

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: James Carl, Sr., and Lucille Johnson Family House

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

## 2. Location

Street & number: 202 E. Gore Blvd.

City or town: Lawton State: Oklahoma County: Comanche

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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

\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_ statewide      X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A      \_\_\_ B      X C      \_\_\_ D

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____  <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>Title :</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

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#### 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously in the National Register N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/single dwelling

Domestic/secondary structure

Domestic/single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/single dwelling

Domestic/secondary structure

Domestic/single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements: Bungalow/Craftsman

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stucco

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The James Carl, Sr., and Lucille Johnson Family House located at 202 E. Gore Blvd in Lawton, Oklahoma was erected in 1938. The property is platted as Lot One and Lot Two in Block 17 of the Vernon I addition, incorporated and established by the city of Lawton in 1930 as an exclusively Black neighborhood. The property has three contributing buildings: the single-story main house, and a detached one-car garage (added in 1946). There is also a secondary, single-story dwelling, referred to by the family as “the little house,” built sometime before 1944 when it was mentioned in a deed record. The main house is an example of the smaller Craftsman style homes, most popular in the United States from 1905 to 1930. Craftsman styles homes are generally one or one and one-half stories high and characteristics of the Craftsman style include a low-pitched, front or side gabled roof (less often cross-gabled or hipped roof), exposed roof rafters, decorative (false) beams or braces under gables, a full- or partial-width porch supported by tapered square columns and piers that extend to ground level. The Johnson Family House exhibits all of these Craftsman characteristics.

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### Narrative Description

The James Carl, Sr. and Lucille Johnson House is in the original Vernon Addition, Lots 1 and 2 of Block 17. According to the Vernon Plat map, each lot is 25 feet running generally east and west and 140 feet running generally north and south. Only 2 other houses remain extant in the original Vernon Addition: the adjoining home 204 East Gore and 25 N.E. Maine Street one block

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to the north. The main house faces south, and fronts Gore Boulevard and the front yard has a white wrought iron fence around the front (south) and east side of the front yard. There is a white picket fence along the west side of the front yard, which runs parallel to NE Maine Street. North of the driveway, the rest of the property is enclosed by a chain link fence. There is an aluminum and glass gaslite and post in the southeast section of the front yard. The exterior of the main house is stucco while the exterior of the little house and the garage are aluminum siding. In 1950, the kitchen was expanded north by 8 feet on the north elevation, and a 16-foot by 20-foot den was added on the west elevation. The main house consists of a parlor, formal dining room, den, kitchen, two bedrooms, one full bathroom, and a study. The little house, almost due north of the main house, consists of three bedrooms, a storage area, and a partial bathroom (sink and toilet). It is north of the main house and the garage. The single-car garage sits north and to the west of the main house.

While no one has lived in the house for the past two decades, the main house is well maintained and fully furnished. A new roof was put on the main house and the secondary house/little house in 2004 and the aluminum siding was added to the little house and the garage in 2019. Otherwise, the house, including its furnishings, has remained largely unchanged since 1973 when Carl, Sr. passed away. His Chrysler Plymouth still sits in the garage. His wife, Lucielle, continued living in the house for another two decades until her death in 1995. Their daughter, Lucielle Johnson Boutte inherited the home. She and her son, Brad Boutte, are the current owners of the home.

**Property details:**

**Main House:**

**South Elevation**

The one-story main house faces south and has a concrete foundation and stucco exterior. The house has a low-pitched, front gable roof (with a cross gable side wing at the west elevation) with exposed rafter tails and asphalt shingles. There are decorative exposed beams at each end of the gable, consistent with a Craftsman style dwelling. The facade features a partial-width porch (8 feet by 13 feet) with two square stucco piers. The pier on the southwest corner of the porch rises 69 inches above ground level with a 3 inch cap and a 35 ½ inch tapered wooden column. The pier in the center of the porch rises 40 inches above ground level with a 3 inch cap. There are two concrete steps that lead up the porch just east of the shorter pier.

Directly north of the stairs onto the porch is the front door. The door is a half-lite, hollow core wood door. The glass is frosted with faux muntins that create a diamond pattern. This door is protected by an aluminum, half-screen door. On the porch to the west of the front door is a pair of single hung, 1/1 aluminum windows with a 7-inch wood mullion separating each window. The pair of windows are unified by a 5-inch wood frame and a 2 inch wood sill. Fixed, decorative wooden shutters flank each side of this window pair. Just to the east of the front door is the door that leads to the study (faces west). This door is exactly the same as the front door, a half-lite,

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hollow core wood door with frosted glass and faux muntins that create a diamond pattern. This door is also protected by an aluminum, half-screen door that replicates that of the front door. Flanking the porch on each side of the south elevation is another pair of windows. Each pair is a single-hung, 1/1 aluminum windows with a 7-inch wood mullion separating each window. Each pair is unified by a 5-inch wood frame and a 2-inch wood sill. Both pairs of windows also have fixed, decorative wood shutters. Since these 2 pairs of windows are not covered by the porch, fixed, quarter-round, aluminum, window awnings were installed. Each awning has two rows of overlapping horizontal pans and extends 2 feet out from the wall at their lowest point, so that only the bottom half of the windows are visible.

### East Elevation

The east elevation has four separate single-hung, 1/1 windows. The southernmost 8 feet of the elevation is recessed 2 feet. The window in this section has fixed, decorative shutters like the house facade, has the same 5-inch wood frame on the top and sides and a 2-inch wood sill and is the same size as those windows (approximately 26.5 inches wide and 57 inches tall). There are 3 more windows on this elevation, all within the 34 feet of flush wall heading north. The two windows on each end are identical in size and have the same frame, sill, and the same width and height as the southernmost window on this elevation, but neither window has shutters. The window between these two is a bathroom window, measuring the same 26.5 inches wide as the rest, but only 32.5 inches tall, and is flush at the top of the window with the other windows at this elevation. The northernmost 8 feet of the east elevation is recessed 12 feet. This section was added to the house in 1950 as a kitchen expansion.

### North Elevation

The north elevation of the home features a low-pitched gable roof, with a cross-gabled wing on the west side, created by the 16-foot by 20-foot addition to the home in 1950. The addition also extended the kitchen north 8 feet, creating a smaller low-pitched gable roof that mirrors the main gable on this elevation. There is a low, brick chimney 15 feet south of this elevation, along the roof ridge, which would have provided ventilation in the original kitchen.

The easternmost window on the north elevation and the window in the kitchen addition are consistent with the full-size windows on the south and east elevations, a single hung, 1/1 window with a 5-inch frame and 2-inch wood sill. The 1950 den addition adds another 16 feet to the north elevation on the west side of the home. On this wing, at the point where the north elevation meets the northwest elevation, there is a narrow single hung, 1/1 window (13.5 inches wide by 57 inches tall). Due to its proximity to the wall, the frame on the left (east) side of the window is only 1.5 inches wide, while the top and right (west) side of the frame is almost 5 inches wide, with a 1.5-inch wooden sill. The window to the west has the same measurements, but its frame is 4 inches wide on the sides, 5 inches wide on the top, and a 2-inch sill. Next to this window on the west is a simple porch light and a door. This door is solid wood, half-lit with horizontal panels and a single pane of transparent glass. The door is protected by an aluminum and glass screen door. There are two concrete steps that lead up to the door.

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### **West Elevation**

The southern section of the west elevation (the den addition) has a low-pitched gable roof with exposed beams at each gable end. Centered under the gable is a pair of single-hung, 1/1 aluminum windows with a 7-inch wood mullion separating each window. The pair are unified by a 5-inch wood frame and a 2-inch wood sill. Like the south elevation, this window pair has fixed, quarter-round, aluminum, window awnings with two rows of overlapping horizontal pans and extends 2 feet out from the wall at their lowest point.

The northern portion of the west elevation has a single hung 1/1 aluminum window that is flush with the tops of the windows on the north elevation and is 26.5 inches wide, but only 33 inches tall. This window also has fixed decorative wooden shutters. To the north of the window is an insulated steel skin 6 lite door with faux muntins. There are 3 concrete steps and a metal railing that lead to this door.

### **Interior**

According to the county assessor, the main house is 1,446 square feet. There are two doors into the house from the front porch. North of the front porch, through the south-facing door on the left (west), is the parlor. This is the main entrance to the house. The formal dining room is adjacent to the parlor and is directly north of it. On the west side of the parlor is the den that was added in the early 1950s. The den includes a north-facing door that leads outside. The addition of the den created an L shape on the west elevation of the main house. In 1950, the kitchen was expanded approximately eight feet to the north. A north-facing window was installed in approximately the same area as the old north-facing door before the expansion. A new door was added on the west side of the kitchen, and this was the primary door used by the family to come and go from the house after the 1950 remodel was complete. All sides of the formal dining room lead to other parts of the house: to the south is the parlor; to the west is the den; to the north is the kitchen; to the east is the hall that leads to the remaining rooms in the house.

Across from the formal dining room (to the east) is a hallway that runs north/south. Across the hall (west) from the dining room is the bathroom. There are two bedrooms in the house, one on each side of the bathroom. One bedroom is north of the bathroom and the other is south of the bathroom. The bedroom that is north of the bathroom was occupied by James Carl, Sr., and Lucille Johnson. The bedroom that is south of the bathroom was occupied by their daughter, Lucielle. Her bedroom leads south into Carl, Sr.'s study (it is on the southeast corner of the house). The study can also be accessed from the front porch through the door on the right (east). The door from the porch into the study faces west.

### **Secondary House:**

#### **West Elevation**

The secondary house, or as the Johnson family called it the little house, is one story and faces west. It has a concrete foundation, and the exterior is white aluminum siding. The siding was

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added in 2019 over the top of the original exterior, which is approximately 12-inch batten board. The house has a low-pitched, side gable roof with a shed roof on the east elevation and the south elevation. Johnson family photos show exposed rafter tails, but those are now covered with aluminum siding. The roof is composed of asphalt shingles, replaced in 2004. In the center of the west elevation is a small gable over the entrance door with two concrete steps. Family photos show that originally the entrance had wooden steps. The door is a steel skin, no lite, six-panel door. It also has an aluminum half-lite, half-screen door. On each side of the entrance are a pair of single-hung, 1/1 aluminum windows with a 7-inch aluminum mullion separating each window. Their width is the same as the predominant windows on the main house, approximately 26.5 inches wide, but they are only 36.5 inches tall. The pair of windows are unified by a 1-inch aluminum frame and a 2-inch aluminum sill. The pair of windows south of the entrance also has the same fixed, quarter-round, aluminum, window awnings found on the south and west elevations of the main house. The awning has two rows of overlapping horizontal pans and extends 2 feet out from the wall at their lowest point so that only the bottom half of the windows are visible.

### **South Elevation**

The south elevation has a total of three windows. The windows closest to the west elevation mirror those on the south elevation. They are a pair of single-hung, 1/1 aluminum windows with a 7-inch aluminum mullion separating each window, approximately 36.5 inches tall and 26.5 inches wide. The pair of windows are unified by a 1-inch aluminum frame and a 2-inch aluminum sill. The bathroom is a six-foot south and four-foot east/west addition with a shed roof lower than the side gable. It has a single 1/1 aluminum window that is 26.5 inches tall and 23 inches wide. The easternmost end of the gable has an extended slanted roof section. On this section of the south elevation, there is a single 1/1 aluminum window to the east of the bathroom addition, measuring 53 inches tall and 26 inches wide. It has a 1-inch aluminum frame and a 2-inch aluminum sill.

### **East Elevation**

The east elevation has a door located in the southern third of the elevation. There are two concrete steps into the house. The door is a steel skin, no lite, six-panel door. There is also an aluminum half-lite, half-screen door. and one window to the south of the door. To the north of the door is a single-pane wooden casement window, measuring 28 inches tall and 23 inches wide. This is the only original wood-encased window on either dwelling and is believed to be original.

### **North Elevation**

The north elevation has no windows or doors. At the easternmost end of the gable, there is an extended slanted roof section.



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**Interior:**

According to the county assessor, the secondary house is 465 square feet, though the sketch in the assessor's records shows the bathroom extension at the southeasternmost end of the south elevation, which is not accurate. The little house faces west. It includes three main rooms, a storage room, and a partial bathroom (sink and toilet). The Johnson boys slept in the three main rooms. Immediately east of the west-facing entrance is the largest of the three rooms. There is a door on the southeast side of that room that leads into the partial bathroom. Directly east of the front door on the east wall of the largest room is a door to a closet that is inaccessible. To the north of the largest room is another room that was used as a bedroom. To the east of that bedroom is a storage area (used by the Johnson boys to store their saddles). Directly south of the storage area is the third room used as a bedroom. It also has a door that leads (east) outside.

**Garage**

The garage, just to the northeast of the main house and southeast of the secondary house, was built in 1946 with a concrete slab floor. The garage has a low-pitched, front gable roof with exposed rafter tails and asphalt shingles. The exterior of the one-car garage is vinyl siding. The siding was added within the last ten years over the top of the original exterior, which is batten board. The south elevation has a single, steel-skin garage door with 16 panels. The resource is void of windows. The interior of the garage is batten board. At one time, a driveway running along the east side of the house went from the garage to Gore Blvd.

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## 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.)

- 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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1938-1946

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

Ethnic Heritage/Black

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The James Carl, Sr. and Lucille Johnson Family House is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of a modest Craftsman Bungalow and demonstrates distinctive exterior characteristics of that style. The secondary house on the property, along with the garage built in 1946 complement the Craftsman style of the main house. Located in the first all-Black neighborhood in Lawton, the Johnson home was not constructed with interior elements of the high Craftsman style, but with modest exterior Craftsman elements that befitted a lower-income, minority neighborhood during the Great Depression. The property has maintained its architectural integrity.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

In 1930, the Lawton City Council created the all-Black neighborhood of Vernon. In 1933, Frank and Littie Roberson purchased Lot one and Two in block 17 of the Vernon Addition. In 1934, the Robersons signed a promissory note with Shamburger Lumber Company, presumably for the construction of buildings on the property. The two houses on the property were built in 1938. In 1941, Shamburger Lumber repossessed the property and sold it to Myrtle Gee, who in turn sold it to James and Lucille Johnson in late 1945. The Johnsons then added a garage in 1946. The Johnsons also constructed a 16-foot by 20-foot addition to the West elevation in 1950, but there have been no significant exterior or interior renovations since that time. At some point, a 4-foot by 6-foot partial bathroom was added to the secondary house, but that was no later than 1950, according to the family.

The exterior of the main house has retained its modest Craftsman bungalow style, with the front of the home (South elevation) providing the most significant Craftsman elements. The partial-width porch has two square concrete piers that, like most Craftsman porches, continues to the ground level without a break at the porch floor. The pier supporting the roof has a battered wooden column while the shorter, low pier adjacent to the porch steps does not have a column, which is also common in the Craftsman style. Craftsman homes generally have two or more windows grouped together, which is found on this property at the front porch and again on each side of the porch. The front (West elevation) of the secondary house also has two pairs of windows grouped together, framing each side of the front door.

The main and secondary houses and the garage also exhibit characteristics of the Craftsman style with their low-pitched, gabled roofs and exposed roof rafters. The main house also has faux decorative beams under the gables at the south elevation. The main house and the garage have a front gabled roof, while the secondary house has a low-pitched, side gable roof. The exposed

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rafter tails of the secondary house were covered by aluminum in 2019. At that time, the original 12-inch batten board wood siding on the secondary house and the garage was also covered with aluminum siding. The wall cladding of the main house is stucco, which was most frequently used in Craftsman-style construction in the Midwest and Southern California.

The Johnson Family property is one of only three properties with dwellings left in the original Vernon Addition, therefore comparing this property to the rest of the neighborhood architecture is now almost impossible. The neighborhood served a marginalized Lawton population that could not afford large or highly decorative homes and there is limited documentation of the types of homes constructed. The Johnson Family House represents traditional American architecture as it demonstrates the characteristics of a modest Craftsman Bungalow. It is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria C for its architectural merit.

### **Historical Context**

#### **All-Black Neighborhood of Vernon:**

In 1930, the Lawton City Council took some rather unusual steps by working, in consultation with a committee of local African Americans, to create a new school and neighborhood for African Americans. On May 27, the City Council discussed concerns about where a new school for Black students would be built. Mayor Fred C. Larrance suggested that it was possible to plot the Flat Iron tracts for a Black school and neighborhood. The Flat Iron tracts were located east of the city in a parcel of land purchased by the city from the US Department of the Interior in 1910. At the June 3, City Council meeting, the president of the school board addressed the Council about the need for a school for Black students. He indicated support from a committee of local African Americans for the school and new neighborhood. On July 15, 1930, the City Council passed Ordinance 561, which expanded Lawton city limits to include an area northeast of the original city, which the community had referred to as the "flat iron tract." On August 5, 1930, the City Council unanimously approved the creation of an exclusively black neighborhood.<sup>1</sup> The City Council established the boundaries of this new addition as the area between the Rock Island Railroad right-a-way (what is now the right-of-way for N. Railroad Street.) and the Frisco Railroad right-of-way (now a right-of-way for Stillwater Central Railroad) with Gore Boulevard on the South and Ferris on the North. Surveyors originally platted the addition into 17 blocks, with each lot 25 feet by 150 feet, except for the easternmost lots closest to the Frisco Railroad, which cut the addition at a diagonal from northwest to southeast.<sup>2</sup> In the 1950s, blocks 1 and 2, the area north of NE Euclid Ave. was re-platted as part of the Legion addition.

<sup>1</sup> Lawton City Council Meeting Minutes, May 27-September 16, 1930, City of Lawton, Minute Record, Book 12, Office of the City Clerk."

<sup>2</sup> Vernon Addition to the City of Lawton plat map, August 1930.

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On September 16, the City Council approved the sale of lots in the Vernon neighborhood, with the city selling the lots directly. The language of the special warranty deed is included in these minutes, prohibiting whites from living there.<sup>3</sup> The warranty deed specifically states that, “no white person shall ever be permitted to reside upon or occupy said lots or ground included in this deed...”<sup>4</sup> If said condition was violated, the City would repossess the property immediately. Three names for the new neighborhood were submitted to the council by a committee of local African Americans— Vernon, Douglas, and New East – and Vernon was selected. The City Council further noted that African Americans could name the streets running north and south in the addition.<sup>5</sup>

The Vernon addition was named in honor of William Tecumseh Vernon, a bishop for the African Methodist Episcopal Church and an educator who served as a president for a few Black colleges, including Western University in Quinada, Kansas.<sup>6</sup> Over the course of ten years as Western’s president, Vernon helped to grow the school from a college of twenty-five students to one of the leading Black universities west of the Mississippi. His outspoken support of the Republican Party would lead to his appointment as the Registrar of the US Treasury in 1906 under President Theodore Roosevelt. It is significant to note that Lawton’s Black residents selected his name for their new all-Black neighborhood and that they did so with the full support of the City Council.

By October of 1930, the City of Lawton published in the local papers the revenue that was generated by the sale of tracts of land in the Vernon I addition, which went into the city’s general fund. At the time, no other neighborhood had tracts of land sold directly by the city, nor were they designated as part of the city’s reported revenue.<sup>7</sup> Work on the grade school and high school, known as the Douglas School, was completed in June 1931 in the Vernon I addition, block 16.<sup>8</sup> Newspaper articles give us a glimpse into the community during the decade of the 1930s. Articles describe a fire at a house in the Vernon addition in May 1933 that resulted in a total loss of the home.<sup>9</sup> The same month, the Bethlehem Baptist Church of Vernon performed an original musical, “Heaven Bound” at Lawton High School for a whites-only audience. Proceeds from that performance paid for a wading pool near Douglas School.<sup>10</sup> There is also evidence that by January 1934 there were at least several hundred residents living in the Vernon Addition because 175 residents petitioned the city of Lawton to compel the removal of a junkyard from the blocks north of Douglas, on which the Yarmuk Iron Works had been established before the

<sup>3</sup> Lawton City Council Meeting Minutes, May 27-September 16, 1930, City of Lawton, Minute Record, Book 12, Office of the City Clerk.”

<sup>4</sup> Special Warranty Deed, City of Lawton, December 4, 1933.

<sup>5</sup> “Vernon Addition Lots to be Sold to Colored Folk,” *The Lawton Constitution*, September 17, 1930, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Lawton Negro Section Named by City Dads,” *The Lawton Constitution*, August 6, 1930, 1.

<sup>7</sup> “Report of the Financial Conditions of Lawton,” *The Lawton Constitution*, October 30, 1930, 6.

<sup>8</sup> “To Be Completed in Two Weeks,” *Lawton News-Review*, June 4, 1931, 1.

<sup>9</sup> “Negro Home Burns Here Late Sunday,” *The Lawton Constitution*, May 1, 1933, 6.

<sup>10</sup> “Negros to Give Play Tonight,” *The Lawton Constitution*, May 11, 1933, 3.

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platting of the Vernon addition. Vernon residents wanted these blocks opened up for settlement of more black families.<sup>11</sup> The City Council ultimately allowed Yarmuk to stay for the time being in the all-black neighborhood, allowing the business to put up an iron fence around the business. Technically, this did not violate the covenant of the neighborhood since Yarmuk did not live on the property.<sup>12</sup>

Economic challenges complicated the sustained development of the Vernon addition. Throughout the decade of the 1930s, the United States remained entrenched in the worst depression in American history. Several African Americans who purchased lots and/or homes in the Vernon addition struggled to stay current on their property taxes. In 1940, for example, the *Lawton Constitution* noted that back taxes were owed on properties in blocks 7, 9, 10, 11, and 17 (42 lots in all), with many owing multiple years of taxes<sup>13</sup> While we cannot ascertain whether all of the lots that owed back taxes had single-family dwellings, those blocks coincide with where homes were located in the Vernon addition in 1961. Aerial photos from that year show approximately nine homes in Block 7, the Galilee Baptist Church in Block 9, fifteen homes in Block 10, four homes in Block 11, and fifteen homes in Block 17.<sup>14</sup> Today, the Galilee Baptist Church is still in Block 9, but there are no homes in Block 7, 10, or 11. They are all part of O.H. Arnold Park. There are only 4 domestic single dwellings left in Block 17 and two of those are on the James Sr. and Lucille Johnson property.

Despite the economic challenges of the 1930s, housing demand only continued to increase, and many African Americans looked to settle in Vernon. According to the *Lawton Constitution*, the Vernon neighborhood “by common consent has been designated as the exclusive residential section for the ‘colored people.’ This is a happy and harmonious arrangement which has been agreeable to all citizens.” The article in the October 1, 1940, edition of the paper went on to explain that “Good school facilities and some playground facilities have been developed there.”<sup>15</sup>

After war broke out in Europe in 1939, military installations across the United States grew, and in Lawton this led to an increase in housing demand, especially for Black families. The officer in charge of housing at Fort Sill met with the Lawton City Council in October 1940 to urge approval of immediate accommodations for FHA housing. The officer was receiving numerous requests daily from the segregated 349th Field Artillery regiment for housing in Lawton.<sup>16</sup> At

<sup>11</sup> “Strict Rules on Traffic Be Enforced Here,” *The Lawton Constitution*, January 10, 1934, 2.

<sup>12</sup> “Study Quiz of Returns from Car Licenses,” *The Lawton Constitution*, February 24, 1937, 1.

<sup>13</sup> “Notice of Original Sale of Real Estate for Delinquent Taxes, Comanche County,” *The Lawton Constitution*, October 10, 1940, 11.

<sup>14</sup> Comanche County 1961, *McCasland Maps and Spatial Data: Aerial Data*, Oklahoma State University, <https://info.library.okstate.edu/map-room/aerial-photos>

<sup>15</sup> “Negro Housing Important,” *The Lawton Constitution*, October 1, 1940, 4.

<sup>16</sup> “Solons Asked Act on Local Housing Site,” *The Lawton Constitution*, October 16, 1940, 2.

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first, the City Council considered the creation of a new neighborhood directly south of Vernon, on the south side of Gore Boulevard.<sup>17</sup> However, protests from City Planning over the legality of using this land for residential housing and protests from Black leaders, including Douglas Principal W. R. Patterson, led the Council to consider a more expedient option. The City Council required Yarmuk Iron Works to remove their property from the addition in blocks 12, 13, and 14.<sup>18</sup>

To increase the number of lots available for low-cost housing, Blocks 12 and 13 in the Vernon were re-platted as Vernon II addition and renamed blocks 18 and 19. The blocks are north of NE Arlington and south of NE Bell. Instead of maintaining the through streets of north/south streets of Larrance (now Albert Johnson Sr. Ave) and Maine St. on either side of block 13 and Maine St. to the west of block 12, the two blocks were re-platted with a U-shaped drive that only opened onto Larrance Street and named NE Arlington Dr. (the southern part of the U) and NE Bell Dr. (the northern part of the U). Another change from the original Vernon plating was that instead of lots running 150 feet north and south and 25 feet east and west, lots in Vernon II were smaller, 55-65 feet wide by 80 feet deep (except for the lots closest to the Frisco Railroad which were wider at the back end of each property due the diagonal nature of the addition). The federal government approved the construction of 45 FHA units of 28 feet by 28 feet and consisting of four rooms each.<sup>19</sup> An aerial map from 1961 shows that every lot in Vernon II had at least one building twenty years after the initial construction began.<sup>20</sup> In March 1941 the City Council approved Block 14 in Vernon I (formerly part of Yarmuk Iron Works) as a new recreational facility for African American soldiers and civilians.<sup>21</sup> This led to the creation of the Douglass Recreational Center, which was used during the war by the USO. At the end of the war, it became a recreational facility for civilians and soldiers, funded after 1950 by the Lawton Community Chest.<sup>22</sup> World War II attracted new families, like the Johnson family, to the Vernon neighborhood who looked to the community as their post-war home.

Johnson Family and the Vernon Addition:

In 1933, Frank and Littie Roberson purchased Lot one and two in block 17 of the Vernon Addition. In 1934, the Robersons signed a promissory note with Shamburger Lumber Company, presumably for the construction of buildings on the property. The two houses were built in 1938. Between 1934 and 1941, there were several disputes between the Robersons, who largely resided out of state in Arizona, and Shamburger Lumber and the City of Lawton for failure to make both

<sup>17</sup> "Negro Housing Action Sought," *Lawton News-Review*, October 17, 1940, 3.

<sup>18</sup> "Negor Housing Site Opposed by City Board," *The Lawton Constitution*, October 23, 1940, 1.

<sup>19</sup> "Low Cost Housing Project in Vernon Addition," *The Lawton Constitution*, January 16, 1941, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Comanche County 1961, *McCasland Maps and Spatial Data: Aerial Data*, Oklahoma State University, <https://info.library.okstate.edu/map-room/aerial-photos>

<sup>21</sup> "Site Set Aside for Negro Park," *The Lawton Constitution*, March 20, 1941, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Arthur R. Lawrence, *Lawton Golden Anniversary, 1901-1951: 50 Years of Progress*, circa 1951,37.



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mortgage and tax payments. On July 11, 1941, Shamburger Lumber paid the city the amount of \$779.54 to take full ownership of the property. A few months later, in September of 1941, Myrtle Gee, a single woman (as noted in the deed of sale) purchased the property from Shamburger Lumber. Myrtle Gee married Jack Patterson and added his name to the deed. The Pattersons sold the property to the Johnson family in late 1945 and the Johnsons moved to their new home in 1946.<sup>23</sup>

M.Sgt. James Carl Johnson and Lucille Munford moved to Fort Sill, Oklahoma in 1922, where Sgt. Johnson served with the Field Artillery Basic School. After his retirement in January 1946 and moving to 202 East Gore Blvd, Johnson worked for the Fort Sill Golf and Country Club for 20 years and served with the City School Patrol southeast of Douglass School for 3 years.

All of the Johnson children were educated at Douglass School for elementary and secondary school. James Johnson, Jr., went on to a long military career from 1942 to 1966, retiring as Sergeant First Class. Bobby Johnson also served from 1953 to 1983, retiring as Senior Master Sergeant. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's in organizational management. Their siblings – Ted, Albert, Jack, Emmett, Lucille, and Preston – went on to have long careers in education. Lucille's career spanned high school classrooms as well as the Fort Sill Education Department.

Albert Johnson Sr. was a senior in high school when his family purchased and moved into the home in the Vernon I addition. He lived in the little house with his brothers for his last semester of high school and then moved to Kansas for college. After college, he returned to Lawton and lived in the little house until he got married and then purchased a home in the Vernon II addition in the mid-1950s, where he lived for the rest of his career as an educator. Albert Johnson, Sr.'s long career in education began in 1951 as a 6<sup>th</sup>-grade teacher and football coach for Douglass School. He became a principal for Douglass Elementary in 1954 and then a school counselor in 1958. In 1963, Johnson transitioned into an administrative position, becoming Assistant Principal, and the next year, he was promoted to principal. In 1967, he served on the Board of Education in Lawton. Eventually, he served as Director of Federal Programs and Deputy Superintendent. Douglass School, according to Johnson, was an important part of the Black community in Lawton. "Students did not miss school. Students did their work. It was a sense of family."<sup>24</sup>

Johnson's career in education coincided with the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. As a result of the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954), Johnson found himself at the center of the desegregation process in Lawton. Johnson

<sup>23</sup> Information about the sale of the property, including lawsuits against Frank and Little Roberston, can be found in the property abstract which Lucielle Johnson Boutte provided for purposes of compiling this nomination. The information is also found in original deeds of record held by the City of Lawton.

<sup>24</sup> ["Oral History Explains Local Desegregation Cameron Professor Uses Interview with Retired Educator to Bring Civil Rights Movement Home."](#) *The Lawton Constitution*, November 14, 2019.

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worked closely with Hugh Bish, Superintendent of Lawton Public Schools, to oversee the closure of Douglass School or the desegregation process.

Bish and Johnson had a long history of working together for the betterment of their students. When Bish served as assistant superintendent in charge of instruction and Johnson worked as a counselor, they worked together “to identify potential drop-outs [sic]” and “through special assigned counseling sessions with selected instructors, try to increase the school’s ‘holding power,’” as Johnson once referred to it.<sup>25</sup>

When the Lawton Board of Education passed a resolution to move forward with desegregation in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it resulted in the elimination of Douglass Junior-Senior High School.<sup>26</sup> At the time, Albert Johnson Sr. worked as the principal of the school and knew that the practical enforcement of desegregation would be difficult. Students would find it difficult to get to school when the free transportation was discontinued, he noted. He feared that as a result, they would stop going.<sup>27</sup>

Albert Johnson, Sr. described the decision as a painful one to the Black community in Lawton. In its initial stages, the plan allowed for freedom of choice, Johnson claimed, but by 1965, “I received an executive order that said Douglass would be closed.”<sup>28</sup>

Although he was troubled by the closing of Douglass, as were many of his students’ parents, Albert Johnson, Sr. worked closely with the administrators and parents to ensure a smooth transition for students and faculty. Johnson hoped they could maintain the high standards and expectations long established when he had been with Douglass. Closing the schools and moving students to another district required action plans that had to be submitted first to the Lawton Board of Education and then to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

In 1973, after approving “a desegregation plan today calling for the closing of Dunbar Elementary School and agree to initiate immediate court action to determine the legality of building new schools in south Lawton,” the Lawton School Board voted to promote Albert Johnson, Sr. who was the director of federal programs, to assistant superintendent in charge of special services. The plan was met with criticism primarily from Black residents, and the board agreed to reconsider their desegregation plans.<sup>29</sup> In this new role, Johnson held the responsibility of implementing the desegregation plan.

Johnson wrote grant proposals for the district to receive federal funds to implement desegregation proposals. To be eligible for funding, Johnson had to assemble a 10-member

<sup>25</sup> “Bish Addresses Douglass Parley,” *The Lawton Constitution*, October 8, 1963, 2.

<sup>26</sup> “School Board to Follow Decrees of Rights Act,” *The Lawton Constitution*, May 6, 1965, 23.

<sup>27</sup> “School Board to Follow Decrees of Rights Act,” *The Lawton Constitution*, May 6, 1965, 23.

<sup>28</sup> [“Oral History Explains Local Desegregation Cameron Professor Uses Interview with Retired Educator to Bring Civil Rights Movement Home.”](#) *The Lawton Constitution*. (14 November 2019).

<sup>29</sup> Donna Evers, “New Desegregation Plan for City Schools Okayed,” *The Lawton Constitution* (3 April 1973): 1, 4.

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advisory committee that was “broadly representative of the minority and non-minority communities to be served by the project.” The purpose of the committee was to “plan an important and continuing role during the development of the proposal and throughout the life of the project.”<sup>30</sup>

In addition to overseeing the desegregation process, Johnson worked with the Head Start Program, adult education program, and Neighborhood Youth Corp. He described the work as “exciting and challenging, but oftentimes, frustrating.”<sup>31</sup>

Still, Johnson was dedicated to the work of investing in young people with programs such as Project COOL. The County Action Program (CAP), which was started under Lyndon Johnson’s Office of Economic Opportunity, established COOL, a program to give employment and recreational opportunities to children who could not afford to attend summer camps or activities. Johnson was credited with defining the acronym: Cooperation, Obedience, Opportunity, Loyalty.<sup>32</sup>

As a counselor and superintendent, Johnson worked hard to develop programs that mentored students and assisted them in applying for colleges. “We worked untiringly with colleges seeking work student assistance, scholars, etc. to help finance students’ education.”<sup>33</sup>

In addition to the family’s commitment to desegregating Lawton’s schools, the Johnson family remained committed to supporting service members and their spouses stationed at Fort Sill. Mrs. Albert Johnson served as associate director of the USO in Lawton, Oklahoma. “What most soldiers don’t realize is that the USO is as much for their wives as for them,” she once told *The Lawton Constitution*. As associate director, she helped to arrange cooking classes, exercise sessions, or “anything the girls show an interest in.”<sup>34</sup>

When Albert Johnson, Sr. passed in 2022, state legislators honored his memory and issued the following statement:

He was a leader in the desegregation movement in the 1960s, working to ensure all Oklahoma students were able to receive a high-quality education. He loved his students and cared for them fiercely – a teacher that moved mountains and no doubt made an incredible impact in the lives of all of those he taught. His accomplishments in the

<sup>30</sup> Donna Evers, “School Officials Pushing to Meet Deadline for Seeking Desegregation Plan Funds,” *The Lawton Constitution*, April 13, 1973, 37.

<sup>31</sup> Albert Johnson, Sr., “Reflection: An Overview of My Involvement in Education and My Philosophy and Greatest Educational Challenge,” in Obituary of Albert Johnson, Sr., Howard Harris Funeral Services, April 25, 2022.

<sup>32</sup> Paul McClung, “Play it COOL, PIC Your Acronyms,” *The Lawton Constitution*, January 26, 1968, 1, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Albert Johnson, Sr., “Reflection: An Overview of My Involvement in Education and My Philosophy and Greatest Educational Challenge,” in Obituary of Albert Johnson, Sr., Howard Harris Funeral Services, April 25, 2022.

<sup>34</sup> Judy Beaupre, “USO Answers Needs of Wives,” *The Lawton Constitution* July 23, 1970, 11..

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classroom led to his appointment to the State Board of Education in 1991, and there was no one more deserving than Mr. Johnson to be inducted into the Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame.<sup>35</sup>

Conclusion:

When the Johnson family moved to the Vernon addition in 1946, they invested their time and energy in their community, and they raised their children to do the same. As the adult children left home, they often returned to the family home for holidays and less formal gatherings. The home at 202 E. Gore Boulevard has remained central to generations of Johnson family members. It has an important place in the larger history of Lawton as it reflects the development of a thriving Black community. The re-platting of Vernon II in the middle of the Vernon Addition in 1941 brought in significantly more residents and the removal of Vernon blocks 1 and 2 (northernmost blocks) for the creation of a new Black neighborhood, Legion Addition, in 1950 did not diminish the vitality of the Vernon neighborhood in the 1950s and 1960s. Today, the Vernon Addition has lost much of its population and most of the original addition homes have been torn down, diminishing the luster and draw that it once had. Block 17 of the original Vernon addition is the only one with original domestic single dwellings. Nevertheless, the Vernon addition continues to offer a window into life for African Americans in a unique planned segregated community in Twentieth-Century America. James Carl Sr. and Lucielle Johnson passed their values down to their children, who carried on this legacy of civic engagement and social change for the betterment of their community. Their home—one of only three remaining homes in Vernon I—where they raised their family and hosted members of the community, should be preserved as an important historic site.

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<sup>35</sup> [“Lawton Legislators Mourn the Passing of Albert Johnson Sr.”](#) Oklahoma Senate. April 28, 2022.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

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**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** 7,012 Square Feet

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.60927                      Longitude: -98.38401

2. Latitude:                                      Longitude:

3. Latitude:                                      Longitude:

4. Latitude:                                      Longitude:

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927    or     NAD 1983

1. Zone:                                      Easting:                                      Northing:

2. Zone:                                      Easting:                                      Northing:

3. Zone:                                      Easting:                                      Northing:

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4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beginning at the southwest corner of Gore Boulevard and Maine Street, proceed due North 140 (one hundred forty) feet, turn due East and proceed 50 (fifty) feet, turn South and proceed 140 (one hundred forty) feet, turn West and proceed 50 (fifty) feet back to the Point of Beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The City of Lawton platted the Vernon Addition in 1930 and the Lots 1 & 2 of Block 17 have remained extant since that date. The boundary encloses the 3 buildings listed in this nomination as associated with the property during the dates of significance, 1946-.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Heather Clemmer, Sarah Janda, Sunu Kodumthara, and Patti Loughlin  
organization: Redbud Historical Consulting, LLC.  
street & number: 3227 Everton Ct.  
city or town: Norman state: OK zip code: 73071  
e-mail sjanda@cameron.edu or sarahepplerjanda@gmail.com  
telephone: 580-284-1070  
date: September 3, 2024

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to



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the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: James Carl, Sr., and Lucille Johnson Family House

City or Vicinity: Lawton

County: Comanche

State: Oklahoma

Photographer: Sarah Janda and Heather Clemmer

Date Photographed: 8/23/24 and 8/31/24

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #	Description	Direction
0001	Main house facade	North
0002	Main house northeast elevation	Southwest
0003	Main house northwest elevation	Southeast
0004	Main house southwest elevation	Northeast
0005	Garage south elevation	North
0006	Garage west elevation. Little house south elevation.	Northeast
0007	Little house northeast elevation. Garage northeast elevation	Southwest
0008	Little house west elevation/facade	East
0009	Little house southwest elevation	Northeast
0010	Little house northwest elevation	Southeast
0011	Little House north elevation	South
0012	Little House east elevation	West
0013	Distant west elevation of all 3 resources	East

**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.).

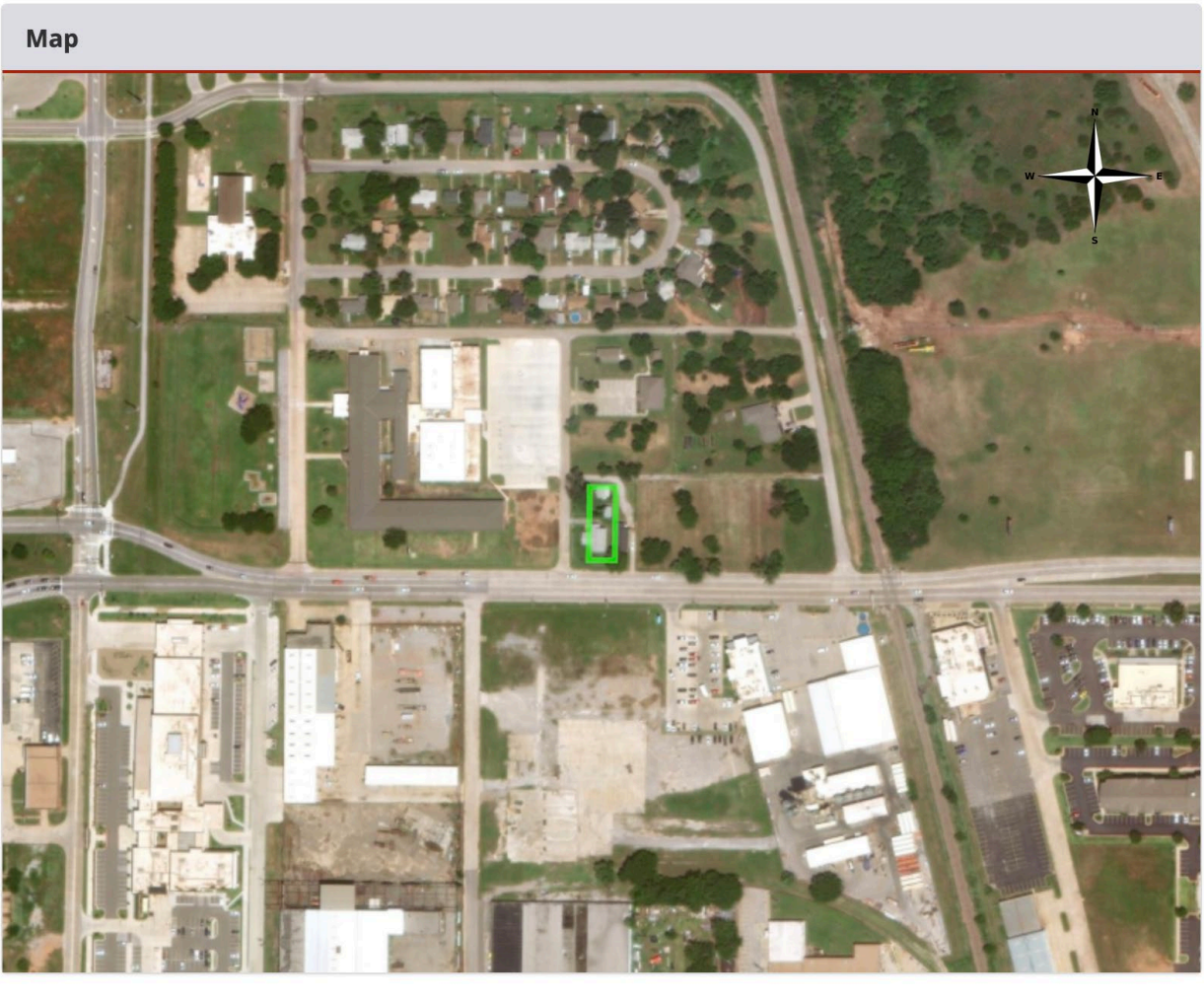
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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National Park Service

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