local traffic. The bridge retains its integrity of structure, materials, workmanship, location, appearance, feeling, and association.

The Lake Overholser Bridge is a steel bridge mounted on concrete piers in the North Canadian River, also known as the inlet to Lake Overholser. A six span bridge, 748 feet long, the structure is noticed not only by travelers who cross over it, but also by those who speed past on the adjacent modern highway. A defining feature of the bridge is that it is constructed of two different types of steel trusses. Each end of the bridge has a camelback Warren pony truss and between those lower, open, trusses on the ends, four Parker through-trusses rise overhead and add mass and height to the structure. Each Parker through-truss is made of eight panels, each eighteen feet long, rising to a height of twenty-eight feet at the center. The pony trusses at the east and west ends of the bridge are made of five panels each, and rise to ten feet at their center with a length of eighty feet. A lattice steel handrail runs the full distance of the bridge on each side for the adventurous pedestrian. The roadway on the bridge, made of concrete, is twenty feet wide with concrete curbing on each side, but at an unknown date the concrete roadway was covered with asphalt. The clearance between the roadway and the bridge structure overhead is fourteen and a half feet. The abutments are made of concrete wingwalls that angle outward and away (toard the banks) from the bridge on the banks. The piers, located at each point where the spans join, are pairs of concrete posts connected by a poured panel of concrete.

The Lake Overholser Bridge on Route 66 is over three-quarters of a century old and has been used almost the entire span of its life, except for a short period in the 1990s when it was closed. It continues in use and retains a high integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The Lake Overholser Bridge in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, emerged in the flurry of road construction in the state from 1923 to 1925 and within two years became an important feature of Route 66 as it crossed the state. Still an active and usable bridge, the structure retained its association with Route 66 until a new route replaced it in 1958. The bridge is significant within the Multiple Property nomination, "Oklahoma Route 66 Historic Resources, 1926-1970," as a representative of the property type "Road Bridges on Route 66" under Criterion A in the area of significance, Transportation, and under Criterion C in the area of significance, Engineering.

Historical Significance of the Lake Overholser Bridge

In the 1920s as Oklahoma moved systematically into a period where automobiles replaced horses and buggies, the state launched a program to upgrade its road network with the goal of paving the major thoroughfares. In fact, the state's roads prior to this time did not effectively constitute a system, but were an assortment of roadways, the vast majority unpaved, connecting rural villages to county seats and markets. In 1924, the State Highway Commission undertook a major innovation. In that year, the commission published a map indicating the roads in the state and called it a system:

> This system consists of State Highways, numbered consecutively from 1 to 26, embracing nearly 5,000 miles of road, and described by listing the major towns or control points through which each highway passes. Each State Highway will be marked by erecting a sufficient number of official State Highway signs in the center of which will be a figure denoting the number of the highway.[1]

[1] *Annual Report of the [Oklahoma] State Highway Commission for the Years 1919 to*

One of these "highways" was State Highway 3, a road that ran east and west across the state from Fort Smith, Arkansas to Texola on the border of the Texas panhandle. Known also as the Postal Road, this was one of the primary corridors stretching across the state. Very little of it was paved however, and the floods of 1923 along the South Canadian River washed out virtually every bridge in the Oklahoma City area. For two years traffic on the Postal Highway and 39th Street had to cross the river on a ferry and pay twenty-five cents per car.[2] In 1924 the state used money from the Bureau of Public Roads in the U.S. Department of Agriculture to pave slightly over seven miles of Highway 3 in Oklahoma County, "from Oklahoma City west to the city Reservoir" in Federal Aid Project No. 60.[3] The bridge formed Federal Aid Project No. 60C. Constructed beginning in 1924, and completed in 1925, the bridge opened for traffic on August 2, 1925; soon afterwards the new paved road connecting it on the east to Oklahoma City also opened.[4]

In 1926 the change that came to the bridge did not alter its physical characteristics, but did reconfigure its historical significance. The same week in 1925 that the bridge was opened for traffic, the local press reported that Highway 3, in which it formed a vital link, was being considered as part of one of the through-routes to be designated as a U.S. highway when the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads completed its plans.[5] When U.S. Route 66 was designated the next year, the new highway made use of existing roadways, including this one. As Route 66 coursed its way west from Oklahoma City, it followed Highway 3 to the Texas state line at Texola and thus took its travelers over the Lake Overholser Bridge.

1924 Inclusive (Oklahoma City: State of Oklahoma, 1925), 7-8.

[2] "Road Conditions this Week," *Daily Oklahoman*, August 31, 1924.

[3] *Annual Report of the [Oklahoma] State Highway Commission for the Years 1919 to 1924 Inclusive*, 44.

[4] *Daily Oklahoman*, August 2, 9, 1925.

[5] "Seven State Roads may Link up with National System," *Daily Oklahoman*, August 5, 1925; "U.S. to Accept Eight Highway Lines in State," *Daily Oklahoman*, August 6, 1925.

For more than three decades, this bridge served as a critical link for motorists traveling across the country and across the state as they also crossed over the bridge. Whether traveling as part of the new fad of auto-campers, traveling to find hopes for a new life in different locations after suffering the privations of agricultural depression, traveling as part of the emerging trucking industry that came to replace the railroads, or as part of the immense wave of tourists unleashed by post-World War II prosperity, Route 66 travelers who passed through central Oklahoma passed over and through the structure that made up the Lake Overholser Bridge. With its striking length, it doubtless impressed some. For others, it became a permanent part of the landscape in the way that a familiar landmark would be taken for granted as a waypoint. Thus, in his popular guide book to the highway, Jack Rittenhouse casually commented as he guided Route 66 travelers west out of Oklahoma City, "Cross a steel bridge over the North Canadian River."[6] The volume of traffic across this stretch of road, in fact, was nothing short of enormous. The two-lane road, at twenty feet, wider than the state standard at the time of its construction, could not sustain the volume. In 1958 this road was replaced on Route 66 by a four-lane divided highway immediately to its north, and the new road included a new, wider bridge. This newer segment of Route 66 meant that the old bridge lost its association with Route 66, although the road and bridge continued to carry local traffic for the remainder of the twentieth century except for a time in the 1990s when it was closed; when it reopened, it carried a lower load limit, a factor which should prolong its life.

This bridge fits exactly the requirements for the property type "Road Bridges along Route 66" in the Multiple Property nomination, "Oklahoma Route 66 Historic Resources, 1926-1970," in the area of Transportation.

Engineering / Architectural Significance of the Lake Overholser Bridge

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[6] Jack D. Rittenhouse, A *Guide Book to Highway 66* (Los Angeles: privately published, 1946; reprint, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989, 2000), 56.

The Lake Overholser Bridge also meets the requirements for significance under Criterion C. The standard reference on Oklahoma bridges notes that "During the 1920s bridge building began to feel the effects of state standards for design, and the first structures reflecting Oklahoma's participation in the federal aid system appeared on major highways."[7] Thus, as part of its surge to develop a meaningful highway system, the State Highway Commission developed standardized plans for structural steel superstructures. The Lake Overholser Bridge exemplified the application of those plans in one of the earliest projects. The state was moving away from timber in its bridges and also moving toward wider roadbeds. As the 1923-1924 *Annual Report* noted, "the materials generally employed in the construction of these bridges are steel and concrete." And, it said, "All bridges have clear roadways of not less than sixteen feet, and the width is eighteen feet or more on the bridges constructed more recently. Wherever considerable traffic is expected, wider roadways on the bridges are recommended and constructed."[8] The expectation for this bridge was clear: the roadway was built twenty feet wide to accommodate plenty of traffic.

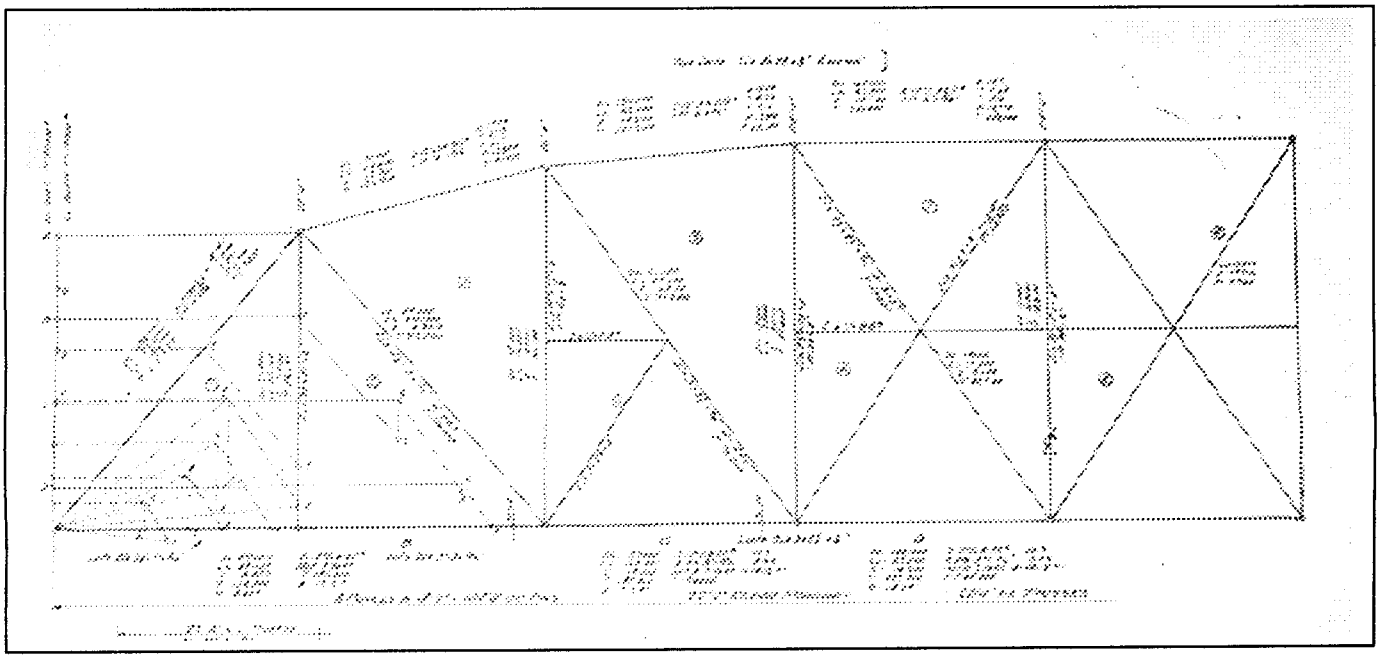

Diagram: Oklahoma State Highway Commission plans used for Parker through-truss in Lake Overholser Bridge, Federal Aid Project 60C. Plans courtesy Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

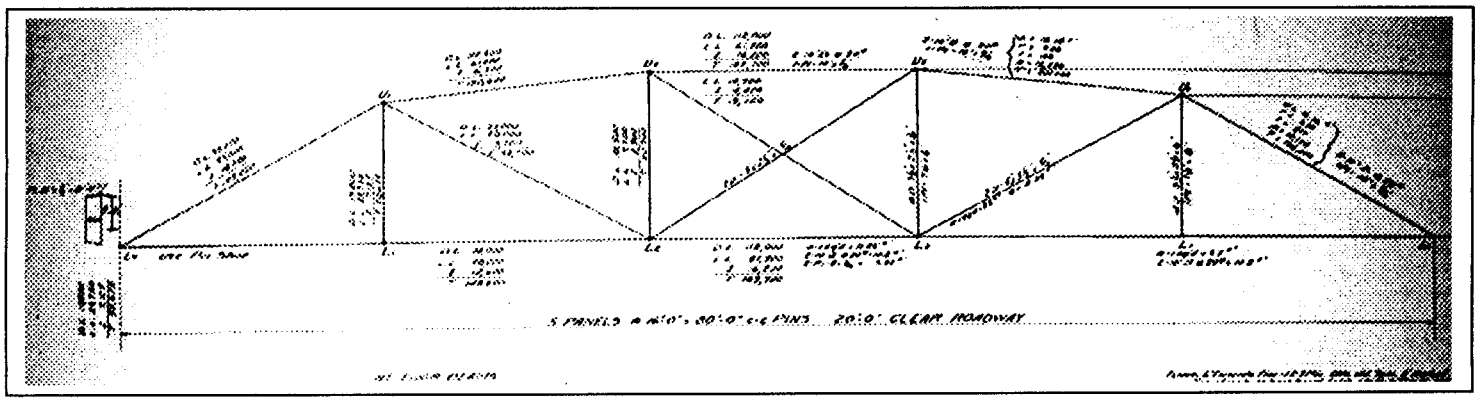

Diagram: Oklahoma State Highway Commission plans for Pony Truss used in Lake Overholser Bridge, Federal Aid Project 60C. Plans courtesy, Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

The bridge is also significant because of its unusual combination of trusses. With both Parker through-trusses and pony trusses, the bridge represents not only a particular design of bridges, but also does so with an elegant symmetry not found in many other examples of that mixed truss type. Finally, the bridge is important because of its size. It is 748 feet long. There are a few larger bridges on Route 66 in Oklahoma, but none larger are as old as this bridge.

The Lake Overholser Bridge in this way is significant under Criterion C in the area of significance of Engineering because it represented a departure in the construction of bridges on highways in the state, because it is an example of the earliest standardized plans

that were being developed and put to use, and because it represented a distinct type of bridge, the mixed truss bridge, and also because of its extraordinary length, making it stand out even more as a significant engineering resource along Route 66.

Conclusion

Because of its direct association with Route 66 during the period of its historic significance, the Lake Overholser Bridge is significant under Criterion A within the Multiple Property Nomination, "Oklahoma Route 66 Historic Resources, 1926-1970" as the property type "Road Bridges on Route 66." Because of its distinct period, type, and style of construction the Lake Overholser Bridge is also eligible under Criterion C in the Multiple Property Nomination in the area of significance Engineering.

Major Bibliographical References

Anderson, Kathy, Jim Ross, and Gary Ray Howell, Oklahoma Route 66 Association, *Oklahoma Route 66 Roadbed Documentation Project (1926-1970): A Survey of Roadbed and Integral Structures* (Oklahoma city: Oklahoma SHPO, 2002).

Annual Report of the [Oklahoma] State Highway Commission for the Years 1919 to 1924 Inclusive (Oklahoma City: State of Oklahoma, 1925), 7-8.

King, Joseph E., *Spans of Time: Oklahoma Historic Highway Bridges* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Department of Transportation, 1993).

Oklahoma Department of Transportation, Road and Bridge Files, Oklahoma City.

"Putting the Canadian Back into its Cage," *Daily Oklahoman*, May 10, 1925.

"Road Conditions this Week," *Daily Oklahoman*, August 31, may 10, June 21, August 2, 9, 30, 1925.

Rittenhouse, Jack D., A *Guide Book to Highway 66* (Los Angeles: privately published, 1946; reprint, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989, 2000).

Ross, Jim, *Oklahoma Route 66* (Arcadia, Oklahoma: Ghost Town Press, 2001).

"Seven State Roads may Link up with National System," *Daily Oklahoman*, August 5, 1925.

"U.S. to Accept Eight Highway Lines in State," *Daily Oklahoman*, August 6, 1925.

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Verbal Boundary Description

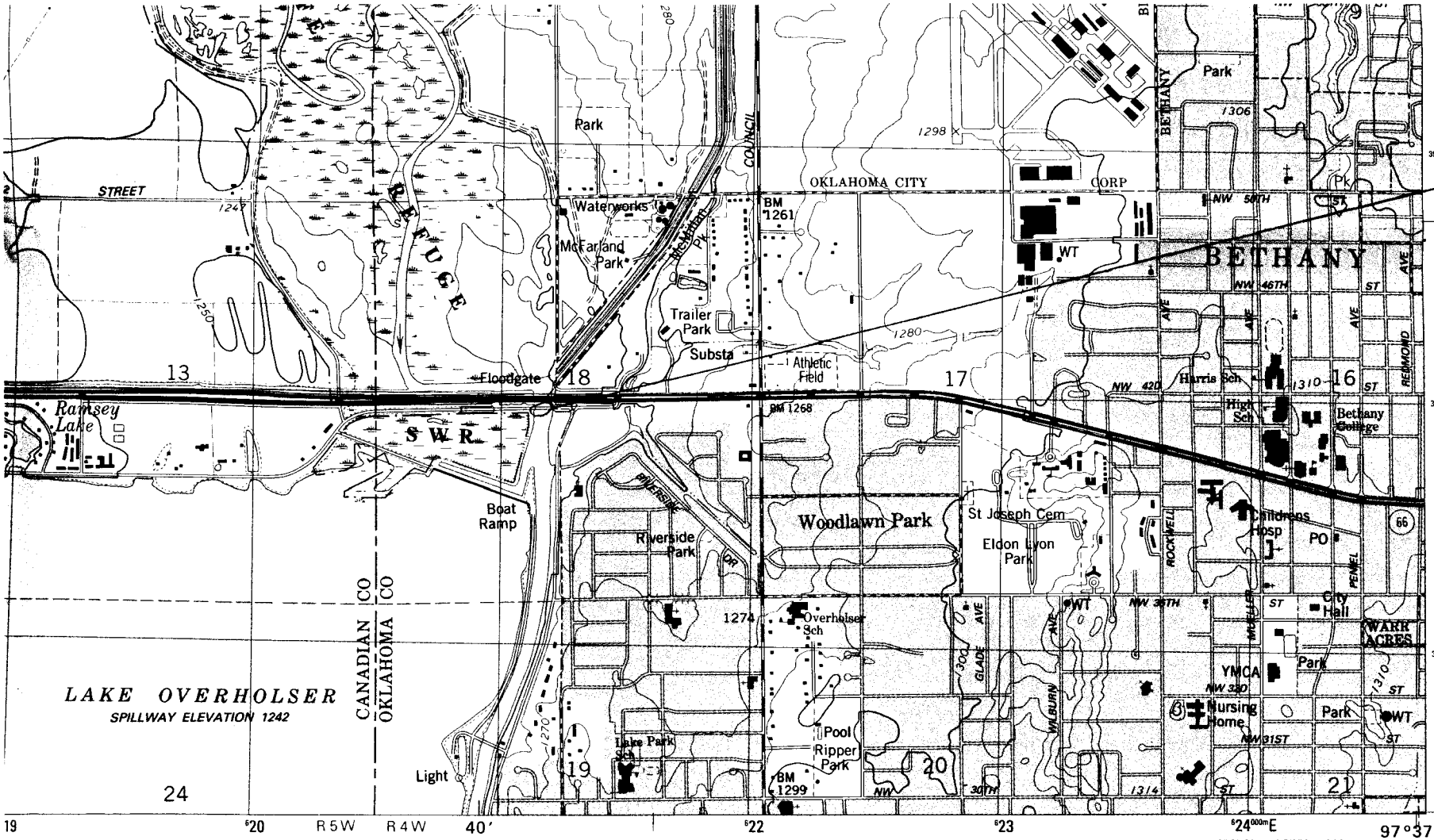
This property includes the bridge and approaches with boundaries forming a rectangle fifty feet wide and eight hundred feet long centered on the Lake Overholser Bridge.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the property historically associated with the Lake Overholser Bridge.

Lake Overholser Bridge

Lake Overholser Bridge
Oklahoma County
UTM:
14 624203E
3930729N



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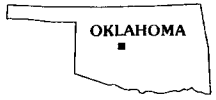
NAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
RVEY, NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73069
S AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4		5
6	7	8

1 El Reno NE
2 Piedmont
3 Bethany NE
4 Richland
5 Britton
6 Minco NE
7 Mustang
8 Oklahoma City

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway hard surface .....
Secondary highway hard surface .....
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface .....
Unimproved road .....

Interstate Route
U.S. Route
State Route

BETHANY, OK

1995

NIMA 6455 II SW-SERIES V883

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