

TWO BUILDINGS IN ONE...

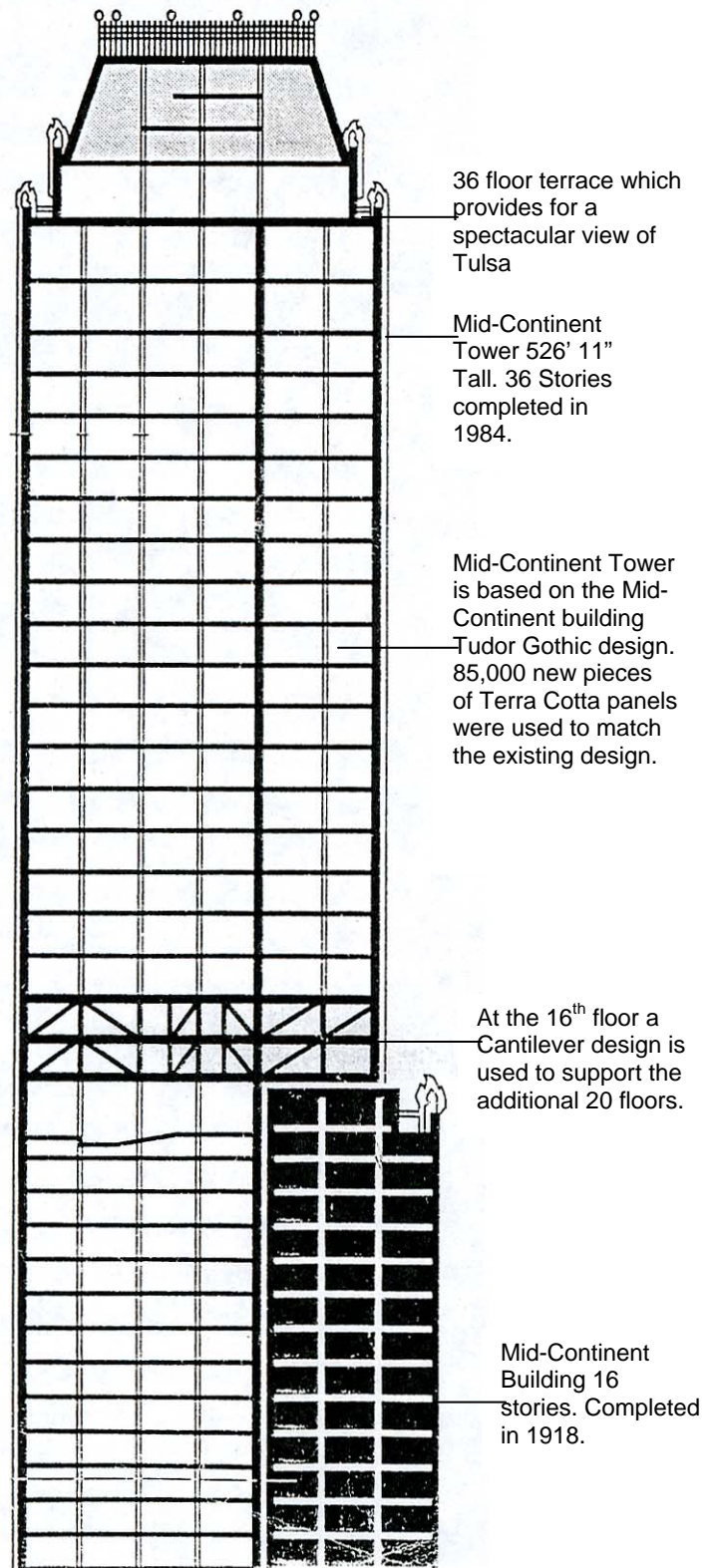
At first glance, a visitor may not notice one of the most unique aspects of the Mid-Continent Tower. Surprisingly enough, the Mid-Continent Tower is in fact two buildings. The 16-story Mid-Continent Building was completed in 1918. The 36-story Mid-Continent Tower was completed in 1984...65 years later.

Because the original structure was not strong enough to support the weight of an additional 20 floors, "cantilever" design was used to suspend the new Tower over the older building at the 16th floor level. The two structures do not touch. (See diagram)

The Tower rises 20 stories above and extends 40 feet horizontally over the older 16-story building. Deeper and wider steel trusses in the construction of the 16th and 17th floors of the Tower and a foundation of 120 feet deep carry the burden of the cantilevered floors.

In order to sustain continuity of the original Tudor Gothic design, more than 85,000 pieces of terra cotta panels, spires, cornices and moldings were produced for the exterior façade. At the time of the Tower's construction, the only manufacturer of terra cotta in the United States was located in California. Terra cotta is fired, glazed clay material somewhat like a ceramic tile. Elaborately ornamental, each hand-crafted and hand-cast piece is a work of art.

Marble panels to match the existing interior walls were carefully selected in integrating the two structures. Three different types of marble used in the Tower came from Italy. Calcutta Vagli Rosatta marble graces the walls and columns. A marble called Roman Travertine covers the walls of the rest rooms. The accents and trim are Verde Antique. Two colors of marble from Tennessee make up the lobby's floor – Craig Rose and Rose Gray.



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True to a neo-gothic approach, the artist used the design motif of those standards in the various stained glass pieces throughout the tower. In the lobby, a panoramic view of the Tulsa skyline, from the Boston Avenue Church to the Bank of Oklahoma Tower, is recreated in stained glass.

The stained glass dome that forms a ceiling over the three-story spiral staircase, which connects the top three floors of the Tower, looks like a giant Louis B. Tiffany lamp.

Other highlights include a fully equipped meeting facility with a 110-seat auditorium, a complete exercise facility and the 36th floor terrace which provides a spectacular view of Tulsa.

Four paintings located in the lobby, preserve the charm of the old west. They include: "Cathedrals End of the Day" by Jim Wilcox, "Spooked" by John Leone, "Grand Canyon" and "Sunset From the Foothills" by Wilson Hurley.

Another dramatic feature of the building is the two-story high "colonnade" entrance which is formed by four terra cotta arches.

In 1980, the Mid-Continent Building was listed as a historic structure in the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of Interior.

A distinct addition of Tulsa's skyline; the Mid-Continent Tower links the pride and respect of the historical significance of Tulsa's oil industry with quality, elegance and uncompromised style.

BUILDING HISTORY

- 1803 This site was part of the land acquired by the United States from France in the famed Louisiana Purchase.
- 1836 The Creek Indian Tribe was given this land as part of the Indian Territory.
- 1884 Tulsa's first school was constructed here by the Rev. W.P. Haworth, a Presbyterian missionary. Church services were also held in the building and the Creek Nation maintained ownership of the land.
- 1903 The entire city block of which this land was a part was sold to the Tulsa Board of Education for \$426.43.
- 1916 Joshua S. Cosden purchased this site in order to construct the headquarters building for Cosden Oil & Gas Company.
- 1918 Construction was completed making the building the tallest in the city of Tulsa for the next ten years.
- 1925 The building became the property of Mid-Continent Petroleum Corp., the firm that succeeded Cosden Oil & Gas Company.
- 1955 Mid-Continent Petroleum was merged into Sunray Mid-Continent Oil Company, which later became Sun Oil Company.
- 1977 Reading & Bates Corporation purchased the building from a firm jointly owned by Sun Oil Company and the Rooney Company.
- 1978 Reading & Bates Corporation began a remodeling and restoration program with HTB, Inc., serving as the architect and Flintco Inc. as general contractor.
- 1980 Restoration was completed and the building was recognized by the Oklahoma State Historical Society and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior as a historic structure.
- 1982 Reading & Bates Corporation commenced construction of the 37-story Mid-Continent Tower
- 1984 The Mid-Continent Tower was completed and dedicated in May, 1984. HTB, Inc., served as the architectural firm and Flintco Inc. as general contractor.

This building, Mid-Continent Tower, consists of two separate structures. The first is the Mid-Continent Building, the 16-story structure on the west side of the complex. It was completed in 1918. The second is the Mid-Continent Tower, a 37-story structure which is built along side and cantilevered above and over the original 16-story building. The two structures do not touch. Each is freestanding, separated by six inches of space to permit each to sway, to expand or contract independently. The older building is constructed of concrete; the newer is a steel structure.

Mid-Continent Tower's Photograph Collection

Descriptions read as follows:

1. Tulsa Skyline (Tunnel Area)
ca. 1931 Collection of Hopkins Photography & Production
2. Tulsa Main at 3rd Street Looking North
ca. 1896 Collection of Beryl Ford
3. Looking South on Main Street
ca. 1909 Collection of Beryl Ford
4. Second Street looking East
ca. 1907 Collection of Beryl Ford
5. Main Street looking South
ca. 1907 Collection of Hopkins Photography & Production
6. West from 4th and Cincinnati
ca. 1917 Collection of Beryl Ford
7. Philtower Building
July 4, 1927 Collection of Beryl Ford
8. Barber Shop Area
 1. Tulsa Skyline, 1927 - Hopkins Photography & Production
 2. Guy Scott's Barber Shop on West 4th Street, 1918
 3. Billie Rupp's Pool Hall and Drug Store – East 2nd Street
ca. 1915 Collection of Beryl Ford
9. Frisco Depot – Tulsa First railroad depot, East of Main and Boston, 1905

Tulsa Skyline 1984

12' L x 5' W (Stained Glass Mural)

Cissy McCaa – Designer

McCaa Glass Studio, Inc – Tulsa

Twenty Panels make up this mural that captures downtown Tulsa as it appeared at the completion of the Mid-Continent Tower in May, 1984. This interpretation is accomplished by line design, executed with one-eighth inch to one inch lead sizes, combined with hand-blown opal flash and flash antique glass imported from Europe.

The Mid-Continent Tower

5' 1/8" x 3' 1/2" (Lobby Area Model Case)

Constructed by: Reading & Bates Corporation - November, 1981 – May, 1984

Flintco – General Contractor

HTB, Inc – Architect, Engineer

A cantilevered steel structure erected over, unitized with, and duplicated the exterior terra cotta façade of the original Mid-Continent Tower completed in 1918.

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