

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Propertyhistoric name Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District

other names/site number _____

2. LocationRoughly bounded by the alley north of Milam St., Rusk St.,street & number Elm St., and Richmond St. n/a not for publicationcity, town Wharton n/a vicinitystate Texas code TX county Wharton code 481 zip code 77488**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☒ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>46</u>	<u>31</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> objects
<u>48</u>	<u>33</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/ANumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official *Charles J. Pinnell*Date 23 Sept. 1991State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:) _____

*Antoinette Phee*November 5, 1991

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: Business

Government: Office

Domestic: Single dwelling

Domestic: Hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: Business

Government: Office

Domestic: Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and early 20th Century

American Movements

Moderne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

Stucco

roof Asphalt

other Concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District is in the City of Wharton, Wharton County, on the east bank of the Colorado River in southeast Texas, 55 miles southwest of downtown Houston. The Historic District comprises approximately 21 acres, surrounding the County Courthouse in the town's center (see 7/5). The district includes all the blocks fronting the square, one block east, one block south and two blocks west of the square where commercial development extends along Milam Street toward the Southern Pacific railroad station, 2/5 mile west of the square. It consists primarily of 1-, 2- and 3-story brick buildings used for commercial or governmental purposes, although several brick and wooden frame houses are found within the district boundaries. The character of the district is cast by the many early-20th-century eclectic commercial buildings that feature Romanesque and Italianate details, often distinguished by decorative brick parapets. The governmental buildings, most of which were either constructed or remodeled in the 1930s, give a strong Art Deco architectural presence to the square as well. The district includes 48 Contributing properties and 33 Noncontributing properties. Most of the Contributing properties were built between 1889-1935, although the period of significance extends to 1941. Noncontributing properties include those constructed after 1941, or properties that have major alterations or additions that have significantly altered their architectural integrity.

Wharton is the county seat of Wharton County, and is approximately 50 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. Wharton County is on the coastal prairie of southeast Texas. The level to gently rolling plain rises from an elevation of 50 to 200 feet, and offers a temperate climate with moderate rainfall. The San Bernard River forms the northeast boundary of the county, and the Colorado River bisects the county into southwestern and northeastern halves (see 7/6). Loam, sand, coastal clays and alluvial soils support a widespread ranching and agricultural industry that includes cattle and horses; rice, corn and cotton. Deciduous trees along the various creeks and rivers break an otherwise continuous prairie (Webb, pp. 890-891). Wharton County comprises an area of 1,086 square miles with an estimated (1987) population of 39,595 (Kingston, pp. 261-262).

The Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District covers most of the City of Wharton's historic downtown commercial area (see 7/7). The town has an area of approximately 2,500 acres and an estimated (1987) population of 8,892 (Kingston, p. 302). The Historic District is made up of the central courthouse square and the associated business district that extends west two blocks on Milam Street. Concentrated lot subdivision occurs on the north, west and east sides of the square and on Milam Street.

Loop 183 (Old U.S. 59), Richmond Road, passes the courthouse square two blocks to the west, and connects Wharton with Houston, 55 miles to the northeast, and El Campo, 10 miles to the southwest. A newer U.S. Highway 59 bypass parallels Richmond Road 1 1/4 miles to the west. All of the streets in

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the district are arranged in a grid pattern running approximately in the four cardinal directions. The district is bounded on the north by the alley behind Milam Street, on the east by Rusk Street, on the south by Elm Street, and on the west by Richmond Street. The principal streets in the district are paved with concrete and have high curbs (Photo 1). The terrain is generally flat, with gentle southward slope toward the Colorado River bank, at the southern edge of the downtown area. Surrounding the courthouse is a grassy area with a number of mature pecan trees; otherwise, the district is largely devoid of vegetation.

The Wharton County Courthouse is set within a single-block square one block north of the Colorado River. The raised, rectangular, cream colored 3-story Art Deco courthouse (1889/1934, Site No. 408, Photo 2) dominates the square. The commercial buildings in the Historic District generally show an eclectic combination of influences, although most can be categorized as one of three kinds: the late-Victorian commercial type, the early-20th-century commercial type and the Art Deco style. Most of the commercial buildings are rectangular in plan with the narrow side facing the street. Virtually all have load-bearing masonry walls and flat roofs behind a parapet; brick is the predominant building material.

The late-Victorian commercial buildings in Wharton were constructed from the 1880s to the 1910s. Classical Revival, Italianate or Romanesque Revival details are common on these buildings. The facades have a vertical orientation with large decorative brickwork parapets common to Wharton (See Site No.'s 690, 691, 692: Photo 3). Round- or segmental-arch window openings, with hood moldings are common and the use of pilasters on the facades accentuate the verticality. Original storefronts may use cast iron thresholds and columns. The storefronts are often heightened by transoms and most have flat awnings.

The 2-story building at 112-114 S. Houston (1903, Site No. 690) is a good example of this type, with an ornate upper facade of four Romanesque arched windows, framed within a larger arch and a stepped parapet of decorative brickwork (Photo 3). The raised, center parapet is repeated throughout downtown Wharton and can be seen in the 1-story building at 138 S. Houston Street (1905, Site No. 684, Photo 4). The Security Bank and Trust Company Building at 101 E. Milam (1910, Site No. 361, Photo 5) is also a good example of the late-Victorian type with its subtle use of Classical Revival ornamentation, such as the reconstructed (1982) pedimented enframing of the south and west doors (McAlester, p. 181).

The Wharton County Courthouse (1889/1934, Site No. 408, Photo 2) is a raised, rectangular 3-story Art Deco building surrounded by a raised 1-story addition in a similar style. The stark, white stucco contrasts with the buff brick and tan stucco found on the buildings around the square. Mature pecan trees line the perimeter of the square, and replicas of early-1930s electric street lamps line the sidewalk around the courthouse lawn. A white, octagonal gazebo (c. 1982, Site No. 408A) is found at the southeast corner of the courthouse lawn. The Sheriff H.B. Dickson (d. 1889: Williams, p. 37) memorial (1889, Site No. 408B) is on the northeast corner of the lawn, and war memorials are found on the other two corners.

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The second principal architectural category is the early- 20th-century commercial type. Generally, the facade detailing on these buildings is simpler than those built in the Victorian era, and is typically based on basic geometrical designs. Brick is still the most common building material but buff brick increasingly replaces red. The best example of this period is the Harrison Building at 200 W. Milam (1913, Site No. 352, Photo 6), which shows a strong Prairie School influence, with wide overhanging eaves and facade details that emphasize horizontal lines (McAlester, pp. 438-441).

The most striking visual impression in the district is created by the juxtaposition of the late-Victorian and early-20th- century commercial types with the Art Deco style reflected in Wharton's Depression era public buildings. The Wharton County Jail (1938, Site No. 461, Photos 7,8) is an excellent example of this style, with a central bay of smooth cast stone that accentuates the verticality, curved porch walls and zigzags on the front door transom light. The municipal building (1931, Site No. 460, Photos 8,9) is a more subtle example of this style, with a smooth stuccoed facade, zigzag brick enframing of the front entrance, and decorative courses of tile that accentuate the vertical lines of the building. The appearance of the 1931 design has been somewhat altered by the replacement of the original windows.

Few houses are found inside the district boundaries, and the closest residential areas lie to the north and to the east of the Historic Commercial District. But several brick and frame residences, such as the Vineyard House (1925, Site No. 456, Photo 10), fall within the district boundaries. The Vineyard House is representative of the Prairie School style, with its horizontal lines, low-pitched hipped roofs, wide overhanging eaves, brick piers and window detailing; the north (front) elevation features an Arts & Crafts style 1-bay gabled porch with exposed beams.

Several years ago U.S. Highway 59 bypassed the City of Wharton about 1 1/2 miles to the west of the courthouse, and recent development has extended the city limits to embrace that thoroughfare. Meanwhile the Wharton County Courthouse Commercial Historic District has remained remarkably intact, despite some recent construction, such as the 1-story stuccoed Security Bank and Trust motor bank (1989, Site No. 364A, Photo 11), and the large, 2-story Wharton Bank and Trust building (c. 1950/1982, Site No. 1034). Many of the historic commercial buildings have been altered, with the majority of storefronts having been covered or rebuilt (See Site No's. 350, 349, Photo 12). In most cases, however, the upper facades remain intact. Sensitive restoration of several of the historic buildings currently classified as Noncontributing would enhance the exceptional example that the Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District provides as a symbol of early 20th-century vernacular architecture.

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CONTRIBUTING/NON-CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES LIST

Site No.	Address	Date	Contrib./NonContrib.
461	100 E. Burleson	1938	Contributing
727A	attached to Site 727, but facing E. Burleson Street		Noncontributing
1036	110 E. Burleson	unknown	Noncontributing
1037	116 E. Burleson	unknown	Noncontributing
460	101 W. Burleson	1931	Contributing
459	105 W. Burleson	c. 1920	Noncontributing
1035	115 W. Burleson	unknown	Noncontributing
458	117 W. Burleson	c. 1930	Noncontributing
1034	143 W. Burleson	c.1950/1982	Noncontributing
1032	222 W. Burleson	unknown	Noncontributing
439	228 W. Burleson	c. 1894	Contributing
457	229 W. Burleson	c. 1948	Noncontributing
456	239 W. Burleson	c. 1925	Contributing
408	Courthouse Sq.	1889/1934	Contributing
408A	Courthouse Sq. (Gazebo)	c.1982	Noncontributing
408B	Courthouse Sq. (H.B. Dickson Memorial)	1889	Contributing
408C	Courthouse Sq. (Civil War Memorial)	unknown	Contributing
408D	Courthouse Sq. (Veterans Memorial)	unknown	Noncontributing
733	101 S. Fulton	unknown	Noncontributing
732	115-117 S. Fulton	1919	Contributing
731	119 S. Fulton	1913	Contributing
730	125 S. Fulton	1909	Contributing
729	129 S. Fulton	1909	Contributing
728	131 S. Fulton	1909	Contributing
727	137 S. Fulton	c. 1910	Contributing
460A	220 S. Fulton: attached to Site 460, but facing S. Fulton Street		/1990 Noncontributing
726	221-231 S. Fulton	unknown	Contributing
693	100 S. Houston	c. 1905	Contributing
692	104-106 S. Houston	c. 1905	Contributing
691	110 S. Houston	c. 1905	Noncontributing
690	112-114 S. Houston	1903	Contributing
689	116 S. Houston	c. 1935	Contributing
688	118 S. Houston	c. 1940	Contributing
687	124-126 S. Houston	c. 1905	Noncontributing
686	128 S. Houston	c. 1905	Contributing
685	134 S. Houston	c. 1915	Contributing
684	138 S. Houston	c. 1905	Contributing
683	140-142 S. Houston	c. 1905	Contributing
1033	148 S. Houston	1964	Noncontributing
498	113 E. Elm Street	c. 1935	Noncontributing
361	101 E. Milam	c.1910 & 1935	Contributing
362	107 E. Milam	c. 1935	Noncontributing
363	109 E. Milam	unknown	Noncontributing

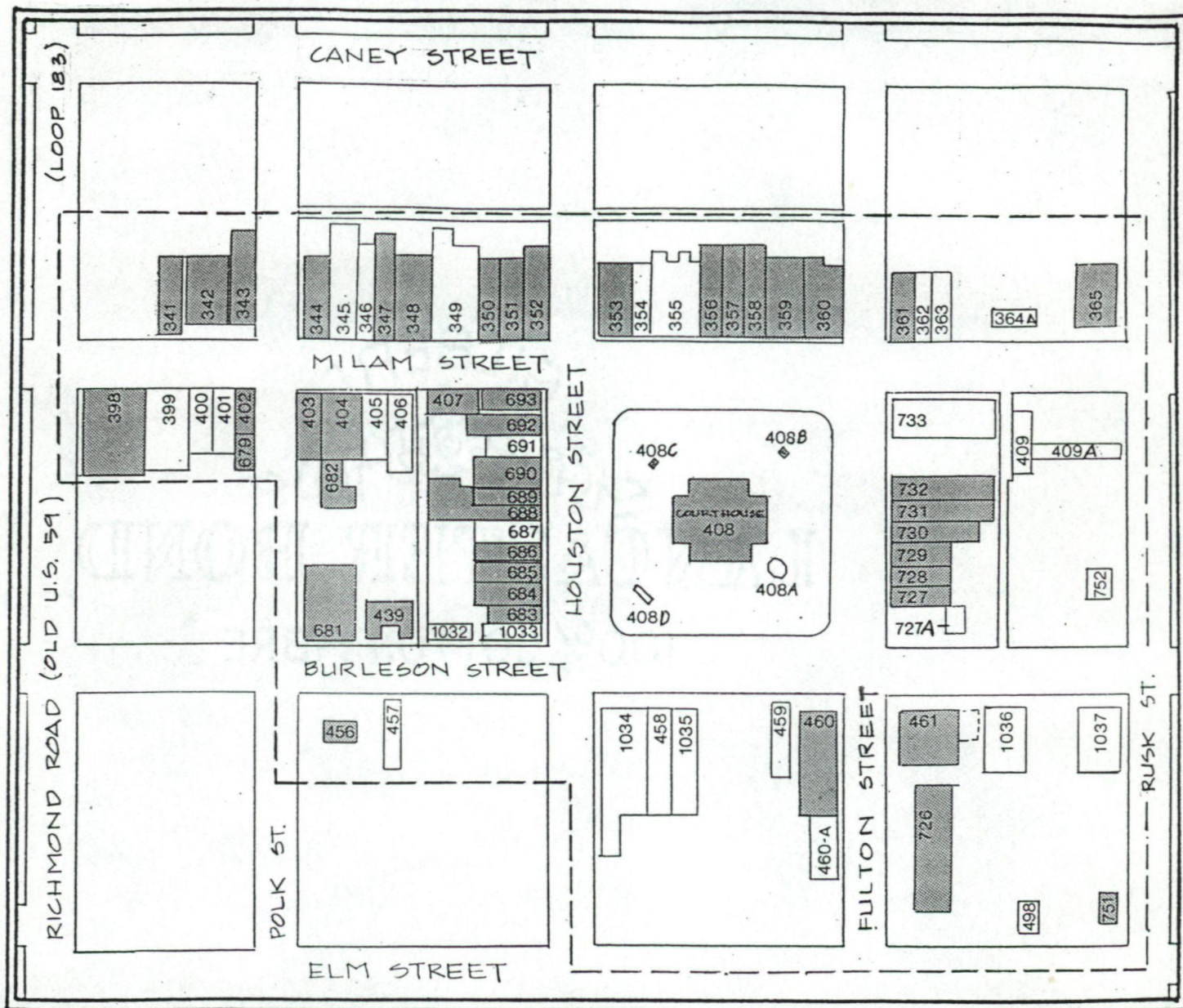
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Site No.	Address	Date	Contrib./NonContrib.
364A	between Sites 363 & 365, on north side of E. Milam St.	1989	Noncontributing
409	118 E. Milam	c. 1935	Noncontributing
409A	120 E. Milam	unknown	Noncontributing
365	141 E. Milam	1935	Contributing
360	102-106 W. Milam	c. 1900	Contributing
359	112 W. Milam	unknown	Contributing
358	118 W. Milam	c. 1900	Contributing
357	118 W. Milam	unknown	Contributing
356	126 W. Milam	c. 1900	Contributing
355	130-136 W. Milam	unknown	Noncontributing
354	140 W. Milam	unknown	Noncontributing
353	142 W. Milam	c. 1910	Contributing
352	200 W. Milam	1913	Contributing
351	204-206 W. Milam	c. 1915	Contributing
350	210-212 W. Milam	c. 1915	Contributing
407	211-223 W. Milam	c. 1915	Contributing
349	222 W. Milam	unknown	Noncontributing
348	224 W. Milam	c. 1920	Contributing
347	228 W. Milam	c. 1920	Contributing
406	229 W. Milam	unknown	Noncontributing
346	232 W. Milam	1947	Noncontributing
405	235 W. Milam	c. 1900	Noncontributing
345	238 W. Milam	c. 1940	Noncontributing
404	241-243 W. Milam	unknown	Contributing
344	246 W. Milam	1919	Contributing
403	247 W. Milam	c. 1915	Contributing
343	300 W. Milam	c. 1925	Contributing
402	301A W. Milam	c. 1890	Contributing
401	301B blk W. Milam	c. 1900	Noncontributing
400	301C blk W. Milam	unknown	Noncontributing
399	301D W. Milam	Unknown	Noncontributing
342	308 W. Milam	1925	Contributing
341	314 W. Milam	c. 1920	Contributing
398	323-333 W. Milam	c. 1930	Contributing
679	104-108 S. Polk	c. 1900	Contributing
682	111 S. Polk	c. 1935	Contributing
681	133-143 S. Polk	c. 1940	Contributing
752	112 S. Rusk	c. 1910	Noncontributing
751	220 S. Rusk	c. 1920	Contributing

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WHARTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE HISTORIC COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

- CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES
- NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY

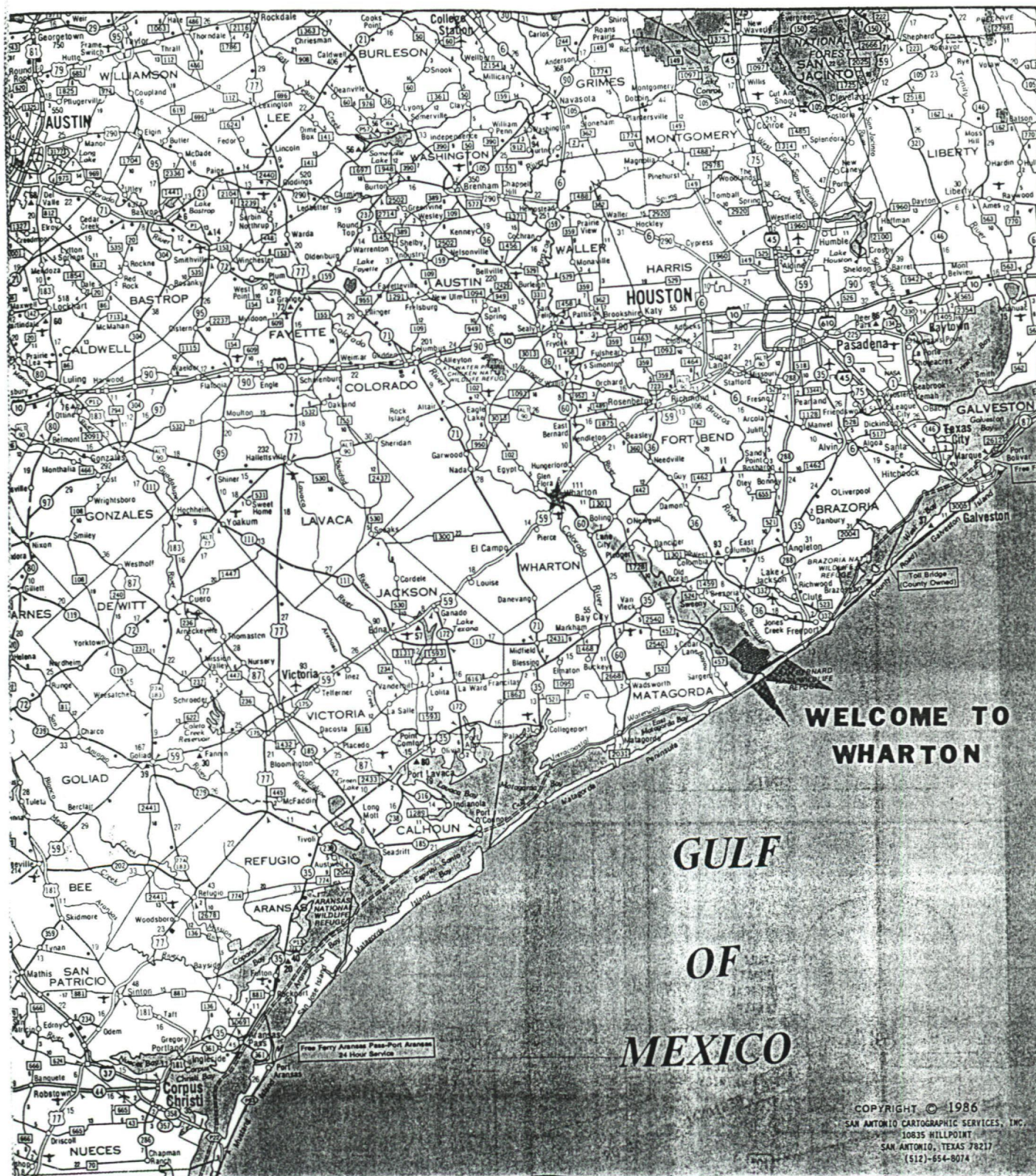
408 SITE NUMBER



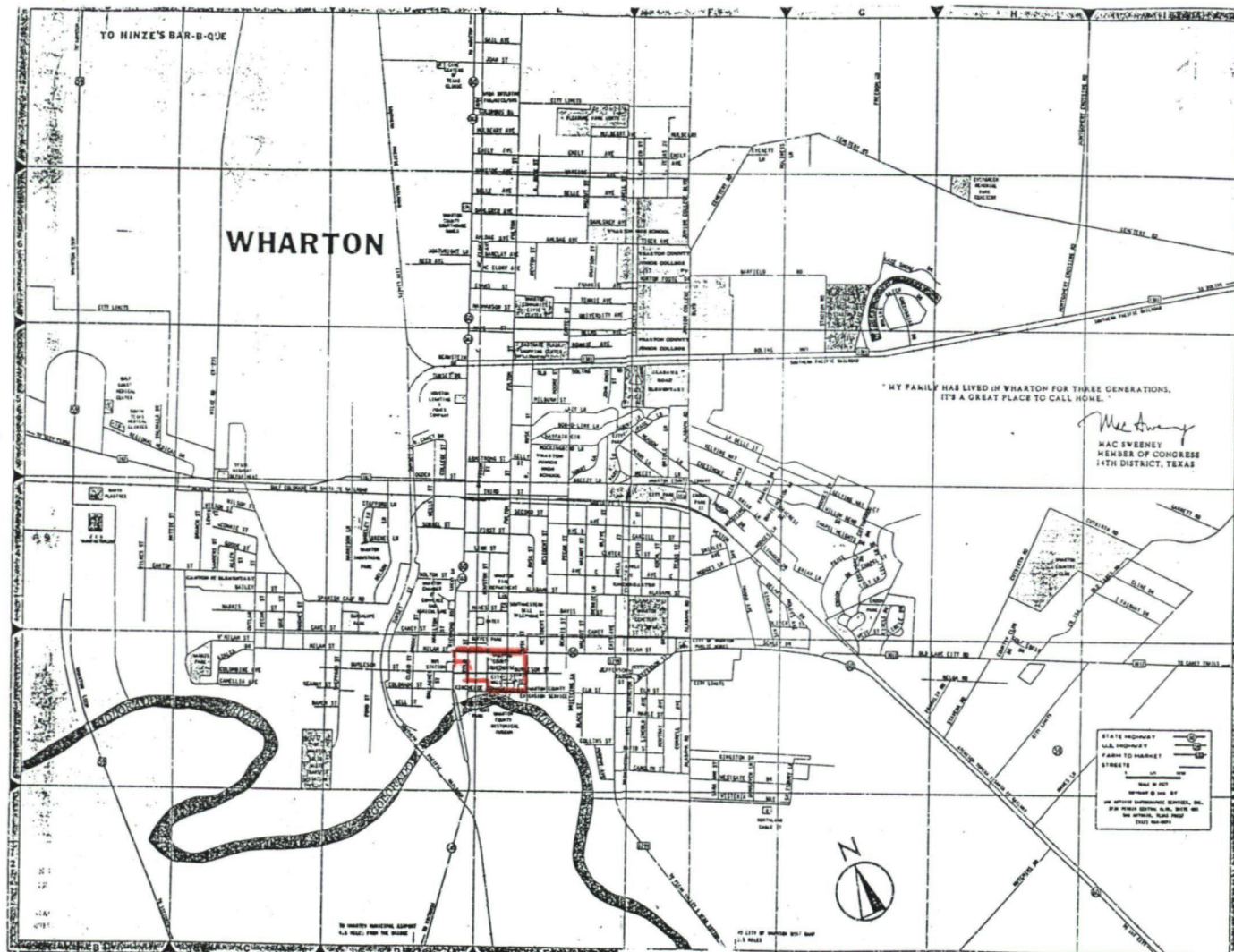
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Representative Properties in the Wharton County Courthouse Commercial Historic District:

Wharton County Jail, 1938, 100 E. Burleson, Site No. 461, Photos 7,8.

This 3-story steel frame building has a brick exterior with modest Art Deco detailing. The central section of the front (north) elevation has cast stone that contrasts the brick veneer, drawing attention to the entrance with its strong vertical emphasis. Cast stone window sills and steel bars define the windows. Wharton County purchased this property in 1937 for \$4,500.00, and commissioned architect Wyatt C. Hedrick to design the building, and the firm of Hedrick and Lindsey as builders.

Watts Hotel, c. 1894, 228 W. Burleson, Site No. 439, Photo 30.

The Watts Hotel is a 2-story multi-unit frame building with weatherboard siding and a U-plan. Gabled roofs with asphalt shingles cover the original hotel, while the 2-story addition on the northeast is capped by a pyramidal hipped roof. A hipped roof covers the 1-story addition.

The southern, open-end of the U-plan fronts the street. A 2-tiered, 3-bay porch with box columns is set within the U between the projecting wings. The shed-roofed upper tier is screen-enclosed and has a turned-wood balustrade. The first floor of the south (front) elevation is entered by means of four single-door openings off the porch, two on the south face and one each on the inner east and west walls. The symmetrically placed windows on the south elevation are a wood-sash double-hung type with a 1/1 light configuration.

The 2-story northeast addition projects beyond the original east wall. The windows on the other elevations are also a wood-sash double-hung type with either a 1/1 or 2/2 light pattern. The addition, even with its similar fenestration and identical siding, diverges from the straight-forward simplicity of the original building because of its awkward attachment.

Only one outbuilding, a metal-clad frame shed, is on the property and is sited on the north section. It is a corrugated sheet-metal clad frame shed. Two broad doors span the east elevation and the building is covered by a corrugated sheet metal roof. The shed is of poor construction and is classified as a Noncontributing element.

The Watts Hotel at 228 W. Burleson is significant because it is a good example of a vernacular wood-frame commercial building in Wharton and is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C. Although an exact date of construction is not known, the structure was on the site as early as 1894, according to Sanborn fire insurance maps. It has served as a hotel, a boarding house and the local post office. The oldest known historic name for the structure is the Watts Hotel in honor of Amanda Watts who acquired the property in 1904.

Born in 1846 in Alabama, Amanda Watts came to Texas in 1879 with her second husband, C.J. Watts. Apparently, she moved to Wharton in 1889 with her four small children after her husband died and opened a private school which

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soon became the first public institution of learning in Wharton. She taught 22 students but also served as assistant postmaster to supplement her income. Later, she gave up the school and became postmistress (Williams 1964:187). It is likely she lived or worked in this building as early as 1894 because Sanborn maps indicate that the structure was Wharton's post office at that time.

When she purchased the building in 1904 (Deed Records 13:91), Watts established a boarding house known as The Watts House which she advertised as a place "where the traveler feels at home. The best \$1.00 house in Texas" (Williams 1964:174). Sanborn maps of 1906 reveal that it was known as the Watts Hotel. In 1907 Amanda Watts sold the building to J.L. Abernathy for \$1,000 (Deed Records 19:42) who continued to maintain the rooming house with his daughter. By 1929 (and possibly earlier), the Watts Hotel was renamed the Riverside Hotel but deed records are sketchy as to the exact date or purpose of the change. It was still known as the Riverside Hotel as late as 1959 (Wharton County Library vertical files).

The Watts Hotel is one of the few extant examples of a late-19th-century frame commercial building in Wharton and is representative of the type of commercial architecture that once characterized the city's downtown. Besides being one of the few survivors of its type, it is also one of the most intact historic commercial buildings in Wharton and has had few nonhistoric changes that detract from its integrity. The building lacks ornate woodwork and detailing typically seen on contemporaneous Victorian-era structures; nevertheless, it is an outstanding local illustration of vernacular commercial architecture.

Vineyard House, 1925, 239 W. Burleson, Site No. 456, Photo 10.

The Vineyard House is a 2-story, brick-veneered dwelling with physical attributes associated with two major stylistic developments of the early 20th-century. While overall design is derived from the Prairie School with its horizontal lines, low-pitched hipped roofs, wide overhanging eaves, brick piers and window detailing, the north (front) elevation features a Arts & Crafts style 1-bay gabled porch with exposed beams. One-story projections on the east and west elevations further emphasize the horizontal lines of the house. The east extension is a sun porch supported by brick piers and enclosed by casement windows with wood sashes and a wood door with side lights, all with multiple lights. A brick pier with a porte cochere projects from the west elevation and has the unusual feature of 15-light fixed windows on the outer wall. Extending from the house's intersecting hipped roofs are two interior brick chimneys; a third, an exterior brick chimney, is on the east wall.

The wide Arts & Crafts-style porch is the focal point of the front elevation. The single-bay porch is supported by brick piers and has two 8-light casement windows centered in the gable end. The front elevation has a single-door primary entrance within the porch and a secondary single-door entrance that opens from the sun porch. The majority of windows on the north elevation are double-hung with wood sashes and a 12/1 light pattern. Two 12-light casement windows are on the second floor above the porch.

A two-tiered enclosed porch extends across the south elevation and has 16-light wood casement windows in the upper floor and 20-light wood casement

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windows in the lower level. Secondary entrances are located on the porte cochere and south elevation of the residence and sun porch.

The Vineyard House at 239 W. Burleson is an imposing residential structure that is significant for its association with R.H. Vineyard, a local civic and business leader, and as an outstanding local example of a Prairie School-influenced house with some Arts & Crafts characteristics. Constructed in about 1925, the house is virtually unaltered and retains its integrity to a remarkable degree.

R.H. Vineyard acquired this property from Mrs. Lula Young and her husband Herman of Los Angeles, California in 1923 for \$83.33 (Deed Records 62:292) and probably built the dwelling soon afterwards. Vineyard selected a site relatively close to the Colorado River but in order to prevent flooding, he filled the surrounding low areas with silt from the Colorado River (Wharton Survey Files). He speculated in real estate and at one time owned the Nation Hotel at Burleson and Polk which was a prominent business in Wharton. Vineyard also participated on a committee to solicit funds for the first county fair in 1912 and later served on the executive committee of the Wharton County Flood Control Association in 1936 (Williams 1964:277,50). Vineyard's active and prominent role in local affairs resulted in his election as mayor in 1922 and he continued to serve in that capacity until 1924. Today, members of the Vineyard family still own the house.

The majority of Wharton's historic residences are modest wood-frame and -clad dwellings that were built in the late 19th or early 20th centuries. This house, however, is one of the few local examples of a brick-veneered domestic structures. Moreover, it is distinguished by its incorporation of Prairie School and Arts & Crafts architectural elements which makes it one of the most unusual houses in Wharton. Remarkably few changes detract from its historic character.

U.S. Post Office, 1935, 141 E. Milam, Site No. 365, Photos 27-28.

The United States Post Office is a well-maintained single-story public building with a basement and load-bearing masonry walls. This simply detailed brick-veneered building with eclectic features is suggestive of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. It has an asymmetrical plan with a large rear wing contains offices and work area.

The main (south) facade has a side-gabled roof and is dominated by an unusual entrance. The classically influenced architrave is composed of two pilasters supporting an entablature crowned with a broken scroll pediment that frames a small, square, fixed light. Four oculus windows form a clerestory along the south elevation. Centered under each oculus is a double-hung window with a wood sash and 4/4 lights.

Both gable ends contain an oculus window with a simple grille centered above two double-hung windows. The regular fenestration is continued in the rear wing. Centered above these windows are faux "carales" (rainspouts) suggestive of the Pueblo style.

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A 3-bay loading dock is on the north elevation and is covered by a canopy supported by tie rods. At the far northwest corner of the building, an exterior brick chimney extends above the parapeted flat roof of the rear wing.

The U.S. Post Office acquired this property in 1934 from the heirs of Edwin Hawes (Deed Records 116:109) and subsequently erected a post office which still serves the community. It stands today as the best-preserved public building in Wharton.

The U.S. Post Office is Wharton's lone federal building. It exhibits detailing suggestive of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture including the symmetrical and formally ordered facade and the cast-stone ornamentation framing the primary entrance. This style is seen rarely in the community. Wharton's other historic public buildings, with the exception of the 1938 Wharton County Jail, have been modified in varying degrees which makes the U.S. Post Office Building an important architectural landmark in the city.

The U.S. Post Office is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C. It is an eclectic institutional design issued from the federal government and is virtually unaltered since its construction in 1935.

W.A. Harrison Building, 1913, 200 W. Milam, Site No. 352, Photo 6.

The W.A. Harrison Building, a 2-story, load-bearing, masonry structure, is an excellent example of the Prairie School style adapted to a commercial building. As a whole, it is one of the most intact of the early commercial buildings in Wharton. A flat roof covers its open plan. The combination of a buff brick exterior, cast-stone lintels, a continuous cast-stone sill and marble-veneer panels below the ground-floor display windows presents an appearance of commercial dignity and grace.

Heavy-timber brackets that extend between and below the second-story window lintels support an expansive cornice which encircles the building. The six-bay ground floor wraps around the east elevation and contains a double-door entrance, a single-door secondary entry and fixed display windows with wood sashes, all with transoms above the canopy. The six windows on the upper floor have wood sashes. The upper sash contains a large light surrounded by a narrow light border.

The continuation of the wide cornice, brackets, second-floor window arrangement and transoms provide uniformity to the east elevation and continuity with the front (south) elevation. On the east elevation, brick piers capped with decorative urns support a second-floor balcony with wood balustrade. Beyond the balcony, an unsympathetic modification/addition extends out from the east wall and across the north (rear) side of the building. A mansard-type parapet makes the alteration more prominent.

The W.A. Harrison Building at 200 W. Milam is an outstanding and well-preserved example of commercial architecture in Wharton. Constructed in 1913 for William Alexander Harrison (W.A.), a member of one of Wharton's most prominent families of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the structure retains its integrity to a remarkable degree.

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The W.A. Harrison Building, built in 1913, housed a dry goods store for most of its history although Sanborn maps of 1919 indicate that the building for a short time housed a "moving pictures" theater on the first floor and offices on the second floor. Most likely, the Burr Albert Harrison Estate financed and constructed the commercial building for Burr's grandson, W.A. Harrison. Upon W.A. Harrison's death in 1940, the property was conveyed to Elizabeth Harrison (Deed Records V:311). Between 1930 and 1950, a small restaurant, Joe's Cafe, operated in the building. Minor alterations to the front of the structure occurred in 1946, otherwise the structure retains much of its historic character.

Most of Wharton's historic commercial buildings have been altered to varying degrees; the W.A. Harrison Building is one of the most intact. It occupies a lot on the courthouse square making the building one of the most prominent and highly visible structure in the downtown area. Moreover, its Prairie School- influenced detailing makes the W.A. Harrison Building one of the most noteworthy examples of early-20th-century commercial architecture.

The Burger-Robertson Block, 1909-1919, 115-137 S. Fulton Street, Site No.'s 732-727, Photo 15.

The Burger/Robertson Block consists of six historic commercial buildings, the Roberts-Gifford Building, the Burger Saloon, the B. Leder grocery store, and the Burger Furniture Company, and the 1-story building at 137 S. Fulton.

The Roberts-Gifford Building (1919, Site No 732) was built by Ed Roberts, a well-to-do Black landowner/farmer, as an investment in office and store space on the popular town square. Roberts also founded the nearby community which bears his name. Wharton had several Black-owned businesses fronting the courthouse square as late as the 1920s, which was fairly unusual for a southern town at that time. Upon completion, the building was sold to the Gifford Mercantile Company. George Gifford founded the Wharton Bank and Trust in 1898.

The three other buildings that make up Burger/Robertson Block were commissioned by Joe Burger, Sr., a prominent Wharton businessman, and designed by Victoria architect Jules Leffland. The buildings are closely associated with Billy Robertson, who ran the various businesses Burger owned there (Cline, 1991).

The 1-story building at 125 S. Fulton (1909, Site No 730) housed the Burger Saloon, which later became a post office with Burger as postmaster. The second, at 129 S. Fulton (1909, Site No 129) housed B. Leder's grocery store, and then became the local light company's offices for nearly 40 years. The 2-story building at 119 S. Fulton (1913, Site No 731) housed the Burger Furniture Company. These buildings, together with the adjacent 1-story building at 137 S. Fulton, are particularly notable for the high quality of their brickwork, unusual in such relatively modest commercial buildings. Built from 1910 to 1919, the Burger-Robertson Block represents the most intact collection of historic storefront buildings in the Wharton County Courthouse Commercial Historic District.

8. Statement of Significance

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

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1889-1941

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Leffland, Jules

Hedrick, Wyatt C.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District is significant at a local level for its association with events central to the development of Wharton County, the town's unique urban environment, and its remarkable state of architectural preservation. The Historic District is an excellent example of an evolutionary late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial downtown. Contextually it relates to Agriculture in Texas (1680-1945), specifically the cotton industry, for which Wharton served as a regional trade and governmental center during the peak years of the town's development just after 1900. The district also relates to the state's Community and Regional Development context (1680-1945) as a example of the town form and architecture employed by many rapidly growing Texas towns and cities in the period between 1880 and 1930. The period of significance extends from the construction in 1889 of the oldest extant building in the district (Site No. 408) to 1941, the present cutoff date according to National Park Service standards. The district is eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and Government for its association with events central to the history of Wharton. It meets Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a collection of late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial and public buildings which typify the distinct periods of Wharton's historic growth.

The history of the Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District reflects the growth and development of the City of Wharton during the late 19th- through the mid 20th- centuries. Founded by Anglo settlers in 1846 to serve as the county seat of newly-formed Wharton County, the town quickly emerged as an important regional trading and governmental center. As county seat and the largest settlement in the county, Wharton developed as a supply point for area plantations and as a marketplace and shipping center for agricultural products.

The original townsite was laid out on a sharp bend in the Colorado River and was based on a grid system (similar to the Shelbyville Plan) with a courthouse square (called Monterey Square) at the center. As in most similar Texas towns, the courthouse square quickly became the focus of the town's activities and a variety of mercantile and government-related businesses grew up along the principal streets (present-day Fulton, Milam, Houston, and Burleson streets) surrounding the courthouse. The earliest mercantile businesses were housed in crude log and clapboard buildings which in many cases also doubled as residences.

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet 9-1.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository:

Texas Historical Commission, Austin, TX

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approx. 21 acres

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	14	781420	3245860
C	14	781740	3245460

	Zone	Easting	Northing
B	14	781820	3245740
D	14	781320	3245600

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See Continuation Sheet 10-1.

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See Continuation Sheet 10-1.

☒ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Daniel Hardy (research by Micheal Clark and Jeffrey A. Twining; edited by J. Twining)		
organization	Hardy-Heck-Moore	date	July, 1989; August, 1991
street & number	2112 Rio Grande	telephone	512/478-8014
city or town	Austin	state	Texas
		zip code	78705

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During the antebellum period the county's economy was based on large sugar cane and cotton plantations. Wharton, situated at the crossing of the Colorado River and the main overland route from Victoria to Houston, became the primary regional shipping point. Sugar cane, cotton and corn were brought into the town from the surrounding plantations to be sold or traded for supplies and luxury goods brought overland from Houston or Matagorda. Fueled by this trade, Wharton by the late 1850s evolved into a thriving settlement with a population of several hundred. The buildings of this period were false-front impermanent frame structures with little or no decoration.

The effects of the Civil War devastated the local economy. The plantation system on which much of the town's prosperity was based was in turn heavily dependent on slave labor. With the abolition of slavery, the plantation system collapsed and in the aftermath of the war the county experienced a prolonged period of economic depression. The rapid construction activity which had characterized the pre-war years came to a halt and many of the stores around the square were closed (Jones, p. 8).

Wharton's fortunes did not begin to improve until the late 1870s with the arrival of a large number of new settlers from Eastern Europe. The new immigrants revitalized the agricultural economy. They bought and subdivided many of the old plantations (some of which had been lying fallow since the war) and brought a good deal of new land under cultivation. With the upturn in the agricultural economy, Wharton also began to revive. A large number of new merchants (many of them recent Jewish immigrants) opened businesses in and around the courthouse square during the late 1870s and 1880s.

With only a few hundred residents, Wharton was the primary trading and population center of the county as El Campo, its present-day rival for commerce and population, was not founded until 1881, 14 miles to the southwest.

In the late 19th-century, the central public square was the most vital part of the fabric of Texas communities, particularly when the town was the county seat and the public space contained the courthouse. The retention of the courthouse square concept, which evolved in Wharton similar to the Shelbyville Plan, proved important for commercial, legal and social reasons (Robinson, p. 342). In Wharton, as in other county seats of the time, commercial lots facing the courthouse were the most desirable land in the community. Narrow lots drawn on 310 foot blocks surrounded the courthouse site. The narrow lots served to maximize the number of potential businesses near the square. Speculators and business owners jockeyed for positions fronting on the center of town and county activity (Williams p. 174). Hotels such as the Watts Hotel (c. 1894, Site No. 439) (later Riverside Hotel) and the Ford Hotel were built relatively early in the formal development of downtown Wharton (1870s), with saloons like Asa Dowdy's and the Club Saloon in operation on the west side of the courthouse square.

Wharton received further stimulus in 1881 when the New York, Texas and Mexican Railroad (later Southern Pacific) was built through the county linking Wharton with the coast (Webb, p. 890). By the 1880s and 1890s, the early frame structures were replaced by brick buildings with decorative facades. With railroad service in the 1880s, standardized construction materials began to

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appear on the buildings, such as cast iron columns, pressed metal cornices and ceilings, and prefabricated doors and windows. The new railroad terminal was built five blocks west of the courthouse on West Milam Street, spurring the growth of a number of new industrial and commercial enterprises on the western edge of the downtown area.

The steady increase in population of the county (3,426 in 1870 to 16,942 in 1900) brought greater demands for county government services and for finished mercantile goods and professional services. In the 1880s, new businessmen, lawyers and physicians moved to Wharton, adding to the list of businesses trying to serve this increased demand. In addition, several governmental buildings were constructed during this period, the most important being the new county courthouse.

Wharton, with more voting blacks than whites, elected blacks to various positions through the 1870s and 1880s, including R.H. Tisdale, County Commissioner (1888), and J.A. Speaker, County Commissioner's Court (1888). Tisdale and Speaker were on the County Commission that selected and contracted with Houston architect Eugene Heiner to construct the 1889 courthouse building (Site No. 408, Photo 13). The new courthouse was an excellent example of the Italianate style: 3-stories high with a low-pitched roof and overhanging eaves supported by decorative brackets; and arched windows with inverted U-shaped crowns.

These details, as well as those indicative of the Classical Revival or Romanesque Revival styles were reflected in the commercial buildings built during the late Victorian period. Most of the Contributing buildings in the Historic District may be loosely classified under one of three architectural types: the late-Victorian commercial style, the early-20th-century commercial style, and the Art Deco style. These three groupings roughly correspond with the three principal periods of building activity in Wharton: the periods from 1895-1910, 1910-1925, and 1930-1938. The late-Victorian type was popular in Wharton from the 1890s through the turn of the century and appeared as late as 1910. While most parapets are finished with some simple variation of corbeled brick, more sophisticated treatment is evident, as in the diminutive Romanesque arcade on 128 S. Houston Street (1905, Site No 686, Photos 4, 14).

As in the pre-Civil War period cotton and sugar cane remained the area's principal crops around the turn of the century and they continued to fuel the development of Wharton's commercial economy. A series of excellent cotton crops in the early 1900s helped to finance the construction of a number of new brick buildings along the east side of the courthouse square (known as the Burger-Robertson Block, 115-137 Fulton Street; Photo 15).

Although similar to the Victorian commercial type in many ways, the commercial style of the 1910s and 1920s begins to reflect new stylistic influences, among them the Prairie School, and the Spanish Colonial Revival including the Mission style. As in the Victorian-era commercial style, pure examples of a particular substyle are rare, and most of the buildings typically exhibit a range of stylistic influences. Generally speaking, the ornamentation on these buildings is simpler than those built in the Victorian era and is typically based on basic geometrical designs. A concentration of this era of

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building occurs in the 200 and 300 blocks of West Milam Street where development grew out from the square toward the Southern Pacific railroad depot (Photos 16-21).

As downtown development progressed after World War I, building styles changed radically. Art Deco became fashionable in the late 1920s and can be found on some of Wharton's commercial buildings, although it is more common on its public buildings.

By 1930 the cotton industry was in decline and, coupled with the national Depression, Wharton fell on very hard times. Building activity slowed, and the crucial role of government funded building projects in sustaining local economies during the Depression is powerfully illustrated in Wharton. Most of the public buildings in the district belong stylistically to Art Deco and its derivatives Art Moderne and Streamline Moderne. Among the most important examples is the Wharton County Courthouse (1889/1934, Site No. 408, Photos 22-25). Constructed in an Italianate style in the late 1880s, the building was significantly altered in 1934. Under the direction of architect J.W. Dahert, the tower was lowered, detailing was stripped and a new Art Deco stuccoed facade added, including zigzag molding around the doors and parapet.

A major sub-type of Depression era architecture, the Art Moderne, or Streamline Moderne, was popular in the mid- to late-1930s and features smooth, stucco facades, rounded corners, tile, and aluminum casings and hardware. The Wharton County Jail, (Site No. 461, Photos 7,8) built in 1938 to the design of Wyatt C. Hedrick, is a classic example of Art Moderne, illustrated by the entryway with its rounded corners and streamlines, the round window set in the double doors, and the decorative aluminum door handles and grilles. Modernistic architecture, in contrast to late Victorian architecture, refined a horizontal emphasis, and large plate glass windows became common in storefronts. Wharton's best example of the Streamline style is the Plaza movie theater (Photo 26) at 116 S. Houston (c. 1940, Site No. 688) and Sharman's Jewelry store next door (1935, Site No. 689). In a break from the Art Deco pattern, the Wharton Post Office at 141 E. Milam (Site No. 365, Photos 27-28), also constructed in the 1930s, uses a Stripped Classical form with stylistic suggestions of Spanish Colonial Revival style.

Many businesses were forced to close during the Depression and what little private building activity occurred after 1930 was concentrated on remodeling of existing storefronts. An exception to the rule is the Art Moderne commercial building at 133-143 Polk Street, built in 1940 (Site No. 681, Photo 29).

Conclusion:

After World War II the Wharton business district enjoyed limited prosperity in its continuing role as county seat and a market center for the surrounding agricultural area. Wharton's advantageous geographic location near the burgeoning city of Houston increased the town's importance. However, as a service town for the agricultural industry, Wharton continues to enjoy the same economic base in the 1990s as it did in the 1890s. Thus the built environment of Wharton has remained largely unchanged since World War II, despite post-war renovations and despite the razing of several buildings. Several blocks,

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particularly the 100 block of South Fulton Street and 200 and 300 blocks of West Milam Street, retain much of their late 19th- to mid 20th-century character. The period of significance ends in 1941, the present cutoff date according to National Parks Service standards.

Several buildings have also been restored or rehabilitated within the past five years as part of the city's participation in the Main Street Project (1987-1989). Also, the concrete slab sidewalks were replaced with red concrete pavers on the blocks fronting the square.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of the Wharton County Courthouse Commercial Historic District runs as follows (directional references are approximate): beginning at the corner of Elm Street and Rusk Street; thence north along Rusk Street 2 1/2 blocks to the alley running between Milam and Caney streets. Thence west along the alley four blocks to Richmond Road; thence south along Richmond Road to the rear lot line of the buildings on the south side of Milam Street. Thence east along the lot line one block to Polk Street. Thence south on Polk Street to the rear lot line of the buildings on the south side of Burleson Street. Thence east along the lot line one block to Houston Street. Thence south on Houston Street about 1/2 block to Elm Street. Thence east along Elm Street two blocks to the beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The district boundaries include the most intact and concentrated area of commercial buildings related to the development of Wharton in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most of the properties immediately outside the district are residential structures or date from the period after 1941. Most of the historic commercial structures outside the boundary were either poorly preserved or have unsympathetic alterations.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Wharton

DATE RECEIVED: 9/30/91 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/16/91
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/01/91 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/14/91
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 91001624

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

✓ ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 11/5/91 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District is significant as representative of the county seat role of the community and the regional market center for the cotton and other agricultural production of the area. It also is significant for its fine collection of late 19th and early 20th century architectural styles, with buildings arranged around a courthouse square.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept / a/c
REVIEWER Antoinette A. Rice
DISCIPLINE History
DATE November 5, 1991

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

CLASSIFICATION

____count ____resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

____historic ____current

DESCRIPTION

____architectural classification
____materials
____descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

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

____summary paragraph
____completeness
____clarity
____applicable criteria
____justification of areas checked
____relating significance to the resource
____context
____relationship of integrity to significance
____justification of exception
____other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

____acreage ____verbal boundary description
____UTMs ____boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

____sketch maps ____USGS maps ____photographs ____presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone

Signed Date



L-R: Site No.'s 359-361 (112-101 Milam St.)
Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District
Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy. Heck. Moore, July 1988

neg. with TX Hist. Comm.; Northeast corner of courthouse square
camera facing north-northeast.

Photo 1 of 30

L-R: Site No.'s 359-361 (112-101 Milam St.)



L-R: Site No's 361, 460, 408, 360

Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy Heck Moore

July, 1988

neg. with TX Hist. Comm.

looking south along Fulton St. from Milam St. intersection

camera facing south-southwest

Photo 2 of 30



L-R: Site No's 689, 690, 691, 692, 693

Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Nardy Heck Moore

July, 1988

reg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.

west side of courthouse square

camera facing west

Photo 3 of 36



L-R: Site Nos 1033, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688
Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District
Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas
Hardy · Heck · Moore
July, 1988
neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.
west side of courthouse square
camera facing north (sic) (oblique)
Photo 4 of 30

Photo 4, pt



Site No. 361
(101 E. Milam)

Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District
Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy. Heck. Moore

July, 1988

neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.

camera facing east

Photo 5 of 36

Photo 5, v4



Site No. 352

(200 Milam St.)

Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy Heck Moore

July, 1988

Site No. 352 (200 Milam St.)

neg. w/ TK Hist. Comm.

camera facing north

Photo 6 of 30

Photo 76

People - here in
sch - newspaper



Site No. 461

(100 E. Burleson)

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy. Heck. Moore

July, 1988

neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.

Wharton Co. Jail

camera facing south

Photo 7 of 30

Photo 7

Wharton Co. Jail

Site No 461 (100 Burleson?)



Site Nos: h-R: 461, 726, 460

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Nardy. Heck. Moore

July, 1988

neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.

h-R: ① Wharton Co. Jail, Old Wharton Jail, Municipal Bldg.

camera facing south

Photo 8 of 30 R: Site Nos 461, 460 (100, 101 Burleson)

8



L-R: Site No. 8: 460, 459

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy & Heck-Moore

July, 1988

neg w/ TX Hist. Comm.

camera facing southwest

Photo 9 of 30

Photo 19

Wharton Municipal Bldg

Site No. 460 (St Charles?)

(4)



Site No. 456
Vineyard House
Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District
Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas
Nandy Heck Moore
July, 1988
neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.
Camera facing south
Photo 10 of 30



L-R Site Nos: 362, 363, 364A, 365
Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District
Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy Heck Moore

July, 1988

neg. w/ TK Hist. Comm.

camera facing east

Photo 11 of 30

L-R: Site Nos 107, 109, ?, 141

362, 363, ?, 365 (107, 109, ?, 141 Milan)

Photo 11



L-R: Site Nos: 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, part of 352
Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District
Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas
Hardy. Heck. Moore
July, 1988
neg. with TX Hist. Comm.
northside of W. Milam Street
camera facing north
Photo 12 of 30



Site No. 408

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy. Heck. Moore

July, 1988 (copy neg. date)

neg. with

Historic photo of Wharton County Courthouse (before 1934 additions & Art Deco detailing)

Photo 13 of 30

Photo 13
Site No. 408



Site No. 686

(128 S. Houston St.)

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy-Neck-Moore

July, 1988

neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.

2nd-story detail of Site No. 686

camera elevated, facing north-northwest

Photo 14 of 30



L-R Site Nos: 733, 732, 731, 730, 729, 728, 727

Wharton Co: Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Nardy · Heck · Moore

July, 1988

neg. w/ TK Hist. Comm.

Burger - Robertson Block; east side of courthouse square

camera facing east (sic)

Photo 15 of 30

Photo 15 of 30

Photo 15



L-R Site Nos: 406, 405, 404, 403, 402, 401, 400, 399, 398
Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District
Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas
Hardy. Heck. Moore
July, 1988
neg w/ TX Historical Comm.
south side of W Milam Street
camera facing west-northwest
Photo 16 of 30



L-R Site Nos: part of 404, 403, 402, 401, 400, 399, 398

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Nandy Heck Moore

July 1988

neg. w/TK Hist. Comm.

South side of W. Milam St.

camera facing west

Photo 17 of 30

View W. side Milam St.

2nd floor Post-Office Bldg.

Site Nos 403-398 (2nd floor - 355 Milam)

Light is at Richmond St. intersection

Photo 18



L-R. Site Nos: collapsed; 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, part of 346

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Nardy. Heck. Moore

July, 1988

neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.

north side of W. Milam St; Bldg. to left of Site No. 341 collapsed in 1991

camera facing north-northwest

Photo 18 of 30

238 W Milam

18A



L-R Site Nos: part of 693; 407, 406
Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District
Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas
Nerdy. Neck. Moore
July, 1988
neg. w/TR Hist. Comm.
south side W. Milam St.
camera facing west (sic)
Photo 19 of 30

211-23 W Milam
Site No 406
Photo 19



Site No. 344

(246 W. Milam St.)

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Nardy. Heck. Moore

July, 1988

neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.

camera facing north-northeast

Photo 20 of 30

246 W. Milam

Site 344

Camera facing N

Photo 20



L-R Site No's: part of 346; 347, 348

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy. Heck. Moore

July 1988

neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.

camera facing northeast

Photo 21 of 30

2-4-78 William

Site No 347

Camera Facing NE

50° oblique

Photo 14



Site No. 408, Wharton County Courthouse
Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District
Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas
Hardy. Heak. Moore
July 1988
neg. w/ TX Hist Comm. Photo 21
camera facing south
Photo 22 of 30



Site No. 408

Wharton County Courthouse

Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy. Heek. Moore

July 1988

neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.

camera facing west

Photo 23 of 30



She No. 408, detail of west elevation

Wharton County Courthouse

Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy, Heck Moore

July 1988

neg w/ TX Hist. Comm.

camera facing east-southeast

Photo 24 of 30



Site No. 408.

Wharton Co. Courthouse

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Nardy Heck Moore

July 1988

neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.

camera facing east

Photo 25 of 30



Site No. 688

Wharton County Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Nardy. Heck. Moore

July 1988

neg w/ TX Hist. Comm.

Plaza Theatre

camera facing northeast

Photo 26 of 30

116 S Houston

Site # 689

facing W

Photo 26



Site No. 365

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Handy Heat Moore

July, 1988

neg w/ TX Hist. Comm.

Wharton Post Office

Camera facing north

Photo 27 of 30

pic 26
27



Security
Bank and Trust
Member Since 1908
OF THE NATIONAL
MOTOR BANK
MoneyMaker

UNITED STATES
POST OFFICE

HARTON TEXAS
77401

Site No. 365

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy. Heck. Moore

July 1988

neg w/ TX Hist. Comm.

Wharton Post Office

camera facing east

Photo 28 of 30



L-R Site No's: 682, 681

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy. Heck. Moore - 455 POK

July 1988

neg. w/ TX Hist. Comm.

camera facing east-northeast

Photo 29 of 30

Pic 29



Site No. 439

Wharton Co. Courthouse Historic Commercial District

Wharton, Wharton Co., Texas

Hardy. Heck. Moore

July 1988

neg w/ TX Hist. Comm.

278 W. Burlington

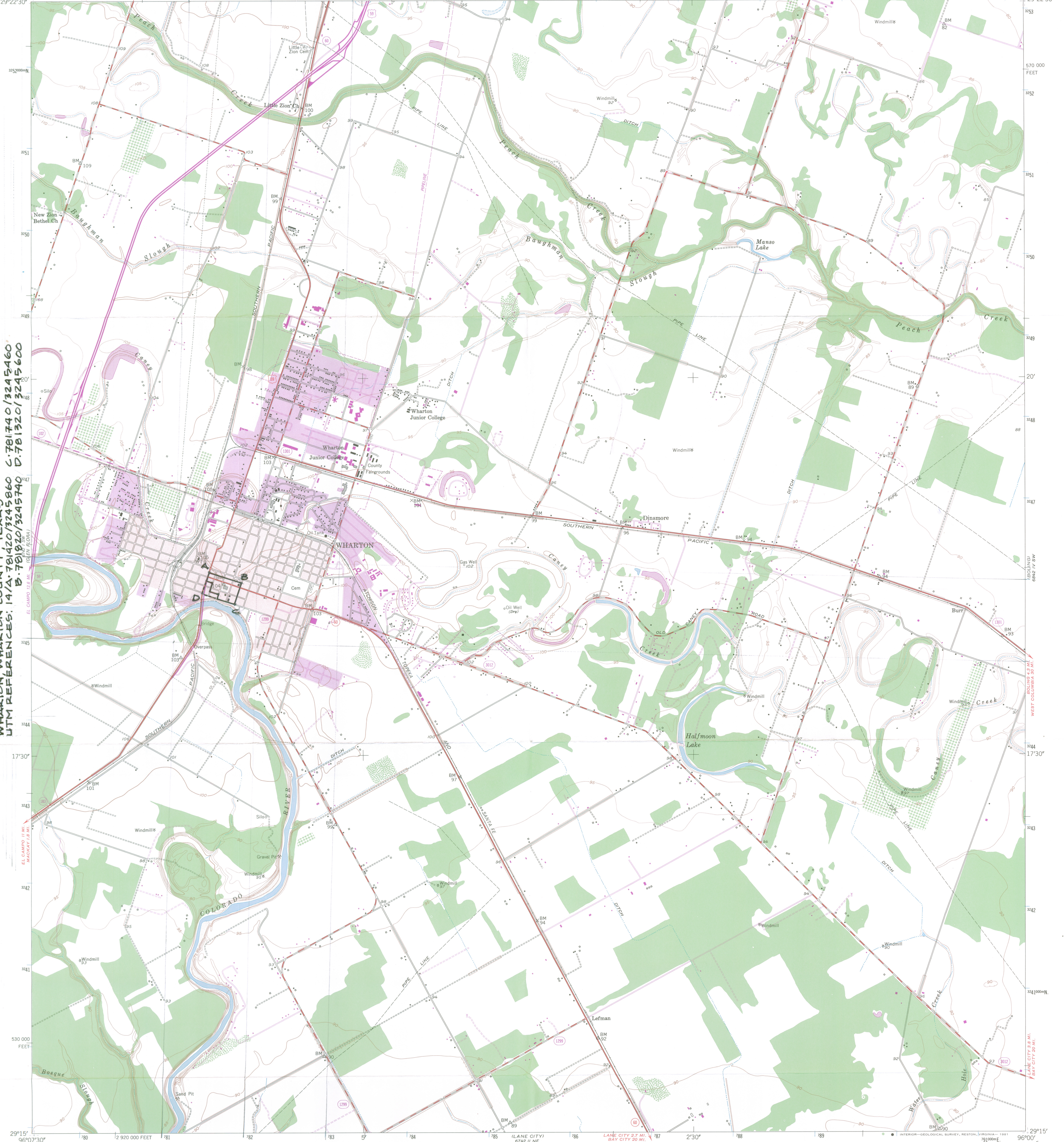
Camera facing north-northeast

Photo 30 of 30

S. Elev., camera facing N.

Photo 30

WHARTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE HISTORIC COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
WHARTON WHARTON COUNTY TEXAS
UTM REFERENCES: 14/A: 781420/3245860 C: 781740/3245460
B: 781820/3245740 D: 781320/3245600
(GLEN FLORA)
EL CAMPO 1.8 MI.
MACKEY 1.8 MI.

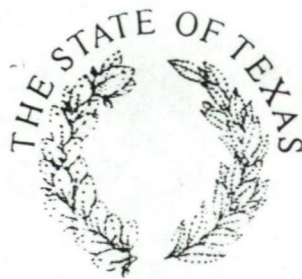


Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, and Texas GLO — State Reclamation Department
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs taken 1951. Topography by plane-table surveys by Texas GLO— State Reclamation Department 1939, and by U.S. Corps of Engineers 1945. Field check 1953
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum. 10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system, south central zone
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks: zone 14, shown in blue

UTM GRID AND 1980 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET
1"=26'
7"=124 MILES
25 MILES
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 22 meters south and 23 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

SCALE 1:24 000
1 000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 0 1 KILOMETER
CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty 4 LANE 6 LANE Light-duty
Medium-duty 4 LANE 6 LANE Unimproved dirt
U. S. Route State Route
TEXAS
QUADRANGLE LOCATION
2996-141
Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1980
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas
WHARTON, TEX.
N2915-W9600/7.5
1953
DMA 6742 I SE-SERIES V882



CURTIS TUNNELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 12276

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

(512)463-6100

April 2, 1990

U.S. Postal Service
Facilities Service Office
7800 N. Stemmons Freeway - Suite 400
Dallas, TX 75266-7180

Re: U.S. Post Office, 141 E. Milam
Wharton, Wharton County, Texas

Dear Postmaster:

We are pleased to inform you that the above-mentioned property will be considered by the State Board of Review for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at their meeting on May 5, 1990 at 9:00 A.M. in the second floor conference room of Ashbel Smith Hall at 201 West Seventh Street in Austin.

The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register provides recognition, assists in preserving our nation's heritage and results in the following for historic properties:

1. Consideration in planning for federal, federally licensed, and federally assisted projects. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires that federal agencies allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to have an opportunity to comment on all projects affecting historic properties listed in the National Register. For further information, please refer to 36 CFR 800.
2. Eligibility for federal tax provisions. If a property is listed in the National Register, certain federal tax provisions may apply. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 revises the historic preservation tax incentives authorized by Congress in the Tax Reform Act of 1976, the Revenue Act of 1978, the Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980, the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, Tax Reform Act of 1984, and, as of January 1, 1987, provides for a 20 percent investment tax credit with a full adjustment to basis for rehabilitating historic commercial, industrial, and rental residential buildings. The former 15 percent and 20 percent Investment Tax Credits (ITCs) for rehabilitations of older commercial buildings are combined into a single 10 percent ITC for commercial or industrial buildings built before 1936. The Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980 provides federal tax deductions for charitable contributions for conservation purposes of partial interests in historically important land areas or structures. Whether these provisions are advantageous to a property owner is dependent upon the particular circumstances of the property and the owner. Because tax aspects as

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

outlined above are complex, individuals should consult legal counsel or the appropriate local Internal Revenue Service office for assistance in determining the tax consequences of the above provisions. For further information on certification requirements, please refer to 36 CFR 67.

3. Consideration in issuing a surface coal mining permit: In accordance with the Surface Mining and Control Act of 1977, there must be consideration of historic values in the decision to issue a surface coal mining permit where coal is located. For further information, please refer to 30 CFR 700 et seq.

4. Qualification for federal grants for historic preservation when funds are available. Presently, funding is unavailable.

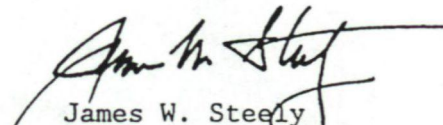
National Register listing does not:

1. require the owner to provide public access,
2. obligate the owner to maintain the property,
3. require notification of changes in ownership, or
4. impose restrictions of any kind unless grant assistance is received or tax credits are taken.

Owners of private properties nominated to the National Register of Historic Places have an opportunity to concur in or object to listing in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act and 36 CFR 60. Any owner or partial owner of private property who chooses to object to listing may submit to the State Historic Preservation Officer a notarized statement certifying that the party is the sole or partial owner of the private property and objects to the listing. Each owner or partial owner of private property has one vote regardless of what part of the property that party owns. If a majority of private property owners object, a property will not be listed. However, the State Historic Preservation Officer shall submit the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register for a determination of eligibility of the property for listing in the National Register. If the property is then determined eligible for listing, although not formally listed, federal agencies will be required to allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment before the agency may fund, license, or assist a project which will affect the property. If you choose to object to the listing of your property, the notarized objection must be submitted to Mr. Curtis Tunnell, State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX, 78711, by May 4, 1990.

If you wish to comment on the nomination of the property to the National Register, please send your comments to the State Historic Preservation Officer before the State Board of Review considers this nomination on May 5, 1990. A copy of the nomination and information on the National Register and federal tax provisions are available upon request.

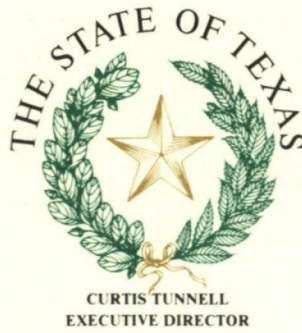
Sincerely,



James W. Stealy

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

JWS/mc



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 12276

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

(512)463-6100

October 15, 1991

Ms. Antoinette Lee
National Register Division
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

RE: Wharton County Courthouse, Wharton County, pending Wharton County
Courthouse Commercial Historic District.

Dear Ms. Lee:

Your office informed me that you are traveling this week, so I thought that I'd write a letter rather than calling you next week. Wharton County is within the geographic area for which I perform architectural project review and the Texas Historical Commission is concerned about the future of the current Wharton County Courthouse. Currently, Wharton County is planning to construct a new courthouse in the downtown area and the County Judge and Commissioners Court are strongly in favor of demolishing the existing Courthouse. There is local opposition to the demolition of the Courthouse. At this time persuasive efforts by the local citizens and Texas Historical Commission have not influenced the County government to abandon the idea of a new courthouse or the point of view that the current courthouse is disposable. For your information, I have enclosed a recent newspaper article regarding the Courthouse.

The Texas Historical Commission forwarded the above referenced National Register nomination to the National Park Service on September 26, 1991. If the proposed historic district is listed in the National Register, the Texas Antiquities Committee, a sister agency of THC, can consider an application from concerned citizens for State Archeological Landmark (SAL) designation. This designation would be one more preservation tool to save the courthouse or at least to continue the negotiation process with the county, buying more time for the local efforts to save the courthouse. This designation does not require owner consent if the owner is a state, county or municipal government, but there is a hearing for the application. The designation does require that the owner of an SAL obtain a permit prior to alteration or demolition.

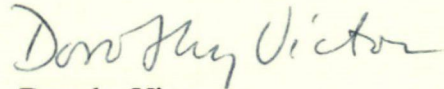
If the historic district is listed in the National Register, would you please communicate this to me at the Texas Historical Commission by telephone as soon as possible? I would then notify the Texas Antiquities Committee and this would allow their office sufficient owner notification time to place an SAL application for the Wharton County Courthouse on the January meeting agenda. I request the telephone notification in

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

Ms. Antoinette Lee
Page 2

hopes that you would be able to inform us by mid-November, and because the usual NPS notification by mail may not arrive at our office until the end of November or early December. Please contact me at (512) 463-6094 and indicate to me if you can answer this request in this manner. Our office appreciates the assistance of the National Park Service in pursuing preservation efforts for the Wharton County Courthouse.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dorothy Victor".

Dorothy Victor
Project Reviewer
Division of Architecture

DV

Enclosure

cc: Lisa Hart, THC