

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form****1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Brownsville City Hall and Market House

Other name/site number: City Market House, Brownsville City Hall

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 1150 Market Square

City or town: Brownsville

State: Texas


County: Cameron

Not for publication: ☐Vicinity: ☐**3.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 levels of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ localApplicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

 _____
Signature of certifying official / Title State Historic Preservation Officer

_____ 8/9/19
Date

Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria._____
Signature of commenting or other official_____
Date_____
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the 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: __________
Signature of the Keeper_____
Date of Action

Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

	Private
x	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

Category of Property

x	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
2	0	total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Government/municipal building; Commerce/marketplace

Current Functions: Government/municipal building

7. Description

Architectural Classification: LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Principal Exterior Materials: Brick/ Stucco

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 6-10)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Government, Commerce, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1852-1969

Significant Dates: 1852, 1912, 1949

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Seuzeneau, Adolphe; John P. McDonough (1850-52); Goldammer, A. (1908-09) Elliott, S. B., & Company (1911-12); Farías, D. V., and Tomás MontesAlbaugh, Ellis F., & Associates / Ferguson, W. D., Construction Company (1948-49)

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 11 through 22)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 23-24)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Part 1 approved on (date)
- ☐ 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, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than 1 acre (approximately 0.46 acres).

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 25.902409 Longitude: -97.497524

Verbal Boundary Description: A portion of Block 87, Original Townsite, Brownsville, Texas. The nominated parcel is 70-foot-wide center section out of standard city block, oriented northwest by southeast. Bounded on the southeast by 12th Street, on the northwest by 11th Street, and to the northeast and southwest by Market Square Street. See maps on pages 25-26.

Boundary Justification: The nomination include all property historically associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Eugene Fernandez
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Date: October 2018

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 25-26)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 27-46)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 47-51)

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.

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Photograph Log

Brownsville City Hall and Marketplace
Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas
Photographed by Eugene Fernandez
August 2018

Photo 1: Southeast Elevation
Camera facing north

Photo 2: Southeast Elevation
Camera facing west

Photo 3: West Elevation
Camera facing east southeast

Photo 4: Northwest Elevation
Camera facing south

Photo 5: Entry Vestibule at southeast end
Camera facing west

Photo 6: Ceramic tile mosaic entry vestibule
Camera facing east.

Photo 7: Central Hallway at north end
Camera facing northeast.

Photo 8: Stairway at north end
Camera facing northeast.

Photo 9: Maj. Jacob Brown Memorial Fountain.
Camera facing north northwest

Photo 10: Marble plaque on memorial fountain.
Camera facing north northwest

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NOTE: The purpose of this nomination is to highlight the individual significance of a building that is within the boundary of the Central Brownsville Historic District, listed in the NRHP May 31, 2019.

Narrative Description

The Brownsville City Hall and Market House is a composite building consisting of a mid-nineteenth-century core, built in 1850-52, a two-story fire department building constructed in 1908-09, an expansion and refacing of the building from 1911-12 that reconstructed the second floor, which had been destroyed during the hurricane of 1867, and a second expansion and refacing from 1948-49 that gives the building its present spatial organization and external architectural appearance. The original, two-story, hipped-roofed, brick building of 1852 was based on the type of the Anglo-American public market house, with a second story containing the offices of the city government above the arcaded ground-floor market stalls. Following destruction of the second floor in the hurricane of 1867, it was replaced with a side gabled roof pitched high enough to permit the offices of city government to function in what was essentially an attic above the market hall. In 1909 the two-story, freestanding, brick Fire Department Building was constructed in Market Square adjacent to the market house on the E. 11th Street (west) end of the square. In 1912 the 1852 building was gutted, a second story was reconstructed atop the market hall, and a two-story extension added to the 12th Street front of the building. The expanded building repeated the pattern of colossal pilasters set on pedestals dating from the 1852 construction. Interior structural brick arches on the ground floor were replaced with cast iron structural columns supporting the timber-framed floor structure above. In 1948-49, a final phase of modernization absorbed the fire department building into the expanded city hall, added a new concrete-framed entrance and stair bay, marked externally with a domed tower, facing 12th Street, and refinished the entire complex with heavily textured painted stucco. The tower was detailed with Spanish Mission style components. The square proportioned E. 12th Street entrance front was detailed with a high-set *cuadri folio diamante* window, accented with delicate wrought iron bars, centered above a double-door entrance. The interior stair is lit by three, narrow, parallel, vertical slit windows beneath the tower, giving the 1949 elevation a Modernistic accent. Despite additions to the 12th and 11th Street ends of the building, the long flanks of the Market House, facing Market Square's interior streets, retain the rhythmic pattern of colossal piers set on pedestals and supporting a layered entablature. The pilasters frame pairs of double doors beneath arched fanlights within each bay, preserving the character-defining architectural details of the Market House's original Border Brick style construction. In addition to the City Market House, Market Square also contains one contributing object, the Jacob Brown Memorial Fountain, installed in 1912 facing E. 12th Street on axis with the main entrance to the market building.

The City Market House of Brownsville, Texas, was built in Market Square, a rectangular city block, 250 feet by 300 feet in dimensions, surveyed and platted as Block 87 in the Original Townsite of 1848 but subdivided in 1850 by two parallel interior streets that frame the square: a 300-foot-long, 75-foot-wide central island spanning between E. 11th Street and E. 12th Street. Between 1850 and 1949, the City Market House took form as a long (257 feet long), comparatively narrow (48 feet at its widest) building that fills all but the block's east frontage, the residue of the Market Square. The original City Market House, the core of the present building, is a rectangular building, six bays long (100 feet) and two bays wide (40 feet), constructed in the center of the rectangular "square." Its long walls, approximately 30 feet tall, face the square's interior north and south streets and its narrow end walls faced E. 11th and E. 12th streets. In 1908-09, a freestanding, two-story, brick Fire Department Building was constructed at the west end of Market Square on E. 11th Street. This is a rectangularly planned building with an advancing center bay facing the square's south interior street. The center bay was capped by a tall, architecturally distinctive tower containing the fire alarm bell. In 1912 a two-story addition to the Market House was built on the east end of the square, facing E. 12th Street. The 1912 addition was eight feet wider in plan than the 1852 Market House; therefore, its north and south walls edge closer to the square's interior streets than do the north and south walls of the original Market House. In 1948-49, a second addition was made to the east end of the square, facing E. 12th Street. At the same time, the roofed open space between the west end of the 1852 Market House and the 1909 Fire Department Building was filled with a new

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two-story bay that spatially integrated the Fire Department Building with the rest of the complex and permitted its conversion to additional office space. In 1985, freestanding tile-roofed, concrete-framed canopies were constructed parallel to the square's interior streets so that the entire square could function as the Transit Terminal, the downtown hub of Brownsville's public bus system. Following completion of La Plaza Brownsville Multimodal Terminal at another downtown site in 2012, the intrusive canopy structures were demolished. The tiled hood over the E. 12th Street entrance doors is the one existing remnant of the 1985 canopy additions. In 2017-18, the square's two interior streets were closed to vehicular traffic, resurfaced with pavers and planting, and transformed into pedestrian concourses.

South elevation

Brownsville's City Market House is seventeen irregular bays long on its north and south sides facing Market Square's interior streets, three bays wide on its east side facing E. 12th Street and four bays wide on its west side facing E. 11th Street. Beginning at its east (12th Street) end, the long south elevation consists of the 1949 bay, capped by the 45-foot-tall domed tower, and pierced by three vertical slit windows that stair-step upward in their location in the wall to follow the ascent of the main stair inside. A horizontally continuous raised base, capped by superimposed molded bands, supports the upper plane of the wall, which culminates vertically in an entablature that projects beyond the plane of the wall and is capped with three layers of molding beneath a simplified classical cornice that projects out farther than the architrave bands below it. The tower is octagonal in plan. Each orthogonal facet of the tower is framed with miniature versions of the pilasters on the historic core of the building, articulated with base, necking, and cornice molding. A single arched aperture is centered on each of the tower's orthogonal facets. The tower pilasters rise to a frieze zone, above which is a molded cornice, serving visually as a base for a parapet and the building's blue-tiled hemispherical dome. A small circular opening is centered on each rectangular facet of the parapet. The diagonally aligned facets of the tower are not articulated with pilasters or openings.

There is a slight recess in plan where the 1949 addition attaches to the 1912 addition, with the 1912 addition being set farther back than the 1949 addition. The 1912 addition is composed with a half bay framed by pilasters rising from tall pedestals. The half bay contains, on the first floor, a flat-headed, one-over-one-pane, wood-sash window set in a recess headed with a blind arch panel. At the spring line of the arch is a projecting belt course that spans between the pilasters. Aligned above the ground-floor window is a second-floor window, also a flat-headed, one-over-one-pane, wood sash window. Its sill is stationed on a projecting belt course that wraps around most of the complex but does not over-ride the vertical pilasters. The next bay to the west is wider than the bay to its east. It too is framed by pilasters on pedestals. A single ground-floor aperture contains a pair of flat-headed, one-over-one-pane, wood-sash windows ganged beneath a continuation of the header belt course and recessed in a blind arched panel. Stationed on the second-floor sill-level belt course above this arched recess is a central pair of windows flanked to either side by single windows. The side windows are separated from the central pair by narrow masonry piers. The heads of the pilasters stop at a horizontal line co-terminous with the heads of the second-floor windows. The entablature zone of the wall is articulated with three parallel horizontal molded bands, a horizontal frieze zone, and the parapet-level cornice. The cornice above the half bay is capped with an extra corona layer, making it slightly taller than the longer bay to its left.

The next six bays to the west (left) of the 1912 bays mark the original 1852 core of the Market House. These bays are set farther back than the 1912 bays. Each bay is organized with one tall, arched opening on the ground floor. The spring line of the arch is articulated with a horizontal molded band spanning between pilasters. The horizontally continuous sill band on the second floor serves as a base for ganged pairs of flat-headed, one-over-one-pane, wood-sash windows. Pilasters between the arched openings rise from pedestals articulated with molded bands to an entablature of three, superimposed, oversailing fasciae capped with a simple cornice. In this portion of the building, the second floor was added in 1912 to replace the original 1852 second floor, demolished after being severely damaged in the 1867 hurricane. The 1912 date accounts for ganging windows and the use of one-over-one-pane window sash. It also accounts for the fact that the three westernmost second-floor bays of the 1852 core were given a slightly different

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configuration than the three bays to the east, with taller pairs of second-floor window that incorporate a top layer of glazed sash, and the installation of pilasters that rise to a single layer frieze continuous with the topmost horizontal division in the frieze layers to the east (right). This simpler frieze is capped by a more pronounced cornice that rises above the parapet of the rest of the building. The taller windows mark the location of the City Council Chamber in the 1912 alterations and additions. This three-bay section has a taller hipped roof (not visible from the square), in contrast to the gabled roof above the easternmost part of the 1912 additions (also not visible from the square). Both the solid wood arched double doors and the solid wood doors with glazed arched heads are modern infill, installed in 2009, when the arched aperture, which had been blocked-in in 1949, were reopened.

To the west (left) of the 1852 core are two continuing bays constructed in 1948-49 to connect the 1852 core to the 1909 Fire Department Building. These repeat the configuration of the easternmost 1852/1912 bays. The westernmost portion of the Market House complex consists of the 1909 Fire Department Building and the connecting stair bay added in 1949, which steps out from the 1852/1912 core to integrate with the front wall plane of the Fire Department Building. The second floor of the Fire Department Building is at a lower level than the second floor of the Market House. Consequently, the pair of single one-over-one-pane, wood sash windows symmetrically arrayed to either side of the advancing tower bay have noticeably lower sills than second-floor windows in the rest of the complex. These second-floor windows are capped with segmental arches. All ground-floor windows in the 1909 Fire Department Building are modern replacements installed in 1999. No pilasters on bases were applied to the Fire Department Building nor were the first-floor arch spring line belt course or the second-level window sill belt course extended to the Fire Department Building. A narrow molded band occurs only in the tower at the sill level of the second-floor window. In the 1949 remodeling, the Fire Department Building experienced the most alterations. The building's tall, wood-shingled, hipped roof with flared eaves and exposed rafter tails and the similarly configured roof above the central tower were damaged in the Hurricane of 1933 and not reconstructed. The topmost parapet line of the 1852/1912 core was extended westward to give the entire building complex a unified roofline and architecturally minimize the differences between the 1909 and 1852/1949 portions of the complex.

West elevation

The west elevation of the Fire Department Building is a single plane parallel to E. 11th Street. Four segmentally arched windows light second-floor rooms. The three windows to the north are spaced at equal distances from each other; the window nearest the building's south corner does not conform to this spacing pattern. First-floor openings are modern replacements.

North elevation

The north elevation of the Market House repeats that of the south side except along the Fire Department component (where there is no protruding tower), and the 1949 stair bay insertion (where a one-a-half-story, steel-framed plate glass window above the street door illuminates the back-stair hall). The pattern of openings and architectural elements on the 1852/1912 recessed core of the Market House and its 1949 extension repeat those on the building's south elevation. Where the 1949 entrance, stair, and tower bay attach to the 1912 east front addition, the pattern of second-story windows is different than on the south side because there is no stair well on the north side of the building. Rather than vertical slit windows, there is a pair of ganged windows in one bay and a single one-over-one-pane wood sash window in the bay closest to the east corner of the north elevation.

East elevation

The front (east elevation) facing E. 12th Street is part of the 1949 alterations and additions. The composition of this elevation is mannered: openings are arrayed asymmetrically around the centered pair of entrance doors. The south

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third of the front elevation, the tower bay, is advanced slightly forward of the wall plane of the rest of the front. Collaging Border Brick style and Spanish Mission historical details on an austere composed planar elevation bespeaks the late Modernistic effort to reconcile the Market House's various construction episodes. The main entrance contains a pair of paneled doors of red oak. Stacked, recessed square panels within each door contain an interior square sunk panel in which a raised circular patera is centered. The double doors are flanked by sidelights surfaced with full-length panes of obscured corrugated glass, which are translucent but not transparent. The doors and sidelights are set in a framed panel. The 1985 tile hood projects from the upper part of this panel, obscuring the framed glass bays above the front doors. Above the entrance bay at the second-floor level, a stylized *cuadri-folio diamante* window, decorated with criss-crossed triple wrought iron bars, is centered on the elevation. The entrance portal's assertion of symmetry is qualified by the advancing tower bay to the left. The molded pedestals supporting pilasters on the north and south fronts of the Market House were extruded around the corner of the tower bay to visually link the 12th Street front to the Market House's original Border Brick style construction detail. Above this tiered, molded base course are three, narrow, vertical, story-and-a-half-high slit windows, which light the interior stair and counterbalance the elevation's assertion of a Border Brick style identity with a late Modernistic identity. The tall, domed corner tower evokes the square-proportioned towers of San Antonio's eighteenth-century Spanish mission churches (San José y San Miguel de Aguayo and Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción) and of the Church of Santa Ana in the Texas-Mexican border town of Camargo, Tamaulipas (c. 1800), one hundred miles upriver from Brownsville, while also referencing the Border Brick style in the detailing of its framing pilasters. The lower level of the E. 12th Street front of the building contains a horizontal line of historical and other markers attesting to the Market House's historical significance.

Interior

Upon the completion of the 1949 re-make and stairwell enclosures as well as their additions, the physical plant is to be considered as contained under one roof, fully enclosed. The only contributing exterior structure/object is the free-standing decorative fountain which is situated at the south end plaza.

The two-story building is utilized wholly by the Brownsville Historical Association as a Research Center / Exhibit Venue / Archival Storage / and Event Center. The ground floor section is organized as such, from south to north (entering from the 12th Street side): 1.) Entry vestibule, with stairwell ascending to the left; 2.) Reviewing / Processing Station, with vault rooms to the right and to the left (three-dimensional and archival storage); 3.) Exhibit Room "A", with executive office to right, and private collection room of Champion Collection adjacent; 4.) Hallway containing departmental and public restrooms to either side; 5.) Entry Corridor to Market Gallery; 6.) Market Gallery (large open event salon); 7.) Entry Vestibule with stair landing to second floor and elevator. The final quarter 8.) is an exterior-loaded 50' x 50' room, previous consideration as Special Collections Library, level one.

The second level is as such, from south to north: 1.) Stair landing; 2.) The entire (following) chamber has been issued selective demolition of interior partition walls for the complete distance up to the north stair landing. The usage is undetermined at the moment of this writing, with intentions of creating a combined configuration of museum storage/exhibit/research area; 3.) The north end stair landing; 4.) Interior access to second floor north structure room 50' x 50', previous consideration as Special Collections Library, level two.

No structural alterations have been applied from the time of the 1949 re-make/addition to present. The selective demolition that was undertaken was sensitive to original hard wall preservation. Interestingly enough, with the sub-ceiling having been removed during this phase of the restoration process, the original roof construction is clearly exposed and reveals an interesting account of piecemeal lumber and beam usage that stems back to the 1851 period of original construction. The plank sheathing of the roof section over the Market Hall is especially interesting, in its mosaic composition of lumber that was obviously salvaged from the Great Hurricane of 1867. The rafter beams are

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astounding in their magnitude. The same is true with the various locations which openly reveal masonry appointments. One can clearly observe the timelines of the four distinct construction eras (1850, 1867, 1912, 1949).

Contributing Object

Contributing to the significance of Market Square is the three-tiered bronze pedestal fountain centered in a low, ten-sided brick basin, axially aligned with the front entrance to the Market House on E. 12th Street. It was installed in October 1912 under the auspices of the Civic League as a memorial to Major Jacob Brown, U.S.A., for whom the City of Brownsville is named.

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Statement of Significance

The core of the Brownsville City Hall and Market House in Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas, was built in 1852, then enlarged and modified in 1912 and 1949. Upon construction in 1852, it was the most architecturally ambitious city hall and market house building in the state. The City Market House was the seat of municipal government in Brownsville from its completion in 1852 until 2002 and is still owned by the City of Brownsville. It is significant for its architectural evolution between 1852 and 1949, beginning as an imposing example of the Border Brick style, a regional architectural vernacular associated from the 1820s until the 1910s with the Texas-Tamaulipas border of the lower Río Grande/Río Bravo del Norte. It is significant for its subsequent architectural transformations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, losing its top floor to the deadly hurricane of October 1867, having its second floor reconstructed as a gable-roofed attic in 1868; then undergoing three episodes of expansion in the twentieth century with the construction of a freestanding Fire Department Building in 1909; a new east end addition to the E. 12th Street front of the market house in 1912 that also entailed reconstructing the second floor atop the 1852 core; and a second east end expansion in 1949 that also incorporated the freestanding Fire Department Building at the west end of the complex. The 1912 alterations and additions restored Border Brick style architectural attributes truncated in the 1868 reconstruction. The 1949 alterations and additions re-imaged the complex in a stylized Spanish Mission interpretation, accented with Modernistic details. The property is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Government and Commerce, and Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its association with the municipal politics and government of Brownsville, for its commercial associations with the public market, and for its association with architectural trends identified with the Texas-Tamaulipas border and the Lower Río Grande Valley of far south Texas during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Brownsville City Hall and Market House is the only purpose-built city hall structure ever erected in Brownsville. It is also the oldest combined city hall and market house in Texas and was, at the time of its completion in 1852, the most architecturally ambitious city hall and market house in the state.

Chronological History of Property

The Original Townsite of Brownsville was surveyed in August 1848 by George Lyons, deputy surveyor of Nueces County, for the Brownsville Town Company. The townsite adjoined the U. S. Army's Fort Brown military reservation and, at its southernmost point, had frontage on the Santa Cruz Bend of the Río Grande. In December 1848 Brownsville won an election to become county seat of the newly organized Cameron County. In January 1850 the city received its charter of incorporation from the Texas Legislature. Due to protracted legal conflict over the validity of the Brownsville Town Company's title to the townsite, the charter was repealed in 1852 but a new charter was authorized in 1853.¹

In November 1850, during the administration of mayor Robert S. Leman, Brownsville's first city council established Market Square in the center of Block 87, a standard 300-foot by 250-foot city block bisected by a 20-foot-wide central alley running the long dimension of the block. The 1848 town plan made provision for a four-block park (Washington Square) near the center of the townsite but otherwise did not reserve sites for governmental, educational, or religious institutions. In contrast, the adjacent Mexican city of Matamoros was surveyed around a central plaza in the eighteenth century. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, as Matamoros expanded, additional block-square plazas were added, including the Plaza de Allende, where the city's public market house, the Parián, was constructed in 1841. Block 87, the 1100 block of Washington and Adams, had its street-facing lots reduced from a standard depth of 115 feet to 50 feet to accommodate insertion of the rectangular Market Square and two flanking streets that run parallel to

¹ Betty Bay, *Historic Brownsville: Original Townsite Guide*, Brownsville: Brownsville Historical Association, 1980, 100-113.

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Washington and Adams.² In Matamoros, a similar spatial arrangement ensued as buildings were constructed on the four street edges of the Plaza Allende, completely surrounding the Parián (subsequently renamed the Mercado Juárez). Thus, more so than in Brownsville's otherwise conventional gridded nineteenth-century town plan, Market Square reproduces the proportions and spatial feeling characteristic of Mexican urban space, as can be seen by comparing Market Square to the streets of the historic core of Laredo, Texas, 200 miles upriver on the Río Grande. Surveyed in 1767 around what is now the Plaza San Agustín, Laredo preserves the dimensions and intimate proportions characteristic of Spanish colonial cities.

Beginning in the 1850s, Twelfth Street emerged as the central axis of Brownsville's business district. It connected the public wharf in the 1200 and 1300 blocks of Front Levee Street to parallel named streets (Elizabeth Street, where many of the border merchants had their store-houses, Washington Street, Adams Street, and Jefferson Street) and to Market Square, the terminus of Brownsville's first railroad line. Brownsville's central business district tended to expand north of the river along either side of 12th Street. Not until the introduction of automobiles after the turn of the twentieth century did the central business district begin to expand along the axis of Elizabeth Street and the named streets parallel to it. In 1899 a quit claim deed conveyed Market Square and its flanking interior streets to the City of Brownsville.³

City Council minutes and the surviving construction contract, dated 25 November 1850, identify the builders of the City Market House as Adolphe Seuzeneau, a New Orleans-born brick mason who had spent much of his career in Matamoros before moving to Brownsville, and John P. McDonough, an English-born carpenter. The contract specifies how the foundations are to be constructed, the building's external dimensions, floor-to-ceiling heights, wall thicknesses, flooring materials, interior finishes, roof construction, a second-story iron balcony facing 12th Street, and a cupola that could accommodate a market bell and a clock. The minutes indicate that Seuzeneau and McDonough agreed to provide materials and construct the building, taking their payment of \$18,260 over the course of six years from the date of completion (eight percent annual interest), to be paid from the anticipated revenue from market rentals. By May 1853 McDonough had died and as late as October 1865 his widow was still trying to collect the balance due him.⁴

The earliest known illustration of Market Square and the City Market House is a perspective by C. E. H. Bonwill published in the February 20, 1864 issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News*.⁵ Bonwill's drawing shows the two-story brick Market House with its central cupola and open-arched ground floor. It is flanked by one-story commercial houses with shed-roofed galleries on the interior streets framing Market Square. Bonwill conveyed the rough, uneven quality of the streets and the presence of a lone *jacal* in the distance to the right of the Market House, emphasizing the openness that characterized this edge of Brownsville during the Civil War period. A photograph by Louis de Planque, probably taken in the mid-1860s, conveys a sense of the imposing scale and material solidity of the building, especially when compared to the wooden commercial houses on either side of the square.⁶ It also conveys, as does Bonwill's drawing, the activity transpiring around and within Market Square.

In October 1867 a ferocious hurricane spun off tornadoes that wreaked destruction in Brownsville and Matamoros. Brownsville's newspaper, the *Ranchero*, in a summary of the damage, noted: "The market house and [city] hall,

² Ibid.

³ Bay, 107-108.

⁴ Mrs. Harbert Davenport, "Contract To Build Local Market First Historic Document Received by Group: Signed Nov. 30, 1850," *Brownsville Herald*, 27 April 1947, 11; and Davenport, "Restoration of Old City Market Recalls History It Has Watched During Century," *Brownsville Herald*, 27 May 1949, 13B.

⁵ "Scenes on the Río Grande," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 20 February 1864, 348.

⁶ Ruby A. Wooldridge and Robert B. Vezzetti, *Brownsville: A Pictorial History*, Norfolk: Donning Co., 1982, 60.

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superior to everything else in the state, were crushed.”⁷ No illustrations survive of the damaged building. The ground floor of the Market House was salvaged, and the exterior walls were rebuilt to the height of the second-floor balcony rail.⁸ An end-gabled hipped roof was constructed to accommodate second floor spaces. These were lit by a single arched opening in the gable ends and by six, arcuated dormer windows, one above each of the ground-floor arches on the long sides of the building. The pilasters were truncated at the eaves line of the roof; no effort was made to reproduce the molded caps or the oversailing cornice bands of the original building. In August 1868 the *Ranchero* sarcastically described the building as “a fine market house with pigeon-hole looking windows in the roof.”⁹ In 1876 Brownsville architect-builder S. W. Brooks was commissioned to add a belfry to the roof of the Market House to contain a bell used to regulate trading hours in the market.¹⁰ By 1877 an exterior stair had been added to the east gabled end of the Market House, facing 12th Street. The stair led from Market Square up to the iron balcony and was centered on the second-story arched door. Images published in *The Twin Cities of the Border, Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Mexico, and the Country of the Lower Río Grande* (1893), show the one-a-half-story City Market House surrounded by shade trees and by substantial two-story brick buildings along the square’s south interior street.¹¹

Completion of the first phase of the St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico Railway line from Corpus Christi to Brownsville in 1904 contributed to the expansion of Brownsville’s population.¹² As the only city in the Lower Río Grande Valley in 1904, Brownsville initially served as a regional base for real estate developers working in both Cameron and Hidalgo counties. Brownsville shared in a statewide construction boom occurring between 1908 and 1912, when the perimeter of Market Square was improved with substantial new business buildings constructed by second-generation Brownsville-born investors. The brothers José and Manuel Besteiro Pérez, sons of the Spanish immigrant merchant José Besteiro Trigo, constructed the square’s two three-story buildings.¹³

The Market House was expanded with the construction of a freestanding, two-story brick fire department building in 1908-09, and then with the reconstruction and expansion of the 1852 building in 1911-12 under architect-builder A. Goldammer. The building housed professional fire-fighting staff, but not any fire-fighting vehicles.¹⁴ The west half of the building’s ground-floor space, abutting E. 11th Street, was a commercial lease space. The 1914 Sanborn map

⁷ “The Storm, Hurricane and Tornado of Oct. 7th and 8th, 1867,” *Daily Ranchero*, 15 November 1867.

⁸ Wooldridge and Vezzetti. 69.

⁹ “Extracts,” *Daily Ranchero*, 5 August 1868.

¹⁰ From 6,305 in 1900 to 10,517 in 1910. Eddie Valent, “Brownsville’s Historic Old City Hall Bell Is Restored,” *Brownsville Herald*, 28 January 1975, p. 4D.

¹¹ Lt. W. H. Chatfield, *The Twin Cities of the Border, Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Mexico, and the Country of the Lower Río Grande*, New Orleans: E. P. Brandao, 1893, 11 and 26. New buildings on the square included the two-story merchant’s house built by the Spanish immigrant brothers José and Miguel Fernández Toral at 1049 E. Washington Street and 11th Street (c. 1868); the pair of one- and two-story buildings that another Spanish immigrant merchant, Victoriano Fernández, built at 1106 E. Adams Street and 11th Street between the mid-1870s and the mid-1880s; the two-story Río Grande Hotel at 1115 E. Washington Street, built by José Fernández about 1882; and the imposing two-story merchant’s house that Juan Hano Fernández, the nephew of José and Miguel Fernández, built at 1200 E. Adams Street and E. 12th Street in 1884. These buildings began to enclose Market Square with Border Brick style buildings that reinforced the square’s Creole spatial ambiance. Bay, 48-49, 113-114.

¹² Kearney and Knopp, 191-194.

¹³ These buildings included the Brownsville Drug Company Building at 645-49 E. 11th Street and E. Adams Street (1909, A. Goldammer) and the Park (subsequently Plaza) Hotel at 1138 E. Adams Street and E. 12th Street (1911, M. E. Tracy). The banker John G. Fernández Champion, a son of Miguel Fernández Toral, built the two-story business building at 1101 E. Washington Street and E. 11th Street (1911, M. E. Tracy). “Building Enterprise,” *Brownsville Herald*, 12 February 1909, 5; “Building Notes,” *Brownsville Herald*, 24 April 1909, 2; “Three Stories,” *Brownsville Herald*, 30 April 1909, 3; “Those Pretty Homes,” *Brownsville Herald*, 28 June 1909, 3; “More Than \$100,000 in New Buildings,” *Brownsville Herald*, 9 February 1911, 2; “City News,” *Brownsville Herald*, 11 March 1911, 3; “Contracts Let for Two New Buildings,” *Brownsville Herald*, 8 April 1911, 2; and “New Business Building on Washington Street,” *Brownsville Herald*, 18 October 1910, 4.

¹⁴ “School Trustees Are Appointed,” *Brownsville Herald*, 29 July 1908, 4; “Local Items,” *Brownsville Herald*, 11 September 1908.

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indicates that a plumbing business occupied this space. By 1919, it was occupied by the Texas Café, which would operate at this location until 1996.¹⁵

In 1911, a new city council, headed by mayor Benjamin Kowalski, authorized the reconstruction and expansion of the market house. The *Brownsville Herald* criticized the city's approach, asserting that

It would be folly to lay a single new brick on the unsightly old shell of a market house. That should be razed to the ground and an entirely new building, to be planned after the most modern ideas, especially embodying every feature that would insure strictly sanitary conditions, should replace it.¹⁶

The 1852 core was retained, although, as the *Herald* observed in a subsequent article, it was “gutted” in preparation for the reconstruction. The internal brick arches and the wood-framed second floor deck were demolished and replaced with concrete floor slabs supported on tubular steel interior columns and wood floor joists. Demolition of the interior brick piers and arches made it possible to expand available space in the market house without adding onto that portion of the building. A construction contract for \$12,000 was awarded to D. V. Farías and Tomás Montes in February 1912 and the building was completed by October 1912. S. B. Elliott & Company of Brownsville was the architect.¹⁷ Wider than the 1852 Market House, Elliott's two-story City Hall addition was framed by corner bays articulated with pilasters on pedestals. Low hipped roofs above these bays gave them a tower-like presence. The end bays framed a two-bay central register facing E. 12th Street that contained a pair of double doors set beneath blind arched recesses on the ground floor and a trio of ganged pairs of one-over-one-paned wood sash windows on the second floor. The parapet level of the central register stepped up toward the centerline of the elevation. Elliott differentiated the new second-floor bays above the 1852 Market House to distinguish the west half, where the City Council Chamber was located, from the east half, where city offices were aligned to either side of a central corridor. Elliott even positioned decorative frontispieces above the taller windows at the council chamber end of the building to further register its importance. According to descriptions published in the *Herald*, the interval between the west end of the Market Hall and the Fire Department Building was enclosed with a gabled roof to shelter fire fighting vehicles. A photograph taken by Robert Runyon, commercial photographer and future City Manager and mayor of Brownsville, shows that the City Market continued to function in its old stalls, with canopies extended over the sidewalk to accommodate the increase in business. The portion of Market Square facing E. 12th Street in front of the new two-story administration building was paved with multicolored tiles and incorporated beds of ornamental plantings and two trees, one a palm tree, the symbol of the Valley's newly formulated image as an exotic tropical paradise. The Jacob Brown Memorial Fountain, installed in 1912 following completion of the alterations and additions, is still in operation.¹⁸

During the second half of the 1920s Brownsville and other communities in the Lower Río Grande Valley experienced a building boom that eclipsed that of the 1910 period. Market Square was built out with new two-story business buildings. These buildings contributed to the modernization of Market Square, and they also indicated the extent to

¹⁵ The Texas Café, founded by A. L. Marques in 1912 and subsequently owned in turn by his brothers R. L. Marques and M. L. Marques, then by R. L. Marques's son, A. W. Marques, was open twenty-four hours a day. It was where city officials, policemen and firemen, newspaper reporters, and those who wanted to keep abreast of local events congregated. Texas Café Began Operation in 1912,” *Brownsville Herald*, 27 May 1949, 7B; John Sevigny, “Cambian Texas Café por Oficinas,” *El Heraldo de Brownsville*, 21 May 1997, 1.

¹⁶ “An Economic Question,” *Brownsville Herald*, 7 March 1911, 2.

¹⁷ “Building Committee Approves Market Place,” *Brownsville Herald*, 17 November 1911, 5; “Notice to Contractors,” *Brownsville Herald*, 1 February 1912, 8; “Bids Opened for New City Hall and Market,” *Brownsville Herald*, 16 February 1912, 4; “Contract Confirmed for City Building,” *Brownsville Herald*, 20 February 1912, 1,4; “Completed Soon,” *Brownsville Herald*, 18 June 1912, 11; “New City Building Is Now Completed,” *Brownsville Herald*, 28 September 1912, 1.

¹⁸ “Have Begun Erection of Brown Memorial Fountain,” *Brownsville Herald*, 31 October 1912, 3; “Practically Completed,” *Brownsville Herald*, 4 November 1912.

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which Brownsville's downtown business district had split into English- and Spanish-speaking sectors during the 1920s.

In 1928 the City of Brownsville constructed a new central fire station at 1000 E. Adams Street. During the Labor Day Hurricane of September 4, 1933 (comparable in its destructive intensity to the 1867 storm) the tower of the former fire department building was destroyed.¹⁹ Brownsville experienced almost no population growth in the 1930s, but municipal offices in the City Market House were so cramped that in 1940, during the administration of mayor Royce Russell, the City of Brownsville purchased the imposing 1911-12 First National Bank at 1050 E. Elizabeth Street and designated it as Brownsville's new city hall, although some city offices remained in the market square building.²⁰

The post-WWII period marked another episode of economic expansion in Brownsville, tied especially to the emergence of a new cotton production region around Matamoros. Because Market Square was built out, no new buildings were constructed around the perimeter of the square. The City Market House experienced its most dramatic transformation to date with a second series of alterations and additions carried out in 1948-49 during the administration of Mayor Herbert L. Stokely. The *Brownsville Herald* took credit for suggesting that the Market House be remodeled and expanded again. Brownsville architect Ellis F. Albaugh prepared a proposal that the City Commission adopted in January 1948.²¹ Construction by W. D. Ferguson & Sons began in October 1948 and the building opened in late May 1949.²²

The 1949 alterations entailed building two concrete-framed additions: one in front of the 1912 entrance facing E. 12th Street, the other filling in the open space between the west end of the Market House and the former fire department building. The arches of the City Market were infilled so that the market, along with the rest of the complex, could be centrally air-conditioned. A vault for the protection of public documents was built as part of the new entrance lobby and stair on the east end of the building and a second stair was constructed in the new west end filler. The *Brownsville Herald* published a special souvenir section in its May 27, 1949 edition documenting what it described as a "restoration" that was "at once modern and air-conditioned and still holds to the Mission style that is the charm of Brownsville."²³

The Demise of City Market

The concept of a *mercado* in Brownsville stems back to its tie with New Spain and Old World tradition. Deep South Texas was culturally more inclined toward Mexican social custom for much of its development, which continues to the modern day. The *mercado* (or "marketa" in the Border vernacular) began to decline between 1949 and 1965. The 1966 city directory was the last to identify commercial enterprises in the building.²⁴

The first local general stores apart from the specialized enterprises (baker, feed stores, saddlery, etc.) were enterprises led by entrepreneurs such as Adolfo Garza, Celedonio Garza, Pedro Bouis, and Casimiro Tamayo. The Bouis store at the corner of E. 9th and Adams in Brownsville was a considerably large plant operation. El Globo Chico and El Globo

¹⁹ Tencha Sloss, "Historic 'Town Bell' Recovered and Will Be Preserved," *Brownsville Herald*, 13 June 1965, p. 3-A; Valent, "Brownsville's Historic Old City Hall Bell Is Restored," *Brownsville Herald*, 28 January 1975, p. 4D.

²⁰ "Open House To Be Held Saturday for New Municipal Building: City Offices Placed in Center of Town," *Brownsville Herald*, 12 July 1940, p. 3.

²¹ "City Votes To Accept Fort Brown Offer," *Brownsville Herald*, 9 January 1948, p. 1; "Historic City Market To Become New City Hall," *Brownsville Herald*, 19 January 1948, p. 1.

²² Mo García, "City Hall Opening Marks Era of Municipal Growth," *Brownsville Herald* 27 May 1949, Souvenir Edition, p. 1B; "Fergusons City Hall Builders," *Brownsville Herald* 27 May 1949, Souvenir Edition, p. 2B.

²³ Mo García, "City Hall Opening Marks Era of Municipal Growth," *Brownsville Herald* 27 May 1949, Souvenir Edition, p. 1B.

²⁴ *Texas 1966 Brownsville City Directory*, Odessa, Texas, Wilmot Directory Service, Inc., 1966.

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Nuevo, owned by Adolfo Garza, carried a selection that extended beyond what was typical of the 19th Century *estancuillos*. The first local supermarket was Jittney Jungle (1929), later Piggley Wiggley, and then H.E.B. In 1933 Jimmy Pace's operation in the West Brownsville subdivision began as a "Tourist Auto Supply." Pace also incorporated a gas station within his base, to accomplish a "one-stop shopping" approach to his business. These were the real forerunners of the new-age supermarket. After WWII, Camero's Red & White Grocery & Market opened at West Jefferson and Palm Boulevard, and then, as the Los Ebanos and Ebony Heights subdivisions were opening up, Glen's and Minimax opened in Palm Village. Out on the Port Road at Four Corners, was El Centro, and within the Buena Vida Neighborhood was the beginning of the Lopez stores.

Each of these entrees into the evolving retail marketplace eroded the customer base that had been loyal to the established city market. Also, earlier prohibitions which protected a single source sanction for slaughterhouses and public sale of meats had expired. Prior to WWII, this monopoly was tested numerous times unsuccessfully in the far reaches of the community, but the city held firmly to the law that no meat could be processed or sold outside of the established marketplace.²⁵ The exact moment that this legality was lifted is not known. Personal interviews conducted in the process of compiling this narrative indicate that consumer demographics changed over the final ten years of market operation, as the older, primarily Latino population made up the bulk of the faithful clientele.²⁶ The convenience, variety, and curb appeal of the new supermarket concept rapidly displaced the old market custom. The last newspaper mention of any vendor presence, other than a very few classified ad placements, was published in 1965.

In 1984, during the administration of mayor Emilio Hernández, the city embarked on a comprehensive effort to rehabilitate Market Square. Overseen by City Commissioner Robert H. Lackner and the city's Community Development director, Larry Brown, the square became the downtown hub of the city's public transportation system, Brownsville Urban System (BUS). Tall, concrete canopies with tile hoods were built along the north and south Market Square streets to provide shelters for those waiting for buses in what was designated the Transit Terminal (1985, Morán Engineering).²⁷ A *placita* was constructed at 1120-36 E. Adams Street in 1986 by demolishing the buildings between the Park Hotel and the Victoriano Fernández Buildings and installing landscaping.²⁷ The city acquired the Park Hotel in 1986 and remodeled it as municipal office space (1987, Ballí, Gómez & Associates).²⁸ Following the closing of the Texas Café in 1996, its space was rehabilitated in 1999, during the administration of Brownsville's first woman mayor, Blanca Sánchez Vela and with the support of City Commissioner Harry E. McNair, Jr., to become the City of Brownsville's Heritage Office, housing the Historic Preservation Officer, Downtown Historic District Manager, Film Commission, and the non-profit bi-national preservation organization, Los Caminos del Río.²⁹

In 1996 the City of Brownsville sold property in what had been the Southern Pacific Railway's switching yard in the 600 block of E. Harrison Street to the U.S. General Services Administration to become the site for the new federal courthouse. The city acquired the 1931 federal courthouse and post office (1001 E. Elizabeth Street), which was remodeled to become the new city hall.³⁰ Different city agencies then filled vacated space in the market house until 2004³¹ In 2009, the city leased the building to the nonprofit Brownsville Historical Association, which houses its

²⁵ City of Brownsville Board of Aldermen Minutes, May 25, 1903, ...no meats sold outside of the City Market, p. 212.

²⁶ Gawenda, Dr. Peter, Personal interview, July 23, 2018

²⁷ Basilio Hernández, "Old Buildings Give Way to New Plaza," *Brownsville Herald* 19 June 1986, 1.

²⁸ Adolfo Pesquera, "Walker Named Newest Member of PUB," *Brownsville Herald*, 29 January 1986, 10B.

²⁹ Daniel Borunda, "'Preserving the Past: Former Texas Café Restored, But Some Question Priorities,'" *Brownsville Herald*, 11 December 1999.

³⁰ Brittney Booth, "City Hall Officially Changing Venues for the First Time in 150 Years," *Brownsville Herald*, 16 January 2003, A1, A9.

³¹ J. Noel Espinoza, One-Stop Shopping: City to Move Several Departments to Duffey Plaza This Summer," *Brownsville Herald*, 17 March 2004, 2; José Borjón, "City Court Closes: Municipal Court to be Moved to the Levee Street," *Brownsville Herald*, 28 December 2005, 2; and Jeff Raymon.

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archives and museum collections in the 1949 portion of the complex.³² BUS left Market Square in 2012 and the intrusive bus canopies were demolished in 2015.³³ The city carried out conservation work on the tower and dome of the Market House in 2016-17 under the direction of architect Roberto Ruiz.³⁴ In 2017, the interior streets of Market Square were closed to traffic and converted to landscaped pedestrian promenades.³⁵

The City Market House has been rehabilitated externally. Portions of the interior—the spaces used by the Brownsville Historical Association for its research center and collection gallery and the ground-floor market hall—have been adapted for public use. The interior of the market hall has been returned to its basic structural condition: the exposed brick bearing walls of the 1852 market house, concrete floor, cylindrical steel columns, and the wood ceiling structure. The market hall space is used for special events and can be opened on both sides to the square.

Associated Architects and Builders

Adolphe Seuzeneau (1807-1879) was a brick mason, born in New Orleans, who immigrated to Matamoros. Seuzeneau's first wife, Petrita González, whom he married in 1827, died in New Orleans in 1838, suggesting that he moved back and forth between New Orleans and Matamoros. Seuzeneau's brothers, Emile and Pierre, also lived in Matamoros. After the U.S.-Mexico War, Adolphe Seuzeneau moved to Brownsville, while his brother Emile and Emile's family remained in Matamoros. Seuzeneau is listed in the Census of 1860 (where the family's name is misspelled as "Suzenean") as living in Brownsville's First Ward with his wife, Dolores, age 38 and born in Mexico, and Emilio (age 23, born Mexico), Julius (age 10, born Texas), and Caroline (age 5, born Texas) Seuzeneau. The City Market House is the only Brownsville building with which Seuzeneau can be associated. That he and McDonough were able to finance the construction of the City Market House suggests that one, or both, had accumulated substantial resources.³⁶

John P. McDonough (c.1811-died by 1853) is listed in the Census of 1850 as a 39-year-old carpenter, born in England, and living in Brownsville with his 28-year old wife, Sarah, also born in England, and their three-year-old son Thomas, born in Texas.³⁷

Andrew Henry Goldammer (1876-1939) worked in Brownsville as an architect and builder as early as 1906 until he moved to Harlingen in 1916, where he spent the rest of his career working principally as a contractor. In addition to the Fire Department Building, A. Goldammer (as he was known professionally) designed the First Baptist Church (1908, demolished), the Puente Building (1908, demolished), the L. K. Morris (subsequently Mrs. James A. Browne) House at 204 E. Levee Street (1909), the three-story Brownsville Drug Co. Building for Besteiro brothers (1909), and the Stegman Building at 543 E. 11th Street (1912).³⁸

Samuel Baber Elliott (1870-1938) was born in Grayson County, Texas, and spent almost his whole life in the county seat of Sherman, where he worked as an architect-builder. From 1907 to 1912, S. B. Elliott worked in Stamford, Texas,

³² Jacqueline Armendáriz, "Block Star: Market Square Building Undergoes Renovation," *Brownsville Herald*, 29 July 2012, 1, 8.

³³ Steve Clark, "Changes Afoot for Downtown's Historic Market Square," *Brownsville Herald*, 18 May 2013.

³⁴ Steve Clark, "Local Architect Wins State Award for Market Square Dome," *Brownsville Herald*, 3 March 2018.

³⁵ Brittney Booth, "Brownsville: A History in Itself: A Future in the Past," *Brownsville Herald*, 19 May 2002, A1, A12; and Kaila Contreras, "Renovations Help Refresh Downtown Brownsville," *Brownsville Herald*, 30 December 2017.

³⁶ *Record of Interments in the City Cemetery of Brownsville*, Vol. 1 (Mat y, 1854 to December 31, 1880), 38; Census of 1860.

³⁷ Census of 1850; Davenport, "Restoration of Old City Market Recalls History It Has Watched During Century," *Brownsville Herald*, 27 May 1949, 13B.

³⁸ "Death Takes A. Goldammer," *Brownsville Herald*, 8 August 1939, p. 1.

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and it was during this interval that he also opened an office in Brownsville in 1911. Elliott's additions and alterations to the City Market House is his only known work in Brownsville.³⁹

Domingo V. Farías (1876-1917) was a Brownsville contractor. The Texas State Archives contain a small collection of photos of one- and two-story wood houses that D. V. Farías built in Brownsville in the 1910 period. Tomás Montes (1873-1947) was a Brownsville contractor and the father of brick mason Daniel Montes.⁴⁰

Martin Hanson, Jr. (1857-1916) was a Brownsville architect and builder who served as City Building Inspector at the time the 1911-12 alterations and additions to the City Market House were designed and built. Hanson had earlier served as Cameron County Surveyor. He was responsible for the school building in Hidalgo (1895), the central core of the François La Borde House in Río Grande City (1902), and the Florencio Sáenz House at Toluca Ranch in Hidalgo County (1905). At the time of his death, Hanson was Brownsville's fire chief.⁴¹

Ellis F. Albaugh, Jr. (1903-1976) was a San Antonio architect who practiced in Brownsville from 1947 to 1956. Albaugh was the architect of houses for Alberto Terrazas-Creel (1949), Dr. Karl Roth (1952), and W. S. Bartz (1952) in Brownsville and for Shelby Longoria Theriot in Matamoros (1950). He designed Canales Elementary School (1949), Russell Elementary School (1950), and Victoria Heights Elementary School (1950) for the Brownsville Independent School District and Immaculate Conception Parish School (1952). Albaugh also designed a professional building for Dr. F. F. Calderoni (1950). All of these buildings were examples of modern design.⁴²

William Denson Ferguson (1887-1961), founder of W. D. Ferguson & Sons Construction Company, built the J. C. Penney Co. store (1949), Ebony Heights and Cromack elementary schools (1954), and the Pan American State Bank Building (1957) in Brownsville.⁴³ After his death, Ferguson's practice in Brownsville was carried on by his son Donald D. Ferguson.

Architectural Significance

The City Market House of Brownsville is nominated under Criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Anglo-American market house building type and because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a regional architectural vernacular, the Border Brick Style, associated with far south Texas and the adjoining Mexican state of Tamaulipas. As a building constructed over time, the Market House additionally exhibits architectural characteristics associated with several periods in the twentieth century. It is also significant for the architects and builders responsible for its evolution between the mid-nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century.

The historic core of the City Market House exemplifies the building type of the Anglo-American market house. James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls in their book, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (1999), illustrate the building type of the arcaded market hall with the offices of town government built above it.⁴⁴ This building type appeared in British cities at the same time as it did in Great Britain's American colonies, an impressive

³⁹ See the biographical profile appended to the website: <https://www.ancestry.com/boards/thread.aspx?mv=flat&m=24892&p=topics.obits2>.

⁴⁰ "Funeral of Domingo Farías," *Brownsville Herald* 27 February 1917, p. 3; "Deaths," *Brownsville Herald*, 10 October 1947, p. 2.

⁴¹ "Brownsville Fire Chief Dead," *San Antonio Light*, 26 January 1916, p. 6.

⁴² "New City Hall Opens Tomorrow," *Brownsville Herald*, 27 May 1949, p. 4B.

⁴³ "Fergusons City Hall Builders," *Brownsville Herald*, 27 May 1949, p. 2B; "Ferguson Services Wednesday," *Brownsville Herald*, 24 October 1961, p. 1.

⁴⁴ James Schmiechen and Kenneth Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, 6.

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colonial example being Faneuil Hall in Boston (1742, John Smibert, architect). Helen Tangires in her book, *Public Markets and Civic Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (2003), identifies this two- (or more) story market house type as “the mixed-use market,” which “had an open arcaded ground floor for marketing, surmounted by one or more stories devoted to other public purposes.”⁴⁵ The Brick Market in Newport, Rhode Island (1772, Peter Harrison, architect) and the Charleston City Market in Charleston, South Carolina (1841, E. B. White, architect) are surviving examples of this distinctive public building type. Schmiechen and Carls began their book by asserting “From medieval times well into the nineteenth century, the most important economic and social center of urban life and a dominant feature of the townscape was the public market.”⁴⁶ The alternative market house building type was the one-story hall, devoted exclusively to the sale of food or other goods. The Halle des Boucheries, the meat market (now the French Market), in New Orleans (1813, Gurlie & Guillot, architects) and the Parián in Matamoros (1841, Carlos Danache and Miguel Seuzeneau, builders) were examples of the one-story, single-purpose market hall type.

Brownsville’s City Market House was the most architecturally ambitious city hall and market house structure in Texas when it was completed in 1852. By contrast, Houston’s public market, constructed in 1840, was a one-story, linear, wooden shed; its city hall was a house-like two-story wood building constructed next to the market shed in Market Square in 1841.⁴⁷ Willard B. Robinson in his book, *The People’s Architecture: Texas Courthouses, Jails, and Municipal Buildings* (1983), illustrates the public market houses of Dallas and Austin, both built twenty years after Brownsville’s Market House and both utilitarian buildings with limited architectural ambitions.⁴⁸ Corpus Christi’s first market house and city hall, constructed in 1871, conformed to the utilitarian character of the Dallas and Austin market houses.⁴⁹ The only other market house built in Texas before the Civil War that could compete architecturally with Brownsville’s Market House was the City Market House of San Antonio (1859, John Fries), with its neoclassical Doric temple front constructed of limestone and facing Market Street.⁵⁰ The San Antonio market was designed to be used exclusively for market purposes. It was sold in 1900 and demolished in 1927. Not until after the Civil War did Texan cities have the resources to build on a monumental scale. Houston erected the most ambitious City Hall and Market House complex built in Texas in the 1870s. This three-story building conformed to the mixed-use city hall-market house type, with a second-floor civic auditorium included. Therefore the building, constructed in 1873, destroyed by fire in 1876, and reconstructed in 1877, was much thicker in plan than the earlier, rectangular, Anglo-American prototypes.⁵¹ Galveston’s three-story City Hall and Market House (1888), like Brownsville’s, was a long, thin building constructed on a narrow city block extracted from a standard city block.⁵² Laredo’s City Market Hall (1885), designed by the Galveston architect W. H. Tyndall, an English immigrant, and built in Market Square, has a thick plan footprint, like the Houston market house. The Laredo Market House is the only one of these nineteenth-century buildings to survive.⁵³

⁴⁵ Helen Tangires, *Public Markets and Civic Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003, 41-42.

⁴⁶ Schmiechen and Carls, 3.

⁴⁷ Barrie Scardino, “A Legacy of City Halls for Houston,” *Houston Review* 4 (Fall 1982): 154-163.

⁴⁸ Willard B. Robinson, *The People’s Architecture: Texas Courthouses, Jails, and Municipal Buildings*, Austin: Texas State Historical Association and the Center for Studies in Texas History, University of Texas at Austin, 1983, 74-76.

⁴⁹ Anita Eisenhauer and Gigi Starnes, *Corpus Christi, Texas: A Picture Postcard History*, Corpus Christi: Anita’s Antiques, 1987, no 54.

⁵⁰ Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Precarious Preservation of a Heritage*, Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1996, 98-102.

⁵¹ Scardino, “A Legacy of City Halls for Houston,” 154-163.

⁵² Barrie Scardino and Drexel Turner, *The Architecture of Nicholas J. Clayton and His Contemporaries*, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000, 104-105.

⁵³ Jerry Thompson, *Laredo: A Pictorial History*, Norfolk: The Donning Co., 1992, 26.

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The City Market House of Brownsville is significant at a statewide level as the oldest surviving purpose-built city hall and market house structure in Texas. It is significant at a statewide level as the most ambitious city hall and market house erected in Texas prior to the Civil War and as a surviving example of the Anglo-American market house-city hall, mixed-use building type.

Method of Construction: Border Brick Style⁵⁴

The City Market House of Brownsville is architecturally significant as an example of the Border Brick Style, a transnational architectural vernacular that took form in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico, in the 1820s and 1830s and by the 1870s had migrated as far upriver as Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, two hundred miles northwest of Brownsville and Matamoros. The Border Brick Style initially represented a merger of Mexican vernacular building typology—one-room-deep houses lining the street fronts of a property to enclose an open-air internal patio—with methods of construction—brick as the principal material of construction, use of French doors instead of sash windows, and, in two-story buildings, second-floor balconies with wrought iron rails—transmitted to the lower Río Grande from Creole New Orleans. New Orleans was Matamoros's chief trading partner and it supplied not only foreign merchants but also building professionals to the Matamoros market.⁵⁵

The City Market House is significant as an architectural hybrid: an Anglo-American building type that employed methods of construction and architectural detailing associated with the building culture of Matamoros, which in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth-century was strongly affected by Creole building professionals who migrated there from New Orleans. The constructional method of brick pilasters rising from tall pedestals, articulated with molded bases and caps and supporting a deep entablature, also articulated with raised horizontal brick bands; the constructional system of brick arches; and incorporation of a wrought iron-railed balcony were typical of Matamoros. In the Market House these methods were combined with second-floor doors with sidelights, wood sash windows, a shingle-surfaced hipped roof, and an octagonal cupola, all characteristics of Anglo-American methods of construction. Although structural arches were widely used in Matamoros, they were much rarer in Brownsville buildings of the 1850s and 1860s. The Oblate Community House at E. 13th Street and E. Jefferson Street (1860), behind the Church of the Immaculate Conception, St. Joseph College (1867; demolished), the Convent of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament (1868; demolished), and the Post Hospital at Fort Brown (1869, now Gorgas Hall at Texas Southmost College) were other Brownsville examples of Border Brick style construction incorporating structural brick arches. Such existing brick buildings as La Joya (The Gem, 1849) at 400 E. 13th Street, the second building constructed in Brownsville, and the Miller-Treviño de los Santos Coy House (Stillman House Museum, 1851) at 1305 E. Washington Street are hybrids: Anglo-American building types “Creolized” with Matamoros methods of construction.⁵⁶ The City Market House is significant because its methods of construction were rooted in a process of cultural exchange tied to immigration flows around the Gulf of Mexico that resulted in production of a cosmopolitan architectural vernacular along the lower Río Grande, which persisted until the early twentieth century.

⁵⁴ Stephen Fox. “Architecture in Brownsville: The 19th Century.” In *Studies in Brownsville & Matamoros History*, edited by Milo Kearney, Anthony Knopp, and Antonio Zavaleta. Brownsville: The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College University Press, 1995. Stephen Fox. “Twin Cities of the Rio Grande: The Border Brick Style in Brownsville and Matamoros.” *Texas Highways*, January 1988.

⁵⁵ W. Eugene George, *Master Builder of the Lower Río Grande: Heinrich Portscheller*, College Station; Texas A&M University Press, 2016, 69-88; *The Buildings of Texas: Central, South, and Gulf Coast*, ed. Gerald Moorhead, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013, 267-319; *A Shared Experience: The History, Architecture, and Historic Designations of the Lower Río Grande Heritage Corridor*, ed. Mario L. Sánchez, Austin: Los Caminos del Río Heritage Project and the Texas Historical Commission, 1994.

⁵⁶ Gregory Free to author, 7 July 2018.

Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Twentieth-Century Alterations and Additions

The City Market House is additionally significant because its architecture registers changes associated with the periods in which it was altered and added to during the twentieth century.

The 1911-12 alterations and additions are significant because they reflect the unusual conservatism of architectural practices along the Texas-Tamaulipas border during a period of rapid cultural and economic change. Involved in the process of planning and constructing these additions was City Building Inspector Martin Hanson, Jr., whose professional career as an architect-builder was associated with the terminal period of the Border Brick style during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Brownsville's City Hall and Market House is unusual in a broader chronological context because the external architectural design of S. B. Elliott's alterations and additions was extrapolated from the Border Brick style details of the 1852 Market House rather than effacing those details in order to project a "modern" identity (either classical or California Mission style) for the expanded building. Elliott's interpretation of the Border Brick style of the original was more complicated than the original, which, typically for Border Brick style buildings, tended to involve repetition of a single bay design. Elliott's more compositionally complex bay divisions, and window divisions within bays, the proliferation of blind arch panels above ground-floor openings, and his use of ganged sash windows on the second floor distinguish the 1912 additions from the 1852 original. When the 1908-09 Fire Department Building was constructed next to the Market House, its architect-builder, A. Goldammer, made no effort to acknowledge the architectural detail or dimensions of the 1852/1868 market building. Goldammer's segmentally arched window heads, hipped roofs, and exposed rafter tails displayed his commitment to modern building practices rather than respect for what, to newcomers, may have seemed like the old fashioned building practices of Brownsville, Matamoros, and the border. The 1912 alterations and additions to the City Market House are significant because they exhibit a respect for established building practices that ran counter to the embrace of modern practices visible in the new commercial buildings constructed on the perimeter of Market Square in the 1909-1912 period.

The 1948-49 alterations and additions are significant because they negotiate architectural representation of regional and modern identities at the midpoint of the twentieth century, when proponents of modern architecture succeeded in constructing consensus on the illegitimacy of basing the design of new buildings on historical models but had yet to persuade conservative segments of the American architectural profession or the general public of this ethical judgment. Mayor Herbert Stokely, a native of Dubuque, Iowa, who moved to Brownsville in 1925, developed an ardent admiration for the history, and historical architecture, of Brownsville. (After leaving office in 1957, Stokely was instrumental in securing the support of Charles Stillman's Stillman and Rockefeller great-grandchildren to acquire and restore the Miller-Treviño de los Santos Coy House to become the Stillman House Museum, Brownsville's first historical house museum when it opened in 1961).⁵⁷ The Spanish Mission architectural theme of architect Ellis F. Albaugh's 1949 alterations and additions, leavened by Albaugh's efforts to streamline this historical model with modernistic details, materializes not only mid-century architectural debates about representation but an early twentieth-century architectural discourse that sought to supplant the old-fashioned, Mexican, Border Brick style with modern "Spanish" style architecture, the architecture of Anglo-American cultural hegemony in the Lower Río Grande Valley during the first half of the twentieth century. Although not externally altering the north and south elevations of the 1852 and 1912 components of the complex, Albaugh's 1949 alterations and additions imbued the City Hall and Market House with a Spanish Mission identity that visually subsumed the older, less assertive portions of the building. Albaugh's modernistic touches sought to update his architecturally contested use of Spanish imagery, a process visible elsewhere along the Texas-Tamaulipas border in the Spanish style remodeling of Laredo's City Market House (1951, Frank T. Drought) and in new residential construction in Matamoros built during its midcentury cotton boom (such as

⁵⁷ "Former Mayor H. L. Stokely Is Dead at 78," *Brownsville Herald*, 17 February 1969, 1; "Obituaries: Herbert L. Stokely," *Brownsville Herald*, 18 February 1969, 6.

Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

the neocolonial Mariano B. Marín House on Calle Sexta between Calle Iturbide and Calle Hidalgo and the neocolonial Huerta House on Calle Moderna). That consensus on the virtue of this ameliorative strategy was short lived is indicated by the extraordinary critical praise that Mayor Stokely's next big public works project, the Fort Brown Memorial Center, a civic community center built on the Parade Ground at Fort Brown in 1951-54, attained. An example of regionally inflected modern architecture that rigorously avoided historical quotation, the Fort Brown Memorial Center won a national design award from the American Institute of Architects the year it was completed.

The City Market House is significant because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Anglo-American market house building type, the masonry construction methods associated with the Border Brick style, and because it combines these historical attributes with materializations of succeeding periods in American architectural history reflecting subsequent cultural developments in Brownsville.

Summary of Preservation Efforts

The City Market House has been the object of concerted preservation efforts, beginning with its reconstruction in 1868 following damage incurred in the Storm of 1867, and including the alterations and additions of 1912 and 1949, which preserved existing parts of the Market House complex. In the twenty-first century, the Market House has undergone exterior conservation work under the direction of Brownsville architect Roberto Ruiz and the recovery of original interior surfaces under the direction of architectural conservator Lawrence V. Lof. The City Market House was designated a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark in 1965. It lies within the City of Brownsville's Downtown Overlay District.

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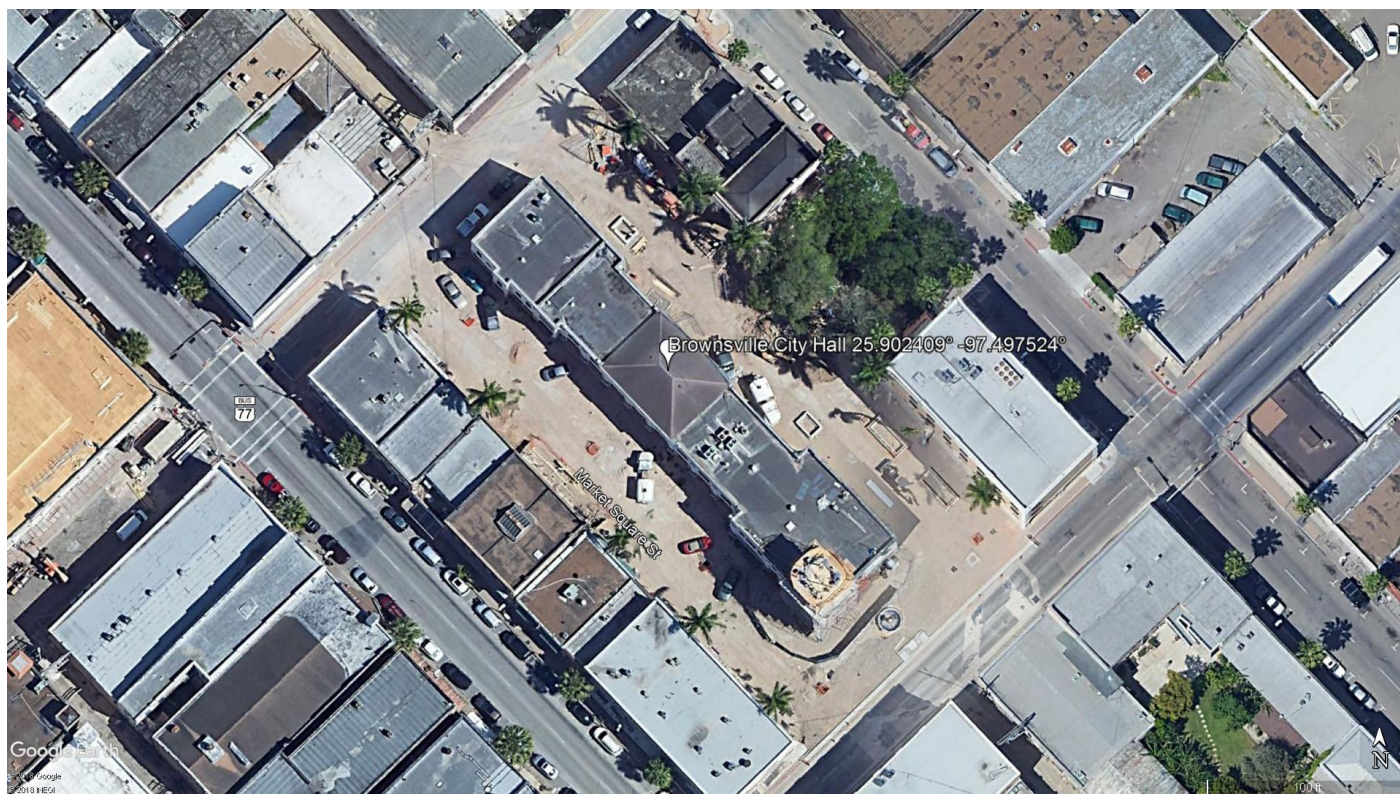
Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Maps

Cameron County, Texas



Google Earth, accessed August 9, 2019.



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Cameron Central Appraisal District Map, property boundary highlighted.



MAP
of the
CITY OF BROWNSVILLE

PUBLISHED BY
THE NEW YORK & BROWNSVILLE IMPROVEMENT CO. LTD.
BROWNSVILLE, TEX.

*East of the Boulevard made by George Lyons, Engineer
in or about 1850. West of the Boulevard made by Richmond, Engineer, May 6th 1909.*

Scale 1 inch = 1200 Feet.

EXPLANATION
All lots are 50 feet x 120 feet. Boulevard is 100 feet wide.
Streets parallel to Boulevard 40 feet. Streets at right angles to
Boulevard 60 feet. Alleys are 20 feet wide.
The dotted lines are the corner lines including Fuchs & Sandrich Addition.

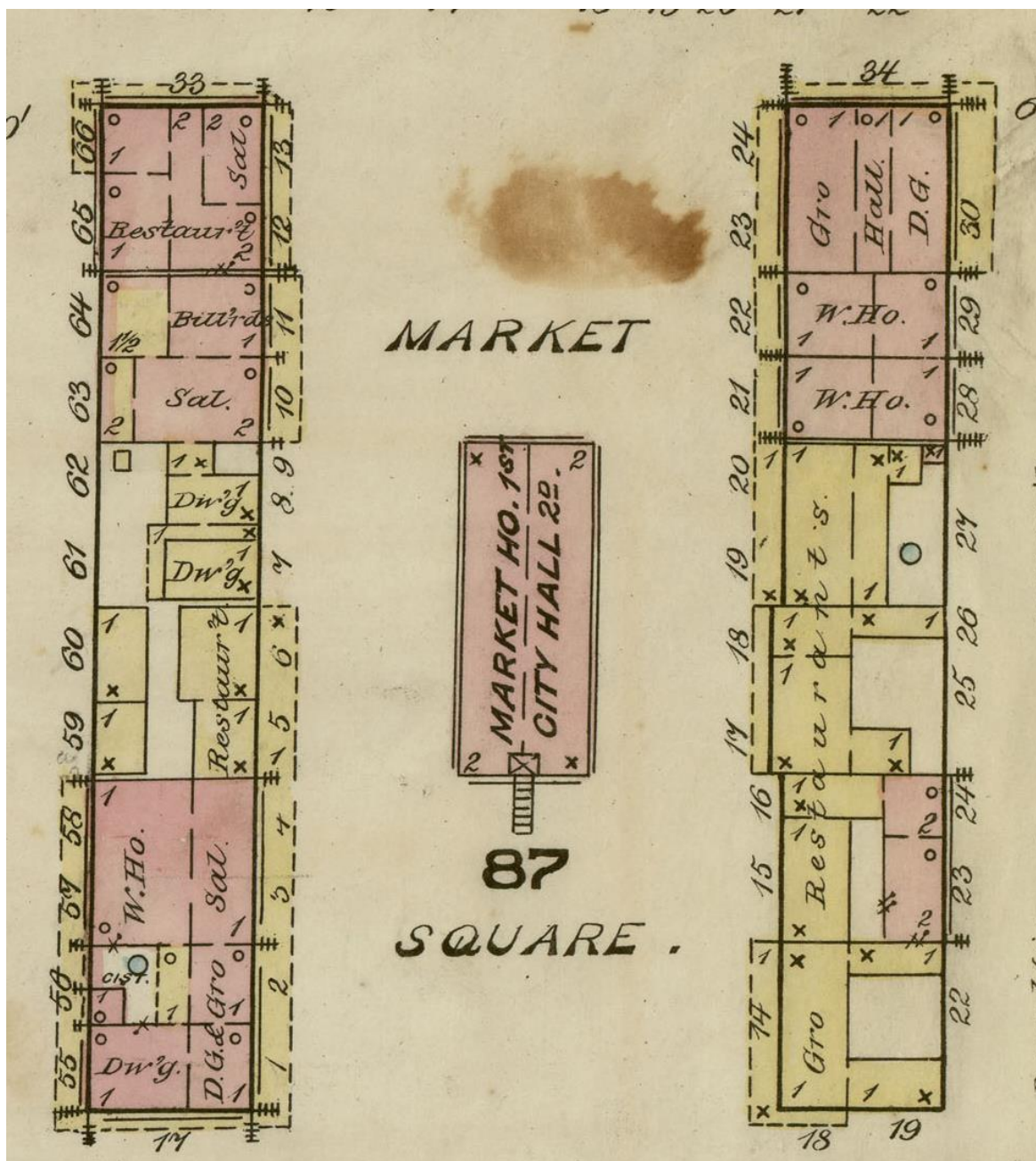
**SHELTON ABSTRACT CO.
BROWNSVILLE TEXAS.**

The map includes labels for "BLOCK No 5", "RESACA", "RINGGOLD", "Cemetery", "MADISON", "Public School House", "PORT BROADWAY", and "LAGOON". A red arrow points to a lot near the lagoon.

Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

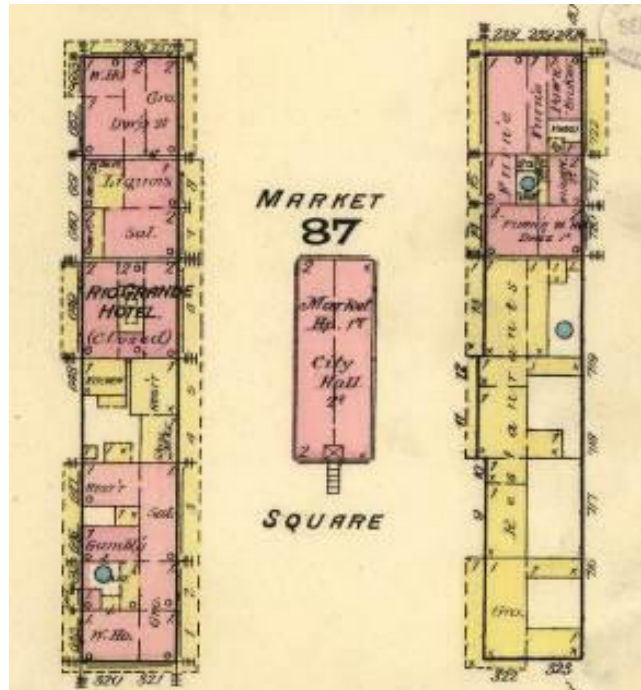
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

1877. The earliest Sanborn map features Market Square in the configuration that was in place after the Hurricane of 1867, with the second floor quite diminished from the original 1852 design. A hipped roof of moderate height had replaced the full Border Brick-style upper walls and parapet. Access by a precarious wooden stairway to the City Hall chambers remained up until the 1912 remodeling.



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

1885. No significant change.

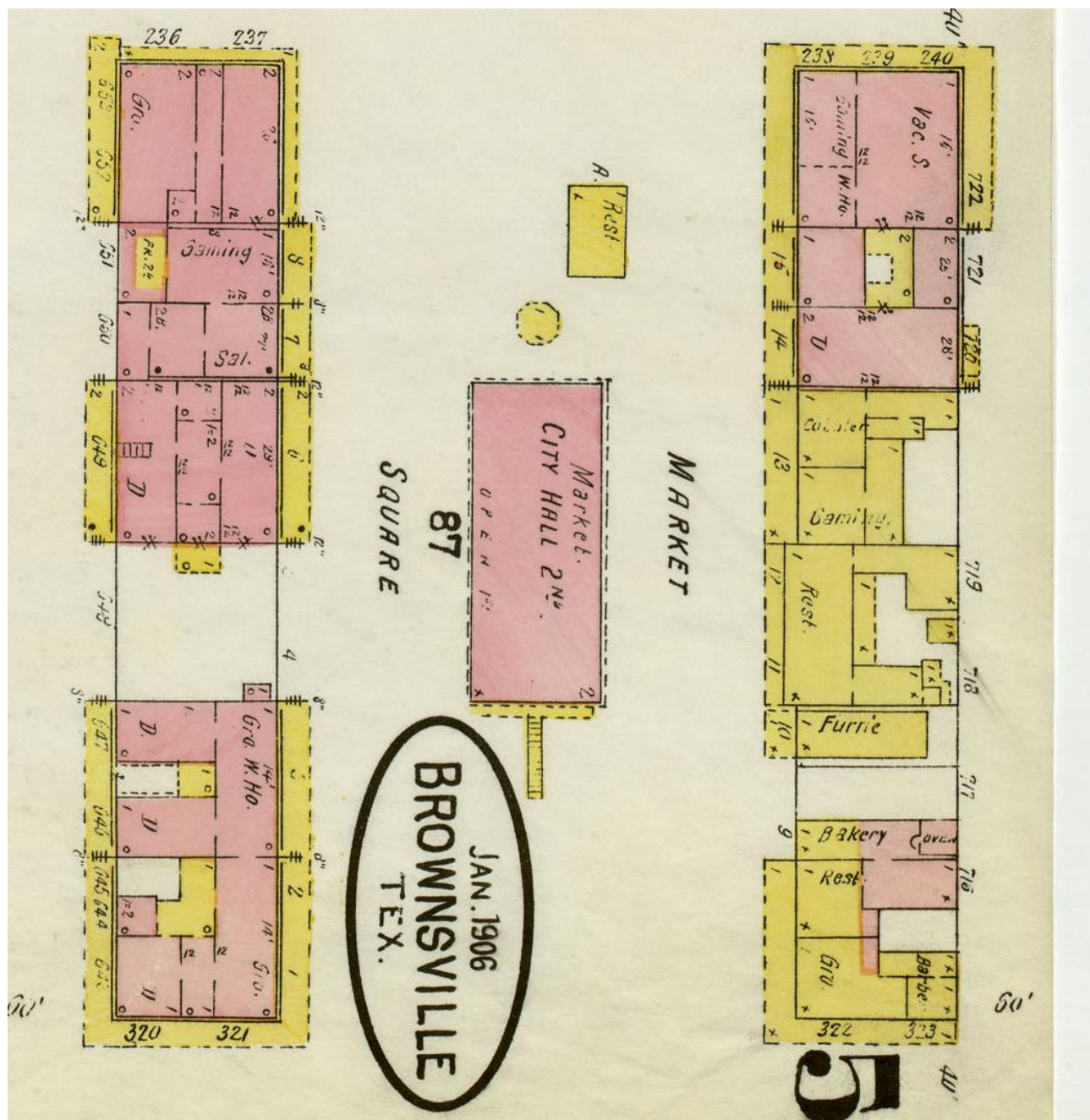


1894. No significant change.



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

1906. No significant change.



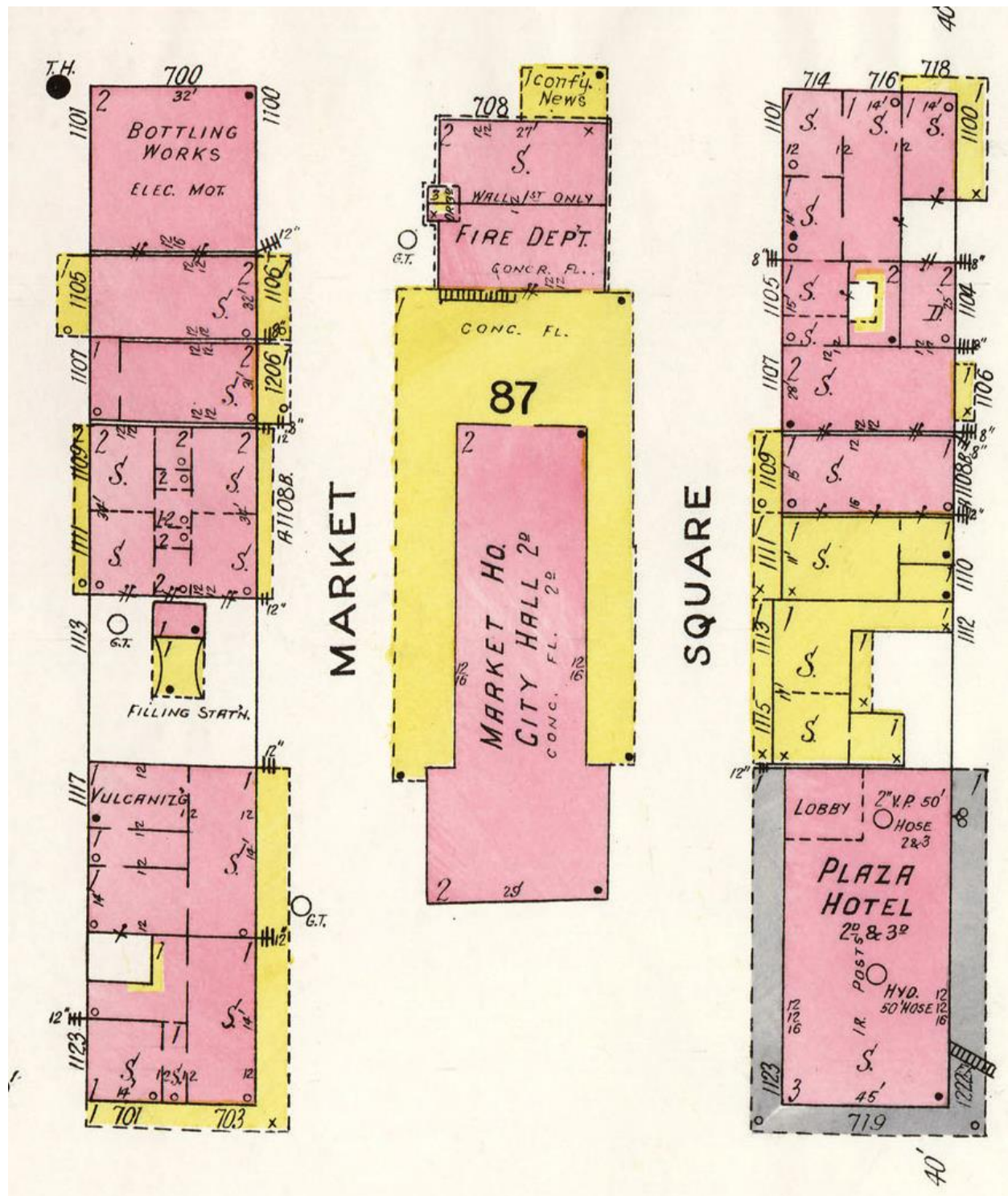
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Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Map 8: 1926

No significant change.

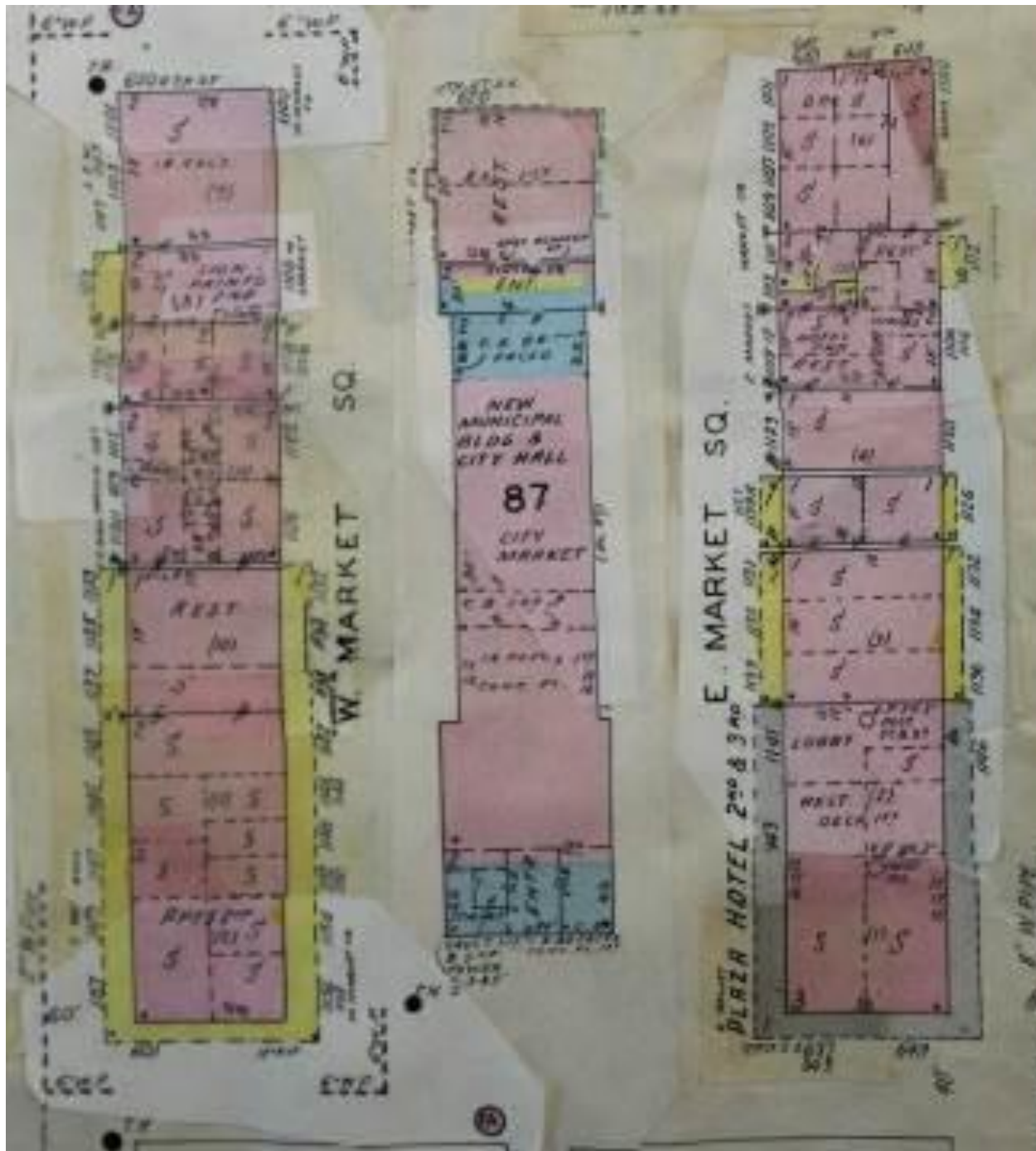


Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

1930-1957

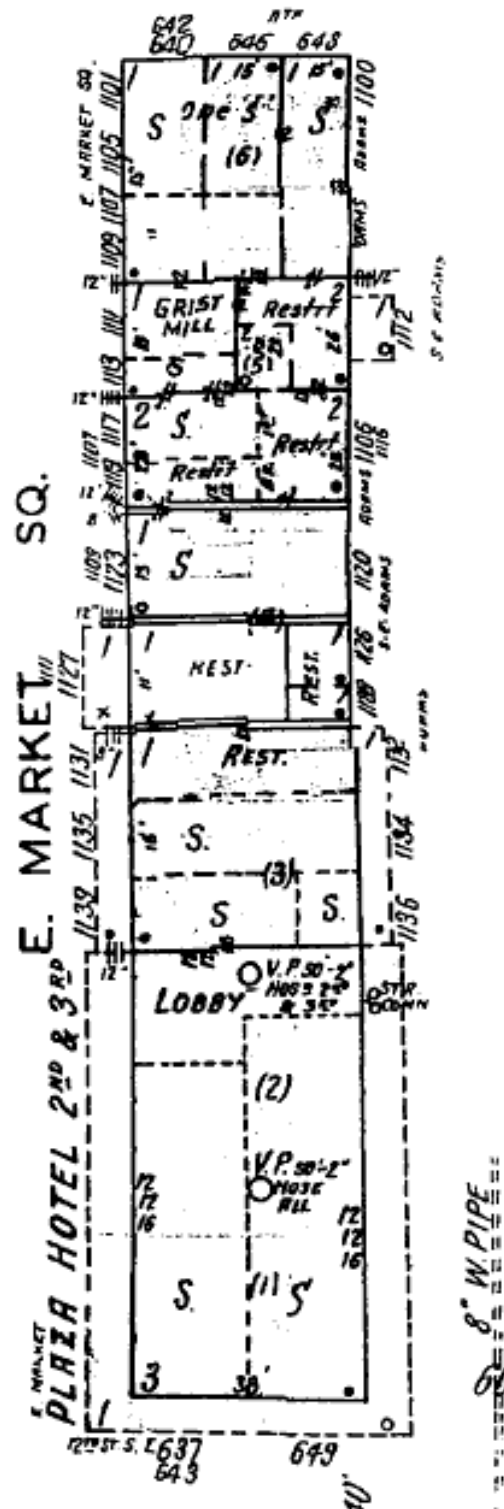
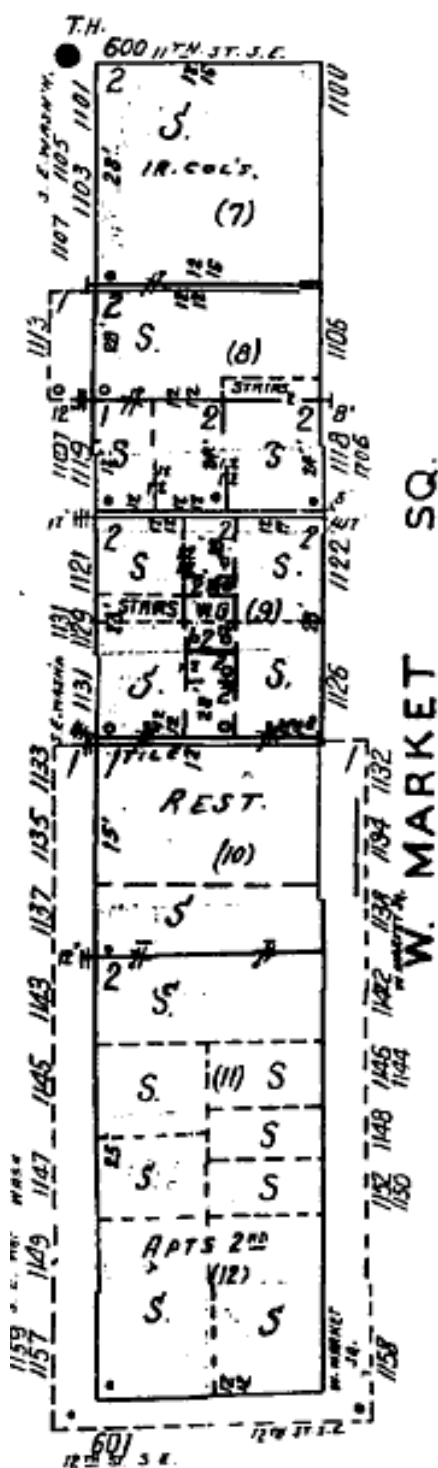
Same as current footprint

Note the enclosed stairwells (in blue), constructed in 1949.



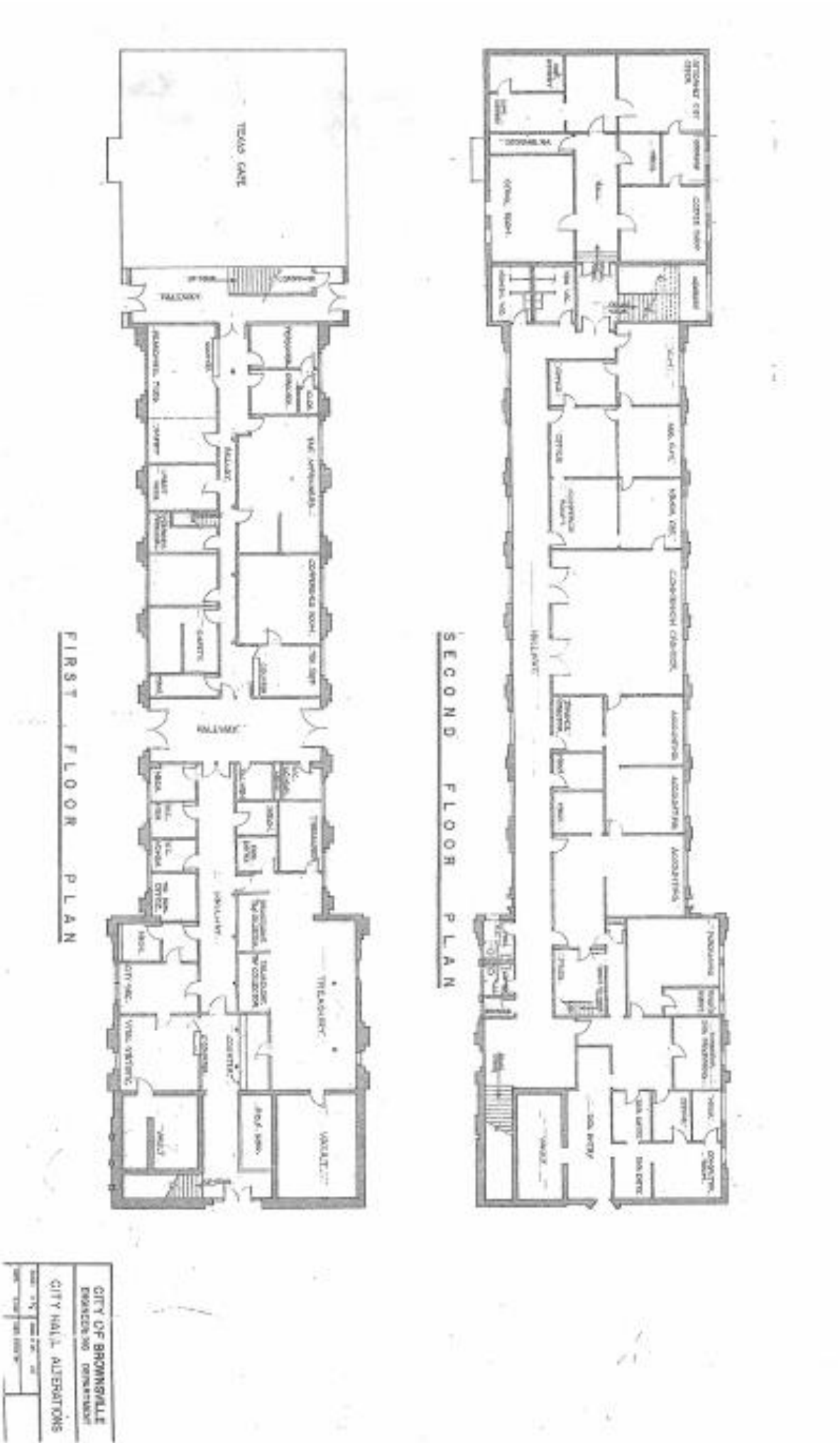
Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

1930-49.



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Floor Plan, 1980.



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Figures

Market Square at time of Civil War: Original two-floor structure of 1852.



Market Square 1907. Fire house had not been built



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Market Square after the 1912 additions, with 1908 fire house at NW corner



Fire house and Texas Lunch, with new 1917 America LaFrance fire truck

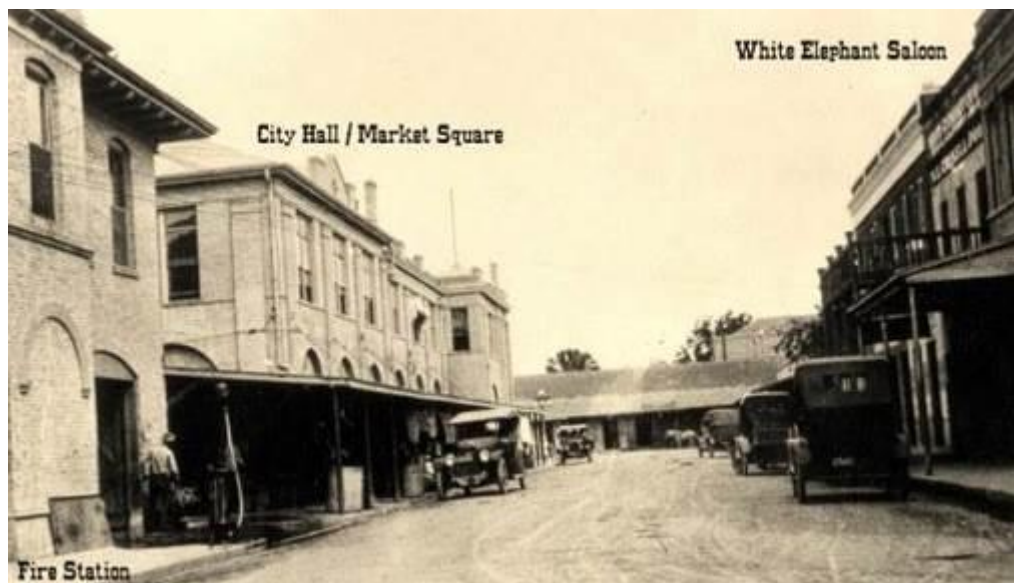


Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Texas Lunch, late 1910s. Lot to left was not developed until approx. 1922.



1927 view facing southeast, just prior to building Manautou store at 12th Street



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Damage from 1933 hurricane. The fallen bell tower from fire house is on the right.



City Hall Market Square just prior to 1949 remodel.



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

1985 Adaptive re-use as municipal transit hub



2014, prior to creation of pedestrian mall.



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Selective interior demolition of 2018. A rare opportunity to observe the successive stages of structural composition



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

19th Century photo of Brownsville's market plaza



20th Century photo of Matamoros Market



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Adolfo Marks stall at Market (1930s exterior)



Arthur Rothstein photo, (1942), Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Arthur Rothstein photo, (1942), Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection

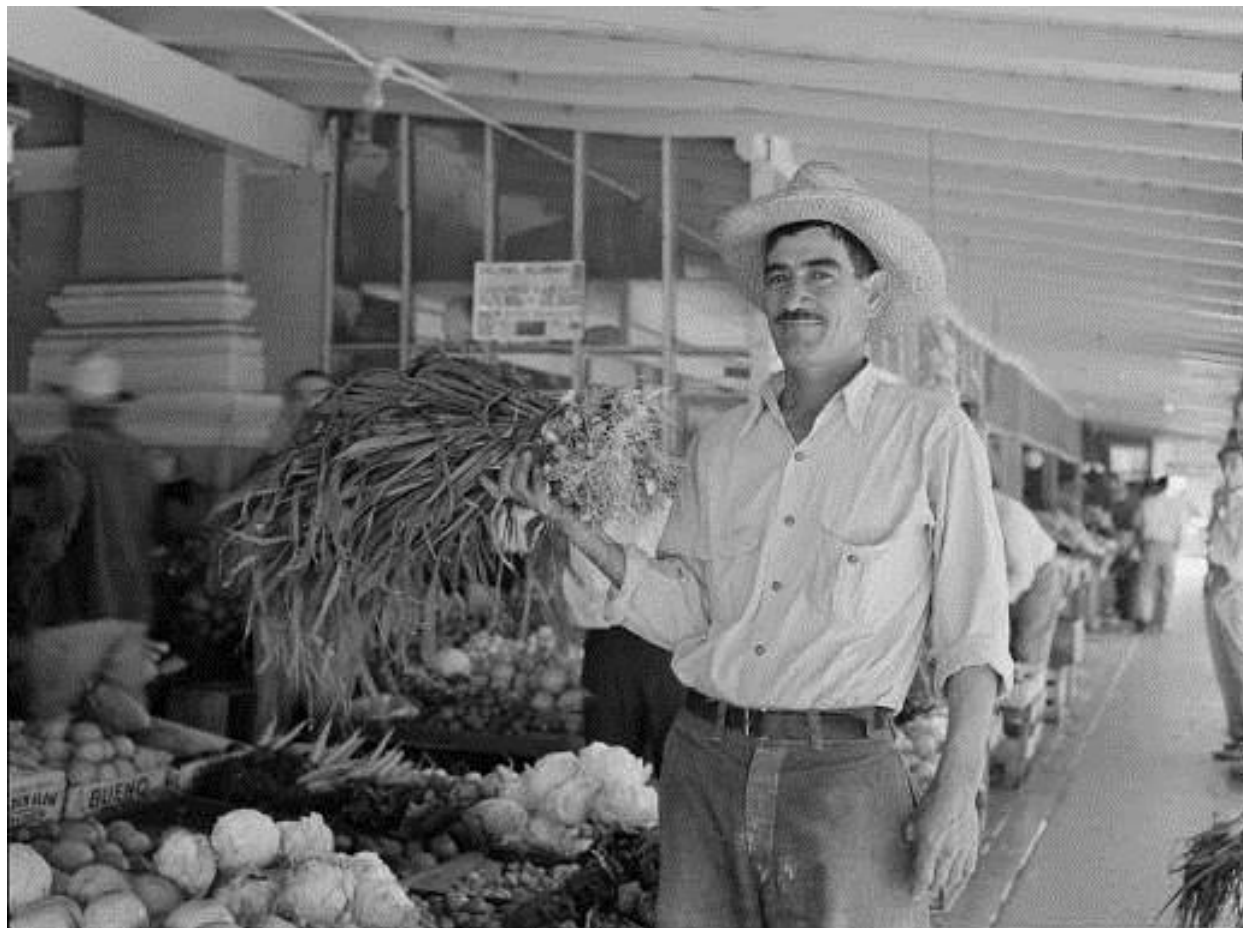


Arthur Rothstein photo, (1942), Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Arthur Rothstein photo, (1942), Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Current Photos

Photo 1: Southeast Elevation; Camera facing north



Photo 2: Southeast Elevation; Camera facing west



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo 3: West Elevation; Camera facing east southeast



Photo 4: Northwest Elevation; Camera facing south



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo 5: Entry vestibule at southeast end; Camera facing west



Photo 6: Ceramic tile mosaic entry vestibule (Gift from Mayor Herbert Stokely 1949; Camera facing east).



Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo 7: Central Hallway at north end; Camera facing northeast.



Photo 8: Stairway at north end; Camera facing northeast.

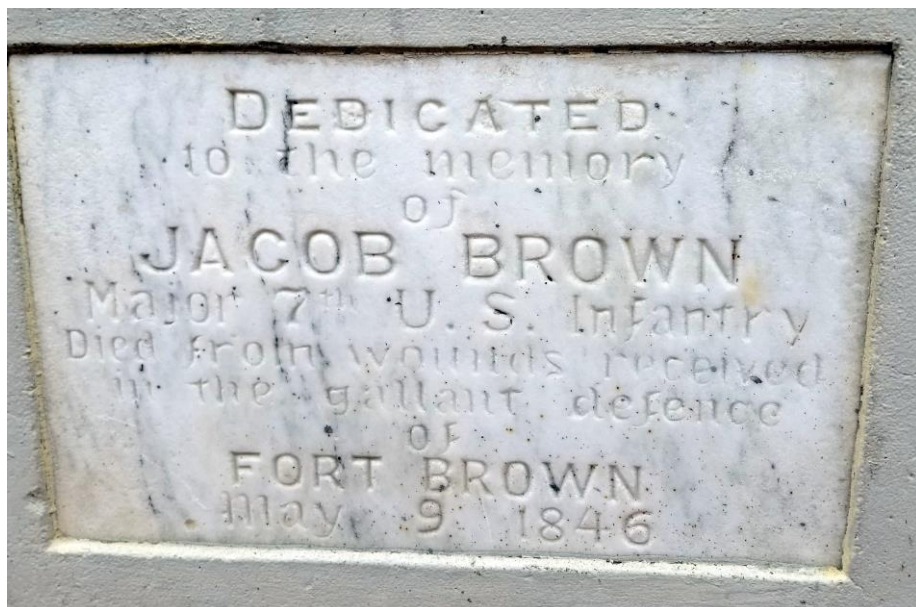


Brownsville City Hall and Market House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo 9: Maj. Jacob Brown Memorial Fountain; Camera facing north northwest



Photo 10: Marble plaque on memorial fountain, Dedicated 1912; Camera facing north northwest



- end -