



Register of Historic Kansas Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. The format is similar to the National Register of Historic Places form. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Matfield Green High School Gymnasium

Other names/site number KHRI # 017-453

Name of related Multiple Property Listing Historic Public Schools of Kansas

2. Location

street & number 408 Bocook Street not for publication

city or town Matfield Green vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Chase code 017 zip code 66862

3-4. Certification

The above property has been determined eligible for both the Register of Historic Kansas Places and the National Register of Historic Places. The property has been documented and recorded on a National Register of Historic Places nomination form, which serves as the official register nomination for this property.

The Historic Sites Board of Review has determined that this property meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

I hereby certify that this property meets the criteria for and is listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Applicable State Register Criteria: x A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title Katrina Ringler, Deputy SHPO

February 3, 2024
Date

Kansas State Historical Society
State agency



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Matfield Green High School Gymnasium
Name of Property

Chase County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/ NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK

roof: SYNTHETICS
other: STONE: limestone

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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.)

Summary

The Matfield Green High School Gymnasium (1929) is a Progressive Era two-story 92' x 54' brick building. A low-pitched roof is surrounded by a parapet corniced in limestone. It is well-lit by windows all around and includes limestone accents throughout the exterior. An arched entryway leads into a vestibule with two stairways, one on each end, that lead to three small upstairs rooms. The smaller-than-regulation basketball court provides minimal room for spectators; but the stage is amply outfitted for dramatic productions. Directly beneath the stage are two locker rooms with toilets and showers; the larger boys locker room features a shallow entry-level and a lower level with a 9-foot ceiling. Adjoining this larger room is an equipment room with its own concrete slab roof at ground level, expanding on the footprint of the brick structure. Directly beneath the stage are basement locker rooms and a central boiler room, adjoined by an additional storage room/ coal storage, with its own concrete slab roof at ground level.

Elaboration



Photo 2: South (main) and east elevations

Site

The Matfield Green High School Gymnasium is located at 408 Bocook Street in rural Matfield Green (population 49). The building was constructed as a free-standing structure west of Matfield Green High School (1927-1970). The building is accessed via sidewalks, which were refurbished in 2000. There is a cistern enclosed by a raised slab behind the building, secured by a manhole-type cover.

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There is also a well in front of the building with no surrounding structure, secured by a manhole-type cover. There is a slab on the north end of the structure that serves as the roof to an extra basement room - reportedly there was at one time a snack bar built on that slab that served a nearby baseball field. There is also evidence of a below-grade doorway at the back of the building, next to that basement room. This supports the idea that the extra basement room was for storing coal.



Photo 5: South and west elevations

Building Exterior

The Matfield Green High School Gymnasium (1929) is a Progressive Era two-story 92' x 54' brick building. The building is composed of brick in a running bond with three accented rows of soldier bricks and rowlock bricks which mark the facades at ground level, at the base of the first floor windows, and the base of the parapet. The low-pitched roof is surrounded by a parapet corniced in limestone around the top and bottom of the parapet. The south (main) elevation is slightly projecting, and symmetrical with a pair of windows on either side of the arched entrance at the lower level and upper levels; a single pair of windows is centered in the upper level. The main arched entrance is constructed of limestone and simple in detail.

The east and west elevations are the same featuring original windows: five large double-hung two-over-two wood windows with two-lite transoms toward the south, a single entry door, then two small rectangular double-hung windows, and a small square three-over-one basement window at the north end. The north (rear) elevation features two double-hung wood windows at the lower level, and four small square three-over-one windows at ground level.

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Photo 8: Stage, looking north

Building Interior

The arched entryway leads into a vestibule with two stairways, one on each end, that lead to three small upstairs rooms. The vestibule features concrete floors, plaster walls, and doors to the main room. The smaller-than-regulation basketball court provides minimal room for spectators. The court consists of wood floors, plaster walls, a coved ceiling; however, the plaster is deteriorating and exposing brick walls, and the entire ceiling has collapsed. There is a stage amply outfitted for dramatic productions and features wood floors. There is a chalkboard along the east side of the stage and wood trim outlining the opening. To either side of the stage is a door leading downstairs, and on the stage is a small room with high ceilings intact on both sides.

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Photo 12: Looking SE, east wall

Directly beneath the stage are two locker rooms with toilets and showers; the larger boys locker room features a shallow entry-level and a lower level with a 9-foot ceiling. Adjoining this larger room is an equipment room with its own concrete slab roof at ground level, expanding on the footprint of the brick structure. Directly beneath the stage are basement locker rooms and a central boiler room, adjoined by an additional storage room/ coal storage, with its own concrete slab roof at ground level.

Integrity

The Matfield Green High School Gymnasium retains excellent historic integrity. The location of the building remains the same, though its setting has been altered as the historically adjacent high school was demolished, this has little impact on the overall integrity of the property. The materials, design, and workmanship are still prevalent in the exterior features and character of the interior form, shape, original flooring, walls, openings, and stage. The gymnasium retains its historic feeling and association as a high school gym in eastern Kansas through its intact features. Character defining features include the openings, spacing, massing on the elevations, the rhythm of the bricks, and limestone accents and entry. Important features on the interior include the arrangement of spaces with a large opening and stage, remaining historic finishes, and openings.

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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.)

Property is:

- 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.

Areas of Significance

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1929-1967

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with the construction of the gymnasium in 1929 and continues through its use as the high school gym in 1967; after which the building sat vacant.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

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Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Summary

The Gymnasium is an excellent example of the property type and reflective of the context “The Evolution of the Public School System in Kansas (1854-1955): The Next Sixty Years (1880-WWII), and “The Public School Buildings of Kansas (1854-1955): The Progressive Era” discussed within the MPDF. The characteristics of the Gymnasium and its historic integrity demonstrate the significance of the periods and types discussed in the MPDF. The property is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a great example of the Progressive Era education related gymnasium. The building retains great historic integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, feeling and association. Though there is loss of historic materials, enough materials remain to contribute to the building’s important features. The period of significance is captured through the construction and use of the building from 1929-1967.

Elaboration

A Brief History of Matfield Green and Its Schools

Matfield Green is a small village on the south fork of the Cottonwood River, on the south end of Chase County, in the heart of the Kansas Flint Hills. For millennia, the tallgrass prairie nourished bison that sustained countless generations of American Indians.

In 1859, when the Kansas Legislature established Chase County, this area was formally opened to white settlers who continued the practice of prescribed burning, but replaced native bison with Euro-American cattle breeds. Seventeen miles south of county seat Cottonwood Falls, Matfield Green was sparsely settled from the beginning. Although the community boasted its first post office in 1867, it was historically lumped together with Bazaar, better known as a cattle shipping point.

Matfield Green formed its first school district (District 143) in 1881, holding classes in a frame one-room schoolhouse until a two-room stone schoolhouse was built in 1886. In the 1880s, the community boasted "two general stores, a blacksmith shop, and a good water flouring-mill." But Matfield Green didn't grow much over the following two decades (Chase County's population peaked at 8,246 in 1900); and the two-room schoolhouse met the community’s needs until a new building, designed by Topeka architect Thomas Williamson, was built in 1917.

The Progressive Era brought a new emphasis on rural education, one of the topics analyzed by the National Commission on Country Life, established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908. During World War I, rural Kansas communities benefited from record-high crop and oil prices. The Smith-Hughes Act, which passed in 1916, provided federal funds for vocational training in agriculture, industry, and domestic arts.

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Although Chase County's population continued to shrink in the early twentieth century, a number of dynamics contributed to a period of school construction. In the 1920s, Matfield Green's school attendance soared due to a post-World War I baby boom, growing automobile ownership, improving roads, and the extension of the rail line that connected Matfield Green to Wichita and Kansas City. The growing all of which promoted consolidation of smaller area schools. Matfield Green's growing student body necessitated the construction of a new high school in 1917, a new gym/auditorium in 1929, and a new grade school in 1938.

World War II forever changed rural America; and Matfield Green was no exception. Fifty-eight graduates of Matfield Green High School served in the war; and many did not return to the shrinking community. Between 1930 and 1960, the town's population halved, from 182 to 95. In 1967, after much debate, the community decided by a vote of 32-18 to close Matfield Green High School. In 1974, after a survey showed that only two grade school students would attend school in Matfield Green in the 1974-1975 school year, and, therefore, it would lack the necessary ten students to remain accredited, the consolidated Chase County School Board voted to close the school.

In the 1990s, the community began to garner media attention following William Least Heat-Moon's New York Times bestselling book about Chase County entitled *PrairieErth: (A Deep Map)*. Although Matfield Green's population had plummeted to 33 by 1990, it had nearly doubled to 60 by 2000. Many new residents were affiliated with The Land Institute, a nonprofit sustainable agriculture organization. The Land Institute purchased and rehabilitated the Matfield Green Grade School (1938) in the 1990s.

According to the 2020 U. S. Census, Matfield Green has a population of 49. The High School classroom building (1917) was demolished in 1970. Although the free-standing Gymnasium/Auditorium (1929) was abandoned fifty years ago, it is now in private hands and slated for rehabilitation. The Grade School, which is in good condition, is now owned by The School for Rural Culture and Creativity, a 501c3 which is maintaining the building.

More Details on the History of the Gymnasium

The two-story brick gym building, completed in 1929, served as the sports and performing arts facility for the Matfield Green High School, which stood next door until its demolition in 1970. The gym structure reflects the Progressive-Era architectural trends applied to education-related structures at the time.

Locals describe a historically cramped basketball court where spectators on the sidelines had to pull their feet in to allow players to run by. An upstairs area in the light booth, once opened to the court, may have provided more room for spectators, as did the stage at the other end of the court.

After the high school closed in 1967, the gym stood empty until the 1990s. It was reportedly used as a movie set for fireside scenes in the 1972 Jeff Bridges western film "Bad Company." In the 1990s, Wes Jackson of The Land Institute purchased the building, replaced the roof and used it for storage. He later sold it to a local individual who used it for storage, eventually opening it up to house a herd of goats. The roof fell into disrepair,

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and elements of the building sustained damage from encroaching trees. Today, the gym remains the town's oldest school building and tallest building in Matfield Green.

Significance

The Matfield Rural High School Gymnasium is an example of an Education-Related Structure built for a Town School property type in the Multiple Property Documentation Form Historic Public Schools of Kansas. Below are MPDF excerpts that relate to this building:

"Education-Related Structures - Like the town high school sub-type, this property sub-type is distinguished from the same sub-type under City Schools solely by the size of community. This property sub-type is inclusive of all support structures used for education-related purposes that were not constructed as schools. The distinguishing characteristic is the original use. The category includes primarily gymnasiums and vocational agricultural buildings. Other uses include domestic science buildings, kindergartens, shops or garages, stadiums, and district offices, etc. The style of buildings is all inclusive although the majority was Progressive Era or New Deal structures. The education-related structures are typically in close proximity to the school, on the school site or immediately adjacent."¹

Properties eligible for National Register listing under the MPDF are significant under Criterion A and C in the areas of education and/or architecture. Below is an annotated list of the MPDF's registration requirements that apply to the Matfield Rural High School Gymnasium:

"The threshold requirement for National Register listing under this multiple property nomination is that structures must have been constructed as a public school or education-related structure for a public school in the state of Kansas. All historic public school facilities are eligible for listing regardless of property type, building form or style provided that they retain historic integrity. Although eligible properties must have been constructed as a public school building, structures are not required to be currently used as public school facilities."²

As required by the registration requirements, the gym retains its massing/basic exterior form, roof form, original primary building materials, pattern of window and door openings, ornamentation and detailing, and basic interior corridor configuration.

The Gymnasium is an excellent example of the property type and reflective of the context "The Evolution of the Public School System in Kansas (1854-1955): The Next Sixty Years (1880-WWII), and "The Public School Buildings of Kansas (1854-1955): The Progressive Era" discussed within the MPDF. The characteristics of the Gymnasium and its historic integrity demonstrate the significance of the periods and types discussed in the MPDF. The property is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a great example of the Progressive Era education related gymnasium.

¹ Historic Public Schools of Kansas Multiple Property Documentation Form, section F page 35.

² Ibid., Section F page 37

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

U.S. Census Records
Historic Public Schools of Kansas, Multiple Property Documentation Form

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 # _____

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): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acree of Property Less than one

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.

(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | <u>38.159473</u>
Latitude: | <u>-96.559588</u>
Longitude: | 3 | _____
Latitude: | _____
Longitude: |
| 2 | _____
Latitude: | _____
Longitude: | 4 | _____
Latitude: | _____
Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The property is rectangular and runs approximately 181 feet north-south, and 117 feet east west along Bocook Street in Matfield Green, Kansas. "The abbreviated legal description is The South Half of Lots 2, 4, 6 in Block 5 of Reed's Addition." From the Chase County Tax Appraiser.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary is the approximate parcel location (based on the limited legal description available) and encompasses the area used and associated with the gymnasium, not the school building has that has been demolished and there are no remnants.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christy Davis
organization _____ date January 2023
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____
e-mail _____

Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Kelly Werts
street & number 202 Bocook St telephone _____
city or town Matfield Green state KS zip code 66862

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.

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs

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

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Matfield Green High School Gymnasium
City or Vicinity: Matfield Green
County: Chase State: Kansas
Photographer: KS-SHPO, Jamee Fiore Krivenko
Date Photographed: September 2023

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

Photo Number	View	Description
#1	N	South (main) elevation
#2	NW	South and east elevation
#3	SW	East and north elevation
#4	NE	North and west elevation

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#5	NE	West and south elevation
#6	E	Entrance vestibule
#7	W	Entrance vestibule
#8	N	Stage
#9	NW	West wall, northwest corner
#10	W	West wall
#11	SW	South wall
#12	SE	East wall
#13	NE	East wall and stage
#14	E	View from the stage
#15	W	Stage side room
#16	NW	Dressing room, under stage
#17	W	Dressing room, under stage
#18	E	Dressing room, under stage

Matfield Green High School Gym

408 Bocook St
Matfield Green, Chase Co, KS
38.159473 -96.559588

Legend

-  Matfield Green High School Gymnasium



Matfield Green High School Gymnasium

Bocook St


Bocook St



Matfield Green High School Gym

408 Bocook St
Matfield Green, Chase Co, KS
38.159473 -96.559588

Legend


 Matfield Green High School Gymnasium

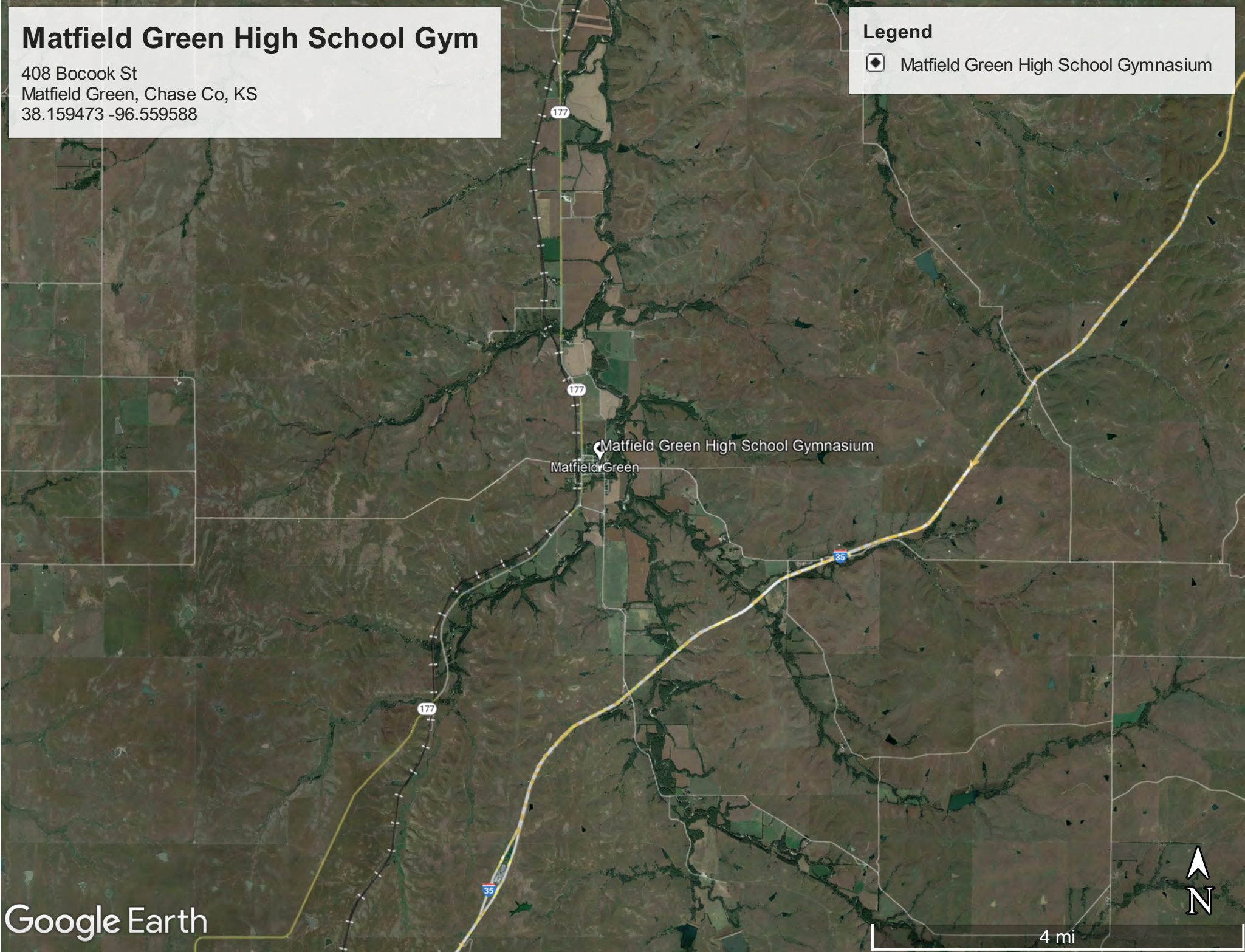


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