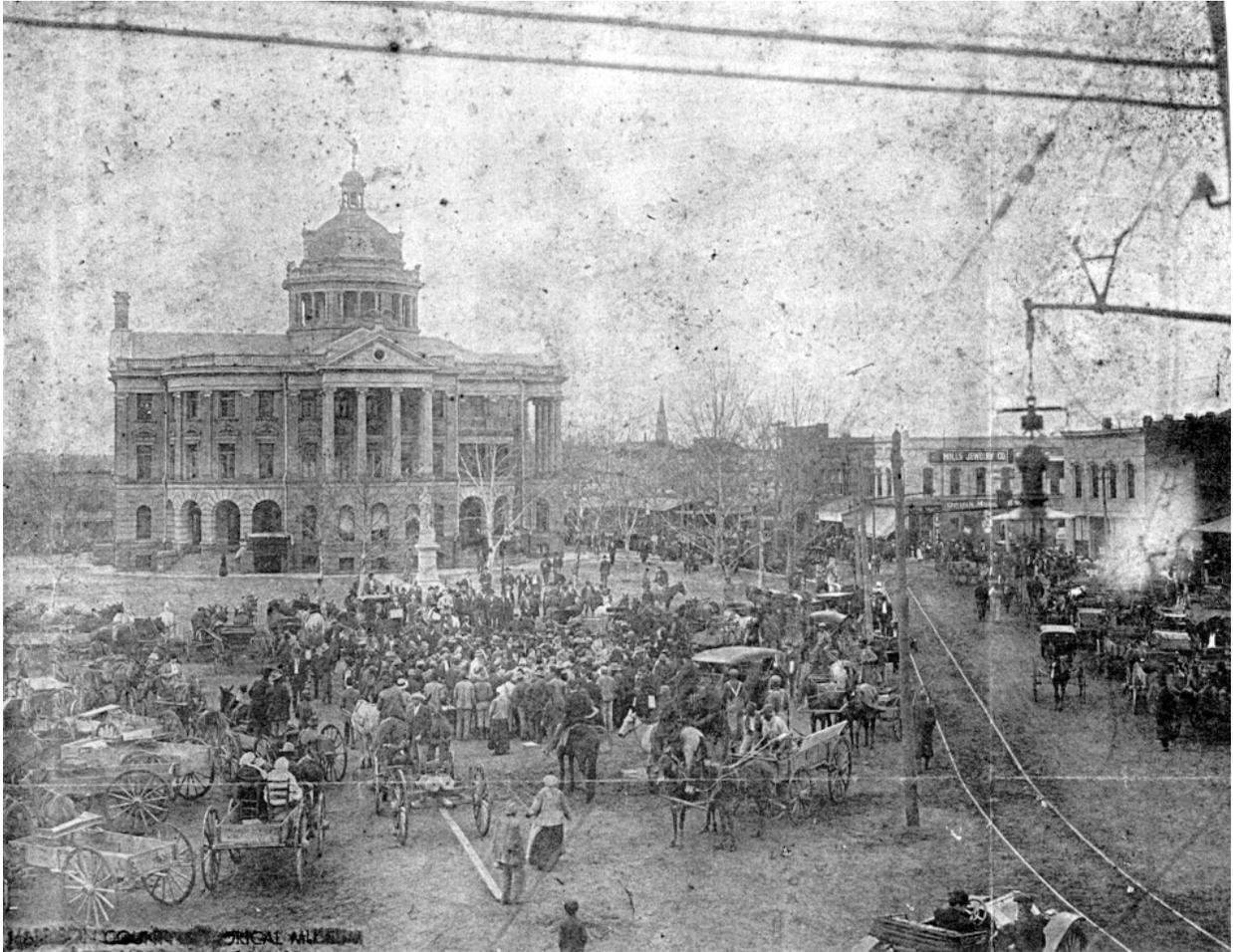


HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN: A Strategy for Economic Development And Neighborhood Revitalization



“Downtown Marshall c. 1910”

CITY OF MARSHALL

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN: A Strategy for Economic Development And Neighborhood Revitalization

Prepared for:
The City of Marshall
City Commission

By:
City of Marshall
Department of Planning and Community Development
And
Historic Landmark Preservation Committee

Marshall, Texas
2001

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This historic preservation plan is a guide for community improvement and involvement.

This is not ordinary historic preservation. The plan takes an innovative, inclusive, conservative approach to historic preservation. Its philosophy is voluntary, rather than mandatory. Its method is area-wide improvement, as opposed to "saving" only a few historic buildings. Its recommendations — based on informing the public, involving the community and offering incentives — encourage investment in older areas of Marshall.

Encouraging investment in Marshall's older areas is wise public policy. These older neighborhoods and the downtown give the city a character and image unlike any other place. Marshall's distinct identity is portrayed in neighborhoods such as East End and Northside; Rainey Addition and Gregg Addition; Belmont and Baptist Hill; New Town and West End; South Marshall, Sunny South, and Yankee Stadium; and in the Original Townsite neighborhoods and Downtown. These unique neighborhoods are a social and economic asset.

Helping these and other significant older areas of the city thrive and prosper is the goal of this plan.

Two important factors directed the development of this specialized approach to serving the city's historic areas: (1) the large number of older buildings, and (2) the economic level of the community.

- Marshall has more than 4,600 properties over 50 years old — more than half of the city's buildings. These older buildings cover a significant portion of the city's land-area.
- Over 50% of the city's residents meet federal low- to moderate-income standards. Seventy-five percent of the city's historic neighborhoods are located in low- to moderate-income census tracts.

Because of these two factors, the city's huge number of older buildings cannot reasonably be replaced by new construction. They can, however, be guided to work to the city's advantage. Through careful, creative programs, older properties have the potential to fulfill a number of community needs:

- Viable downtown and neighborhoods
- Affordable housing and affordable business locations
- Increased homeownership
- Stabilized property values
- Protected investment in what already exists — buildings, infrastructure, and established neighborhoods
- Preserved cultural and historical heritage in all older neighborhoods
- Increased construction-related and tourism-related business, jobs, and dollars
- An expanded tax base
- A more attractive, livable city.

This plan outlines policies and programs that use historic preservation as a tool to meet these community economic development and revitalization needs.

This plan also recognizes **community improvement as a shared responsibility**. Every citizen has a role. There must be a dynamic partnership of both public and private efforts. A united force of private groups and individuals working with the City can achieve vastly greater results than a single government entity working alone.

The success of this plan will come through initial leadership from the City coupled with increased involvement of community groups, property owners, neighborhood residents, and the general public — **all working together to make Marshall an even more attractive place to live, invest, and visit.**

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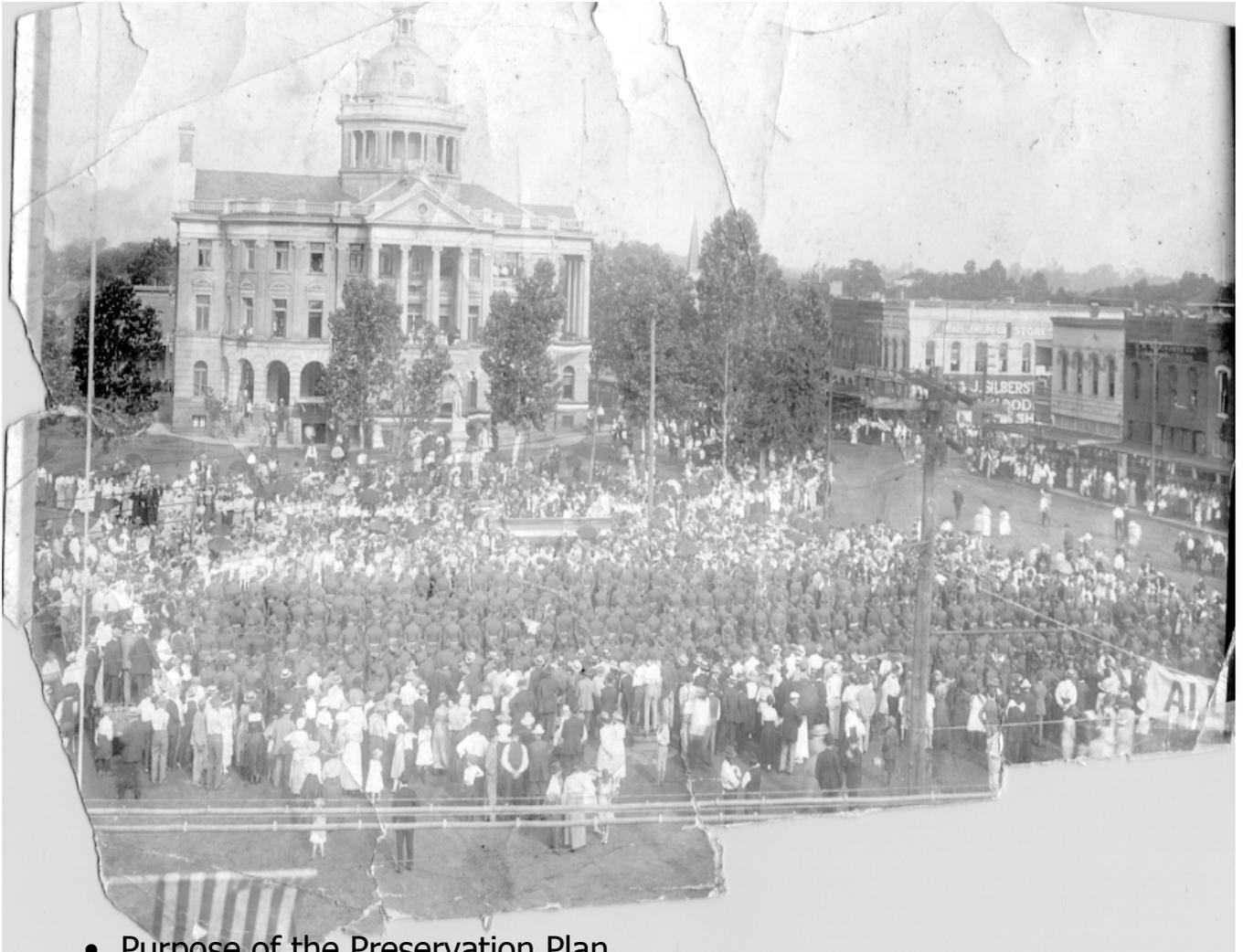
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INTRODUCTION



“Downtown Marshall, c. 1917”

- Purpose of the Preservation Plan
- Legal Basis for Historic Preservation
- Process Used to Prepare Preservation Plan
- Scope of Preservation Plan
- Historic Character of Marshall
- Background of Historic Preservation in Marshall
- Historic Preservation Issues
- Use of Preservation Plan

1. PURPOSE OF THE PRESERVATION PLAN

Why an historic preservation plan for Marshall?

Because preservation of older properties makes good economic sense. The city of Marshall has more than 4,600 properties over 50 years old — over 50 percent of its building stock. This vast number of buildings cannot reasonably be replaced by new structures. They can, however, be recycled to work to the city's benefit.

Cities and towns across Texas have successfully embraced preservation of older properties as an economic development tool:

- Revitalizing downtowns and neighborhoods;
- Enhancing interesting character and appearance to attract new business, industry, tourists and residents; and,
- Increasing the tax base.

With these outcomes in mind, the primary purpose of this preservation plan is to set forth a program of work that will take underutilized assets — Marshall's huge collection of older properties — and use them to expand the local economy.

Idealistically, Marshall's older buildings and houses would be preserved for their historic and aesthetic value alone. Realistically, this is not happening. In the public mind there must be viable reasons to save these resources. By viewing them as just that, **resources** — objects of value, **resources** for economic development — reason exists to protect and utilize them. Marshall's older buildings, houses, and neighborhoods are irreplaceable economic resources that can be properly managed to the city's advantage — accomplishing common goals of community improvement and economic growth.

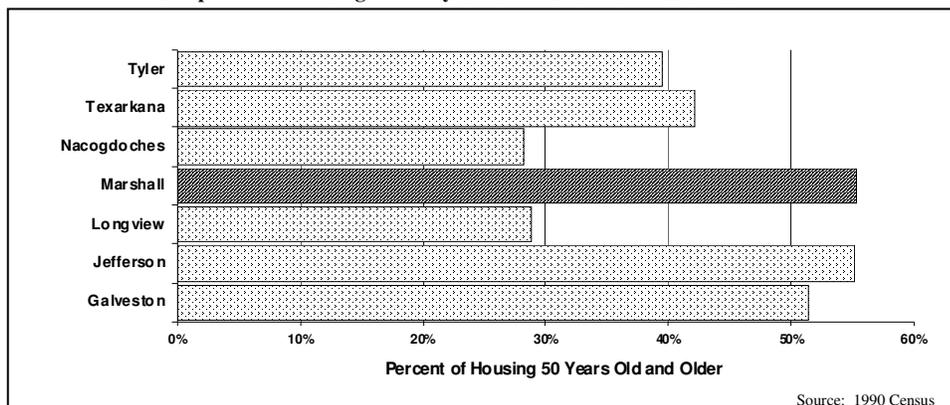
All of Marshall's older properties and neighborhoods, whether declining, reviving or thriving, face three common threats which lessen their economic value to the community: neglect, incompatible alteration, and development pressure. Guiding and preserving properties and neighborhoods that represent the city's heritage and an important segment of its economic base, then, is the goal of a workable historic preservation program.

Marshall's preservation task, however, is unlike most other Texas cities for two reasons:

(1) **The large number of historic properties that still exist.**

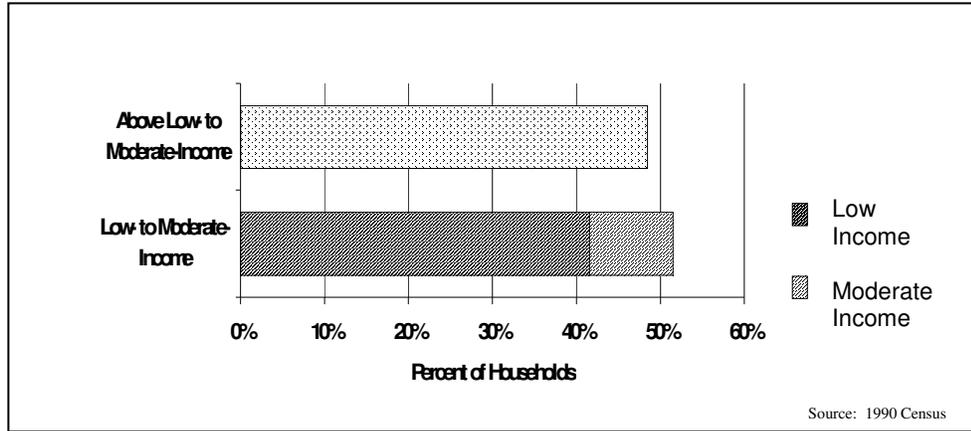
Of the 4,600 properties over 50 years old, hundreds qualify as "historic".

Comparison of housing over 50 years old in selected Texas cities.



- (2) **The economic level of the community.**
 Over 50% of the city's population meets federal "low- to moderate-income standards".

Comparison of the income levels of Marshall's population.



These factors dictate that Marshall's historic preservation plan must be a specialized document that responds to the unique needs of this particular community. Taking into account **the magnitude of resources involved** and **the economic level of the community**, this plan contains customized components that outline historic preservation's role in the economic development of the city:

- It brings together an explanation of City policy, programs and procedures concerning historic preservation.
- It presents a detailed program of work for the City's historic preservation board.
- It emphasizes private-sector involvement as the key component of the preservation program.
- It prescribes the role groups and individuals can play in implementing this program of work.

Execution of this proactive plan of action will help city officials and citizens alike renew their commitment to Marshall's older buildings and neighborhoods, thus enhancing the city's attractiveness, quality of life, and economic base.

2. LEGAL BASIS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

An historic preservation program must have a sound legal foundation. Legal authority must be granted to create and implement a preservation plan. There must also be legal basis for the laws and ordinances applying and interpreting the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan. The State of Texas clearly intended to grant this legal authority through state statute.

The law most important to preservation planning is the enabling legislation, which provides for local community zoning. The state's general zoning statute gives municipalities the power to zone for:

"the purpose of promoting the public health, safety, morals, or general welfare and protecting and preserving places and areas of historical, cultural, or architectural importance and significance" (Texas Local Government Code 211.001)

In addition:

"In the case of designated places and areas of historical, cultural, or architectural importance and significance, the governing body of a municipality may regulate the construction, reconstruction, alteration, or razing of buildings and other structures". (Texas Local Government Code 211.003)

Texas law clearly intends for local governments to set their own preservation priorities and grants them the authority to implement and enforce these choices.

Further, the City of Marshall's historic preservation ordinance:

"...declares as a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, preservation, and use of historic landmarks is a public necessity and is required in the interest of culture, prosperity, education, and welfare of the people." (Marshall Code 32A-2)

The ordinance sets up a local historic preservation commission, the Historic Landmark Preservation Committee, to guide the city's historic preservation program and mandates that the board **"shall prepare an historic landmark preservation plan."** (Marshall Code 32A-6a) The ordinance also requires that **"the preservation plan shall be presented to the city Planning and Zoning Commission for inclusion in the comprehensive plan of the city."** (Marshall Code 32A-6b)

3. PROCESS USED TO PREPARE PRESERVATION PLAN

Preparation of a preservation plan for Marshall was a lengthy and thorough process undertaken by the City's Department of Planning and Community Development staff and members of the City's Historic Landmark Preservation Committee.

City of Marshall documents were evaluated, including the local historic preservation ordinance, previous comprehensive plans, the current general plan, and a 1985 draft historic preservation plan.

Historic preservation ordinances and programs around the state were surveyed. City staff in other communities were questioned about preservation plans, historic resources surveys, preservation board structure, board training, historic districts, neighborhood

revitalization, funding, incentives, building codes, heritage tourism, and educating the public about historic preservation. The Texas Historical Commission, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions were also contacted for information, advice, and sample documents.

Preservation issues, needs, and ideas specific to Marshall are the most important component of the information gathering. Ideas relating to Marshall's appearance, its older properties and neighborhoods, and the need for revitalization were compiled. These comments came from various community groups, including the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community focus groups, the City-appointed Downtown Advisory Committee, historic property owners, and City staff.

The City's Historic Landmark Preservation Committee then held a series of brainstorming sessions, and developed a set of preservation actions based on their extensive research. These preservation actions, designed to address needs specific to Marshall's older buildings and neighborhoods, are the foundation of this preservation plan.

Community needs and ideas on which this preservation plan is based are found in **SECTION 19.**

4. SCOPE OF PRESERVATION PLAN

Preservation programs, to varying degrees, direct attention to several types of resources – cultural, historical, and architectural. Most historic preservation programs, however, concentrate on the improvement of historic structures and their surrounding neighborhoods. Therefore, an important element of a preservation plan is the identification of the city's historic sites. **Which properties are they? Where are they located?**

Identification of what is "historic" is accomplished through a formal **historic resources survey**. Public perception of "historic" most often is only large, "important" buildings. However, a comprehensive historic resources survey identifies, evaluates, and documents every kind and size of structure and site over 50 years old.

Types and sizes of historic structures included in historic resources survey of Marshall.



1102 Alvin Street



701 North Washington



1200 block Alvin Street

The City of Marshall began a city-wide survey of historic sites in 1995. The process has been lengthy and the work continues. However, information gathered thus far confirms the extent, variety, and quality of the city's collection of older properties. The study identifies in excess of 4,600 sites (within the pre-1995 city limits), over 50 percent of the city's buildings.

A preservation priority rating of **high, medium, or low** is assigned to each of the 4,600 sites. The rating is based on these criteria:

- How well the site retains its original design and materials

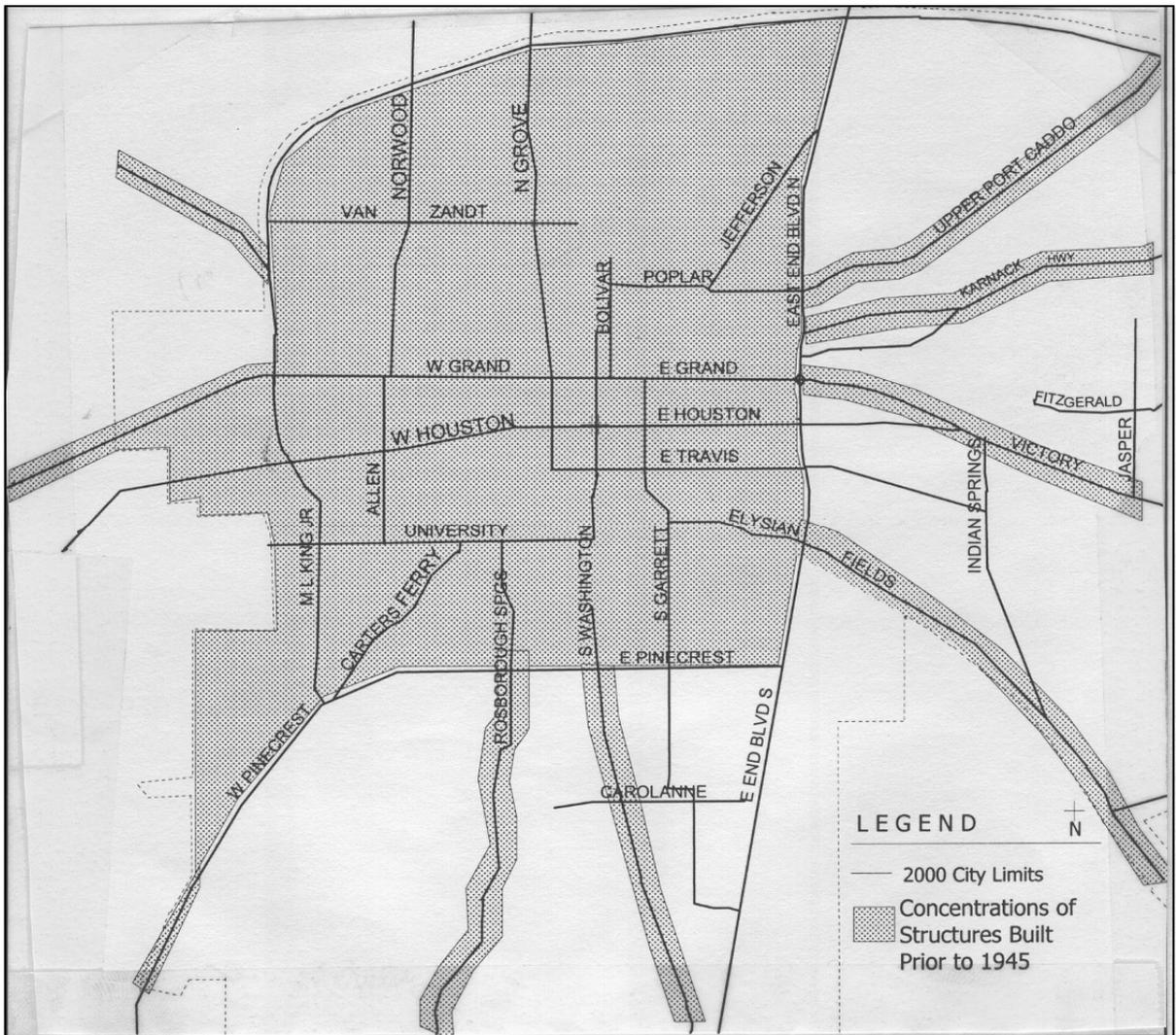
- How unique (or common) the site is
- The site's condition
- How the site contributes to local history

Preliminary survey figures indicate about 14 percent of the properties are **high** priority sites; 39 percent are **medium** priority sites; and 47 percent are **low** priority sites.

(SECTION 20) Preservation programs traditionally focus efforts on areas with concentrations of **high** and **medium** priority properties, along with **low** priority sites that contribute to the character of an historic neighborhood or can be restored to a higher rating.

Marshall's survey reveals that historic resources are located throughout the city. However, sites are concentrated primarily in the area west of U. S. Highway 59 and north of Pinecrest Drive. Concentrations are also located along the city's older transportation routes, such as U.S. Highway 80, Karnack Highway, Elysian Fields Road, and South Washington Avenue.

Concentrations of structures built prior to 1945 in Marshall.



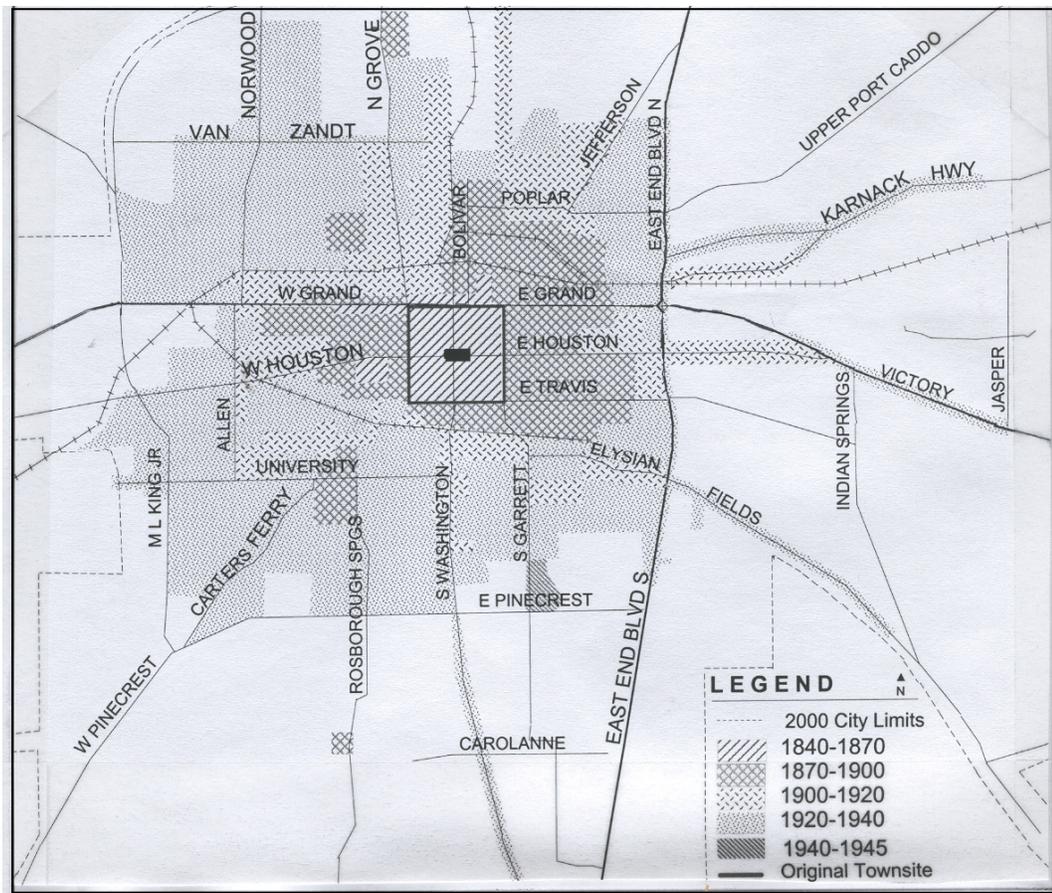
The completed historic resources survey, by defining the scope of the city's historic sites, provides a firm basis for preservation planning. Identification of Marshall's historic structures (**what to preserve**) and historic areas (**where to preserve**) establishes a foundation for a comprehensive preservation program.

5. HISTORIC CHARACTER OF MARSHALL

This preservation plan seeks to protect and promote those qualities that make Marshall a city unlike any other – qualities that give it its distinct identity. Today's identity is a product of the past, created by the buildings and landscapes that still exist from the city's first 100 years.

Marshall's accumulation of older buildings illustrates the growth and development of the city from its founding in 1841. They depict the city's evolution – from government headquarters, to cotton-economy mercantile center, to Civil War headquarters, to center of African American activity and culture, to railroad headquarters, to center of education and light manufacturing. Beginning at the courthouse square in the center of the Original Townsite and radiating in all directions, the current location, variety, and quality of historic buildings are all a result of this progression of history.

Historic growth and development of Marshall 1840 to 1945.



More than 120 years ago Marshall's appealing character was described in an 1879 promotional booklet. **Much of that character still exists today:**

"...the physical appearance of the place is picturesque and charming. The public square is large. In the center of it stands a neat brick courthouse, with a large and pretty courtyard. The buildings around the public square are many of them of an imposing and substantial character. ...hotel, one of the finest brick structures of the kind to be found in any of the interior towns. ...on Houston Avenue, and going north to Austin Street are rows of brick store houses. The north side of the square contains the finest buildings... Brick structures also adorn the west side of the square. ...the public square is on an elevation.

"The streets are broad, and adorned with charming residences, in which modern architectural taste is conspicuous. ...the taste for shade trees, flowers, and shrubbery is to be noted, and adds much to the loveliness of the place. Surrounding the town are dense woodlands, and the streets, radiating in every direction, are lost in their shade.

"The views from the courthouse and the railroad headquarters are very fine. There are very few towns that present so many picturesque scenes, and such a number of pleasant drives."*

The attractiveness of 1879 is still evident today in Old Marshall:

"picturesque and charming... neat brick courthouse...large and pretty courtyard...buildings of imposing and substantial character... rows of brick store houses...charming residences...shade trees, flowers, and shrubbery...loveliness of the place...dense woodlands...the views...picturesque scenes...pleasant drives."

It is this character that an active preservation program will protect and enhance to improve the quality of life and economy of the city.

Examples of elements in older neighborhoods that give a unique character.



A tree canopy on East Bowie Street



Front porches, small front yards on Alexander Street

* "A Pen Picture of the City of Marshall and Harrison County"; Tri-Weekly Herald Book and Job Print; Marshall, Texas; November, 1879.

6. BACKGROUND OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN MARSHALL

Historic Preservation in the United States

Historic preservation in the United States began by rescuing from impending destruction two of our country's most historically significant national landmarks – Independence Hall in 1816 and Mount Vernon in 1856. These efforts stimulated an interest in preservation throughout the nation. Local historical and patriotic organizations formed to preserve locally significant landmarks, resulting in a nationwide abundance of "house museums." Early in the twentieth century the concept of preservation broadened beyond "saving" single buildings. In the 1920's restoration of an entire town, Williamsburg, Virginia, led to the organization of local non-profit historic preservation groups with a mission to preserve entire significant older neighborhoods in their respective cities. The San Antonio Conservation Society and the Galveston Historical Foundation were among the first and most effective of these pioneering revitalization organizations.

These early preservation efforts were entirely privately organized, directed, and funded. In the 1930's, however, seeing a need to strengthen its effectiveness, preservation took on a new partner, local government. Through historic zoning ordinances and locally zoned historic districts, historically and architecturally significant areas began to be protected for "public benefit." The earliest historic preservation ordinances were enacted by Charleston, South Carolina in 1931, New Orleans in 1936, and San Antonio in 1939.

In the 1960s federal and state government began to play a part in the preservation of locally significant historic buildings and neighborhoods through the National Register of Historic Places and, in Texas, the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark program. These new historic designations offered little legal protection for the historically or architecturally significant sites; they did, however, call further attention to the importance of locally significant properties in older neighborhoods.

Historic preservation further evolved in the 1980s by taking on even larger redevelopment tasks. Preservation expanded from its role as guardian of largely upscale historic buildings and districts to increasingly become a tool for economic development through heritage tourism and revitalization of struggling downtowns and more modest, declining neighborhoods. That function continues today.

Historic Preservation in Marshall

Generally, historic preservation in Marshall has followed a pattern similar to its development throughout the nation:

- Saving significant individual buildings
- Establishing house museums
- Designating a National Register historic district and a number of Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks
- Enacting a local historic preservation ordinance
- Designating a small number of local historic landmarks
- Implementing downtown revitalization programs

These preservation efforts have had mixed results and **key components of other more successful historic preservation/revitalization programs are still missing in Marshall.**

Demonstrated support for historic preservation in Marshall began in the 1950's. In 1957 county voters defeated a bond issue that called for the demolition of the 1900 county courthouse in the center of the downtown public square in order to build a new courthouse. Citizens clearly wanted to keep the old courthouse. In 1961, with an alternate proposal to retain the old courthouse and build the newer courthouse nearby, the bond issue passed.

This courthouse issue served as a catalyst for further preservation efforts in the city. In 1959 the Harrison County Historical Society organized. A branch of this group would eventually play a major role in calling attention to additional historically significant buildings in Marshall.

In the early 1960s, as the historical society began to research and collect selected area history, state government recognized tourism as a potential economic development strategy for Texas. State and county officials joined forces to initiate a program using history and historic structures to attract more visitors to Texas. The Official Texas Historical Marker program was launched in 1962 to place historical markers at significant sites in each county throughout the state.

To guide this marking program on the county level, the Commissioners' Court appointed a county historical survey committee (now called the Harrison County Historical Commission). In the first decade of this marking program, 35 state historical markers were placed in the county, 27 of those markers within the city of Marshall. Six of the early markers honored historic buildings in the city and designated them Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks. Tourism efforts were also enhanced at this time by opening the first exhibit room of the new Harrison County Historical Museum in space allocated by the county in the old courthouse.

Although the 1960s was a period of growing awareness of the economic, educational, and cultural potential of Marshall's historic properties, there was also a growing threat to their continued existence. Downtown Marshall, the oldest area of the city, was being drained by competition from outlying strip shopping centers and discount merchants. Customers and businesses were drawn away from the city center. Also, population of surrounding older neighborhoods declined as residents acquired a taste for newer architectural styles and fair housing laws opened a wider selection of neighborhoods to African American residents.

The early 1970s brought contradictory solutions to this nationwide trend toward declining downtowns and older neighborhoods. Government response to this exodus and accompanying deterioration was the federal urban renewal program developed to "save" inner cities. Each local urban renewal agency purchased "blighted" properties, cleared the land of buildings, and sold the vacant land at low cost for new development. Tax law offered incentives that favored demolition of older buildings and construction of

new ones, rather than rehabilitation of existing buildings. Urban renewal in Marshall resulted in the demolition of several whole blocks of historic commercial, institutional and residential buildings in and near the original townsite, along with the demolition of the entire former Bishop College campus.

In contrast to this program of getting rid of older buildings, the private-sector solution to revitalizing old downtowns and neighborhoods was to move back in and call attention to them. In Marshall this was accomplished by private individuals and one organized group in particular. First, new residents, primarily young families, moved into older residential neighborhoods to restore the historic properties. These houses were architecturally attractive, low priced, and offered lots of room for growing families. Each restoration encouraged additional restorations.

These individual efforts at improving historic neighborhoods in Marshall were enhanced by the work of the newly organized Harrison County Conservation Society, an auxiliary unit of the local historical society. The group was formed in reaction to urban renewal policies to promote restoration of the city's many historic properties. This organization erected yard signs to mark many of the city and county's significant houses; they created the Stagecoach Days festival and tour of newly restored homes to highlight city and county heritage and architecture; and they solicited donation of historic houses in urban renewal areas to be moved to other locations, rather than be demolished. (Ironically, this program resulted in a number of historic houses leaving Marshall.) The group also restored a condemned historic house in an urban renewal target area for their headquarters and as a house museum available for public functions.

Preservation-minded citizens, seeking to call further attention to the value of the city's

Ginocchio National Register Historic District



North Washington Street

historic properties, also worked with state historic preservation officials to designate an historic district in the neighborhood around the Texas and Pacific Railway Depot. In 1974 the Texas Historical Commission prepared and secured nomination of the railroad-related neighborhood as the Ginocchio National Register Historic District, the city's first National Register designation.

This National Register designation was prestigious for the district, but carried with it little legal protection from further

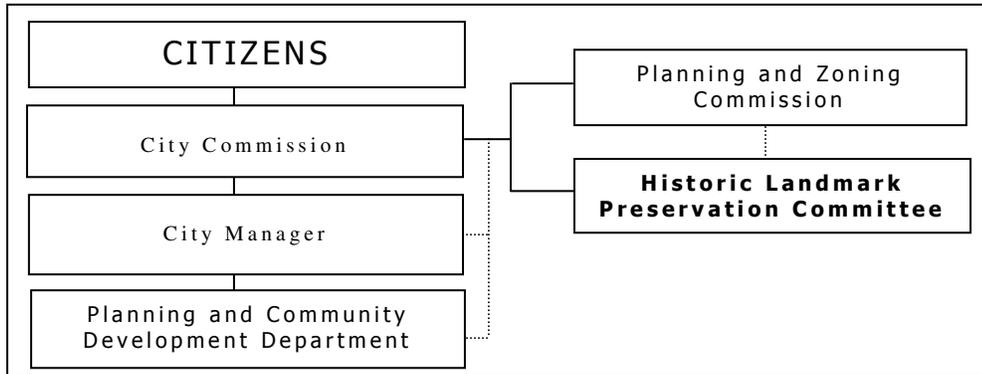
demolition. Therefore, concerned citizens sought passage of a **local historic zoning ordinance** with stronger protection for locally designated historic properties. Marshall's **historic preservation ordinance (SECTION 21)** was adopted in 1977.

The local ordinance allows for designation of individual **local historic landmarks** and larger **historic districts**. It grants protection to these locally designated landmarks and districts by requiring a review process, called a **certificate of appropriateness review**, for any proposed change to the **exterior** of a designated property. This

review process insures that the landmarks and districts retain their significant architectural identity. Additional protection is also offered by a required review, and optional delay period, for any application for **demolition** or **removal** of a locally designated historic property. The delay period grants time to seek development options other than demolition or removal of the historic property, when desirable.

Marshall’s preservation ordinance also established the Historic Landmark Preservation Committee, appointed by the City Commission, to administer the ordinance and the City’s historic preservation program.

Historic Landmark Preservation Committee in the Marshall city government organization.



One of the first items of business for the newly appointed Historic Landmark Preservation Committee was nomination of much of the Ginocchio National Register Historic District to be Marshall’s first locally designated historic district. What had been the primary goal for passage of the local preservation ordinance – enhanced legal protection for the Ginocchio neighborhood – met with considerable public resistance, however. Objection to historic district designation came primarily from owners of non-historic properties within the proposed historic district who viewed the review requirements as “excessive.” The nomination was tabled by the City Commission. The preservation committee eventually voted the nomination “held in abeyance” due to “misunderstanding.... in the mind of the general public.”

After this initial defeat, the Committee made the decision “that individual [landmark] designations be made only after establishment of an historic district”, thus preventing any designation success until a local historic district could be established. Their strategy was to build support for large historic districts rather than single individual landmarks.

To address property owners’ concerns about the review process, the Committee developed a list of design review guidelines for proposed alterations in historic districts; however, these guidelines were never formally adopted.

In 1979 the Committee arranged for the Texas Historical Commission to undertake a survey of historic buildings in the city, hoping to obtain a large multiple-property National Register nomination in the original townsite area. This limited survey included 150 buildings and houses in and near the original townsite determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Due to changes in the Texas Historical Commission’s focus from staff-initiated nominations to owner-initiated nominations this survey did not lead to the large National Register nomination as expected. However,

sixteen property owners completed the nomination process themselves to have properties individually listed in the National Register – far fewer than the Committee hoped for.

In 1981 the City's new Comprehensive Plan included an historic preservation component recommending several areas in and near the original townsite as potential local historic districts. The plan also recommended developing historic district design guidelines, establishing an "umbrella historical organization", undertaking additional surveying of historic properties, developing a public education program, expanding home tours, enlarging the historical museum, and developing a formal historic preservation plan.

Between 1979 and 1983 three more proposed historic districts were nominated in the areas of West Austin Street, West Rusk/West Burleson Streets, and in the southern part of the original townsite. None were adopted. With each historic district request, the initial pattern of rejection repeated itself: nomination of the historic district by the Committee, public opposition from some of the property owners within the proposed district, and rejection or tabling of the nomination by the Planning and Zoning Commission or the City Commission.

Two of three historic neighborhoods proposed as historic districts between 1979 and 1983.



Property-owner opposition continued to center around lack of distinction between historic and non-historic properties in the review process and the review requirement being interpreted to include ordinary maintenance, such as reroofing, rather than only exterior **changes or alterations**. And the Planning and Zoning Commission, in recommending against the fourth proposed historic district, commented "...it is their opinion that the creation of any historic districts...be based on a plan for historic preservation...with policies on which creation of all historic districts should be based." The Committee clearly had more educating and planning to do.

After four unsuccessful attempts to create historic districts, the Committee reassessed its policy against designating individual landmarks. Individual properties on West Austin Street and

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