

McALLEN CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY



Preservation Central, Inc. for
The City of McAllen Department of Planning
August 2005

PRESERVATION CENTRAL, INC.
Austin, Texas

McALLEN CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY
McALLEN, HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS

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Enclosures:
Survey Report
Cultural Resources Inventory
Survey Map
35 mm Black and White Photo Contact Sheets
Digital Photo Contact Sheets

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Karen McGraw, January 2005

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INTRODUCTION

The history of the City of McAllen has been characterized by development spurred by irrigation and railroad construction, demographic change due to with immigration and migration, and continued economic growth sustained by oil, agriculture, and tourism. The scope of this project surveys the area of the 1910 historic town site bounded by 26th (Hackberry) Avenue to the north, 10th Street to the east, 10th (Houston) Avenue to the south, and 18th/19th (Bicentennial) Street to the west (See Appendix 1: Index of Historic Street Names). This swath of town is representative of McAllen's social, economic, and architectural context throughout its history. The survey area includes a total of 1155 cultural resources including buildings, structures, objects, and sites. The data gathered during the survey is detailed in the inventory and maps that supplement this report. Overall, the functional character of the survey area is approximately 49% domestic, 41% commercial, and 8% institutional (including 3% religious, 1% cultural, 1% health care, 1% governmental, 1% educational, 1% social), 1% industrial, and 1% other. Of the total number of resources, 770 (66.6%) were built during the historic period from 1904 until 1960, and approximately 436 (38%) of these historic resources retain sufficient integrity to contribute to one of several potential National Register Historic Districts within the survey area. A number of individual resources previously were listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), including the Casa de Palmas hotel at 101 North 14th (Main) Street, the Cine El Rey theater at 311 South 17th (Guerra) Street, and the Sam and Marjorie Miller House at 707 North 15th Street.

Today the historic core of McAllen is extraordinarily vibrant. The McAllen-Edinburg-Mission Metropolitan Area population numbered 569,463 in the 2000 census, with 88.3% of the population listed as Hispanic. Between 1990 and 2000 the population increased by 37.9%, and it is projected to increase by an additional 25.5% between 2000 and 2010. Like most contemporary American cities much of McAllen's growth has taken place at the suburban outskirts of town, yet, unlike many contemporary towns, downtown commercial activity and occupancy remain very high. This cultural resources survey identifies the elements of McAllen's built environment that have enabled its

independently-owned businesses and walkable neighborhoods to thrive. This cultural resources survey intends to aid the City of McAllen Planning Department in the development of policies and strategies to encourage maintenance and rehabilitation of the city's historic resources, and to promote compatible design for new construction within McAllen's historic core.

SURVEY and RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

During the summer and fall of 2004, the City of McAllen contracted with the Austin-based historic preservation consulting firm, Preservation Central, Inc., to conduct a comprehensive cultural resources survey of a swath of the historic city. The City of McAllen defined the survey area boundaries as 26th (Hackberry) Avenue to the north, 10th Street to the east, 10th (Houston) Avenue to the south, and 18th/19th (Bicentennial) Street to the west. This area includes a portion of the Heart of the City and De Palmas districts currently targeted by Planning Department initiatives. The McAllen Planning Department and the City of McAllen Historic Preservation Council intend to conduct a series of future surveys in other historic portions of the city.

In December 2004, Principal Investigator Terri Myers and Associate Architectural Historian Emily Thompson of Preservation Central, Inc. conducted a windshield survey of the project area. This preliminary survey provided an opportunity for the consultants to understand the layout of the survey area, to determine the relative locations of commercial versus residential versus institutional activities, to identify the boundaries and paths that define neighborhoods, and to roughly gauge the period of construction. The consultants used historic Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Appendix 2) to determine where historic buildings were extant and where they had been demolished. The integrity of extant historic buildings was not evaluated during this phase of the survey. Data obtained during the windshield survey was used to create a Windshield Survey Map (Appendix 3) and Intensive Survey Forms (Appendix 4).

Preservation Central, Inc. conducted an intensive survey of the project area in January 2005. Ms. Myers and Ms. Thompson were joined by Architect Karen McGraw and Associate Architectural Historian Elizabeth Butman. The consultants surveyed the area on foot over five days. Findings were verified during a second reconnaissance

survey conducted by Ms. Myers and Ms. McGraw in June 2005. Surveyors documented the address, resource type, number of stories, use-type, construction date, architectural style, roof form, and exterior materials of every built resource in the project area. Alterations or additions to the original building were noted where pertinent. They then assigned each resource a preservation priority of High, Medium, or Low. A baseline priority of Medium was assigned to all properties constructed during the historic period (1905-1960). If alterations or additions to the historic building had compromised its integrity so that it no longer communicated its historic character, then the building was assigned a Low priority. All buildings constructed after 1960 also were assigned a Low priority. If buildings constructed during the historic period retained an exceptional degree of integrity and/or were especially illustrative examples of an architectural style or construction method, then they were assigned a High priority. All Medium and High priority resources were photographed using both 35mm and digital cameras. Representative streetscapes were photographed as well. Outbuildings constructed during the historic period were documented if visible from the street or from a prominent alley; non-historic outbuildings were not documented. Buildings at the fringes of the project area were documented only if they were oriented inward toward the project area. For instance, all buildings on the west side of 18th/19th (Bicentennial) Street and the east side of 10th Street were documented because they faced inward and formed a coherent streetscape. However, buildings on the south side of 10th (Houston) Avenue or the north side of 26th (Hackberry) Avenue were not documented if they were oriented toward the side street rather than the avenue. Data obtained during the intensive survey was then compiled into an inventory in a Microsoft Access database and used to create an Intensive Survey map. All survey materials, including an inventory, survey map, and photo contact sheets are submitted along with this survey report. Preservation Central coordinated with Peter Ketter in the Texas Historical Commission (THC) History Programs Division to ensure that all data encoding and database formatting was compatible with THC standards.

Historic research regarding the development of the city was conducted at the McAllen Public Library using *Monty's Monthly Digest of Valley Activities*, a regional

publication promoting civic activism and beautification in the Valley during the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. Additional historic background was obtained from the Center for American History at The University of Texas at Austin. This included historic newspaper articles, City Directory listings, and census data. Broad historic context was gleaned from National Register nominations for other Historic Districts in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, as well as secondary sources.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION & CONTEXT

The City of McAllen is located in Hidalgo County, Texas in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. U.S. Highways 83 and 281 intersect just east of McAllen's historic core, bringing a high volume of Pan-American traffic through the area. The topography is generally flat, with a gentle slope toward the Rio Grande. The climate is sub-tropical and sub-humid, with an exceptionally long growing season. Native vegetation includes grasses and sparse mesquite trees. With the aid of irrigation, the soils support cultivation of crops including sorghum, cotton, and fruits – especially citrus. Mineral resources include oil and natural gas.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

SPANISH COLONIZATION & THE RANCHING ERA

Like neighboring settlements along the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the City of McAllen began as part of a vast ranch upon porciones, or Spanish land grants, colonized by José de Escandon. The site of present-day McAllen is located on porciones 63 and 64. The Spanish crown granted porcion 63 to Antonio Gutiérrez in 1767 and porcion 64 to Juan Antonio Villareal in 1767 (Garza). In 1800 Spain granted porcion 63 to José Manuel Gomez, solidifying his 1797 establishment of the Santa Anita Ranch. Gomez's great-granddaughter Salomé Ballí inherited the ranch. She wed Brownsville businessman John Young, and around 1850 Young applied for the grants for porciones 64 and 65. When Young died in 1859, his enormous land holdings passed to his widow and their son, John J. Young. The widowed Salomé Ballí de Young then wed John McAllen, who had been Young's assistant. Together they renamed the Santa Anita Ranch the McAllen Ranch. During the 1860s they enlarged the boundaries of the ranch whenever possible. During this time they also had a son, James Ballí McAllen. Because ranching dominated the

economy and land use of the Lower Rio Grande Valley throughout the nineteenth century, the McAllen family would be very influential in the development of the region in the years to come.

POPULATION, IMMIGRATION, AND MIGRATION

The City of McAllen was founded in 1904 and incorporated in 1911. In 1910, McAllen's population numbered approximately 1,000.¹ McAllen's population reached 5,331 by 1920; 9,074 by 1930; 11,877 by 1940; approximately 24,000 by 1950, and approximately 33,000 by 1960 (National Register Nomination for Casa de Palmas). McAllen's population originated in Mexico, the mid-western and southeastern United States, and Europe. When the International Bridge to Reynosa opened in 1926, migration between McAllen and Mexico became increasingly easy. A series of newer and better bridges were constructed in 1933, 1937, 1960, and 1967. After World War II the United States government initiated the Bracero program to allow Mexican citizens to work on American farms through contracts with the Department of Labor (National Register Nomination for the Cine del Rey). Mexican-American citizens had a strong presence in McAllen from its founding, but the Bracero program and subsequent immigration measures allowed the Hispanic community to grow and take advantage of economic opportunities. Devaluation of the Mexican peso during the 1970s and 1980s encouraged many American corporations to bring manufacturing operations to Mexico, and the increased traffic of goods across the border brought activity to border cities like McAllen. The approval of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993 cemented this relationship between Mexico and North America and further bolstered McAllen's position as a center of international trade. Conversely, worsening economic conditions in Mexico forced more and more immigrants from Mexico to seek work across the border. Worsening economic conditions in Mexico took place at the same time that Mexican-American communities were gaining access to civil rights and public services, making McAllen even more attractive to immigrants.

¹ The enumeration districts for McAllen do not appear in the 1910 census holdings at the Texas State Archives.

AGRICULTURE, TOURISM, AND OIL

The Spanish *porcion* system was structured so that agriculture would be the economic mainstay of all land north of the Rio Grande. The City of McAllen began as a ranch, and agriculture continued to support the economy into the mid-twentieth century. The establishment of the Hidalgo Irrigation Company in 1903 allowed agriculture to expand to include farming in addition to ranching. The construction of the McAllen railroad depot in 1904 further encouraged farming by enabling Midwesterners with experience and interest in agriculture to reach remote tracts in the Valley. Broom corn was the staple crop of McAllen area farms during the 1920s. Citrus fruits became major cash crops during the 1930s and 1940s, but a series of hard freezes in the late 1940s and early 1950s crippled citrus production. In 1954, the Falcon Dam was constructed in an effort to bring improved irrigation to the Valley, but harsh droughts hampered the effort to revive agriculture. With much hard work and determination, by 1960 the farms surrounding McAllen regained their status as major producers of cotton, vegetables, and citrus.

The construction of the grand Casa de Palmas hotel (1918) early in McAllen's history indicates that McAllen was always a tourist destination. Many early visitors considered purchasing farms or homes in the area. McAllen first became a vacation destination for winter tourists in the 1930s. In the 1940s and 1950s, the McAllen Chamber of Commerce conducted free tourist programs and weekly trips to Monterrey, Mexico (Hidalgo County Scrapbook, Box 3L242, File 2). By 1961 McAllen was one of the three most important points of entry into Mexico. Improvements in the McAllen airport document increasing travel to and from McAllen. Prominent McAllen booster Sam Miller first donated land for the city airport in 1930, and the airport is dubbed Miller Field. In 1947, the runways at Miller Field were paved. In 1952, runways were expanded and Trans Texas Airlines began to service the area, and in 1956 Miller Field was designated an International Airport. Today, the McAllen Miller International Airport is the second busiest in the Rio Grande Valley.

The Rio Grande Valley experienced its first major oil boom in 1934. With the decline of the agriculture in the 1940s and 1950s, oil supported the economy. "Oil

discovered in Reynosa in 1947 resulted in a large migration of people from the Mexican interior that constituted a new tourist market and cheap labor supply for McAllen” (Garza). Significant oil and natural gas production continued in the McAllen area into the 1980s.

URBANIZATION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

With the construction of the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Railroad in 1904, the economy of the region began to change. Anglo-American land speculators began to introduce farming to the region. The Hidalgo Irrigation Company catalyzed farm growth by building canals and pump houses to bring water northward from the Rio Grande, and the Hidalgo and San Miguel railroad spur (now known as the Sam Fordyce Extension) encouraged development to stretch westward from Brownsville along the Rio Grande. Seeking to profit from this economic shift, John McAllen, John J. Young, and James Ballí McAllen partnered with railroad entrepreneur Uriah Lott and lawyer and land speculator Lon Hill to found a town named McAllen. This settlement, however, fell prey to competition from the neighboring town of East McAllen. Land speculators William Briggs, O.E.M. Jones, and John Closner had established East McAllen in 1907. Their experience in founding other railroad towns in the Valley, such as Samfordyce and Edinburg, combined with their connections among potential buyers in the mid-west and southeast to give East McAllen a distinct competitive advantage over McAllen. More importantly, a canal constructed by the Rio Bravo Irrigation Company in 1908 made the farmland surrounding East McAllen more attractive to mid-western “home seekers” looking to purchase inexpensive land. By 1911 East McAllen’s agricultural productivity dwarfed West McAllen’s, and East McAllen was incorporated as the City of McAllen. Ironically, the 8,000 acres owned by Briggs, Closner, and Jones had been purchased out of *porciones* 63 and 64 – presumably from John McAllen – for a mere \$3.00 per acre (THC Historic Marker Files, McAllen Post Office Building). The McAllen Town Company, headed by Closner, was responsible for the original plat of the town and for the sale of city lots (National Register Nomination for *Casa de Palmas*).

West McAllen began as nothing but a railroad depot surrounded by uncleared land with no streets, so East McAllen seemed very cosmopolitan by comparison. In 1907,

the McAllen Town Company hastily cleared an area of land and installed a few unpaved streets in West McAllen. Yet even East McAllen had no real design for its development. Construction of the St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico Railroad preceded establishment of the town of McAllen, and the tracks had pre-determined the east-west axis of the city. The town had no north-south axis, though, and its position along the tracks was rather arbitrary. In 1908, when the Rio Bravo Irrigation Company constructed its main canal intersecting the railroad tracks between 18th and 19th (Bicentennial) Streets, it conveniently defined a north-south axis. Irrigation insured growth in East McAllen, and Briggs invested in a formal town plat and hired Rowland E. Horn (*McAllen, The Early History*). Horn platted the McAllen Town Company's 50,000 acres of land into a roughly square town measuring about 7.5 miles from east to west and about 10.3 miles from north to south. The railroad tracks divided the town into two halves of approximately equal size. The western boundary of the town was determined by the old horse trail leading to the train depot in West McAllen, which has since become 23rd Street (or Depot Road).

Horn chose to locate the town's center a few blocks east of the canal between 18th and 19th (Bicentennial) Streets, and 14th (Main) Street became the commercial strip. Because the canal would be such a difficult physical boundary to cross, McAllen's development was focused east of the canal. The area west of the canal, known as the Hammond Addition, developed slowly as large subdivisions.



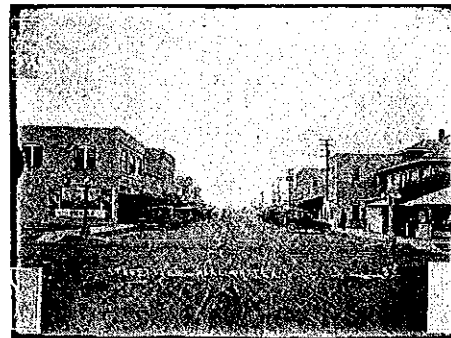
Robert Runyon photograph showing railroad tracks,
courtesy of the Barker Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin

Horn platted the area east of this canal according to a regular grid pattern. Numbered Avenues ran north to south and numbered streets ran east to west. The street pattern was strictly orthogonal, deviating only slightly to accommodate the angle of the railroad tracks. Early in the city's development, an uncovered subsidiary canal zig-zagged through the neighborhood south of the railroad tracks, but this canal was paved

over in 1926 (*McAllen Monitor*). City blocks measured 200 feet by 200 feet, with north-south alleys bisecting them. Lots along the main commercial streets, South 14th (Main) Street and South 13th (Broadway) Street, were platted at half the width of residential lots (Sanborn). Blocks along the railroad tracks and canal were not subdivided into lots in order to accommodate larger industrial complexes. Large institutional blocks reserved for schools and hospitals were dispersed throughout the area.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Commercial growth in the City of McAllen followed commercial patterns seen elsewhere in small town America. The original town plat included a single commercial street - 14th (Main) Street – with double-density lots. Commercial and residential districts would be separate, with the exception of isolated small-scale neighborhood commercial nodes. Commerce in McAllen was so vital, though, that it quickly outgrew this typical pattern. By the 1950s the streets to the east and west of Main had become densely commercial as well. Businesses that began as small-scale neighborhood establishments, especially in the neighborhood around South 17th (Guerra) Street, prospered and grew into large commercial complexes. Today, the area of central McAllen between Business Highway 83 and 10th (Houston) Avenue is either commercial or mixed-use. During the mid- and late-twentieth century, while commerce was vacating many traditional American Main Streets, independently owned and operated businesses continued to thrive and expand in downtown McAllen. Commerce in the greater McAllen area has grown in concentric rings of sprawl just as elsewhere in America, but the area's continued population growth and the daily migration of shoppers from Reynosa and Monterrey, Mexico into McAllen has allowed the historic downtown to coexist with contemporary sprawl and big-box commerce. In sum, patterns of commercial development in McAllen are integrally related to cultural patterns of immigration and migration, which will be discussed in the next section.



Robert Runyon photograph of downtown McAllen, courtesy of the Barker Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin

The 1919 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of McAllen shows commerce centered South of the railroad tracks along South 14th (Main) Street. Businesses included offices, hardware stores, drug stores, grocery stores, a movie theater, a printing press, and a meat market. Industry located along the railroad tracks, at 18th Avenue. The north side of 18th Avenue accommodated railroad-dependent industries such as lumberyards, gins, grain elevators, and warehouses, as well as noxious industries such as petroleum companies and the water, electric, and light plant. The south side of 18th Avenue (Business Highway 83) featured lighter commercial functions such as garages, auto repair shops, and auto showrooms. A few lumberyards were located to the south of 18th Avenue (Business Highway 83) early in McAllen's development, but, as the area became more commercial, such industrial uses were edged out. Early in its development, McAllen had a single commercial "Main Street," South 14th Street. The town's original plat had fostered this by dividing the lots along 14th (Main) Street into half-width so that development would be dense. Businesses along South 14th (Main) Street in 1919 included banks, offices, restaurants, clothing stores and tailors, jewelers, barbershops, hardware stores, drug stores, and movie theaters. Small industries such as a bottling works and a creamery lay further south on 14th (Main) Street.

The neighborhood north of the 18th Avenue (Business Highway 83), beyond the railroad tracks and industries, was predominantly residential with the exception of a few stores along North 10th and North 15th Streets. In the neighborhood to the south of the railroad tracks, however, commercial pockets were mixed with areas of modest dwellings. For instance, the corner of 17th (Austin) Avenue and North 16th Street included a grocery, a dry goods store, a bar, a pool & billiards hall, two restaurants, a barbershop, and a fruit stand. Three more small groceries, two bakeries, and another pool hall were located at the corner of 15th (Chicago) Avenue and North 18th (Bicentennial) Street. Similar small commercial clusters could be found along 17th (Austin) Avenue between 14th (Main) and 17th (Guerra) Streets. Businesses on South 17th (Guerra) Street included restaurants, grocers, a tailor, a barber, a drug store, a printing press, and a hide and saddle manufacturer. Many of these small enterprises provided necessary goods and services within walking distance of the residences in the surrounding blocks. Others provided

goods for the city at large. As time went by, some of these small-scale ventures blossomed into very successful businesses and became loci for more intense commercial development. Consequently, commercial development in McAllen did not follow the typical linear “Main Street” pattern, but expanded to include several parallel streets.



Small neighborhood store, 407 S. 16th Street.

By 1925, Sanborn Maps showed increased commercial development along South 14th (Main) Street and the spread of commerce to South 15th Street. Many businesses shown in the 1919 Sanborn Map remained in 1925, along with some newly-established businesses. A cluster of stores was present on 17th (Austin) Avenue at South 16th Street. More commerce located on 15th (Chicago) Avenue at South 14th (Main) Street, near the creamery. A fully-developed commercial strip on South 17th (Guerra) Street between 15th (Chicago) and 13th (Erie) Avenues would later become Guerra Street, one of McAllen’s primary commercial strips. Dwellings remained on South 11th, 12th, and 13th Streets between 17th (Austin) Avenue and 18th Avenue (Business Highway 83). A Mexican Baptist church and tiny dwellings were present on South 16th Street and 13th (Erie) Avenue. Between 1925 and 1929 these neighborhood commercial developments were supplemented with larger ventures including a business college, Western Union, the McAllen Monitor and McAllen Daily Press newspaper offices, and the Rio Grande Valley Telephone Company. Today, properties in the southern portion of the survey area are about 56% commercial (309 out of 351).

Commercial architecture and urban development in McAllen paralleled popular styles and patterns found throughout small-town America in the early- and mid-twentieth century. Throughout this period, commercial buildings' footprints fully filled their city lots, although sometimes open space fronting the alley was retained for loading or outbuildings. In terms of massing, historic commercial buildings in McAllen are between one and three stories in height, with flat, rectangular elevations and flat or shed roofs. Nearly all historic commercial buildings are masonry. Brick was used from the 1910s through the 1950s. McAllen's Mexican-American population carried a strong traditional cultural knowledge of masonry construction into the commercial downtown. Even in the 1940s and 1950s, after steel frame and poured concrete construction methods gained popularity for commercial construction elsewhere, traditional masonry continued in McAllen. In the 1910s and 1920s, local red or brown brick predominated. In the 1930s, rough-textured yellow brick and hollow clay tile both gained popularity. Often brick and tile were used in conjunction, with yellow face brick over hollow clay tile. Stucco, ceramic tile, and cast stone also were used as facing materials. Occasionally hollow clay tile was simply painted. Beginning in the 1950s, concrete block replaced hollow clay tile. Stucco was commonly used to sheath concrete block, sometimes in combination with aluminum or cast stone.

Nearly every commercial building in downtown McAllen includes an awning, although few are original. Typically awnings are suspended with cables, but some later awnings are cantilevered using reinforced concrete. Aluminum is the most common material for extant awnings, but some wood awnings do remain intact. Storefronts, like awnings, have been replaced in many historic buildings. Aluminum, often anodized, is used for replacement storefronts. Wood storefronts from the 1910s and early 1920s are intact in very few instances. Relatively narrow window lights, casings with simple moldings, and transoms would be typical of storefronts of this era. In the later 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, steel storefronts followed configurations very similar to early wood storefronts, but windows were larger and more open, ceramic tile was more common, and entries often were recessed. Sometimes terrazzo flooring finished recessed entries. Steel casement windows often accompanied steel storefronts.

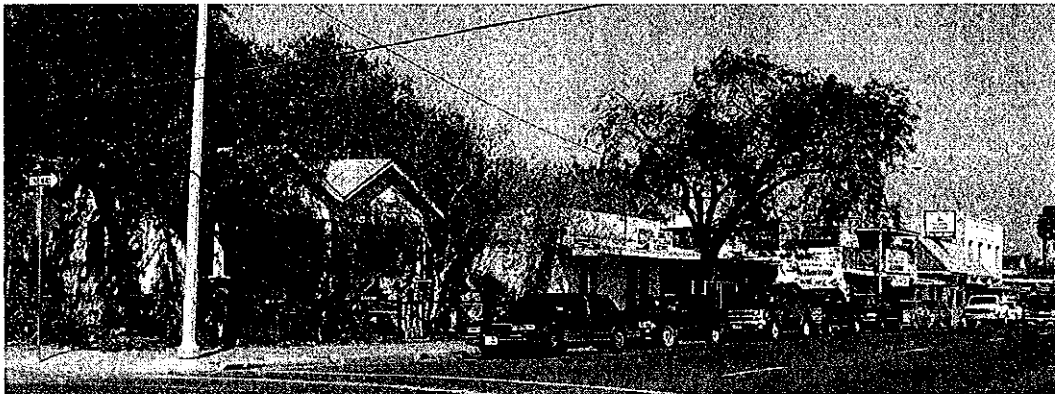
McAllen's commercial streetscapes possess visual continuity because of the consistent elevations formed by building up to the lot line, continuous awnings, wide sidewalks, and recently-added street lighting and furniture. Yet the streetscapes also possess extraordinary visual excitement and variety because of brightly colored signage, banners, shop displays, and paint. Even where smaller commercial nodes are surrounded by residential properties, they continue the architectural patterns set forth by commercial districts on South 14th (Main) Street, South 13th (Broadway) Street, and South 17th (Guerra) Street.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Residential development in McAllen occurs throughout the project area, on both the north and south sides of the railroad tracks. Yet architectural styles, construction methods, building materials, and site planning reflect starkly differing economic, social, and cultural contexts in north McAllen versus south McAllen. During the historic period the railroad tracks were a social boundary. The segregation of neighborhoods north and south of the railroad tracks was the most defining feature of McAllen's urban organization into the mid-twentieth century. A number of urban beautification projects visually distinguished the neighborhood north of the tracks as more affluent. Most of the real estate along the railroad tracks was industrial, but the City Park (today Archer Park), located just north of the tracks, signified that the neighborhood to the north could afford to sacrifice an entire city block for beautification. The central median planted with palms that stretched down North 14th (Main) Street similarly communicated affluence and separation. Census data shows that, throughout the historic period, the neighborhood north of the railroad was nearly exclusively Anglo-American while the residential neighborhoods south of the railroad were nearly exclusively Hispanic. Consequently, the neighborhoods to the north evidenced Anglo-American architectural tastes and popular twentieth-century building methods while the southern neighborhoods evidenced Latin-American tastes and building traditions.

While the southern section of the survey area includes some small areas of consistently residential neighborhood, the residential development more typically is mixed with commercial. Residential buildings very often are located on the same block as

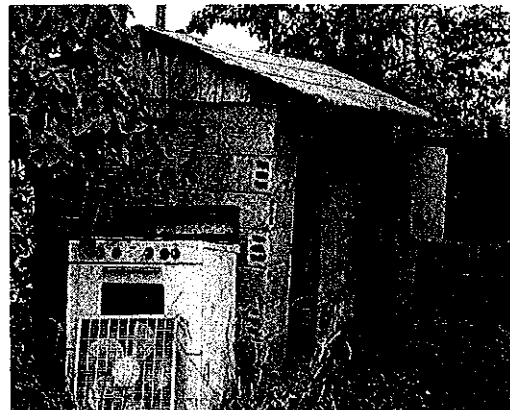
commercial properties, or even on the same lot. Multi-family residences are common. Even when a lot is exclusively residential, it likely may contain garage apartments, duplexes, or even additional single-family houses accessed from the rear alley. South of the railroad tracks, lots were built to the highest density possible (but usually with only single-story buildings). McAllen's Hispanic population was largely segregated from economic and educational opportunity, and housing resources were scarce. Multiple housing units typically were built on a single lot. Early in McAllen's history the area along South 14th (Main) Street that lay south of the subsidiary irrigation canal (since demolished) at was especially poor. City utilities in the neighborhood were inequitable as well, and privies were built as late as the mid-1950s.



Streetscape, mixed commercial and residential uses, S. 17th (Guerra) Street at Galveston looking Northwest.



Rear residence at 605 S. 17th (Guerra) Street.



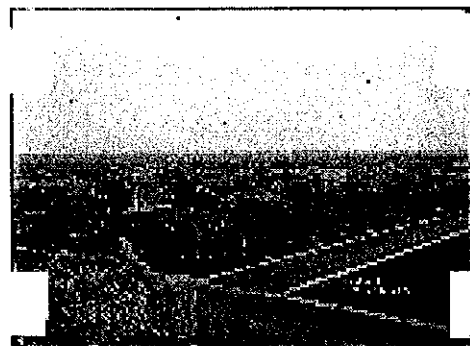
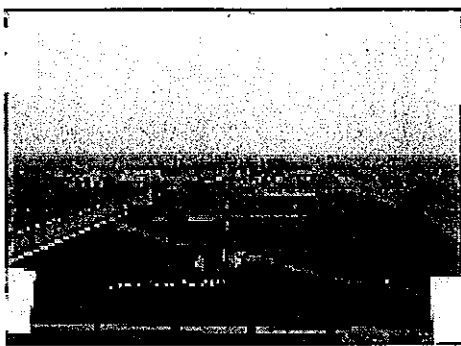
Privy at 419 S. 16th Street.

Some American folk house forms and some popular twentieth century architectural styles are found in south McAllen's residential properties. However, given the area's history of poverty, residential construction is more of a document of necessity

than of taste. Salvaged building materials often were joined with newer materials, confusing interpretation of the building's construction date. Streetscapes were very inconsistent because development was so dense and there was no zoning. Today, not even street setbacks are consistent because in some cases the historic front house has been demolished, leaving only the alley house.

Residential neighborhoods north of the railroad tracks, on the other hand, developed consistently and regularly. The east side of 10th (Houston) Avenue, outside of the official city limits, was developed into residential subdivisions early in McAllen's history.

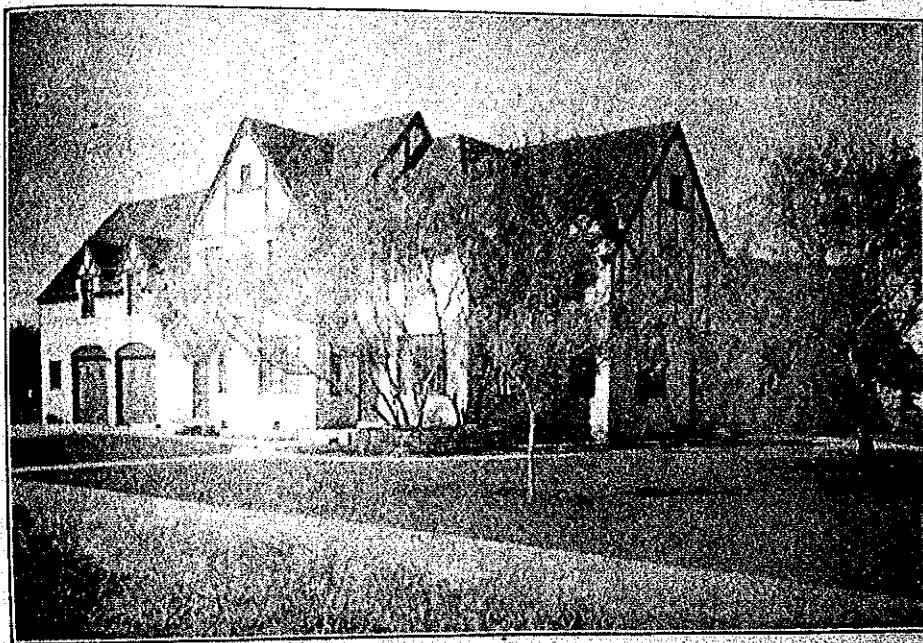
The 1925 Sanborn shows the W.L. Harts Addition on North 10th Street between 23rd (Ebony) and 21st (Cedar) Avenues. Lots typically have only one house and perhaps an outbuilding. The 1925 Sanborn maps shows some small garage apartments north of 18th Avenue (Business Highway 83) and some rooming houses near the railroad depot but primarily single-family houses and no apartment complexes. In a number of instances, land use is even less dense and a single house occupies two lots. Where denser development occurs, it is typically located on corner lots or at the edges of the neighborhood. Open spaces such as parks and playgrounds punctuate the area as well, enhancing the sense of openness. The most prominent of these is Archer Park, which was donated as a public space in 1917 by Mayor O.P. Archer.



Robert Runyon photographs of North McAllen residential neighborhoods,
Courtesy of the Barker Center for American History at the University of Texas, Austin

Setbacks of buildings in the north McAllen residential neighborhoods typically measure about twenty feet with landscaped front lawns, and garages are typically detached and accessed from the rear alley. The scale of residential buildings varies

dramatically – from multi-family apartment buildings located near North 10th Street to small cottages and bungalows to large single-family homes lining North 15th Street. For single family residences, architectural styles selected were typical of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, namely Craftsman and Eclectic Revival styles. Mission Revival, Spanish Eclectic, and Tudor Revival examples are common. Some early-ranch styles and minimal traditional styles were constructed during the historic period. House forms and materials are typical of the various styles and include wood, brick, and stucco. Historic multi-family apartment buildings often employed Mission Revival architecture. Despite variations of style and scale, north McAllen's streetscapes are unified by landscaping and setbacks. Many yards include lush flowering plants, and on North 15th Street tall palms line the street median.



Magnificent \$32,000 14-room Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Miller, North 15th Street, McAllen, Just Completed.

Historic photo of Sam and Marjorie Miller House, *Monty's Monthly* Dec. 1927.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The area surveyed in the scope of this project does not represent a single district, but an urban patchwork of districts with varying histories, functions, and preservation planning needs. That said, recommendations for promoting maintenance, rehabilitation, and compatible new design in the area as a whole are as follows:

- Consult Texas Historical Commission staff in the Certified Local Government (CLG) division and staff from neighboring CLG communities to address weak areas of McAllen's existing historic preservation ordinance (Appendix 5). Specific issues include the lack of a tax abatement that stimulates rehabilitation and leveraged private investment, and the philosophical question of whether newly-constructed buildings in historicist styles may be designated as "heritage properties." This is in conflict with the spirit of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which require new construction to be legible as a product of its own time so that it does not create a false sense of history and devalue authentic historic fabric. Design guidelines for new construction that are overseen by the Planning Department are a more appropriate solution.
- Enforce existing building codes and permitting laws. This is an issue in McAllen not only in terms of aesthetics, but also in terms of vital life-safety issues. Enforce the existing provision in the preservation ordinance stating that all designated historic properties must seek a certificate of appropriateness before performing any work, and contribute fines toward further preservation. Enhance communication between the Planning Department, building inspectors, and even the Police Department. Delegate neighborhood watch groups to notify the proper City officials about code and permitting violations.
- Conduct additional research and nominate the following potential National Register historic districts in the following order of priority:
 1. South 17th (Guerra) Street Historic District (Appendix 6). Downtown McAllen possess many more historic buildings than are included in this small district (Appendix 3: Windshield Survey Map). However, inappropriate alterations would have to be reversed in order for many of these buildings to meet the National Register's criteria for integrity;

2. Las Palmas Residential Historic District (Appendix 7);
 3. North 11th-12th Street Residential Historic District (Appendix 8).
- Nominate the following individual high-priority resources for listing on the National Register and as McAllen landmarks (note that resources in gray are already listed on the National Register):

| Address | Street | Current Name | Historic Name |
|------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1410 | Austin Ave. | | |
| 1018 | Beech Ave. | Celestial Room | 1st Christian Church |
| 1316 | Beech Ave. | | |
| 1103 | Bus. Hwy. 83 | Affordable Furnishings | |
| 1512 | Fresno Ave. | | |
| 1619 | Galveston Ave. | Roosevelt School | Roosevelt School |
| 0100-0104 | N. 10th St. | Super Market, Discount Superstore | |
| 0118 | N. 11th St. | Masonic Temple | Masonic Temple |
| 0101 | N. 13th (Broadway) St. | | |
| 0101 | N. 14th (Main) St. | Casa de Palmas | Casa de Palmas |
| 0201 Block | N. 14th (Main) St. | 1st Methodist Church | 1st Methodist Church |
| 0300-0302 | N. 15th St. | Williams & Williams Attorneys at Law | |
| 0505 | N. 15th St. | | Horn House |
| 0520 | N. 15th St. | | |
| 0612 | N. 15th St. | | |
| 0704 | N. 15th St. | | |
| 0707 | N. 15th St. | | Marjorie & Sam Miller House |
| 0101 | N. 16th St. | | Mid-Valley Ice |
| 0316 | S. 11th St. | | |
| 0123 | S. 13th (Broadway) St. | V & E Boutique/Lingerie Outlet | Southwestern Bell Telephone Co. |
| 0300-0308 | S. 14th (Main) St. | J.C. Penny/M&J Building | J.C. Penny/M&J Building |
| 0301 | S. 14th (Main) St. | La Placita Leisure Center | Post Office |
| 0302 - 306 | S. 15th St. | Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church | Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church |
| 0500 | S. 15th St. | | |
| 0710 | S. 16th St. | Roosevelt School | Roosevelt School |
| 0313-0317 | S. 17th (Guerra) St. | | |
| 0609-0611 | S. 17th (Guerra) St. | Hotel El Valle | |
| 0100 | S. 17th (Guerra) St. | Bright Lights | D. Guerra & Sons |
| 0210 | S. 17th (Guerra) St. | Bitas Wedding & Gifts | |
| 0311 | S. 17th (Guerra) St. | Cine El Rey | Cine El Rey |
| 0712 | S. 17th (Guerra) St. | | |
| 0100 | S. 18th/19th (Bicentennial) St. | | S.P.R.P. Passenger Station |

- Develop official design guidelines that the McAllen Planning Department can use to consistently regulate signage, storefronts, awnings, alterations to historic buildings, and reversal of inappropriate alterations to historic buildings. Considering that occupancy rates are so high and demand for space is so intense in McAllen's downtown core, these guidelines should also address how to best match new tenants and new functions with old buildings.
- Hold town-hall meetings or workshops to educate historic building owners and realtors about the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits available to properties eligible for the National Register and/or constructed before 1936, as well as McAllen's preservation ordinance and design guidelines.

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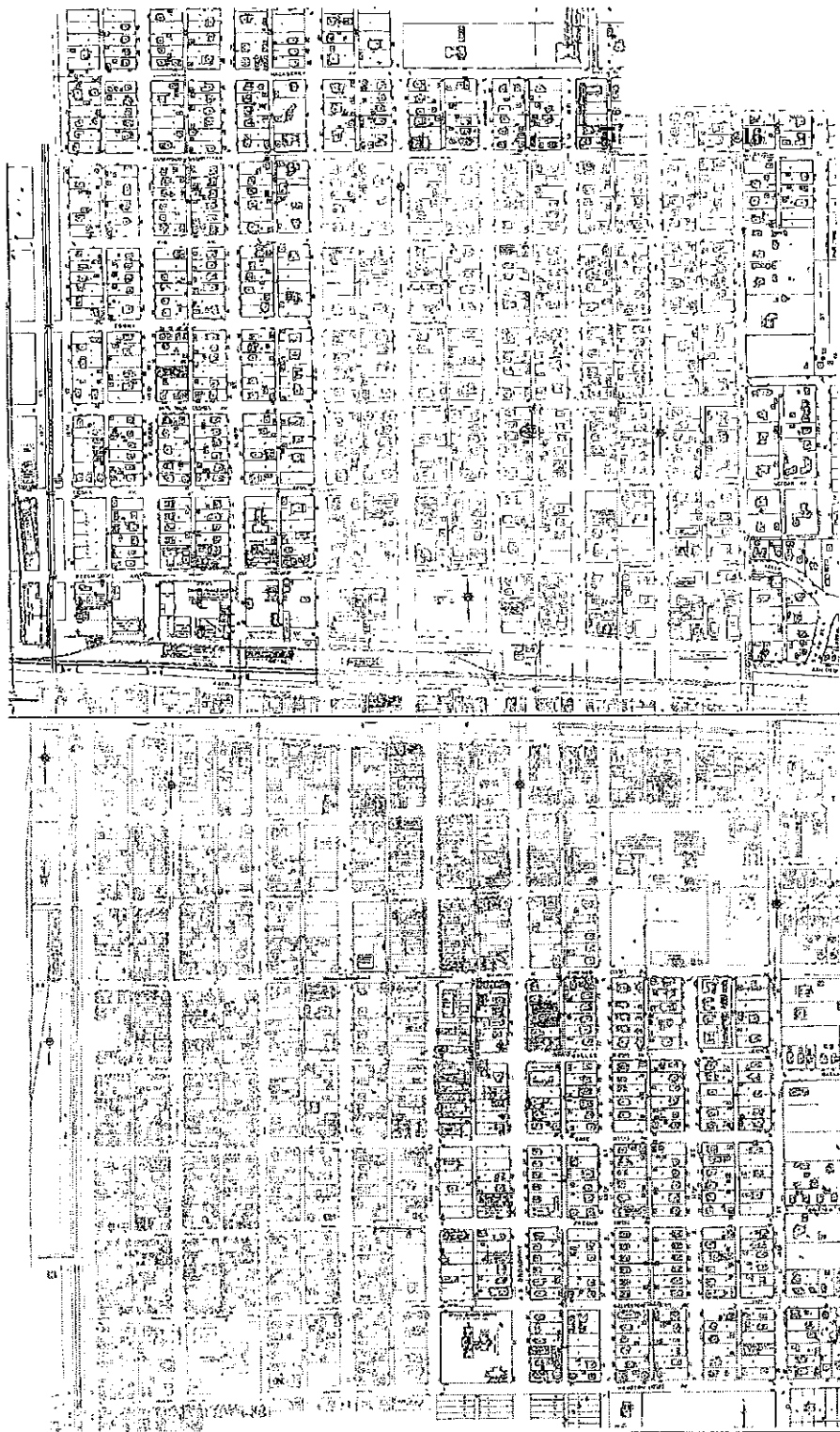
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APPENDIX 1: INDEX OF HISTORIC STREET NAMES

| HISTORIC STREET NAME | CONTEMPORARY STREET NAME |
|---|--------------------------|
| 13 th Street | Broadway |
| 14 th Street | Main Street |
| 17 th Street | Guerra Street |
| 18 th & 19 th Streets | Bicentennial Street |
| 26 th Avenue | Hackberry Avenue |
| 25 th Avenue | Gumwood Avenue |
| 24 th Avenue | Fir Avenue |
| 23 rd Avenue | Ebony Avenue |
| 22 nd Avenue | Date Palm Avenue |
| 21 st Avenue | Cedar Avenue |
| 20 th Avenue | Beech Avenue |
| 19 th Avenue | Ash Avenue |
| 18 th Avenue OR Hi-way | Business 83 |
| 17 th Avenue | Austin Avenue |
| 16 th Avenue | Beaumont Avenue |
| 15 th Avenue | Chicago Avenue |
| 14 th Avenue | Dallas Avenue |
| 13 th Avenue | Erie Avenue |
| 12 th Avenue | Fresno Avenue |
| 11 th Avenue | Galveston Avenue |
| 10 th Avenue | Houston Avenue |

APPENDIX 2: 1929 SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP UPDATED -1949



APPENDIX 3: WINDSHIELD SURVEY MAP²



² Key: Buildings shaded in gray were constructed by 1960.

Preservation Central, Inc.

Surveyor: EC

APPENDIX 5: McALLEN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION ORDINANCE³

Sec. 138-410. Purpose.

(a) The Board of Commissioners of the City of McAllen hereby declares that as a matter of public policy the protection, enhancement, and perpetuation of landmarks or districts of historical and cultural importance and significance is necessary to promote the economic, cultural, educational and general welfare of the public. It is also recognized by the board of commissioners that the buildings and structures of the City of McAllen represent the unique confluence of time and place that shaped the identity of generations of citizens, collectively and individually, and produced significant historic, architectural, and cultural resources that constitute the City of McAllen heritage. This article is intended to:

- (1) Protect and enhance the landmarks and districts which represent distinctive elements of McAllen's historic, architectural, and cultural heritage;
 - (2) Foster civic pride in the accomplishments of the past;
 - (3) Protect and enhance McAllen's attractiveness to visitors and the support and stimulus to the economy thereby provided;
 - (4) Insure the harmonious, orderly, and efficient growth and development of the City of McAllen;
 - (5) Promote economic prosperity and welfare of the community by encouraging the most appropriate use of such historic buildings and structures within the city; and
 - (6) Encourage stabilization, restoration and improvements of such buildings.
- (7) It is specifically provided that when the application of this article results in a substantial burden on a person's free exercise of religion, as defined under Chapter 110, Civil Practice and Remedies Code of the State of Texas, then the provisions of such chapter are applicable to such specific application.
(Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01)

Sec. 138-411. Definitions.

[As used in this article, the following words shall have the following meaning:]

Appurtenance means a feature related to a parcel of land or a site, or to a building, structure or object, or to a related group of any of these. The term includes, but is not limited to, buildings, structures, objects, sites, landscaping features, walls, fences, light fixtures, steps, paving, sidewalks, shutters, awnings and signs.

Building means a structure or construction that is created to shelter or accommodate any form of human activity. The term building may be used to refer jointly to historically or functionally related units, such as a courthouse and jail, or a house and barn.

Certificate of appropriateness means a permit issued pursuant to section 138-416 evidencing approval of the particular work it specifies.

Commission means the Board of Commissioners of the City of McAllen.

Conservation means the careful treatment of historic building materials and features and artifacts to preserve them and to prevent future deterioration.

Council means the McAllen Historic Preservation Council.

Historic district means a geographic area designated as such pursuant to section 138-413(a).

Heritage property means a building or structure that is:

- (1) At least 50 years old but does not qualify for or is not designated a landmark property and whose owner, in keeping with standards and procedures promulgated by the City of McAllen, substantially restores, rehabilitates, or preserves all of the facade facing any street it abuts; or
- (2) Less than 50 years old and at the time of application for designation, is located within the City of McAllen's boundaries of 50 or more years prior thereto or in a historic district, and has been substantially restored, rehabilitated, or preserved in keeping with standards and procedures promulgated by the City of McAllen; or
- (3) Is a replica building or structure, as defined in this section.

Landmark property means an individual building or structure that is at least 50 years old, has been restored, rehabilitated, or preserved in accordance with the applicable United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards, and as to which the council finds that it:

³http://library5.municode.com/gateway.dll/TX/texas/159?f=templates&fn=default.htm&npusername=10021&nppassword=MCC&npc_credentialspresent=true&vid=default

- (1) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of historical construction or architecture;
- (2) Is associated with the lives of persons significant to our past;
- (3) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- (4) Has yielded information important in the prehistory or history of McAllen, the region, or the nation.

The designation "landmark property" recognizes that the historic place, or the building(s), structure(s), accessory building(s), fences, or other appurtenances at the place are of basic and vital importance for the preservation of culture and the development of tourism.

Landmark properties are designated by the commission upon nomination by the council.

Ordinary repairs or maintenance means work done to prevent deterioration of a resource or any part thereof by returning the resource as nearly as practical to its condition prior to such deterioration, decay, or damage and by using where possible, original materials.

Overlay zone means a set of requirements that is described in the ordinance text, is mapped, and is imposed in addition to those of the underlying zoning district.

Preservation means the stabilization of an historic building or structure, its materials and features in their present condition to prevent future deterioration.

Rehabilitation means the act or process of making possible a compatible use of a building through repair, alterations or additions while preserving those portions or features of the property which convey its historical, architectural, and cultural values.

Replica building or structure means a newly constructed building located either within the City of McAllen's boundaries of 50 or more years prior to its application for designation or in a historic district, and that has been built in keeping with standards and procedures promulgated by the City of McAllen, in a building style congruent with a period of the neighborhood of 50 or more years prior to application.

Resource means a landmark, landmark site, and all land or water within an historic district together with the appurtenances and improvements if any. The term resource includes, but is not limited to, separate districts, buildings, structures, sites, objects, landscape features, and related groups thereof.

Restoration means the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features and character of an historic building as it appeared at a particular period of time. Sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make the building functional is appropriate.

Structure means anything constructed, erected or artificially built up; or composed of parts and joined together in a definite manner.

(Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01; Ord. No. 2004-75, § 1, 9-27-04)

Sec. 138-412. McAllen Historic Preservation Council.

(a) There is hereby created a board to be known as the McAllen Historic Preservation Council, hereinafter called council, consisting of seven members appointed by the board of commissioners each having a known and demonstrated interest, competence or knowledge in historic preservation within the City of McAllen. The council shall consist at a minimum of five members each from one of the following areas of expertise:

- (1) Architect licensed to practice in Texas;
- (2) Historian with specialization in McAllen history;
- (3) Licensed real estate broker or appraiser;
- (4) Building contractor; and
- (5) Owner of historic or landmark property.

(b) Should a member, resigning or finishing his/her term from the council, be from one of the identified professions leaving the council with no members from the identified profession, the vacancy thereby created shall be filled by the appointment of another member of the same identified profession.

- (1) A quorum shall consist of four members.
- (2) Members shall serve for a term of two years in staggered terms according to Chapter Two, Article III, Boards, Committees and Commissions of the McAllen City Code.

- (3) The chairperson and vice-chairperson of the council shall be elected by and from members of the board.
- (4) The chairperson and vice chairperson of the council shall be elected annually in September by a majority of the members of the council, and shall serve a term of one year until their successors are elected. (Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01)

Sec. 138-413. Designation of historic districts landmark properties, and heritage properties.

(a) Historic district.

- (1) Zoning designation. The board of commissioners may, from time to time, designate certain areas in the City of McAllen as historic districts, and define, amend or eliminate the boundaries of same. Such districts shall bear the word "historic" in their zoning designation. Such designation shall be an overlay zone, in addition to any other zoning district designation established in the zoning ordinance.
 - (2) Official zoning map. The board of commissioners shall cause the designation to be recorded in the Records of Hidalgo County, the tax records of the City of McAllen and the Hidalgo County Appraisal District. The official zoning map for the City of McAllen shall indicate the designated historic district with the suffix "HD".
 - (3) Criteria. In making the designation of a historic district, the board of commissioners shall affirmatively find the area has one or more of the following characteristics:
 - a. Possess significance in history, architecture, archeology, and culture;
 - b. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local, regional, state, or national history;
 - c. Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
 - d. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction;
 - e. Represents the work of a renowned master designer, builder or craftsman;
 - f. Represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood;
 - g. The majority of the buildings or structures within the district is 50 years old or older and considered contributing historically as it retains its structural and architectural integrity, and
 - h. Most buildings have been rehabilitated to The Secretary of the Interiors Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings.
 - (4) Procedure to establish a historic district. In designating a historic district, the following steps must be followed:
 - a. A petition signed by the majority of the property owners within the proposed district requesting its designation as an historic district must be filed with the council, or the council may on its own motion propose and act to designate an historic district;
 - b. The council entertains the petition or the agenda item and conducts a hearing to learn the historic nature of the proposed district and forwards a recommendation to the planning and zoning commission;
 - c. The planning and zoning commission receives the recommendation, gives notice, conducts a public hearing and forwards a recommendation to the board of commissioners;
 - d. The board of commissioners receives the recommendation, sends notices, conducts a public hearing and takes action to accept, modify, or reject the proposed district.
 - (5) Properties within a designated district not affected by this article. This article shall not apply to any properties within a designated district with buildings or structures less than 50 years old, except if such properties are designated heritage properties.
 - (6) Maintaining districts. A designated historic district must maintain the characteristics depicted in subsection 138-413(a)(3) on the basis of which it was designated, and follow all relevant guidelines established by the City of McAllen in order to qualify for any special funding or tax incentives.
- (b) Designation of landmark and heritage properties.
- (1) These provisions pertaining to the designation of landmark and heritage properties constitute a part of the comprehensive plan of the City of McAllen. A property qualifies for designation as a landmark or heritage property if it purports to meet the definition of either as set out in section 138-411, and upon compliance with all the requirements of this article.
 - (2) A property owner shall submit an application to the historic preservation council in order to be considered for designation as a landmark or heritage property. The application shall be in the form and be filed in the manner required by the council.

- (3) Once the application is submitted and processed, the council shall conduct a public hearing whereas the owner, interested parties, and/or technical experts may present testimony or documentary evidence which will become part of a record regarding the historic, architectural or cultural importance of the proposed property.
- (4) Upon recommendation of the council, the proposed application shall be submitted to the planning and zoning commission which shall give notice and conduct its hearing on the proposed designation. Such hearing shall be in the same manner and according to the same procedures as specifically provided in the general zoning ordinance of the City of McAllen.
- (5) Upon receipt of a recommendation from the planning and zoning commission, the board of commissioners shall give notice, follow the publication procedure, hold a public hearing and make its determination in the same manner as provided in the general zoning ordinance of the City of McAllen.
- (6) Upon designation of property as a heritage or landmark property, the board of commissioners shall cause the designation to be recorded in the Official Public Records of Real Property of Hidalgo County, the tax records of the City of McAllen and the Hidalgo County Appraisal District. The official zoning map for the City of McAllen shall indicate a designated landmark property with the suffix "LP," and a designated heritage property with the suffix "HP".
- (7) Landmark and heritage properties must be properly maintained and follow all relevant guidelines established by the City of McAllen in order to qualify for any special funding or tax incentives.
- (8) The board of commissioners upon recommendation by the historic preservation council and the planning and zoning commission shall have the power to involuntarily designate landmark or heritage properties after public hearings are conducted and after proper notification of property owner(s).
(Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01; Ord. No. 2004-75, § 2, 9-27-04)

Sec. 138-414. Functions of the council.

- (a) The council shall have the following powers and it shall be its duty to:
 - (1) Prepare rules and procedures as necessary to carry out the business of the council.
 - (2) Recommend criteria for the designation of historic, architectural, and cultural landmarks and the delineation of historic districts, which may be adopted by the board of commissioners.
 - (3) Conducts surveys, and maintains an inventory of significant historic, architectural, and cultural landmarks and all properties located in historic districts within the city.
 - (4) Create committees from among its members and delegate to those committees responsibilities to carry out the purposes of this article.
 - (5) Maintain written minutes which record all actions taken by the council and reasons for taking such actions.
 - (6) Recommend conferral of recognition upon the owners of landmarks or properties within districts by means of certificates, plaques or markers.
 - (7) Increase public awareness of the value of historic, cultural and architectural preservation by developing and participating in public education programs.
 - (8) Make recommendations to the city commission concerning the utilization of federal, state, local or private funds and/or tax incentives to promote the preservation or rehabilitation of landmarks and historic districts within the city.
 - (9) Act upon applications for certificates of appropriateness pursuant to this act.
 - (10) Prepare specific design guidelines for the review of landmarks and districts.
 - (11) Recommend the acquisition of landmark structures by the city government where their preservation is essential to the purpose of this article and where private preservation is not feasible.
- (b) Meetings. The council shall meet once a month if necessary at a regularly scheduled time. Special meetings may be called upon request of the chairperson or vice chairperson, or upon written request of four members, or upon notice from the chief building official that a matter requires the consideration of the council. All meetings shall have advance notice posted in accordance with Texas Open Meetings Law.
(Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01)

Sec. 138-415. Certificate of appropriateness.

It shall be unlawful for any person to install, alter or demolish any exterior feature of any resource, or construct any new structure within a designated historic district or in a designated historic landmark or

heritage property until after an application for a certificate of appropriateness of such work has been approved by the council. Additionally, a building or demolition permit may not be granted for property within the historic district or in a designated historic landmark or heritage property unless the council issues a certificate of appropriateness.

- (1) The council shall serve as the review body with the authority to approve and deny applications for certificates of appropriateness.
 - (2) In acting upon such applications, the council shall seek to accomplish the purposes of this article.
 - (3) A certificate of appropriateness shall not be required for work deemed, under the provisions of the chapter, to be ordinary repair or maintenance of any resource.
 - (4) Decisions of the council shall be in writing and shall state the findings of the council.
 - (5) A certificate of appropriateness shall be valid for 12 months and shall expire thereafter.
 - (6) An applicant may resubmit an application for a certificate of appropriateness after 12 months from the date of a denial.
 - (7) Certificates of appropriateness shall be issued for distinct and separate phases of an ongoing project.
- (Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01)

Sec. 138-416. Application and procedure.

(a) Application. The applicant shall submit to the chief building official an application in writing for a certificate of appropriateness which includes data and information as required by the building official, including but not limited to the following:

- (1) Name of applicant and property owner.
- (2) Mailing address of applicant and permanent address of property owner.
- (3) Legal description and location of property to be altered or repaired.
- (4) A detailed description of the nature of the proposed external alteration or repair to be performed.
- (5) A description of how the proposed change will be in character with the architectural or historical aspect of the structure or site.
- (6) Any circumstances or conditions concerning the property which may affect compliance with this article.
- (7) The intended and desired starting and completion date of the alterations to be made.
- (8) Any drawings or photographs which would explain the proposed alteration.
- (9) Color samples of the colors which will be used on the structure.
- (10) Building, plumbing, electrical, mechanical and/or other permit applications.

(b) Fees. A nonrefundable administrative fee in addition to the building permit fee will be assessed to the applicant reflecting the cost to the city for processing the application. The application will not be deemed complete, nor will it be processed until such fee is paid in full. A separate permit fee will be applicable for work under associated permits at time of construction.

(c) Insignificant alteration. If the chief building official, guided by the adopted design guidelines, and where applicable, criteria from the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings, determines that the application involves ordinary repair or maintenance, alteration, change, restoration, color or removal of any exterior architectural feature of a building or structure which does not involve significant change in the architectural or historic value, style, general design or appearance, he/she may, within seven days, tentatively approve the application and shall forward a copy of the approved application to the chairperson of the council or to the vice chairperson of the council, if the chairperson is not available. The chairperson or vice chairperson of the council shall, within five business days, either approve the building official's decision or call a meeting of the council to consider the application. If the chairperson or vice chairperson of the council does not take any action within five business days, it shall be deemed that such council person has approved the building official's decision.

(d) Significant alteration. If the building official determines that the application involves an alteration, change, restoration, removal or demolition of an external architectural feature of a building or structure which involves a significant change in the architectural or historic value, style, general design, or appearance or for any other reason does not desire to act under the subsection above and is within a historic district or is a designated landmark or heritage property, he/she shall refer the application to the council and call for a meeting of the council to consider a certificate of appropriateness.

(e) Time for approval. The council shall hold a meeting to consider the application within 30 days after the receipt of a completed application. The applicant shall be given written notice of the time and place of the meeting by regular mail to the address on the application. The council may hold any additional meetings within 60 days following submission of a completed application as may be necessary to carry out its responsibilities under this article. The applicant or his/her agent, or representative, shall attend at least one meeting of the council during which his/her application is considered, otherwise the council shall not take action, and the application will be deemed to be incomplete. The council shall make its determination to the building official within 60 days after receipt of a completed application unless the council and the applicant mutually agree to extend the period of review. If action is not taken within 60 days after receipt of a completed application and if there was no mutual agreement to extend the period of review, it shall be deemed that the council approved the application and it shall issue a certificate of appropriateness. This shall not apply if the council requested additional information from the applicant and the applicant has not submitted the information to the chief building official.
(Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01)

Sec. 138-417. Criteria for review of certificate of appropriateness.

In determining the recommendation and action on an application for a certificate of appropriateness, the chief building official and the council shall review and decide the appropriateness of the proposed alterations in accordance to the following:

- (1) Removal or modification of architectural detail. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure and its environment shall not be destroyed.
- (2) Scale of new construction in the historic district. The board shall review all new construction plans in order to ensure visual compatibility with the surrounding buildings and environment in relation to height, gross volume, and proportion.
- (3) Value of the historic district or landmark. The value of the historic district or landmark as an area of unique interest and character shall be preserved.
- (4) Standards to be used. The Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Applying the Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings, as issued by the Secretary of the Interior shall be used for any alterations.

All items in the above subsections are mandatory and must be met in order to receive a certificate of appropriateness.

(Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01)

Sec. 138-418. Additional issues for consideration.

In addition to granting certificates of appropriateness under the criteria listed in subsections 138-417(2)--(4), the council shall review and consider additional issues. In determining the action to be taken on an application for a certificate of appropriateness, the chief building official and the council shall review and consider the following matters:

- (1) The effect of the proposed change on the general historic, cultural, and architectural nature of the district or landmark.
- (2) The appropriateness of proposed exterior architectural features which can be seen from a public street, alley or walkway.
- (3) The general design, arrangement, texture, color, and material of the building or structure and the relation of such factors to similar features of buildings, structures, in the district.
- (4) Conformity to the general character of the particular historic area involved.
- (5) Conformity of proposed signs with the character of the historic district or landmark.
- (6) The importance of finding a way to meet the current needs of the property owner and the importance of approving plans that will be economically reasonable for the property owner to carry out.

(Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01)

Sec. 138-419. Appeals.

Any persons, jointly or severally, aggrieved by any decision of the council may present to the board of commissioners a petition, duly verified, setting forth that such decision is unjust, in whole or in part, and specifying the grounds of injustice. Such petition shall be presented to the board of commissioners within

ten days after the final decision of the council, and not thereafter, for notification and calling of a public hearing to hear and act on the appeal.
(Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01)

Sec. 138-420. Demolition by neglect.

No owner or person with an interest in real property designated as a landmark or heritage property or included within a historic district shall permit the property to fall into a serious state of disrepair so as to result in the deterioration of any exterior architectural feature which would, in the judgment of the council, produce a detrimental effect upon the historic character of the district or landmark.

Examples of such deterioration include:

- (1) Deterioration of exterior walls or other vertical supports.
- (2) Deterioration of roofs or other horizontal members.
- (3) Deterioration of exterior chimneys.
- (4) Deterioration or crumbling of exterior stucco or mortar.
- (5) Ineffective waterproofing of exterior walls, roof, or foundations, including broken windows or doors.
- (6) Deterioration of any feature so as to create a hazardous condition which could lead to the claim that demolition is necessary for the public safety.

(Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01)

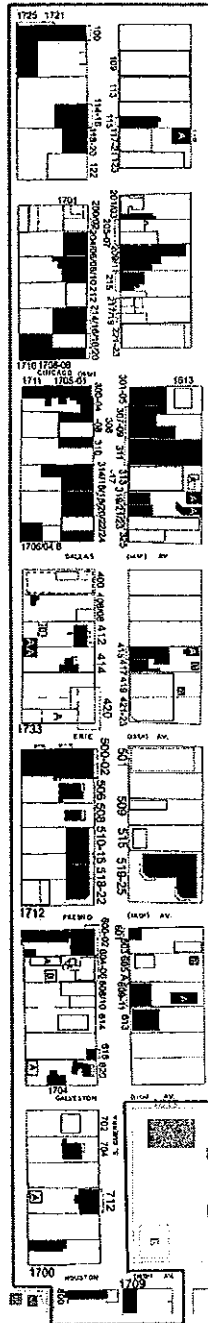
Sec. 138-421. Penalties.

- (a) The board may revoke classification designators for failure by the property owner(s) within the historic district or of a designated landmark or heritage property to maintain the structure at the prescribed levels.
 - (b) Any person who shall violate, participate or acquiesce in the violation of any provision of this chapter or who shall fail to comply therewith or with any of the requirements thereof, or who shall erect or alter any building in violation of any detailed statement or plan required to be submitted and approved thereunder shall for each and every violation or noncompliance be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction, be punished as prescribed in section 1-14 of the McAllen City Code.
 - (c) The city attorney's office is hereby authorized to file an appropriate action in a court of competent jurisdiction to enforce the provisions hereof by cause in equity or by any other remedy available by law.
- (Ord. No. 2001-82, § 1, 11-26-01)

APPENDIX 6: POTENTIAL SOUTH GUERRA STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

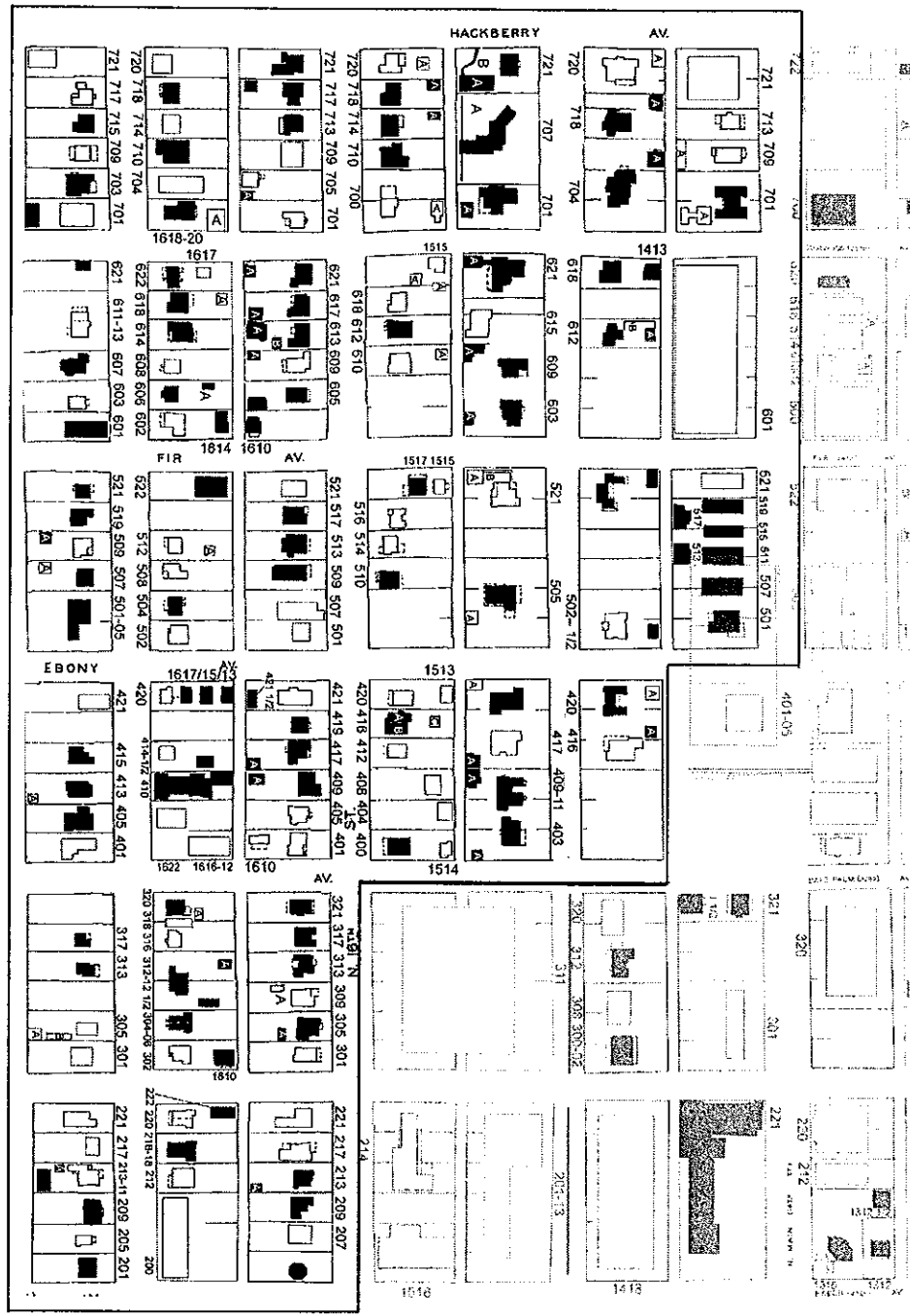
Potential South Guerra St. Historic District
72 Contributing Resources/49 Non-Contributing Resources

Rough Boundaries:
South Guerra St. to the East and West
Austin Ave. to the North
Houston Ave. to the South



APPENDIX 7: POTENTIAL LAS PALMAS RESIDENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

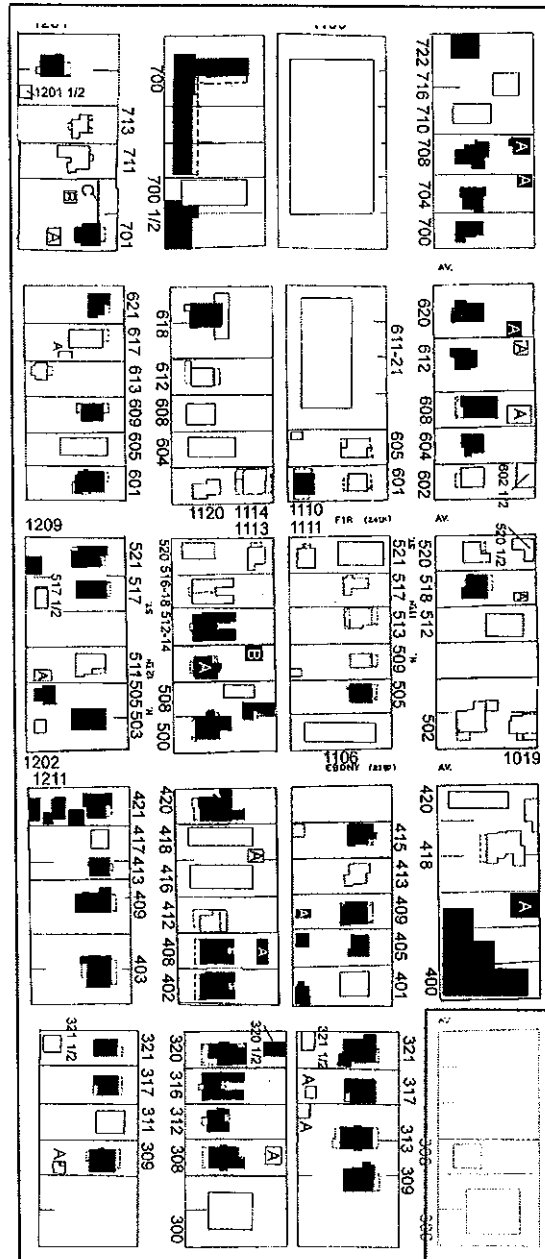
Potential Las Palmas Residential Historic District
127 Contributing Resources/94 Non-Contributing Resources
Rough Boundaries:
Hackberry Ave. to the North
Date Palm Ave./Beech Ave. to the South
N. 17th St. to the East
N. 16th St./N. 14th St. to the West



APPENDIX 8: POTENTIAL NORTH 11TH-12TH STREET RESIDENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Potential North 11th & 12th St. Residential Historic District
64 Contributing Resources/63 Non-Contributing Resources

Rough Boundaries:
North 12th St. to the West
North 11th St. to the East
Hackberry Ave. to the North
Cedar Ave. to the South
Hackberry Ave. to the North





SURVEY MAPS

**MCALLEN CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY
AUGUST 2005**