

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

RECEIVED
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic name: West Texas Utilities Company Power Plant

Other name/site number: 748

2. LOCATION

Street & number: 100 Block of North Second St.

not for publication: N/A

City/town: Abilene

State: TX *County:* Taylor

code: 441 *zip code:* 79601

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Structure

<i>Number of Resources within Property:</i>	<i>Contributing</i>	<i>Noncontributing</i>
	<u> 4 </u>	<u> 3 </u> buildings
	<u> 1 </u>	<u> 2 </u> sites
	<u> 2 </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<u> 7 </u>	<u> 5 </u> objects
		<u> 5 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Resources in Abilene, Texas

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.

Curtis J. Russell
Signature of certifying official

2-12-92
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission
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

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Entered in the
National Register

entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

Arlene Byers

3/23/92

 determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the
National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain): _____

ja
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Industry

Sub: Energy facility

Current: Industry

Sub: Energy facility

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Other: industrial: power plant

<i>Materials: foundation</i>	brick
<i>walls</i>	brick
<i>roof</i>	asphalt
<i>other</i>	concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance. x See continuation sheet.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Area(s) of Significance: Commerce

Period(s) of Significance: 1920-1939

Significant Dates: 1920-1922

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Hedrick, W.C. (contractor)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. x See continuation sheet.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Historic and Architectural Resources
of Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

Description:

The West Texas Utilities Power Plant is an industrial complex that includes seven Contributing and five Noncontributing features. The main structure has 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-story components, three small stacks, and a massive brick smoke stack (see Continuation Sheet 7-6). By utilizing a cast in place concrete, multiple bay, structural form with brick infilled bays, the main structure projects both a polychromatic decorative character and massive strength.

The most prominent feature of the main structure is the smoke tower, among the tallest structures in Abilene. The original structure includes four components, besides the tower. Each of these sections has slightly projecting vertical and horizontal brick piers that create a grid pattern and give the structure a boxy character. Because of its utilitarian character, the structure displays little noteworthy architectural detailing.

A brick addition to the main structure was constructed in 1948 on the north end and has massing and materials that are similar to the original structure.

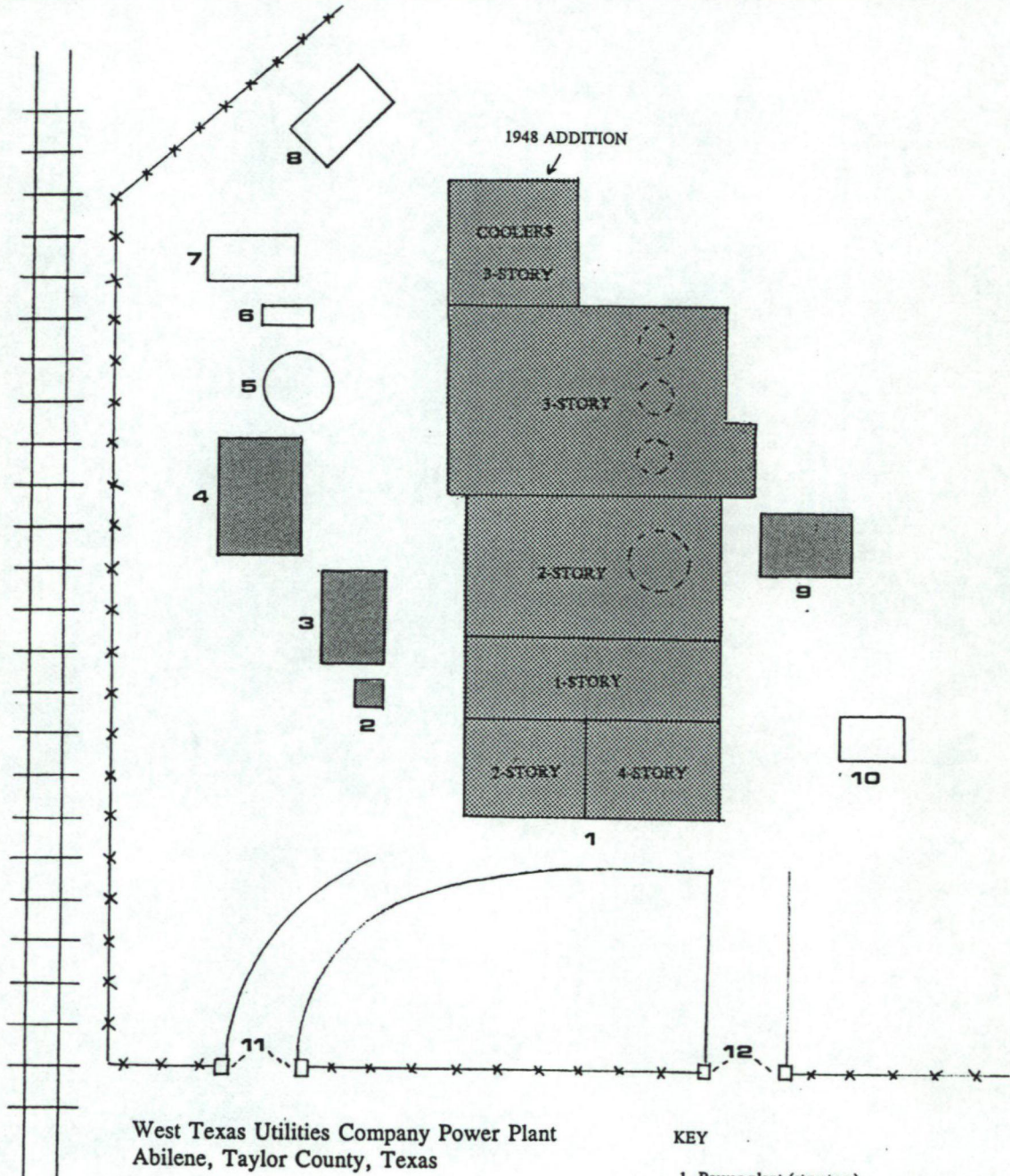
Other Contributing features include four storage buildings and two pairs of stone entry gates (see Continuation Sheet 7-6).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet




Section number 7 Page 6

Historic and Architectural Resources
of Abilene, Taylor County, Texas



West Texas Utilities Company Power Plant
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

KEY

-  CONTRIBUTING
-  NONCONTRIBUTING
-  NORTH
- NOT TO SCALE

- 1 Power plant (structure)
- 2 Storage (1-story brick and frame building)
- 3 Storage (1-story brick building)
- 4 Storage (1-story metal building)
- 5 Tank (structure)
- 6 Storage (1-story metal building)
- 7 Storage (1-story wood building)
- 8 Storage (1-story metal building)
- 9 Storage (1-story brick building)
- 10 Substation transformer (structure)
- 11 Entry gate posts (stone object)
- 12 Entry gate posts (stone object)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7Historic and Architectural Resources
of Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

Statement of Significance:

The West Texas Utilities Company [WTU] Power Plant, built from 1920-1922, is nominated under Criterion A in the area of Commerce, because of its associations with Abilene's position as a distribution center in the region. The structure is associated with the historic context "The Railroad and Abilene's Development into a Wholesale and Distribution Center in West Texas, 1881-1939." Owned and maintained by WTU, the large industrial complex has an electrical generating plant that has been providing electricity for Abilene and surrounding communities since 1920. The structure is in good condition and retains its integrity.

Electricity was available locally as early as 1891 when the Abilene Electric Light and Power Company began operations. This privately owned company floundered but in 1905 was merged with Lytle Water to become the Abilene Light and Water Company. W.G. Swenson assumed control and made many improvements (Duff and Seibt 1980:150-151).

By 1919 the American Public Service Company with regional headquarters in Dallas acquired the Abilene Light and Water Company, as well as the locally owned ice and gas firms and on November 5, 1919, announced plans to erect a large new power plant in Abilene, which made front page news. "The plant will be one of the most modern in the United States," a company vice president proudly boasted (Abilene Reporter-News November 5, 1919). Not only would the plant generate electricity for residents of Abilene, it also was to provide power to seven towns from Merkel to Cisco, including Stamford, Hamlin and Anson.

Company officials built the plant on property near Cedar Creek and the tracks of the Wichita Valley (formerly the Abilene and Northern) Railroad so there would be adequate room for expansion and easy access to the railroad for essential supplies. The water works previously occupied the site. W.C. Hedrick of Dallas served as contractor for the plant that had a steam turbine with a 2,600 horsepower capacity. Its 182-foot smokestack was reported to be "the highest object in West Texas" (Abilene Reporter-News February 4, 1920).

The company and plant prospered until the 1930s when the Great Depression created severe financial hardships. WTU was subsequently founded and it continues to own this and other power plants throughout the region. Central and Southwest Corporation is currently the parent firm (Duff and Seibt 1980:207-208).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

x See bibliography for associated historic context.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 (Texas Historical Commission)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government (City of Abilene Planning Department)
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: Abilene Preservation League

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Approximately 10 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	14	432100	3590600	B	14	432220	3590580
C	14	432200	3590280	D	14	432080	3590300

Verbal Boundary Description:

Abilene Original Townsite, Block 195, Lots 1 and 2

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the area that has been historically associated with the property and that retains its historic and architectural integrity.

11. FORM PREPARED BY (assisted by Amy E. Dase, Historian, THC staff)

Name/Title: David Moore, Historian
 Organization: Hardy Heck Moore
 Street & Number: 2112 Rio Grande
 City or town: Austin

Date: June 1989; January 1992
 Telephone: 512/478-8014
 State: TX Zip: 78705

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ PHOTOS _____ Page 7 _____

Historic and Architectural Resources
of Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

David and Docia Fritz House
1325 North Eighteenth
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by David Moore
Winter 1989
Negative with Texas Historical Commission
Northeast oblique, camera facing southwest
Photograph 25 of 48

Charles Motz House
1842 North Fifth
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by David Moore
Winter 1989
Negative with Texas Historical Commission
Southeast oblique, camera facing northwest
Photograph 26 of 48

West Texas Utilities Company Power Plant
100 Block North Second
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by David Moore
Winter 1989
Negative with Texas Historical Commission
Southwest oblique, camera facing northeast
Photograph 27 of 48

David S. Castle House
1742 North Second
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by David Moore
Winter 1989
Negative with Texas Historical Commission
South facade, camera facing northwest
Photograph 28 of 48

2/19/92

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Abilene MPS
TEXAS

Section number _____ Page _____

		Date Listed
92000095	Sayles Boulevard Historic District <i>SR</i>	<u>3/9/92</u>
92000213	Stith, William and Evla, House	<u>3/23/92</u>
92000203	Thomas, Oscar P., House	<u>3/23/92</u>
92000208	Universal Manufacturing Company Building	<u>3/23/92</u>
92000217	West Texas Utilities Company Power Plant	<u>3/23/92</u>
92000202	Williamson, E. D., House	<u>3/23/92</u>
92000238	Wooten, Horace O., Grocery Company Warehouse	<u>Substantive Review 3/23/92</u> <i>SR</i>
92000197	Wooten, Horace O., House	<u>3/23/92</u>
92000227	Zabloudil--Hendrick House	<u>Substantive Review 3/23/92</u> <i>SR</i>

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: West Texas Utilities Company Power Plant

MULTIPLE NAME: Abilene MPS

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Taylor

DATE RECEIVED: 2/19/92 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/06/92
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/22/92 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/04/92
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 92000217

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 3/23/92 DATE

Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

___count ___resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

___historic ___current

DESCRIPTION

___architectural classification
___materials
___descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

___summary paragraph
___completeness
___clarity
___applicable criteria
___justification of areas checked
___relating significance to the resource
___context
___relationship of integrity to significance
___justification of exception
___other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

___acreage ___verbal boundary description
___UTMs ___boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

___sketch maps ___USGS maps ___photographs ___presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone

Signed

Date



WEST TEXAS UTILITIES CO. POWER PLANT
100 BLOCK NORTH SECOND
ABILENE, TAYLOR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 27 of 48

WTU Company Power Plant
100 N. Second
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photo 28 of 70

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64500625