

**NOTICE OF MEETING TO BE HELD BY THE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2024 - 12:00 PM
MCALLEN DEVELOPMENT CENTER – 311 NORTH 15TH STREET
PLANNING CONFERENCE ROOM**

AGENDA

At any time during the course of this meeting, the Historic Preservation Council may retire to Executive Session under Texas Government Code 551.071(2) to confer with its legal counsel on any subject matter on this agenda in which the duty of the attorney to the Historic Preservation Council under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code. Further, at any time during the course of this meeting, the Historic Preservation Council may retire to Executive Session to deliberate on any subject slated for discussion at this meeting, as may be permitted under one or more of the exceptions to the Open Meetings Act set forth in Title 5, Subtitle A, Chapter 551, Subchapter D of the Texas Government Code.

CALL TO ORDER -

1. Minutes

- a) Approval or Disapproval of Minutes held on August 7, 2024

2. Information Only

- a) Update on Roosevelt School Renovations
- b) Presentation of new Historic Preservation Council Officer – Hilda Tovar

3. Adjournment

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, the undersigned authority, do hereby certify that the above agenda for the meeting of the McAllen Historic Preservation Council is a true and correct copy and that I posted a true and correct copy of said notice on the bulletin board in the municipal building, a place convenient and readily accessible to the general public at all times, and said notice was posted on the 6th day of September, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. and will remain so posted continuously for at least 72 hours preceding the scheduled time of said meeting in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.

Jessica Cavazos, Administrative Supervisor

**STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF HIDALGO
CITY OF MCALLEN**

The Historic Preservation Council convened in a meeting on Wednesday, August 7, 2024 at 9:02 a.m. at the McAllen Development Center – 311 N. 15th Street – Executive Conference Rm

Present:	Danny Boultinghouse	Vice-Chairperson
	Carolina Civarolo	Member
	Melissa S. Knerr	Member
	Marc Millis	Member
Absent:	Dr. Jaclyn Miller	Chairperson
Staff Present:	Evaristo Garcia	Assistant City Attorney III
	Edgar Garcia	Planning Director
	Samantha Trevino	Planner I
	Magda Ramirez	Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER – Dr. Jaclyn Miller - Chairperson

1. Minutes

- a) Approval or Disapproval of Minutes held on July 10, 2024

Mr. Marc Millis **moved** to approve the minutes. Ms. Carolina Civarolo **seconded** the motion. Motion approved with four board members present and voting.

2. Public Hearing:

- a) Request of Mario Luis Guerra Jr. for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a proposed single family residence within the Las Palmas Historic District at Lot 11, Block 12, North McAllen Subdivision, Hidalgo County, Texas; 604 North 15th Street. **(CLM2024-0003)**

Ms. Trevino stated a Certificate of Appropriateness was required for all proposed exterior alterations, new construction, and demolition within a local historic district. The goal of a Certificate of Appropriateness is to preserve historic, architectural, and cultural heritage by protecting character-defining features of the Las Palmas Historic District.

The property was located on the east side of N. 15th Street, north of Fir Avenue. The site plan indicates that the property has 50 feet of frontage along N. 15th Street and a depth of 140 feet for a lot size of 7,000 square feet. The lot have never been developed.

The applicant is proposing to construct a new residence with a storage room in the rear attached to the home in the Modern Spanish Mediterranean style.

The design review process for the Certification of Appropriateness is critical within a designated historic district to ensure that the unique and defining characteristics of the area are maintained according to the design standards of the Las Palmas Historic District.

1. **SITING:** Any new development should follow the zoning ordinance and maintain the setback of existing adjacent buildings. When setbacks on either front or backside of new construction vary, an average distance should be taken and used as a guideline for siting the new residence.

- *Setbacks* – To ensure consistency in the historic district, new construction should follow existing ordinance requirements.

For the proposed new house, the applicant proposes a front setback of 40 feet, a rear setback of 10 feet, and a north side setback of 5 feet and south side setback of 7 feet. The plans submitted seem to comply with the design standards of a front yard setback of 40 feet or in line with existing for Block 12, North McAllen Subdivision and will be reviewed during the building permit process.

2. **SCALE OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT:** Existing homes within the historic district range from one to two stories in height. Roof forms and building footprints also vary but most homes comprise only a small portion of their lot and do not exceed an average of more than 20 percent of the overall lot size.

- *Consistency of Style* – New construction should not try to mimic the architectural styles of the past but should look to them for guidance on fenestration patterns, façade organization, level and extent of detailing, massing, roof forms and height, and materials used. New construction should reflect modern design but be sensitive to the historical architectural styles of the past that are represented within the Las Palmas Historic District.

The applicant submitted plans for a two-story single family in the Modern Spanish Mediterranean style of architecture (see attached plans). The plans submitted comply with the consistency of style design standards.

- *Scale* – New construction should maintain a scale that mirrors and respects the scale of adjacent properties. Existing residences within the Las Palmas neighborhood are sited on approximately 15 to 20 percent of the overall lot.

The applicant proposes a two- story single-family residence with a building footprint that is 4183 square feet or 59% of the total lot area.

The average building footprint of the Las Palmas Historic District is currently 24%. The plans submitted do not comply with the design standards of scale with a building footprint of 59% that is greater than the 20% as recommended in the standards but may be acceptable, as the Board has approved a greater percentage than the 20% maximum.

- *Materials* – Primary exterior materials used within the historic district include stucco and brick or stone masonry. Wood trim exists on a few examples. Primary roof materials include clay tile, composition shingle, and wood shingles. New construction should maintain the characteristics of existing exterior materials. Other exterior wall materials such as simulated stone, hardi-board or vinyl siding would detract from the cohesiveness of the neighborhood and should be avoided.

The applicant was proposing a combination of brick, stucco and wood siding for the exterior of

the front façade. The stucco color is to be Snowball 10400L (75) and all fascia and soffit will be Sherwin Williams Snowfall white 2144-70. For the roof, the applicant proposes black clay tile.

3. SITE FEATURES: One of the most recognizable features of the Las Palmas Historic District is the palm-lined center median that extends the length of the district. Palm trees also line the street along each side of North 15th Street along the front yard of most lots. Well-manicured lawns with native plantings are typical of residences within the neighborhood.

- *Fencing* – Historically, fence enclosures at the perimeter of the Las Palmas Historic District, if they existed, were isolated to the rear yard. Low landscaping walls of stone or brick masonry construction can be seen along front patios or along the side property line in the district.

The applicant was not proposing a fence at this time, but would like to add one in the future. A COA will be required at the time of construction.

The design of the home is acceptable, but size may overwhelm the character of existing homes and detract from existing character. Staff is recommending for the home to be moved back to be in line with other homes in the area and for the footprint to be decreased.

Should the request be approved, it will be subject to conditions noted on the approved permit.

Staff recommended disapproval of the new home as currently proposed.

Mr. Todd Henningsen, 6730 Mile 7 Road, Mission, Texas. The contractor stated the house was designed to meet the style of the neighboring houses and the same amount of lot taken.

Vice-Chairperson Boultinghouse asked if there was anyone present in opposition of the proposal request.

Ms. Trevino stated there were no phone calls, letters or emails in opposition to the request.

Board member Civarolo asked staff if the four or five new houses along the block were on that 20-foot setback or further back. Staff stated they were on the 40 foot or in line with existing. Most of the houses on this side of 15th Street their property line started right at the street.

Board member Millis asked staff what was the percentages to the right, to the left, and to the Rhodes' house. Staff stated the Rhodes' house was at 36 percent on the initial proposal and the Board did approve it.

Chairperson Boultinghouse asked staff what was a Golf Support Easement. Staff stated it was something that was to be corrected on the site plan but it was a standard setback for staff. It was a 10-foot rear yard setback for the applicant to be in compliance.

Chairperson Boultinghouse asked if there was any reason the house could be moved back a little more. Mr. Henningsen, the contractor stated staff informed them they had to move it away from the back. Staff stated as long as they comply. The way the house was designed as long as they respect the front and rear yard setback staff was fine with it. Mr. Henningsen stated they made the house smaller in order to comply.

Following discussion, Mr. Marc Millis **moved** to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition for the house to be moved back to be in line with the adjacent properties . Mr. Daniel Padilla **seconded** the motion. The board voted to approve the item with four board members present and voting.

3. **Adjournment**

Mr. Marc Millis made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Carolina Civarolo **seconded** the motion, which passed unanimously with four members present and voting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

Dr. Jaclyn Miller- Chairperson

ATTEST _____
Magda Ramirez

VBR

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Restoration Honors History Of School

By: Chris Ardis (<https://valleybusinessreport.com/author/chris/>)

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Designated a City Landmark, all exterior restoration work on The Annie must first be approved by the City of McAllen's Historic Preservation Council.

Angela Diaz-Millis and her husband, Marc, noticed a desolate building four years ago that is bordered by 16th and 17th streets in McAllen.

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A sign declared the property was for sale.

The couple are licensed realtors and own Millis Real Estate Group. They couldn't overlook the distinct architectural elements of the building, which told their trained eyes that it held historic significance. The property was under contract, they discovered, but three years later, the for-sale sign was back up.

"We came to the property and walked it," Angela said. "We walked in and saw the high ceilings, and we said, 'We can't let anyone tear it down.'"

The couple went home that afternoon and drew up the contract.

A Past Life

The vacant building has countless stories to tell. Historical records show that it was known as the "Mexican Ward School" when it was completed on Jan. 29, 1921. Its purpose as defined by the McAllen school board of that era was for it to serve as a new school for the city's Mexican-American population. It would shortly thereafter be officially named Theodore Roosevelt School.

An annex facing Galveston Avenue to the north was built when enrollment at the school grew. The building features Aztec ornaments atop the exterior doorways and tiles on the outdoor entrance ceilings. Records state the addition was completed in 1927. The property in later years housed school district offices and the Instruction & Guidance Center.

'The Annie'

The Millises began their restoration work on the annex, which they call "The Annie."

"We name all of our properties," Angela said. "It's just one of those things where you bring life back to it. We're bringing her back to her old glory and add a modern flair, but not too modern."



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Angela and Marc Millis stand near the hound/beagle mosaic on the east side of The Annie, the couple's second sign that they should purchase the historic property.



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The Galveston Avenue entrance to The Annie has retained its 1920s architectural elements.

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For the Millises, restoring and repurposing community landmarks means staying true to the historical aspects of the building. One of the first things they uncovered inside The Annie was that carpeting hid and protected the original hardwood floors.

"We can deal with staples and nails all day long," Angela said.

After removing them, sanding, and applying polyurethane, more of The Annie's original glory returned. They revealed more hidden history after speculating there had to be windows in the main hallway for cross-circulation. After removing a small piece of sheetrock, they discovered treasure in the form of original, but covered, windows along the top of both hallway walls.

"It was likely done to contain sound," Angela said.

Covering windows also provides more wall space, she said. All of the sheetrock has now been removed, allowing the light to shine on The Annie's history. Old green chalkboards are now painted with black chalkboard paint. Original pieces of wood from the structure were used to create a zebra-effect backsplash in the east-side restrooms, with their floors finished in onyx concrete.

Vintage chandeliers, cedar countertops and antique furniture pieces tie everything together. There is a wheelchair ramp, and doorways are wheelchair accessible. Exposed ceilings throughout the building will add to what Angela calls "that modern vintage flair."

'Keeping History Alive'

The city of McAllen designated the property a "City Landmark."

The Millises have submitted documents for the exterior paint colors and all other exterior restoration. They will then go to the City's Historic Preservation Council for approval. The project has diligently honored time appropriateness and The Annie's history throughout the interior.

The next chapter in the building annex's history will be for it to house the studio of Barbara Delgado Photography.



(<https://i0.wp.com/valleybusinessreport.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Pic-4-1-scaled.jpg?ssl=1>)

The windows lining the main hallway in The Annie, originally the annex of Theodore Roosevelt School, are now uncovered.



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The ceiling of the 17th Street entrance to The Annie is its own work of art.

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"We love that they restore old buildings," said Delgado, a friend of the Millis couple. "I love the idea of the old with the new. It's a dream. We get to keep history alive."

Delgado's business will fully settle this month into The Annie. Work will now begin on the original building. When completed, Angela said, it would make a perfect site for an event center or a brewery.

"It has one-and-a-half acres of usable space and an outdoor courtyard," she said.

The building has good bones and historical value.

"It's an incredible architectural masterpiece," Marc said.

Now, instead of being lost, its history will continue.

◆ Angela Diaz-Millis (<https://valleybusinessreport.com/tag/angela-diaz-millis/>) Marc Mills (<https://valleybusinessreport.com/tag/marc-mills/>) McAllen (<https://valleybusinessreport.com/tag/mcallen/>) Millis Real Estate Group (<https://valleybusinessreport.com/tag/millis-real-estate-group/>)



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Angela Millis displays a vanity purchased for Barbara Delgado Photography. "It's pieces like this that add a different flair," she said.

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([A circular portrait of a woman with short brown hair, wearing an orange polo shirt. She is smiling and has her arms crossed.](https://valleybusinessreport.com/t:</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Chris Ardis is a retired teacher. She is a freelance writer, editor, and social media manager and works with Tony Roma's and Macaroni Grill to help schools and nonprofit organizations raise money. Chris is also an education blogger, and you can her blog at the link below. You can reach her at cardis1022@aol.com.

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