

AGENDA
CITY OF TAYLOR, TEXAS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
TAYLOR CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 400 PORTER STREET
AUGUST 5, 2026, 6:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARE A QUORUM

II. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

(The Board or Commission welcomes public comment on items not listed on the agenda. However, the Board or Commission cannot respond until the item is posted on a future agenda. All public comments are limited to 3 minutes.)

III. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Review and approve the minutes of the July 01, 2026 regular meeting.

IV. REGULAR AGENDA - NEW BUSINESS

V. REGULAR AGENDA - CONTINUING BUSINESS

2. Review work plan tasks with Freese & Nichols.
3. Present building inventory findings.
4. Present definition findings
5. Review and consider action on work plan items.

VI. ADJOURN

I certify that the notice of this meeting was posted in the Taylor City Hall Lobby continuously for three business days before the scheduled date of said meeting.

Posted by: Niecy Baum Date: 7/29/2026

Minutes
CITY OF TAYLOR, TEXAS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
TAYLOR CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 400 PORTER STREET
JULY 1, 2026, 6:00 PM

Present: John Hawkins, Lea Bowman, Lotte Vehko, Kay Peebles

Absent: Frances Sorrow - excused

Staff Present: Niecy Baum

Guest: Chance Sparks and F&N associate, 3 community members

I. CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARE A QUORUM – 6:00 PM

A quorum was declared, and the meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM

II. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

(The Historic Preservation Commission welcomes public comments on items not listed on the agenda. However, the Commission cannot respond until the item is posted on a future meeting agenda. Public comments are limited to 3 minutes.)

No public comments.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Lotte Vehko motioned, and Jack Hawkins seconded to approve the minutes of April 1, 2026..
The motion passed unanimously

IV. REGULAR AGENDA - NEW BUSINESS

V. REGULAR AGENDA - CONTINUING BUSINESS

1. . Work plan proposed by Freese & Nichols.

No formal action was taken on the work plan.

- Discuss the current district listed with the National Register of Historic Places. Does this map need to be revised for the Historic District boundaries?
- Discussion for the Commission to review suggested Certificate of Appropriateness Circumstances Matrix. Review suggested level of approval and process for Taylor.
- Should new construction always go to HPC or can staff approve clearly compliant infill?
- Does the Commission want to add levels of contribution or just have contribution vs non-contributing?
- Are alterations treated differently if they are not visible from the street?
- What work should be exempt?
- Lotte Vehko volunteered to start the building inventory of approximately 122 properties, define contributing vs non contributing.
- Jack Hawkins was asked to review the current historic preservation ordinances to see if the definitions of demolition, relocation, and economic hardship are clear enough as is or need further clarification and updating.

VI. ADJOURN AT 7:02 PM

Signed by: Niecy Baum Date: 7/1/2026

Certificate of Appropriateness Circumstances Matrix

Project (Scope of Work)	Historic Significance	Decision Making
HPC = Historic Preservation Commission * HPO = Historic Preservation Officer * NR = Not Required HPO to review <i>any</i> building permit application in a Historic District or affecting a Historic Landmark HPO review for NR would occur with building permit package to verify it meets exemption <i>Whether a structure is contributing is based on most recently adopted historic resources survey/National Register</i>		
New Construction (Infill Development)		
New building construction (some cities opt to make this an HPO action rather than HPC, but I suggest not since this is National Register)	All Historic Overlay Districts	HPC
Additions		
Addition that creates a new, or adds to an existing, street-facing facade	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority)	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority)	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	HPO
Addition of a non-street-facing facade (not visible when viewed perpendicular to street)	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
New addition does not comply with the zoning standards of the historic overlay district	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	
Addition of awning or canopy visible when viewed perpendicular to street	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority)*	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority)*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure*	NR
Addition of porch, patio, deck, pergola, or sail sunshade visible when viewed perpendicular to street	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure *	
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority)*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure*	NR
Reconstruction, Alterations, Changes		
Restoring historic architectural features	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure*	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Replacing a historic architectural feature with a non-historic architectural feature±	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority)*	
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority)*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Replacing a historic non-architectural feature with a	Historic Landmark	HPO

Project (Scope of Work)	Historic Significance	Decision Making
HPC = Historic Preservation Commission * HPO = Historic Preservation Officer * NR = Not Required <i>HPO to review <u>any</u> building permit application in a Historic District or affecting a Historic Landmark</i> <i>HPO review for NR would occur with building permit package to verify it meets exemption</i> <i>Whether a structure is contributing is based on most recently adopted historic resources survey/National Register</i>		
non-historic architectural feature	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority Structures)*	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority Structures)*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Replacing roof materials with different roof materials±	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority Structures)*	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority Structures)*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Modifications to exterior steps, stairways, and ramps using in-kind material±	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Modifications to exterior steps, stairways, and ramps (addition or different materials±)	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority Structures)*	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority Structures)*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure*	NR
Paint removal from historic and significant architectural features (back to original condition; does not include repainting)	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Changes to paint color on previously painted surfaces (includes repainting or new paint on previously painted surface)	Historic Landmark	NR
	Contributing Historic Structure*	NR
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure*	NR
New paint on unpainted historic and other significant architectural features	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure*	HPC
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Changes in color to awning fabric	Historic Landmark	NR
	Contributing Historic Structure*	NR
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure*	NR
Exterior lighting that is attached to the building or structure	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure*	NR
Rooftop HVAC, mechanical, or communication equipment that result in no modifications to the	Historic Landmark*	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure*	HPO

Project (Scope of Work)	Historic Significance	Decision Making
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building facade	Non-Contributing Historic Structure*	
Rooftop HVAC, mechanical, or communication equipment that result in modifications to the building facade	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority Structures)*	
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority Structures)*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure*	HPO
Removal, Demolition, or Relocation		
Awnings or canopies	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority Structures)*	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority Structures)*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Exterior non-historic architectural features	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure*	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Exterior siding to unencapsulate historic siding materials	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure*	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Removal, stripping, concealing, or destruction of any historic and architectural feature that is integral to the historic character of the building or structure, or historic overlay district	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority Structures)	
	Contributing Historic Structure* (Low Priority Structures)	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure*	HPO
Non-historic additions that are made of non-historic materials	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Attached carport, porch, patio, or deck	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure*	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Attached carport, porch, patio, or deck made of non-historic materials	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure*	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Reopen enclosed porch, patio, or deck to original condition	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure*	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR

Project (Scope of Work)	Historic Significance	Decision Making
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Street facing facade	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Demolition that results in the reduction or loss in the total square footage of the existing structure	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority Structures)*	
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority Structures)	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Relocation of a building or structure on the same lot	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	
Relocation of a building or structure to a historic overlay district (includes relocation of buildings or structures within the historic overlay district)	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	
Relocation of a building or structure from inside to outside of the historic overlay district	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure	
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
Signage		
Master Sign Plan	All Historic Overlay Districts	HPO
New signage, to include new signage that is consistent with an approved Master Sign Plan	All Historic Overlay Districts	HPO
New signage that is inconsistent with an approved Master Sign Plan or applicable guidelines	All Historic Overlay Districts	HPC
Changes in content or configuration (re-facing) that do not involve changes in sign location, dimensions, lighting, or total sign area	All Historic Overlay Districts	HPO
Amending an approved Master Sign Plan	All Historic Overlay Districts	HPO
Fences		
New fence, railing, or wall inconsistent with the overlay district's characteristics and applicable guidelines located along a street or in street yard	All Historic Overlay Districts	HPC
New fence, railing, or wall consistent with the overlay district's characteristics and applicable guidelines located along a street or in street yard	All Historic Overlay Districts	HPO
New fence, railing, or wall that is not located along a street lot line or located in a street yard	All Historic Overlay Districts	NR
Miscellaneous		

Project (Scope of Work)	Historic Significance	Decision Making
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Exceptions, incentives or bonuses on building height, setback, and lot coverage/impervious cover standards pursuant to this Code	All Historic Overlay Districts	HPC
Renewal of an expired Certificate of Appropriateness	All Historic Overlay Districts and Historic Landmark	HPO
* Only applicable to a street-facing facade ± Material that is intended to replace a historic material or feature that is either the same or a similar material, and the result will match all visual aspects, including form, color, and workmanship in order to retain the original design of the structure, may be permitted by the identified decision maker for medium and low priority resources.		

(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SEP 15 2005

1193

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Taylor Downtown Historic District
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Roughly bounded by Fifth Street, Washburn, First Street, and Vance Street.
CITY OR TOWN: Taylor VICINITY: N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
STATE: Texas CODE: TX COUNTY: Williamson CODE: 491 ZIP CODE: 76574

1. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (☒ nomination) (☐ request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (☒ meets) (☐ does not meet) the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant (☐ nationally) (☐ statewide) (☒ locally). (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



Signature of certifying official

9-6-05
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

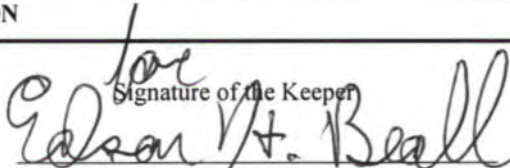
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

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


Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

10.26.05

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Private, Public-local

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: District

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING	
	83	35	BUILDINGS
	0	0	SITES
	1	3	STRUCTURES
	0	0	OBJECTS
	84	38	TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 2 (Preslar-Hewitt Building; Taylor National Bank)

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:	COMMERCE: financial institution, specialty store, department store, professional GOVERNMENT: post office, city hall AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: processing, storage INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: manufacturing facility
CURRENT FUNCTIONS:	COMMERCE: financial institution, specialty store, department store, professional GOVERNMENT: city hall VACANT

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival, Romanesque Revival, Beaux Arts

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco, Streamline Moderne

OTHER: One-part Commercial Block, Two-part Commercial Block

MATERIALS:	FOUNDATION	CONCRETE, STONE
	WALLS	STUCCO, BRICK, WOOD, STONE, METAL
	ROOF	ASPHALT, METAL
	OTHER	CAST IRON, METAL/Pressed Tin, GLASS, CERAMIC TILE

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-18).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 7 Page 5Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas

The properties located within the Taylor Downtown Historic District comprise the core of Taylor's historic commercial quarter and industrial sector. These buildings taken together represent significant aspects of the economic, physical and architectural development of Taylor. As a railroad town, Taylor developed both parallel to the tracks and along the perpendicular artery that became Main Street. Although the area adjacent the railroad track and the block immediately to the north along Main Street are no longer the physical center of Taylor's expansive commercial district, this historic core remains the visual anchor of downtown. Most properties within the Taylor Downtown Historic District are one and two-part commercial block buildings constructed of brick. Other building types within the district include two load-bearing masonry warehouse buildings (Taylor Warehouse, Property #1 and the Speegle Brothers Building, Property #115), a central block with wings (the United States Post Office, Property #88), and five early to mid-20th century gas stations. Architectural styles represent those most common in commercial construction during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including Classical Revival, Italianate, Commercial, and Streamline Modern. While the earliest extant contributing building dates to 1878 (Vincel's, Property #118) and the most recent building dates to 1954 (Property #111), the majority of the properties within the district were constructed between 1880 and 1930. Construction, alterations, and modernization continued throughout the period of significance (1876-1955), and reflect the changing physical needs and aesthetic preferences of commercial establishments. Alterations are typical of those made to many commercial properties in the middle decades of the 20th century, and reflect the town's continued prosperity as well as Taylor's recognition of nationwide architectural trends. Despite minor alterations and modernization, contributing properties that predate World War II retain the character defining elements that convey a visual sense of the historic environment.

The nominated district is composed of approximately 16 full blocks and portions of 6 others. These blocks, although varied in size, are laid out in a grid pattern with the majority of buildings oriented toward the North-South axes (Main Street). The district is roughly bounded on the north by Fifth Street, on the east by Washburn (several contributing resources lie in two blocks between Washburn and Elliott just north of the railway tracks), on the south by First Street with the Missouri Pacific Railroad track providing a visual boundary on the south, and on the west by Vance Street. These boundaries are consistent with the concentration of commercial properties that existed in Taylor from the 1880s onward. There are 122 properties within the district, of which 84 are contributing (only two of these were previously listed on the National Register) and 38 are non-contributing. The percentage of contributing properties is 69%. The contributing resources retain integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location and association.

Setting and Description

Located in southeastern Williamson County, Taylor is at the intersection of State Highway 95 and U.S. Highway 79, and at the convergence of the Missouri Pacific (formerly the International & Great Northern) and the Union Pacific (formerly the Missouri, Kansas and Texas) railroad lines. Taylor is twenty miles southeast of the county seat in Georgetown, and thirty-four miles northeast of Austin. Other nearby towns in Williamson County are Hutto, Round Rock, Circleville, Thrall and Coupland.

The city of Taylor is laid out in a compact grid pattern, and the city limits are twelve miles square. A loop has been constructed three-quarters of the way around the south portion of the city to allow for uninterrupted travel, whether crossing the city on Highway 95 (north/south) or on Highway 79 (east/west).¹ Business 79, or Second Street, is one block north of the southern boundary of the Taylor Downtown Historic District; Highway 95, or Main Street, bisects the district.

¹ <http://www.tayloredc.com/trans2.html>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas

These two segments of highway serve as the major east-west and north-south transportation arteries through downtown Taylor.

The historic district is roughly bounded on the north by Fifth Street, on the east by Washburn, on the south by First Street, and on the west by Vance Street. These boundaries lie within the current Taylor Main Street District, but do not circumscribe the entirety of the existing Main Street District. The greatest concentration of historic commercial properties lies along Second Street (Business 79) between Fowzer and Washburn, and along Main Street (Highway 95) between First and Fifth Streets. A significant number of industrial-related resources are located along First Street, immediately to the north of the Missouri Pacific (formerly the International & Great Northern) and the Union Pacific (formerly the Missouri, Kansas and Texas, or the Katy) railroad beds.

The areas immediately surrounding the Taylor Downtown Historic District on the east and west are primarily residential. Many significant residential properties are found within close proximity of the downtown district, and were home to some of Taylor's most significant merchants, businessmen and professionals such as Daniel Moody, Howard Bland, A.V. Doak (Recorded Texas Historic Landmark 1965), and J.E. Tucker (RTHL 1991). The area to the north of the district, particularly along Main Street is primarily comprised of commercial and civic properties (including Temple College and Taylor High School) that were constructed beyond the period of significance. The area to the south of the district is comprised of a combination of industrial, commercial and residential properties that are of a different character from the commercial area north of the railroad tracks.

The Taylor Downtown Historic District is primarily commercial in character. The properties to the north of the Missouri Pacific and the Union Pacific tracks housed various retail and commercial businesses, while properties directly adjacent to the tracks and particularly those south of the tracks were related to agricultural, industrial and transportation activities that dominated Taylor's economy during the period of significance. The earliest businesses in Taylor were housed in buildings adjacent to the railroad tracks or along Main Street. Many small homes were constructed in near proximity to the early commercial core, particularly in the blocks east of Porter and west of Talbot. By 1900, most of these homes were replaced by commercial buildings.

Although Taylor did not become a county seat, the city blocks included within the historic district are laid out in a grid pattern based on the Shelbyville Courthouse Square typology (fig. 1), with the City Hall occupying the central block usually allocated to the county courthouse.² Block sizes and the pattern of inter-block alleyways remain relatively consistent throughout the core of the district. The lots are regularly divided (though are not uniformly developed) and average 28' in width.

The majority of the buildings within the district were constructed between 1878 and 1931, although infill construction and alterations to existing properties continued throughout the period of significance.³ Only one building remains that was constructed from 1876 to 1880, seven were built between 1880 and 1889, and twelve between 1890 and 1899. Between 1900 and 1909, an estimated twenty-nine buildings were constructed. This number was reduced to nineteen between 1910 and 1919, and nine between 1920 and 1929. Thirteen new buildings were complete between 1930 and 1939 (several of

² Veselka, Robert E. *The Courthouse Square in Texas*. Austin: University of Austin Press, 2000 (19;35).

³ Construction dates were determined using Sanborn Maps, building cornerstones, historic photographs, interviews and the author's knowledge of late 19th and 20th century building trends.

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National Park Service

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas

these were begun in 1929), and eight more appeared between 1940 and 1949. Only three new buildings were constructed between 1950 and 1955, though several façade remodelings occurred during this time. Approximately eighteen buildings and two structures were constructed after 1957.

One-part and two-part commercial buildings are well-distributed within the district, though one-part buildings predominate. Approximately 54% of all the buildings in the historic district can be classified one-part commercial blocks, with two-part commercial blocks representing 20% of the building stock. Other building types include eight warehouses or industrial buildings, six gas stations, five postwar commercial buildings (of the type similar to the former Williamson County Equipment Building, Property #78), five contemporary buildings (all used as banking facilities), three central blocks with wings (including the Taylor City Hall, Property #81, and the United States Post Office, Property #88), and one temple-front (City National Bank, Property #124).

The first commercial buildings constructed in Taylor were false-front wood-frame structures with little or no architectural embellishment. These early buildings were gradually replaced by more substantial buildings, or sometimes rapidly replaced in the aftermath of city-wide conflagrations (1878 and 1879). The majority of new buildings were configured as one and two-part commercial block buildings. By the late 1880s and early 1900s, brick and masonry replaced wood-frame structures. Three-quarters of the buildings in Taylor are constructed of brick, most of these are unpainted; approximately 30% of the brick buildings are painted and roughly 35% are stuccoed. Other exterior materials include load-bearing masonry, concrete block, and wood-frame. Decorative façade details were incorporated in most of the commercial buildings within the district. Full-façade awnings suspended from iron rods were also common, as were transom windows above these awnings. Evidence of these predominant features remains, although many of the historic awnings have been replaced and many of the transoms have been altered or filled. Other decorative motifs repeated throughout Taylor's commercial district include corbelled denticular cornices (made of brick), pressed metal cornices, and cast iron building façades. The majority of these pressed tin cornices and cast iron storefronts (which include thresholds, pilaster and columns) were fabricated in St. Louis, and can be documented by their still-visible product stamps. One extant cast-iron store front was made in Texas, this one at the Oil City Iron Works in Corsicana (Cotton Seed Annex, Property #109). Twelve buildings within the district have cast iron storefronts, including the three buildings that are part of the Peterson Block (Property #18, 19 and 20), the John Bohls Building (Property #23) and the Richter Building (Property #47).

One-story buildings predominate throughout the district, though two-story buildings are frequently interspersed. Three-story commercial properties are far less frequent: the Swift & Company Poultry and Produce Building (Property #12) and the Taylor National Bank (Property #34) are prominent examples of three-story buildings. The Blazilmar Hotel (Property #6) is the only four-story building in the district. The historic district as a whole, and particularly the buildings along Main Street, exhibit consistent massing and composition, with many buildings sharing similar storefront configurations (many are inset store fronts), fenestration patterns, fenestration types (plate glass display windows on the ground floor and sash windows on upper floors), and architectural details such as decorative cornices and protruding parapets. The district is stylistically cohesive and is typical of late 19th and early 20th commercial properties around the state. The influence of Late Victorian commercial architecture is readily apparent in the arched windows and hood moldings of several buildings such as the First National Bank (Property #21) and the Thompson and Tucker Building (Property #17). There are several examples of Neoclassical architecture, including James Wetmore's Neo-Palladian Post Office (Property #88) and the Classical Revival style of the City National Bank (Property #124). Although many of Taylor's commercial buildings were constructed during the late 19th when Victorian detailing was common, only few buildings exhibit the over-exuberance and ornamentation that came to characterize this style. The City Hall of 1935 (Property #81A) exhibits characteristics of

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Continuation SheetSection 7 Page 8Taylor Downtown Historic District
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late ZigZag Art Deco as influenced by buildings displayed at the Chicago Exposition of 1933, and the Taylor Motor Company (Property #32) is an example of Streamline Moderne. The Howard Theater (Property #125), restored in 2004, also displays characteristics of Art Deco, though with an abstract character that suggests an affinity to Streamline Moderne.

The majority of the buildings in downtown Taylor were executed in a typical functional-commercial idiom, exhibiting only a few stylistic accents of the types described above. Yet four other distinctive building types exist in Taylor that are not of an architectural style per se, yet remain definable in terms of composition, details and materials. The first of these types is a load-bearing masonry building, of which there are two examples: The Taylor Warehouse (Property #1) and the Speegle Brothers Building (Property #115) (fig. 2). The Taylor Warehouse building is industrial in nature, and is characterized by surrounding loading platforms and wide portals; the north elevation features a unique arched entryway that adds architectural accent. The second building type of special note is the gas station (fig. 3), of which there are six examples in downtown Taylor (a rather large number given the compactness of the town). Four of these were constructed around 1930, and represent four types of common gas station types (Property #79 filling station, Property #42 house-type with canopy, Property #16 service station with canopy, and Property #90 service station with bays, with Spanish Revival stylistic inflection).⁴ The fifth service station was constructed during the 1940s, and represents the later form of a flat-roofed box service station with bays (Property #72). The third building type of note is industrial, and these buildings in Taylor are characterized by simple frame construction often clad in corrugated metal (fig. 4). Small-scale industrial architecture was common in Taylor in the areas immediately adjacent to the what was the I&GN and the Katy (M-K-T) railroad tracks; large agricultural-industrial complexes are still intact on the south side of the railroad tracks beyond the southern border of the commercial district. Both sides of the tracks were developed as a support network for the county's agricultural economy and small industry. Cotton platforms, cotton gin plants, small processing plants, machine shops, lumber yards, wagon yards and warehouses were built in this area as early as 1876. Sanborn maps indicate that the majority of these structures, through the mid-1900s, were simple frame buildings, often clad in "iron," presumably meaning sheets of pressed iron, tin or other metal. These range from single-story, gabled roof clear span warehouses, such as Property #13 which was constructed in 1916 and served as R.B. Spencer & Company Lumber Warehouse. Larger scale industrial buildings, of similar construction and materials, include those associated with the Taylor Bedding Company (Property #129). The fourth and final building type of note is also industrial in nature, but constructed of substantial concrete frame with brick infill. There are two examples in Taylor, both dating from 1930, of which the Swift & Company Poultry and Produce Building (Property #12) is an excellent intact representative. The second example is at 406 Talbot (Property #94) and has undergone a substantial (though deliberate and designed) façade remodeling.

The most common alterations to buildings within the historic district are modernized storefronts in which frame plate glass windows and aluminum frame plate glass doors replaced the original wood-frame entryways and display windows. The application of non-original materials (such as ceramic tile, metal or glass panels) at the base of the ground-floor storefront or the covering of transoms were also common and in most cases do not significantly detract from the historic character of any property. A number of significant alterations occurred in the mid 1950s and 1960s, including the replacement of historic windows and doors with plate-glass framed in aluminum, and the re-cladding of many of the historic buildings with glass tiles, metal panels, buff brick laid in a straight bond pattern, and metal slip-coverings (fig. 5).

⁴ For gas station types, see John A. Jakle & Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America*. Baltimore : The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

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Storefront alterations of this sort most often occurred only at the street level, and the area above storefront (usually above the awning level) including the parapet remained intact. These modernizations were a nationwide architectural trend beginning in the late 1940s, and numerous buildings in downtown Taylor reflect an intimate knowledge of such developments. At least 39 of Taylor's 121 commercial buildings display store-front modernizations from the postwar period, including Sturgis-Goldstein Department Store (Property #35), Bland's Jewelers (Property #64), 206 Main Street (Property #122), and 204 Main Street (Property #121). Many of these display the intentionality of design, indicating the involvement of a professional architect; the concrete-frame building at 406 Talbot (Property #94) is a good example of this, as is 206 Main Street (Property #122). Some store-front alterations exhibit design features common after 1955, including the addition of open-front or floating display window boxes as in the former J.C. Penney Store at 314 Main Street (Property #127). Because this represents a significant nation-wide trend, such store front redesigns should be noted and the property's status within the district re-considered once these modifications have reached the fifty-year mark.⁵ Other common alterations to the historic fabric include the replacement of historic awnings (often wood-frame supported on posts or hung from the façade by iron chains) with contemporary awnings; the majority of these have retained the historic placement and form and do not impact the integrity of most properties. In cases where the historic awning has been removed altogether, the building facades often retain ghostings or iron eye-hooks that indicate the original location of the awnings.

Methodology for the Evaluation of Individual Properties within the District

An intensive level survey was conducted in the area bounded by Fifth Street on the north, Elliot on the east, First Street on the south, and Fowzer Street on the west. This area was identified as a potential historic district in January 2004 during a windshield survey conducted by Texas Historical Commission staff, the consultant, and Calvin Jayroe representing the Exploratory Group for the Taylor National Historic District (later subsumed by the Taylor Conservation & Heritage Society). The boundaries were set at that time. This district roughly corresponds with the properties under the purview of the Taylor Main Street Program. Joan Cabaniss, AIA, of Taylor prepared a brief Historic Sites Survey for the Taylor Conservation & Heritage Society in 1988, completing a historic sites inventory form for twenty-four properties within this commercial district. Black and white photographs were also taken at that time. The current nomination utilized the 1988 Historic Sites Survey and the associated photographs, but the majority of the current survey and research were completed between April 2004 and April 2005.

In early 2004, in consultation with Taylor Conservation & Heritage Society, the consultant examined properties within the proposed district boundaries. Documentation consisted of mapping the location of the resources within the district, and completing a historic resource survey form for each property. A property was defined as the principal building at a given address. The survey forms included the survey inventory number (assigned in 2004 and keyed to the historic district map), the corresponding 1988 survey number, the current name of the property or business housed at that address, historic names of the property, the *situs* address, legal description, resource type, landscape and site features, function, construction date (actual or estimated), names of the architect and builder, possible threats to the property, level of integrity, indication of existing historic designations (RTHL, NR, etc.) and a physical description of the exterior of the property. Notes were included regarding the presence of any outbuildings or associated structures that were visible from

⁵ For more on the design of postwar storefronts, see Jackson, Mike, "Storefronts of Tomorrow: American Storefront Design from 1940 to 1970" in *Preserving the Recent Past 2*, Philadelphia, 2000. Deborah Slaton and William Foulks, Editors. HPEF and National Park Service, Washington D.C.: 2000.

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the public right-of-way. This information was coordinated, when possible, with descriptions and statements of significance from the 1988 survey cards. At least one color photograph and one digital color photograph was taken of each property. Black and white photographs were taken of each representative property.

The current physical appearance of each resource was checked against Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1885, 1889, 1893, 1898, 1904, 1912, 1916, 1923, 1931 and 1931-1947 to verify year of construction, and any additions or alterations. Dates of construction were established through records at the Williamson County Tax Assessor's Office, city directories, newspaper articles, and Sanborn Maps. Aerial photos from 1948 and 1965 were also used to check the physical appearance of the district. Photographs and historic postcards located in the Taylor Public Library proved useful in documenting the historic form of numerous buildings, as well as demolitions and renovations that have occurred in recent years. Research on the history and development of Taylor, individual properties and significant individuals was conducted at the Barker Center for American History and Taylor Public Library archives, which has a significant holding of historic materials. A great deal of information was collected from back issues of the *Taylor Daily Press* and the *Taylor Weekly Texan* from as early as 1893. Building histories were also compiled using two National Register nominations for individual properties in Taylor, and several files for Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks housed at both the Taylor Public Library archives and the Texas Historical Commission.

The district was evaluated using the following considerations: the area as a whole contained a high concentration of historic properties that remain remarkably intact; there are a few examples of infill architecture that disrupt the feeling and setting of the district; and the properties within the district reflect aspects of the historical development of the downtown commercial district from the mid 1800s to the present. The evaluation of a commercial district is complicated by the economic necessity to modernize facilities so that an area can maintain its viability. These types of alterations, which include both building and street infrastructure, are accepted as necessary and part of the development of any town. When these alterations are made within the period of significance and remain sensitive to the historic character of the individual property and the district as a whole, they do not detract from a resource's integrity. Integrity of location, setting, feeling, association and design were considered to be the most important aspects for this district. The individual components of design, materials and workmanship were considered in terms of hierarchical importance and visual impact. Building facades were considered as two parts – the lower section consisting of the storefront, and the upper section consisting of the either the upper level of a one-part commercial block (containing cornice, parapet, etc.) or full second, third or fourth floors of two-part commercial blocks. The following components were examined and aided in the determination of a building's contributing or noncontributing status: materials used on the ground floor; materials used on the upper portion or upper floors; fenestration patterns on the ground floor; fenestration patterns on the upper floors; entryway; configuration of overall storefront components; awning (or indication of historic placement); cornice; parapet; architectural ornament and detailing; overall massing, composition and form. Many of the resources within the district have undergone alterations such as the replacement of original windows, doors and storefronts, the replacement or removal of historic awnings or the support systems for these awnings, the replacement or removal of historic materials, the removal of exterior treatments such as historic stucco or paint, and the application of non-historic façade treatments such as stucco panels, colored glass panels or ceramic tiles. These alterations are common, often fall within the period of significance, and frequently do not detract from the overall historic character of a resource. The cumulative effects of such changes were evaluated for each resource and these changes did not automatically render a building noncontributing. Buildings that exhibited changes to a majority of the character-defining features or had irreversible alterations were considered noncontributing even if these buildings retained integrity of setting, feeling and association. Reversible alterations, such as the replacement of original windows or temporary blocking of windows or doorways, were evaluated in terms of their visual impact. As was often the

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case, smaller resources could not withstand numerous alterations (reversible or not) and retain their historic character, as is the case with the one-part commercial block at 202 Main Street (Property #120). Larger, more substantial properties such as the former Sturgis-Goldstein Department Store (Property #35) could undergo a number of physical alterations, such as the modernization of the ground floor store front and the blockading of upper-floor windows, and still retain integrity of design because other significant features such as bay delineation, cornice line and parapet remained intact. Functional industrial buildings were considered primarily in terms of location, association, setting, feeling and design footprint, as the very nature of these building types necessitates frequent change in materials and workmanship is not always evident. Character-defining features for industrial buildings were determined in accordance to "A Field Guide to Industrial Properties in Texas," authored by Amy E. Dase and published by the Texas Department of Transportation in May 2003. Poor or deteriorating physical condition was found to be a widespread problem in the Taylor district, but for the most part did not detract from the integrity of most resources. Aside from deteriorating historic materials, the primary problem was vacancy and boarded windows and doorways; again, this did not detract from the historic character of most buildings in this state of decline and in most cases would be easily repairable or reversible. Buildings less than 50 years of age were considered non-contributing.

Upon completion of the survey and archival research, a color-coded map was created for the survey area denoting the contributing and noncontributing resources (see MAP 3). Final district boundaries were confirmed in consultation with the Taylor Conservation & Heritage Society and staff at the Texas Historical Commission. The boundaries were drawn to include the highest number of contributing resources, the fewest number of noncontributing resources and fewest number of vacant lots. The following is a list of the properties within the district and their contributing or noncontributing status.

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#	Address	Property Name	Previous Names	Current Property or Business Name	Date	Type	Status
1A	313 1ST ST E	Taylor Warehouse		vacant	1889	warehouse	C
1B	313 1ST ST E	Tip Top Milling; H Bland & Co.		vacant / storage	1904	warehouse	C
1C	313 1ST ST E	Tip Top Milling; H Bland & Co.		vacant	1916	structure	C
2	209 1ST ST E	Heidenheimer Company Wholesale Grocers		vacant	1905	one part	C
3	209 1ST ST E	Heidenheimer Company Wholesale Grocers			1905	one part	C
4	106 PORTER ST			Jeff's Resurrections Auto Restoration	1916	one part	C
5	106 PORTER ST	Auto Sales		Jeff's Resurrections Auto Restoration	1925	one part	C
6	101 PORTER ST	Blazilmar Hotel		Landmark Inn (vacant)	1918	two part	C
7	109 1ST ST E			vacant	1885	one part	NC
9	110 1ST ST W	Nelson-Davis & Son Wholesale Grocer		vacant	1905	one part	C
10	112 1ST ST W	Nelson-Davis & Son Wholesale Grocer			1905	one part	NC
11	102 TALBOT ST N	Taylor Feed & Supply; Talley Bros Wholesale Groc.		Taylor Feed & Supply	1904	industrial	C
12	105 VANCE ST	Swift & Co Poultry and Produce		Connor Building	1930	industrial	C
13	301 2ND ST W	RB Spencer & Co Lumber Warehouse		Taylor Volunteer Fire Dept.	1916	industrial	C

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#	Address	Property Name	Previous Names	Current Property or Business Name	Date	Type	Status
14	205/209 2ND ST W	Texaco Gas		Shell Gas	1970	gas station	NC
15	205/209 2ND ST W	by address	residence associated with JA Thomson & Sons Lumber Yard	owned by JA Thompson and Sons, Inc.	1941	domestic	NC
16	205/209 2ND ST W	Texaco Gas		The Station Collectibles; owned by JA Thompson and Sons, Inc.	1930	gas station	C
17	201 2ND ST W	JA Thompson Building Lumber Yard	Thompson & Tucker	Art Office Signs	1893	two part	C
18	119 2ND ST W	Peterson Block		Toy Crazy	1898	one part	C
19	115 2ND ST W	Peterson Block		Barber Shop	1893	one part	C
20	113 2ND ST W	Peterson Block		A Moment in Time/ Paperbacks, Inc.	1893	one part	C
21	115 MAIN ST	First National Bank		vacant	1883	two part	C
22	100 2ND ST E	by address		Tobak Building (residence)	1885	two part	C
23	100 2ND ST E	by address		Tobak Building	1898	two part	C
24	106 2ND ST E	by address	John Bohls Building (1980s)	King Vending	1910	two part	C
25	108 2ND ST E	by address	Old Western Union (1930s)	Scott Building	1912	one part	C
26	116 2ND ST E	by address	Old U.S. Post Office	vacant	1912	one part	C
27	120 PORTER ST	Lone Star Linen	Forwood Transfer Co & Mattress Warehouse / Tractor Sales and Service	Lone Star Linen	1931	one part	C
28	218 2ND ST E	by address	Tractor Sales and Service	City Body Shop	1912	one part	C
32	200 PORTER ST	Taylor Motor	Buick / Chevrolet	Taylor Motor Co	1931	one part	C

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#	Address	Property Name	Previous Names	Current Property or Business Name	Date	Type	Status
33	121/122 2ND ST E	by address		vacant	1930	two part	C
34	200 North Main	Taylor Nat. Bank			1888	two part	C
35	201 MAIN ST N	Sturgis-Goldstein Building		Attorney / City of Taylor Volunteer Fire	1923	two part	C
36	120 2ND ST W	by address		Ro-Laine Furniture	1948	one part	C
37	200 2ND ST W	Kincl Hardware	Kincl Hardware	Kincl Hardware	1949	two part	C
38	204 2ND ST W	by address		vacant	1949	two part	C
39	206 2ND ST W	Louis Mueller BarBeQue	Louis Mueller BarBeQue	Louis Mueller BarBeQue	1902	one part	C
40	2ND ST W	Louis Mueller BarBeQue	Louis Mueller BarBeQue	Louis Mueller BarBeQue	1999	one part	NC
41	300 2ND ST W	Rudy Mikeska's Bar-B-Que	Safeway / warehouse for Taylor Bedding	Rudy Mikeska's Bar-B-Que	1920	one part	C
42	400 2ND ST W	Mobil Gas	Mobil Gas	The Station / Watkins Motors	1930	gas station	C
44	211 3RD ST W	Taylor Daily Press	Taylor Daily Press	Taylor Daily Press	1970	one part	NC
45	209 3RD ST W	Ed's Place		Ed's Place	1904	one part	NC
45A	209 W 3rd	by address			1912	one part	C
46	111/119 3RD ST W	Richter Furniture / Taylor Office Products		Taylor Office Products	1904	one part	NC
47	111/119 3RD ST W	Richter Furniture	Forwood Furniture	Richter Furniture	1904	one part	C
48	219/221 MAIN ST N	Melasky-Daliet Building	Melasky-Daliet Drug Store	Texas Historic Café (vacant) / Gomes residence	1927	two part	C
49	212 MAIN ST N	City Nat. Bank	former site of Melasky Drug	City National Bank	1965	contemporary	NC
50	213 MAIN ST N	City Nat. Bank			1970	contemporary	NC
51	218 PORTER ST E	by address	Filling Station	vacant / Williamson County Storage	1930	gas station	C

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#	Address	Property Name	Previous Names	Current Property or Business Name	Date	Type	Status
58	300 Washburn	Taylor Auto Electric	Tractor & Truck Sales and Service	Taylor Auto Electric	1941	one part	C
59	200 4TH ST E	by address	Tractor & Truck Sales and Service	Case Tractors	1930	industrial	C
60	119 3RD ST E	Eanes-Prewitt Building		Louie's Hair / Misty Marx Massage / Guerro's Restaurant	1912	two part	C
61	117 3RD ST E	by address		L&L Food Salvage	1912	one part	C
62	113-115 3RD ST E	Eanes Building	Eanes-Jacobsen (1988)	T. Ford Enterprises / Double S Ranch	1911	two part	C
63	105 3RD ST E	by address		Gourmet Country Café	1912	one part	C
64	300 N MAIN ST	Bland's Jewelers		Bland's Jewelers	1900	one part	NC
65	301 MAIN ST N	by address		Investment Centers of America	1900	one part	C
66	301 MAIN ST N	by address		Investment Centers of America	1900	one part	C
67	116 3RD ST W	City National Bank	site of TW Marse & Co (alter Montgomery Ward)	City National Bank	1965	contemporary	NC
68	216 3RD ST W	City National Bank			1980	contemporary	NC
69	216 3RD ST W	City National Bank			1970	contemporary	NC
72	221 4TH ST W	by address	Gas Station	El Corral Lozano	1940	gas station	NC
73	201/203 4TH ST W	Hays Building / Hays Pharmacy		Hays Pharmacy	1980	one part	NC
74	201/203 4TH ST W	Hays Building		Frills	1980	one part	NC
75	117 4TH ST W	by address		Pfeil Building: MidTex Loan/Heart of Texas/ Sharon Sanders Webster Attny	1912	one part	C
76	105 4TH W	by address			1914	one part	C

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#	Address	Property Name	Previous Names	Current Property or Business Name	Date	Type	Status
77	321/323 MAIN ST N	Preslar-Hewitt Building		Jayroe Building / Cotton Seed	1914	two part	C
78	200 4TH ST E	Williamson County Equipment	Williamson County Equipment / Auto Sales	Antique Warehouse	1949	postwar commercial	C
79	300/302 4TH ST E	Cervenka's Texaco		Cervenka's Texaco	1930	gas station	C
81A	400 MAIN ST N	City Hall			1935	central block with wings	C
81B	400 MAIN ST N	Taylor Fire Department			1935	two part	C
82	401 Main Street	John Threadgill Building	John Threadgill Building	Little Liberty's	1893	two part	C
83	104 4TH ST W	by address	Electric Supply	Allstate / Leland Stevens CPA	1916	one part	C
84	112 4TH ST W	4th Street Station	n/a		2000	structure	NC
85	114 4TH ST W	Melasky & Bullion (attny).			1955	one part	C
86	118 4TH ST W	Barber Shop		Ideal Barber Shop	1923	one part	NC
87	120 4TH ST W	Odd Fellows Building	Odd Fellows Building / IOOF	Taylor Made for You	1907	two part	C
88	202 WEST 4TH ST	United States Post Office	United States Post Office	United States Post Office	1930	central block with wings	C
89	VANCE/4TH ST	Williamson County Annex			1999	contemporary	NC
90	300/306 4TH ST W	Gas Station		Paul's Pool	1930	gas station	C
91	300/306 4TH ST W	by address		Alladin	1960	postwar commercial	NC
92	421 TALBOT ST	by address		S&D Plumbing	1970	postwar commercial	NC
93	109 5TH ST W	by address		Williamson County Precint 4	1960	postwar commercial	NC
94	406 TALBOT ST N	by address		Life Steps	1930	two part	C
95	103-105 5TH ST W	by address		State Farm Insurance	1930	one part	NC

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#	Address	Property Name	Previous Names	Current Property or Business Name	Date	Type	Status
96	423 MAIN ST N	Midget Café Building	Midget Café	Gifts	1923	two part	C
97	201/203 4TH ST W	Hays Building (part of)		Frills	1940	one part	NC
98	315 TALBOT ST	by address			1960	one part	NC
99	311 TALBOT ST N	by address		Ted Hejl Law	1960	one part	NC
100	421 MAIN ST N	Lee Building		vacant	1923	one part	C
101	415-417 MAIN ST N	by address	Otto Building	TDS / Gambrell's / Bryan Technical Services	1923	one part	C
102	407 MAIN ST N	Texas Power and Light Building	TU Electric	University Federal Credit union	1923	one part	C
103	319 MAIN ST N	by address	Rivera's Bridal		1912	one part	C
103B	317 MAIN ST N	by address	Twin's Shop	Rivera's Bridal	1898	one part	C
104	315 MAIN ST N	by address		Young's	1900	one part	C
105	313 MAIN ST N	by address		EBJ Sports Cards	1900	one part	NC
106	311 MAIN ST N	by address		Hiway 95 Café	1900	one part	NC
107	309 MAIN ST N	by address		Longhorn Title	1900	one part	NC
108	305 MAIN ST N	by address	Colonial / Howard Theater ; Duke & Ayres	Taylor Sporting Goods	1914	one part	NC
109	303 MAIN ST N	by address	TW Marse & Co at one time	Cotton Seed Annex	1914	one part	C
110	211/215 MAIN ST N	by address		Leaders in Leather	1953	one part	NC
111	209 MAIN ST N	Old Brunner & Williams Drug Store		Thrift Store	1954	one part	C
112	113 MAIN ST	by address	Part of Thompson block	vacant	1898	one part	C
113	111 MAIN ST	by address	Part of Thompson block	vacant	1898	one part	C
114	109 MAIN ST	Thompson Building	Thompson Building		1889	one part	C
115	107 MAIN ST	Speegle Bros. Building	Speegle Bros. Building	Speegle Bros. Building (vacant)	1907	one part	C

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#	Address	Property Name	Previous Names	Current Property or Business Name	Date	Type	Status
116	103 MAIN ST	by address		Vic's Heat & Air	1907	one part	C
117	107 MAIN ST	by address		Vincl's Bar-B-Q	1912	one part	C
118	101 MAIN ST	Vincl's / Kamp's Hotel	Kamp Hotel / International Hotel / Central Hotel / Windsor Hotel / City Hotel		1878	one part	C
119	119 2ND ST W	by address	Harness and Tin Shop		1898	two part	C
120	202 MAIN ST N	by address		NU to U	1898	one part	NC
121	204 MAIN ST N	by address		Shepherd's Heart	1900	one part	NC
122	206 MAIN ST N	by address		World Finance Corp.	1900	one part	NC
123	208 MAIN N ST	Jones Building		Toledo Loans	1885	two part	C
124	210 MAIN ST N	City National Bank		City National Bank	1909	temple front	C
125	306 MAIN ST N	The Howard	The Rita	The Howard	1914	two part	C
126	310 MAIN ST N	by address		Taylor Fitness	1900	one part	C
127	314 MAIN ST N	by address	JC Penney	vacant	1900	one part	NC
128	316 MAIN ST N	Eikel-Prewitt Building	Eikel Bros Hardwrae / Prewitt Hardware	Citizens National Bank	1893	two part	C
129	417 2ND ST W	Taylor Bedding Co.	Taylor Bedding		1930	industrial	C
130	400 MAIN ST N	Band Stand	Band Stand	City Hall park	1985	structure	NC
132	Highway 95 overpass	Highway 95 overpass	Highway 95 overpass	Highway 95 overpass	1965	structure	NC

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- ☒ **A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- ☐ **B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- ☒ **C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- ☐ **D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Commerce, Community Planning and Development, Architecture

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1876-1955

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1878, 1879, 1882, 1930, 1931

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Struve, Henry; Wetmore, James

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-19 through 8-55).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-56 and 9-57).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

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

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government: Main Street Taylor, Taylor Conservation & Heritage Society, Inc.
- ☒ University: University of Texas, Barker Center for American History
- ☒ Other -- Specify Repository: Taylor Public Library

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The Taylor Downtown Historic District represents the core of commercial activity and economic development in Taylor since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Founded in 1876 in anticipation of the arrival of the International-Great Northern Railroad, Taylor emerged as a transportation hub, center of agriculture and seat of commerce. The initial purchase and platting of the townsite in 1876, the subsequent auction of the first downtown lots, and the completion of the first rail line were decisive events in the town's initial development. This date, 1876, marks the beginning of the historic district's period of significance for the purpose of listing in the National Register of Historic Places. By 1879, the International-Great Northern Railroad (I&GN) had transformed Taylor into a shipping point of considerable consequence; the arrival of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas (M-K-T or Katy) line in 1882 solidified the town's stature as an important transportation hub linking the economies of the town and outlying rural agricultural areas, a trend which continued through the depression of the 1930s and into the 1950s. Taylor not only became the key agricultural center particularly for processing and transportation of cotton and cattle of Williamson County, but came to host numerous commercial endeavors including retail establishments, small scale industry and manufacturing. The Taylor Downtown Historic District, with its proximity to the railroad, played a significant and varied role as a commercial and economic center of the region, vying for importance with the nearby county seat in Georgetown, and is therefore eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under a number of Criteria. The Taylor Downtown Historic District is eligible for listing under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the area of Community Planning and Development as an excellent example of a late 19th-century town plat expanded to accommodate physical and functional growth; in the area of Commerce for its role as one of the largest inland cotton markets in the United States, an important center of livestock trade, and as a host to numerous influential wholesale, retail and industrial establishments. The district is also eligible for listing under Criterion C at the local level of significance in the area of Architecture as an intact sampling of late 19th and 20th century commercial buildings that are reflective of local and national architectural trends during the period of significance (1876-1955).

Immigration, Settlement, and Community Organization prior to 1876

The area of Central Texas that has become Williamson County has been the site of human habitation since at least 4500 B.C.⁶ Among the first known residents were several Native American tribes, including the Tonkawas, the Lipan Apaches and Comanches. The first European exploration of the region likely occurred in the late seventeenth century, when Captain Alonso De León sought a new route between San Antonio and the Spanish missions in East Texas. Their journeys passed through the area of Williamson County along Brushy Creek and the San Gabriel River. In 1716, Louis Juchereau de St. Denis and Domingo Ramón led a Spanish expedition that passed through the area and camped on Brushy Creek and the San Gabriel River, naming them respectively Arroyo de las Benditas Ánimas and Rio de San Xavier. In the 1740s and early 1850s, Spaniards built the San Xavier missions and a presidio along the San Gabriel between present-day Williamson and Milam counties. Despite some success (including the conversion of over 250 Native Americans to the Catholic faith), the missions were plagued by incessant raids from warring Apaches, by drought and by disease. Although exploration continued within the region, the Spanish finally abandoned these missions in 1756. There were no Spanish land grants issued for the land within Williamson County.⁷

⁶ Handbook of Texas Online, s.v. "Williamson County." <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/WW/hcw11.html>. Archaeological evidence suggests prehistoric inhabitation along the San Gabriel River.

⁷ Leffler, John J. "Williamson County History" in *Williamson County Sesquicentennial 1848-1998*. Austin: *Austin American Statesman* commemorative edition, September 27, 1998.

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In 1825, the Mexican state of Coahuila and Texas approved the first colonization contract with Robert Leftwich that included present-day Williamson County. Before settlement could commence on the Leftwich Grant, he sold his rights to the Texas Association in Nashville, of which Stephen F. Austin was agent. The first six land grants in Williamson County were officially issued to Stephen Austin in association with Sterling Robertson between 1831 and 1834.⁸ Initial settlements began soon afterward.

In order to protect settlers' interests in the frontier region, the newly-established Provisional Government of Texas dispatched companies of Rangers to establish a number of forts. These represented the first major wave of settlement in the region.⁹ In 1835, in an attempt to strengthen the frontier against Indian attack, a military post called Block House (or Tumilson's Fort) was built near the headwaters of Brushy Creek in what would become southwestern Williamson County, but was abandoned in February of 1836, when its garrison forces were withdrawn to counter the Mexican invasion. This fort was eventually destroyed by Indians and never rebuilt.¹⁰ In 1838, Dr. Thomas Kenney established the first civilian settlement, named Kenney's Fort, on Brushy Creek near the site of the eventual crossing of the Katy Railroad. This half-acre site, defined by four log homes and a surrounding stockade, was abandoned in late 1840s. Several other sites on Brushy Creek were settled soon after, including the Lawrence settlement southeast of present-day Taylor. Despite persistent attempts to establish lasting settlements, Indian raids kept Anglo settlement in check, and a number of the early pioneers, including Kenney, were killed by Indians over the next few years. As the Indian threat eased after 1846, and the influx of settlers who came to Texas after its annexation traveled along Brushy Creek and the San Gabriel River. Many of these settlers established civilian forts, including Shiloh Fort, located on Brushy Creek three miles south of Hutto (1848).

There were at least 250 settlers in what was then western Milam County, and in the early months of 1848, 107 of them signed a petition to organize a new county. The Texas legislature established Williamson County on March 13, 1848, naming it for prominent attorney, circuit judge and hero of San Jacinto, Robert M. Williamson.¹¹ Georgetown was laid out as the county seat. According to the census of 1850, the newly-established Williamson County had a population of 1,379 whites and 155 slaves. As was common in other frontier counties, most of the improved acreage was used to farm (corn was the crop of choice) and subsistence agriculture remained the predominant trend until the Civil War.¹²

The second wave of settlement commenced after 1848, and again was centered around the San Gabriel River and Brushy Creek. This development was attached to mills for grinding corn and gins for processing cotton.¹³ Early mill settlements included Glasscock Mill on Berry's Creek, John's Mill at Florence, the McFadden & Gellett Mill at Circleville and the Mileham Mill at Jonah.¹⁴ The first cotton gin was established at Rice's Crossing in 1852. The population in Williamson County exploded in the 1850s and 1860s,¹⁵ and with it came a burgeoning economy, six times the number of slaves in 1850. Agricultural pursuits were varied and reflected the county's geographical diversity. In the eastern half of the county,

⁸ Leffler, 3.

⁹ Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 6

¹⁰ Johnson, T.H. "Your Home Town," 4.

¹¹ Ibid. Judge Williamson never actually lived in the county, and he died in Wharton in 1859.

¹² U.S. Census, 1850.

¹³ Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 8.

¹⁴ Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 8.

¹⁵ The white population tripled between 1850 and 1860 to 3,638 whites, while the black population grew even more dramatically to 891 slaves. Handbook of Texas Online, Williamson County.

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rich blackland soils produced healthy crops of wheat and corn. Cotton was introduced in the 1850s, but did not become an important cash crop until the late 1870s. Cattle ranching and sheep herding, however, were widespread throughout the county by 1860.¹⁶ The Civil War caused little material damage in the area, but the value of established farms and livestock holdings decreased considerably. The economic recovery in the 1870s was aided by the growth of the cattle and sheep industries, a dramatic expansion of cotton farming, and the coming of the railroad.

The fourth and largest wave of settlements was directly linked to the expansion of rail lines into Williamson County. Taylor was founded during this fourth wave of settlement, and was the first town in the county to be established solely in anticipation of the coming railroad. Other nearby towns that were founded as a direct result of the railroad include: Hutto (1877; I&GN); Bartlett (1882, M-K-T); Granger (1883; M-K-T); Coupland (1889).

Community Development, Industrial and Commercial Growth of Taylorsville, 1876-1882

The International and Great Northern Railroad, later consolidated as the Missouri Pacific, entered Williamson county in 1875.¹⁷ In 1876, Taylor Station or Taylorsville, named for Edward Moses Taylor,¹⁸ an official and part-owner of the I&GN, was founded as a train stop along the rail line that would eventually stretch to Hutto, Round Rock and out of the county by 1878.¹⁹ In anticipation of the development that accompanied new railway extensions, the Texas Land Company, headquartered in Palestine, bought parcels for the townsite from John Winsett and James C. Evans. The original town consisted of about 501 acres of land, of which 250.5 came from the Winsett survey and 250.5 out of the Evans survey. In May 1876, the townsite was laid out by M.L. Linch, a civil engineer and employee of the I&GN. The entire parcel was cut into sixty blocks; soon after, William Elliot laid out an additional six blocks to the west side in what became the Doak Addition.²⁰ Taylorsville was platted as a series of regular rectilinear city blocks emanating northward from the railroad tracks. Although the town was not founded as a county seat, the plat resembles the Shelbyville courthouse square plan (see Figure 1: Courthouse Typology) and perhaps suggests a certain amount of ambition and competitive forethought on the part of the founders.²¹

The Texas Land Company advertised the first sale of lots in May 1876, only a few months in advance of the completion of the I&GN line.²² The auction generated a great deal of interest within the county, as prospective investors recognized

¹⁶ The practice began with herding wild cattle in the 1840s, but the number of domesticated cattle more than tripled from 11,973 head in 1850 to 38,114 head in 1860. Similarly, the number of sheep grew from 2,937 producing 3,499 pounds of wool in 1850 to 16,952 sheep and 32,994 pounds of wool in 1860. Handbook of Texas Online, Williamson County.

¹⁷ Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 2.

¹⁸ Handbook of Texas Online, "Taylor, Texas." <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/TT/het1.html>; Mantor 1. E.M. Taylor, a wealthy entrepreneur from New York, was one of the largest owners of the railroad. See also brief statement on him in *The Taylor Weekly Texan*, Wednesday November 29, 1893.

¹⁹ A tap line of I&GN was also extended from Round Rock to Georgetown in 1878. Johnson, T.H. "Your Home Town," 7.

²⁰ *The Taylor Weekly Texan*, Wednesday November 29, 1893.

²¹ This development pattern is characterized by in the siting of a prominent civic building sited on a central square that was in turn surrounded by a network of rectilinear city blocks. Major transportation arteries run along the four sides of the town square, facilitating access to and from all parts of the county and state. Veselka, Robert E. *The Courthouse Square in Texas*. Austin: University of Austin Press, 2000 (34-35).

²² Mantor 1 and Griffith 4. Leffler documents the sales in May; Mantor reports the sale of lots as occurring June 1, and Griffith reports the sale taking place around June 10. The rail line was finished in early August.

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that the proposed townsite was not only in the path of the coming rail, but was in the center of already-established (and growing) cattle trails. Thoughts of nearby farmland cultivation were soon to follow. Approximately eight town lots were sold on that first day, including: block 5 purchased by Pedro Amite; lot 9 block 10 to Isam Olive; lots 16 and 17 on block 9 sold to R.M. Wiley and R. S. Porter (both businessmen from Davilla); Wolf Max and partner bought lot 18 block 4; C.P. Vance, a merchant from Circleville, in association with James A. Simmons purchased lot 14 block 9, and later lot 15;²³ Joseph Yicabo purchased lot 11 block 11; lot 19 in block 4 was sold to Elias Epstein and H. Goldsticker; lot 5 block 21 went to Samuel Tomlinson.²⁴ These early property owners were among the first to establish businesses and construct a number of wood-frame buildings. Many of Taylorsville's streets were named after these first investors, including Vance, Olive, and Porter.

Although the first lots were sold in 1876, the first map of the town, showing only forty lots, was not filed with Williamson County until July 1878. The deed dictating the streets and alleyways was executed around the same date. At this time (March 1878) Womack and Sturgis bought lots 1, 2, and 3 in block 4. This site was later developed as the T.J. Kamp Hotel (Property #118, 101 Main Street) and the Speegle Brothers Building (Property #115, 107 Main Street).²⁵ These blocks, adjacent to the railroad tracks, were the location of the earliest businesses in Taylorsville. Development occurred rapidly along the rail corridor until the fire of May 1878, which decimated most of the earliest frame structures. After the fire, Womack and Sturgis extended their property to include lots 3 and 4 of block 9 (now the location of Property #35, 201 Main Street). Here, the partners erected one of the first two-story brick buildings in Taylorsville. The ground floor served a mercantile business and upper floor functioned as an assembly hall with a stage.²⁶

From late 1876 to 1878, Taylorsville's building stock was characterized by its "temporary nature and cheap construction."²⁷ Before the town's incorporation in 1882, property owners were permitted to select their own materials, and as a consequence most commercial and residential properties were wood-frame structures. This relatively inexpensive method of construction provided the greatest return on investment (particularly when paired with low lot prices), and few building owners were motivated to upgrade. Improvements in building quality often did occur, however, after the occasion of fire which was a particular hazard in tightly packed commercial areas with wooden buildings. Such was the case with the fire of May 1878, which originated in the Kamp Hotel and burned all of the wooden buildings on the west side of Main Street from First Street to the Wiley and Porter Building on block nine (approximately the location of Property #110, 211 Main Street). The east side of Main Street also burned northward to lot 12 block 10 (now the location of Property #49, City National Bank, 212 Main Street).²⁸

Despite this conflagration, 1878 was a prosperous year for Taylorsville. Since 1876, the town had acted as a stopping point for trains and a shipping point for cattle and sheep, with relatively little land devoted to agriculture. Early commercial developments did however include stockyards and by 1878, at least one cotton gin was in existence on the site that would become the Taylor Bedding Company (Property #129) and one grain elevator was under construction.²⁹ In

²³ Griffith 4.²⁴ *The Taylor Weekly Texan*, Wednesday November 29, 1893; Griffith 4.²⁵ Griffith 5.²⁶ See Sanborn maps and Griffith 5.²⁷ *The Taylor Weekly Texan*, Wednesday November 29, 1893.²⁸ Griffith 5; Mantor 2. Griffith reports the fire to be in the Winter of 1878 rather than in May as does Mantor.²⁹ The first gin was constructed in 1877. Griffith 10; Mantor 1.

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only two years, the population had reached 1,000, only 500 fewer than Georgetown and 300 fewer than Round Rock.³⁰ There were at least thirty-two businesses concentrated in the six blocks parallel to the railroad, and north to the 300 block of Main Street.³¹ Businesses sprang up not only in support of rail-related demands (hotels, restaurants, and many saloons), but also for ranching and farming pursuits (including dry goods wholesalers, hardware stores, and feed yards). Among the most prolific of early establishments were hotels. The first hotel in Taylor was owned by Anton Kroschewsky and his wife, located north of the railroad on the future site of Kamp's Hotel (now Vencil's Bar-be-Que, Property #118). As was typical of early hotels, meals were available as part of the accommodations. In addition, Mrs. Kroschewsky made sandwiches which Mr. Kroschewsky sold to train men and travelers. This early hotel was destroyed in the fire 1878, but the hotel was immediately rebuilt. The fire of 1879 again struck this property, and burned off the second story.³² In late 1878 and 1879, the hotel was known as the International. Soon after, T.J.N Kamp purchased the property and renamed it as the Kamp Hotel. The wood-frame structure (held together with still-visible square nails) that currently houses Vencil's Barbeque is the remnant of this early hotel (although another fire in 1950 burned the second story, yet again), and it remains the oldest extant building in the historic district.

As town sites were sold and early businesses grew, Taylorsville began to establish civic and cultural facilities. The first post office was established immediately after the town's founding in 1876. In this same year, Professor John McMurray started the McMurray School on the site of the J.W. Darlington residence on Sixth Street. The first Sunday school services were also held there. As the Taylor population grew, McMurray abandoned the first school building for larger facilities, and purchased lots on the north side of Fifth Street (in block 28). Education was important, but religion unified the community. The Texas Land Company encouraged the building of churches and charged a reduced rate for the first church properties in Taylor. Many early churches held services in different locations before they purchased lots for their permanent establishments, but by 1878 at least five substantial religious building were underway. The St. James Episcopal Church was among the first founded in 1876; the dedicated church buildings for the Christian, Baptist, Presbyterian Churches, Roman Catholic were all under construction by 1878.³³ Many of these early churches were constructed along Fifth Street (such as the Methodist), and many were built on Sixth Street, which came to be known as Church Street. Fraternal organizations also played a significant role in the early cultural life of the town. The Odd Fellows Lodge was "reported to be strong"³⁴ though did not have their own lodge facilities. There was also an active temperance organization. Entertainment was not ignored in this growing town, and as early as 1876 an auditorium and stage were built to attract traveling artists and performers, and to give local talent a forum in which to perform. Several abortive efforts were made to establish a local newspaper before 1879, however, the most successful forays were made by Minor H. Brown, who began publishing and editing *The Taylorsville Times* in 1879, which ran through 1898.³⁵ Brown also founded *The Taylor Weekly Texan* in 1880, which he sold in 1887 but continued to edit. Although the town population was quite large and was expanding rapidly, civic infrastructure was slow to develop. Streets were rough and muddy, and fire protection was

³⁰ At the time, Galveston was the largest city in Texas, with a population of 35,000 followed by Houston (25,000), Dallas (20,000), Fort Worth (10,000), and Austin (13,000). Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 2.

³¹ Mantor 2.

³² *Taylor Daily Press*, Wed May 10 1978: Page 7. FILES, Taylor Public Library.

³³ Mantor 2.

³⁴ Ibid., 1-2.

³⁵ Mantor; Griffith 8.

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limited to a number of double hydrants along Main Street.³⁶ City drinking water was supplied by a natural spring in the Murphy and Mendel pastures and sold for twenty cents per barrel.³⁷

A massive fire on 25 February 1879 changed the face of Taylorsville almost overnight. The fire started at site of International Hotel between Commerce and Broad Streets (now First and Second, respectively), and because the majority of buildings were wood-frame, the conflagration burned most of the commercial section of downtown. A second fire broke out in a saloon and the remaining businesses and some homes were also burned. Twenty-nine of the existing thirty-two businesses burned in this fire.³⁸ In other late-nineteenth century towns, transition from frame construction to more substantial and permanent brick and masonry structures was often gradual and correlated with economic growth; in Taylorsville, the devastation of 88% of commercial buildings necessitated an immediate rebuilding. The fire of 1879 encouraged a more aggressive approach, and most new constructions were executed in brick, a large portion of which was made locally.

Despite the destructive fire and the subsequent struggle to rebuild, Taylorsville grew quickly. By 1879, only three years after its initial platting, the town had become shipping point of major consequence. A September 1879 article in the *Taylorsville Times* reports sizable exports of cotton, wool, hides, bones, oats, corn, flour, hogs, sheep, horses, and cattle. Of these, cotton and cattle were the largest.³⁹ By 1880, the Texas Land Company had sold all of its interest in Taylor to John Barnes and Jacob Wetmore. In December 1890, Barnes and Wetmore conveyed their remaining interests to the New York and Texas Land Company, which subsequently sold all of its town lots. By this time, Taylorsville had incorporated, and shortened its name to Taylor.

Community Growth in Taylor, 1882-1929

In 1882, the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad (the M-K-T or the Katy) was extended across the Williamson County line and into Taylor. The construction of this railway, which intersected with the I&GN, ensured that Taylor would become a major transportation hub for the county, and one of Central Texas's most important shipping centers for cattle, wool and cotton. The extension of the IG&N into Williamson County in 1876 laid the foundation for settlement in Taylor; the extension of the Katy into Taylor in 1882 provided additional economic incentives. Taylor's location on these two major railroad lines brought large shipments of goods into the area (notably, building materials such as cast iron and brick) but sent even larger shipments of cotton, cattle, and other goods out of the area. This transportation activity further stimulated commercial and banking activities and prompted industrial and agricultural processing businesses that depended on rail service. Freight depots for both railroads were constructed alongside their respective tracks just south of First Street. By 1898, the Katy had an additional freight house east of the commercial district, near First and Burkitt.⁴⁰ All of these freight depots were initially modest, utilitarian wood-frame buildings. By 1913, the I&GN had replaced their first depot with a more substantial two-story building with Spanish Mission style influences (now demolished). The majority of the railroad shops, including roundhouses and repair facilities, were south of the railroad track.⁴¹ A joint passenger

³⁶ See Sanborn Maps, 1885, 1889, 1893.

³⁷ Mantor 2.

³⁸ Ibid..

³⁹ *Taylorsville Times* Sept 9 1879.

⁴⁰ Sanborn 1898.

⁴¹ By 1912, these facilities were expansive. See Sanborn 1912.

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terminal for both of these railroads was in use by 1885, and was positioned south of First Street and Porter, just east of the freight depots. This passenger depot was enlarged and improved around 1898 and again around 1914, but was demolished and replaced by the current AMTRAK depot (south of boundaries for the historic district).

After the arrival of Katy, the town developed at such a rapid rate that the citizens began to demand civic organization and a city government. Taylorsville, now renamed Taylor, was incorporated in 1882. City government took the mayor-alderman form, with Daniel Moody, a prominent judge and businessman elected as the first mayor.⁴² At this time, the city limits were expanded to one and a half miles in each direction from the town square, a block of land which had initially been donated by the Texas Land Company for public buildings. These city limits were in place until 1890 when continual growth necessitated expansion beyond existing boundaries.⁴³ Subsequent additions were laid out on the eastern and western ends of town, and a F.M. Girard laid out a large addition on the south side of the tracks in March 1891.⁴⁴ By this date, the population had reached 2,547, of which 556 residents were black.⁴⁵

Taylor soon became the largest town in the county – the largest to grow as a direct result of the railroad – and soon overshadowed Georgetown as a center of ranching, agriculture, commerce and shipping. Taylor's rising status encouraged new settlement in the area. Land usage in the 1870s had centered around raising livestock, primarily cattle and sheep. Early residents, such as John R. Hoxie, a railroad magnate and former mayor of Chicago, often owned large tracts of land for grazing grounds.⁴⁶ As savvy businessmen and investors began to realize the potential of the area's rich soil, these larger acreages were portioned into smaller parcels and sold as farm plots. The introduction of barbed wire (patented by Joseph Glidden in 1873) had a profound effect in cutting off open range grazing, and securing these smaller plots of farmland. Agricultural pursuits began to appear more lucrative than the declining ranching industry, and Taylor began to attract a growing number of farmers, merchants and professionals. Most of these new residents were primarily Anglo-Americans from the southern United States, or European immigrants from Germany, Austria, Sweden, and the Czech lands (including Moravia). In the 1880s, Taylor in particular drew a large number of Czechs and Moravians, as well as a significant number of freed blacks which consisted of about 25% of Taylor's population. Many of these African-Americans lived in the outlying areas and worked as tenant farmers or sharecroppers.⁴⁷ Immigration increased yearly, and the needs of the town and county had outstretched the capacity of the first buildings. By 1890, after only fourteen years of

⁴² Daniel Moody was the father of Daniel Moody, Jr., who later became a two-term governor of Texas (1927-31). *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "MOODY, DANIEL JAMES, JR.," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/MM/fmo19.html>.

⁴³ *The Taylor Weekly Texan*, Wednesday November 29, 1893.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ U.S.Census data.

⁴⁶ In 1878, Hoxie purchased 9,000 acres of land east of Taylor and established a ranch there. A small community eventually grew up around his ranch and eventually included a school, blacksmith shop, general store, and cotton gin. Hoxie became one of the wealthiest individuals in Williamson County and had significant ties to with many Eastern and Midwestern entrepreneurs who made economic development possible. He was an influential businessman in Taylor, and instrumental in the physical and economic development of the town and the surrounding areas. Notably, Hoxie was also the first president of the First National Bank of Taylor, founded 1883. See Mantor 5; Leffler, John J. "Williamson County History" in *Williamson County Sesquicentennial 1848-1998*. Austin: *Austin American Statesman* commemorative edition, September 27, 1998: 38; *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "HOXIE, TX," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/HH/hnh47.html>.

⁴⁷ Leffler, John J. "Williamson County History" in *Williamson County Sesquicentennial 1848-1998*. Austin: *Austin American Statesman* commemorative edition, September 27, 1998: 40.

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existence, Taylor had a population of 2,584 residents and at least 107 permanent businesses.⁴⁸ By 1900, the population had reached 4,212. The greatest period of growth for a ten year period occurred in this decade, from 1890 to 1900, when the increase was 1628 residents.⁴⁹

Taylor quickly assumed the leading role as the agricultural center of Williamson County, due in part to its rail linkage to Houston and the north-eastern United States. Rich blackland soils and an agreeable climate proved conducive to production of cotton. Other products (in order of value and yield) were corn, oats, sorghum, hay, millet, and wheat. Taylor's commercial center, however, grew in direct response to the needs of the cotton industry and the requirements of a major rail shipping center. Most commercial activity catered to the local clientele, selling lumber, farming supplies, dry goods and sundries. Lumber yards were among the largest developments within the district, often encompassing an entire city block or more. A number of early lumber yards, mostly located on the west side of town, provided materials and building services in Taylor. Some of the largest included Thompson and Tucker (1885-1904, First and Talbot), J. Griffith (1885, Second and Talbot), C. Williams and Sons (1889-1898, Porter and Second), SF Evans and Company (1893, First and Davis), Williams Brothers (1898, Second and Doak), Holder Lumber (1904, Second and Fowzer), JA Thompson Lumber (1904-1931, Second and Vance), RB Spencer Lumber (1912-31, Second and Fowzer), and Fairchild Lumber (1912, Third and Fowzer). Though there were a great number of lumber yards in the 1880s and 1890s, after about 1916, JA Thompson and RA Spencer dominated the lumber business in downtown Taylor. Several local industries produced building materials used in Taylor and in the surrounding region. There was at least one, and possibly several, brick plants in the Taylor vicinity. The dates and locations of these brick plants within the area remains to be documented. References, however, to their existence have been noted in several publications and in oral interviews. The Eikel-Prewitt Building was constructed in part of Taylor brick. Other local buildings of note were also constructed of Taylor brick, which because of its soft composition was often stuccoed or plastered. Although a brickyard operated in Taylor, the ideal mineral deposits necessary for a successful brick-making operation were not present in the area. The brick made in the vicinity was too sandy, crumbling easily, and therefore inferior. Rather than be deterred by this lack of quality, owners and contractors stuccoed the exterior of buildings constructed with Taylor brick. In many cases the stucco was then scored to resemble stone, a more prestigious building material than brick. A number of the commercial buildings constructed during the late nineteenth century illustrate the use of stucco scored to resemble stone, including the First National Bank (Property #21, 109 Main Street). In the years following the Civil War, cast iron was increasingly used for structural components and along with pressed metal and galvanized iron sheeting, was used as an architectural element. Cast iron was molded into window caps, lintels, window sills, columns, pilasters, and cornices. Cast iron elements were often combined to create entire store fronts. Some of the best known manufacturers were the George Mesker and Company and the Union Iron Foundry, St. Louis, Missouri; Vulcan Iron Works of Fort Worth; Phoenix Iron Works of Houston; Lee Iron Works of Galveston. Because Taylor was founded as a railroad town, many early builders could readily import cast iron for building fronts from many of these well-known iron works. Several prominent buildings incorporated such details, mostly imported from Scherpe and Koken in St. Louis (see Property 82, Main Street).

Service industries were also crucial to Taylor's operation, and blacksmith shops, carriage works and harness shops were scattered throughout the commercial district. In 1889 alone, Taylor had five saloons (all in the four blocks nearest to the railroad and flanking Main Street), four barbers, and four laundries (two of which were "Chinese").⁵⁰ A number of

⁴⁸ See Sanborn 1889, 1893.

⁴⁹ Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 8.

⁵⁰ See Sanborn 1889.

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physicians and attorneys made Taylor their residential and professional home, and officed above the ground-floor commercial space of larger buildings such as the First National Bank (1883) and the Taylor National Bank (1894).

Taylor became a leader in cotton production in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (fig. 6). Associated industrial activities included the ginning of raw cotton, processing of cotton fiber into textiles, refining the cotton seed into oil, and using cotton to make mattresses at Taylor Bedding Company. The first cotton mill was organized and was fully operational in 1877 on the south side of Commerce Street. Other significant agricultural production companies were Hartman's Cotton Gin (1885, on Fowzer), Rhodes Cotton Gin and Feed Mill (1885, on Davis), Taylor Cotton Oil and Manufacturing Company (1893, First and Doak), Taylor Compress (south of the railroad tracks), National Compress (1898, south of the railroad tracks), Aderholt and Company (1912, Second and Washburn), Taylor Milling Company (1912, First and Elliott encompassing Property #1), and Taylor Cotton Oil Works (1912, south of the railroad tracks). There were many other gins in Taylor and the surrounding area during the heyday of the cotton producing industry. Around 1920, Taylor proclaimed itself the "World's Greatest Inland Cotton Market," and remained the most important trade center for the eastern part of the county until after the second World War.⁵¹

Because of its location on the railroad, Taylor attracted more industrial development than most cities in the county. The Taylor Bedding Company (Property #129), located north of the railroad between Fowzer and Davis, was perhaps the most significant industrial activity to contribute significantly to the Taylor's economy from its foundation to the current day. Founded in 1903 by the Forwood family, who also owned a furniture shop in town, Taylor Bedding grew from a small building on the tracks to dominate an entire block between Fowzer and Davis Streets (fig. 7). Products included not only their famous Morning Glory and Sanidown mattresses, but quilts, comforters, padding, batting, felts, upholstery. By 1930, it was one of the largest mattress manufacturers in the south. At peak production, its 400 employees could turn out 2500 mattresses (enough to fill five rail cars) in one day. In 1942, the plant encompassed over 100,000 square feet (more than two city blocks), owned thirteen buildings to house equipment and stock, and could produce 5,000 mattresses in a single day. Taylor Bedding was and is one of the few businesses in Taylor to maintain its national reputation, and the slogan "Taylor-Made" gained household meaning.⁵²

⁵¹ Between the beginning of Taylor's cotton boom in 1877 and World War II, Texas was the largest cotton-producing state in the country. The number of planted and harvested acreage as well as the total yield (in pounds and bales) was at least double and more often triple to four times that of any other state. Texas cotton comprised between 30% and 40% of the nation's cotton production, and approximately 75% of this cotton was shipped to foreign markets (for more, see the *Texas Almanac* for 1929). For example, in 1920, there were 12,972,000 acres planted with cotton in Texas, which produced 4,345,000 bales; the next largest cotton producing state was South Carolina in which only 2,501,000 acres of cotton were planted to yield only 1,623,000 bales. The greatest yield of cotton was in 1949 (6,040,000 bales), and the second-largest production year was in 1926 (5,628,000 bales), a total of almost four million bales more than the next largest producing state (Mississippi). It was at this time that Taylor declared itself the "World's Largest Inland Cotton Market." Although ginning and sales supporting this claim has not been uncovered, the likelihood of the claim is great considering that in 1919, 1920 and 1922 Williamson County was the largest cotton producer in the state of Texas. In 1921, 1923 and 1924, Williamson County was second in cotton production, closely following Ellis County. In 1927 and 1928, Williamson County fell to third in statewide cotton production. General statistics courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), <http://www.usda.gov/nass>; county statistics cited from *Texas Almanac* 1929 (102-104).

⁵² "It's All Done With Cotton: The inside story of the world's largest bedding plant." Taylor: Taylor Bedding Manufacturing Company, 1942.

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With the success of a diversified economy that included not only agriculture, but processing, shipping, manufacturing, banking, retail and wholesale, Taylor flourished through the first two decades of the twentieth century to approximately 1931. With the discovery of oil in nearby Thrall in 1915, a large amount of capital flowed into the town. Taylor witnessed great activity in building and general infrastructural improvement. Many new homes were built, and businesses were reconstructed or remodeled. Downtown merchants and professionals were interested in expanding their floor space, and continuing to modernize their building. Physical alterations to older buildings included the removal of old post-supported awnings and the installation of the new awnings which hung from the façade on iron chains or rods, and the installation of glass show windows to replace the old two and three door openings to stores. Streets in the thriving business district were paved. Gins, compresses, rail yards, banks, and stores attracted farmers from the surrounding areas.

Along with the shift to a cotton-based economy, one of the more significant developments in Taylor's commercial history was the formation of several large banks (fig. 8). The establishment of banks meant an increased availability of loans and credit, a crucial factor in the development of downtown businesses and buildings, but even more important for agricultural practices that required many farmers to buy on credit and pay when crops came in. These transactions affected both the local businesses that would float credit and the banks that would supply loans to support businesses that were cash-poor. The first bank in Taylor was privately owned and operated by Miller Brothers and Robertson, but was discontinued by 1883.⁵³ The first "national" bank in Taylor was also the first in all of Williamson County; it was established in 1883 with John R. Hoxie as its first president.⁵⁴ The First National Bank was housed in a temporary location at the corner of Second and Main streets until the bank's permanent home was completed toward the end of 1883 on the opposite corner at 115-117 Main Street (Property #21). The bank remained on this site until its merger with Taylor National Bank in 1931.⁵⁵ The Taylor Savings and Loan Association was organized in 1885, with Dr. R. H. Eanes as president. This was perhaps the first savings and loan in the region. It later changed its name to Taylor Banc Savings Association. The Taylor National Bank (Property #34, RTHL and NR), was established in 1888 by C. H. Booth, Sr., who had been a director of the First National Bank of Taylor. Booth founded the new bank on the premise that it would be "people owned," or owned by stockholders. The Taylor National Bank purchased the site at Main and Second Streets (lots 7 to 9, block 10) in 1888 for \$4800. The bank's permanent home, the three-story brick and sandstone building, was designed by prominent Austin architect A. O. Watson and constructed in May 1894. The last of the three major banks in Taylor was the City National Bank, founded in February 1900 by John H. Griffith, Dr. R.H. Eanes, J.J. Thames, C.C. Hooper, S.A. Easley, H.T. Kimbro and Robert D. Penn.⁵⁶ The bank was first housed in a one-story building, constructed in 1900. The bank remained in that location until 1908, when it purchased the lot at 210 N. Main from Thomas Duffy. The new building, a Classical Revival temple-front, was designed by prominent local architect Henry Struve in 1909 (Property #124). This new building was and still remains one of the only examples of high-style Classical Revival architecture in Taylor, and demonstrates that architects and clients in Taylor were atune to nationwide architectural trends. The Struve-designed building was home of the bank until a new building (Property #49) was constructed and opened on May 13, 1965.⁵⁷ The First State Bank and Trust Company was the last of the major banks, and it was founded in 1913 on the site of the 1965 City National Bank Building. By 1915,

⁵³ Griffith 10.⁵⁴ "Taylor, Texas The City of Opportunity", 1915: 13. For more on the First National Bank, see NR section Representative Properties.⁵⁵ Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 9.⁵⁶ Griffith 15-19.⁵⁷ Griffith 15.

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Taylor had four major banks, two of which lasted through leaner times of the Great Depression of the 1930s and into the present day.⁵⁸

Growth in the commercial realm during the late 1890s and early 1900s paralleled development in the civic arena. Taylor elected its first mayor in 1882, and retained this form of city government until 1914, when the city adopted a commission and city manager.⁵⁹ In 1905, Taylor commissioned a new city hall. It was designed by Henry Struve and built by contractor John F. McKnight. The city hall housed city offices, police and fire departments, and had opera house on the second floor. Declared "unsafe" in 1934, the city hall was demolished and replaced in 1935 by a "modern" building influenced by nationwide architectural trends and displaying characteristics of ZigZag Moderne and Streamline Moderne (Property #81A).

The first United States Post Office opened on August 9, 1876 with J.B. Loper as first Postmaster. This post office located in a wood-frame building on the east side of Main Street near the railroad tracks, but was destroyed by fire in 1879. The second post office was at the corner of East Second and Porter, with John O. Fink as the Postmaster. In 1890, the Post Office was moved to the south side of the John Threadgill building at Main and Fourth. A year later, it moved to West Second and Talbot. For a short time, it was housed in the J.J. Crim Furniture Building at the corner of East Second and Talbot. On Jan 15, 1903, Postmaster Henry C. Payne signed a lease for the Post Office to be housed in the Sturgis-Goldstein Building at Main and Fourth. On September 15, 1903, rural free delivery was instituted, and Taylor opened three routes. On October 12, 1914, the United States government purchased the site of the present-day United States Post Office (Property #88) from Robert J. Eckhardt and Oscar E. Roberts for \$5000. Still unready to construct a new facility, the post office continued to rent, and in 1922 occupied space in the T.W. Marse Building at the southeast corner of Fourth and Talbot (demolished for new bank facilities in 1965). Congressman James Buchanan was instrumental in acquiring appropriations for the present building, which opened on June 28, 1930. The post office represents one of the few major building projects executed in Taylor during the beginning of the depression; it was perhaps the income generated from this project that delayed economic devastation that many other regions of the country faced in late 1929.

Although most streets and alleyways in Taylor's commercial district were laid out and named by 1878, significant improvement did not occur until after the turn of the century. The street naming conventions were typical, as many of the first streets were named for early settlers and prominent citizens. For example, Colonel Elliot was an educated gentleman, lawyer, bachelor, and reputable gambler (who disappeared without a trace); John Porter was among other things, the director of the local funeral home; Talbot was a lawyer and businessman; CP Vance participated in the initial auction of town lots, built the first drug store, and was prominent in civic affairs. But by 1893, many of Taylor's streets were renamed: Commerce became First, Broad became Second, Milam changed to Third, Olive became Fourth, Hunter became Fifth, Hamilton became Sixth and Dickson became Seventh.⁶⁰ Both street names seemed to be used interchangeably, but by the 1912 Sanborn map, only the numbered system was used. Interestingly, the north-south streets retained their names, such as Davis, Fowzer, Vance, Talbot, Porter, Washburn and Elliot. Streets that were directly related to the railroad and transportation of crops, such as First and Main, were macadamized very early at the impetus of the railroad companies. With the appearance of the first automobile on Taylor streets in 1906 (owned by CC Hooper), and the second in 1908

⁵⁸ "Taylor, Texas The City of Opportunity", 1915: 11.

⁵⁹ Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 4.

⁶⁰ See Sanborn 1889 and 1893 for changes.

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(owned by C.H. Booth, a prominent banker),⁶¹ street improvement became a private concern. Main Street was paved for the first time in 1908, at cost of 25,000.⁶² The first widespread efforts to pave other streets occurred began in 1916, and was paid for by a bond issue of \$100,000. Seven miles of paving were completed at that time.⁶³ The signal light system was installed on Main Street in 1928, but as late as 1940, Taylor streets did not have street signs.⁶⁴

Public transportation arrived early in Taylor. Dr. A.V. Doak's streetcar line was constructed in 1890, and provided access through the town and extending to the fairground. The route passed along Main Street from Second to Seventh, west on Seventh to Doak's Pavillion, south on Sloan to Third, and turned east to Doak Street, south to Second and east to Main. The streetcar, pulled by two Spanish mules, operated until 1900.⁶⁵

The first public water system was installed in 1882 by George W. Burkitt and Daneil Murphy, Sr. The town's first water came from springs in the Murphy and Mendel pastures. As population increased, these sources became inadequate, and a pipe line was installed from the city to the San Gabriel. This source also proved less than dependable. The Taylor Water Company finally drilled an artesian well to supply the city.⁶⁶ As a partnership between Taylor Ice Company and the Taylor Water Company, this artesian well was drilled to a depth of 3260 feet and had pressure of 70 pounds that "throws an eight inch stream of water 60 feet in the hears...hot to the temperature of 116 degrees, and the Government analysis shows that its medicinal properties are unsurpassed."⁶⁷ In 1915, Texas Light and Power Company, located at First and Doak, was one of the "most modern and up-to-date plants in the country."⁶⁸

Soon after town was founded in 1876, Professor John McMurray started the McMurray school on sixth street (east of the Baptist church). This site was soon abandoned for larger facilities on Talbot Street, where he built a one story wood-frame building (24x60) with a belfry and a playground to the south. An early private school for girls was founded by Kitty Hutchins on the site of the later Catholic rectory to the north of Fourth Street. In 1882, Professor Green started the Green Institute school at the corner of Main and Fifth. Other schools included the Lone Star Academy (1884) on Victoria Street, taught by JV Brown and his wife,⁶⁹ the Aten School and the Stock Company School. In August 1883, Taylor citizens passes the first bond issue to purchase land for the first public school, and construction began in 1884. Although this property is beyond the boundaries of the historic district, it is significant to note. Taylor Public School had its first graduating class of two students in 1887 (Lillian Noyes and Fergusson Doak).⁷⁰ Population growth required new school buildings, and the original school replaced in 1890 by three-story brick school that was in service until 1923.⁷¹ Curriculum consisted of reading, writing, spelling, grammar, composition, literature, general history, civics, economics, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, physics, chemistry, Latin, and bookkeeping. Until 1910, Taylor schools consisted of primary school (grades 1-3), grammar school (grades 4-7), high school (grades 8-10). All Anglo students were housed in one building;

⁶¹ Johnson, T.H. "Your Home Town," 7; Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 22.

⁶² Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 3.

⁶³ "Taylor, Texas The City of Opportunity", 1915: 19.

⁶⁴ Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 12.

⁶⁵ Griffith 12.

⁶⁶ Griffith 8-10.

⁶⁷ "Taylor, Texas The City of Opportunity", 1915: 5.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁶⁹ Griffith 6.

⁷⁰ Griffith 6 (gives names); Mantor 4.

⁷¹ Griffith 6; Mantor 4.

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Taylor had separate public schools for the "Mexican race" and the "Negro race." By 1923, Taylor had several schools, including the new high school, the school on Twelfth Street, West End, Blackshear ("negro" – later called Eastside School; name for Edward L. Blackshear, Negro Educator and orator and President of Prairie View College⁷²), Alamo ("Mexican-American"), and the Kindergarten School.⁷³ By 1924, the duck was selected as Taylor mascot in 1924 (Taylor was the only high school in Texas with Ducks as mascot), and later, Walt Disney designed the Duck emblem and gave town the permission to use it. In 1968 the new Taylor High School constructed.⁷⁴

Because Taylor was the largest town in the area, and the gathering center for the rural populace, it was host to a number of entertainment and cultural facilities. It was of course the center of news, publishing the *Taylor Citizen*, *Taylor Daily Democrat* (first daily paper in the county),⁷⁵ *The Journal*, the *Taylor Times*, and the *Taylor Daily Press* which was published for the first time in 1913 and continues today.⁷⁶ The Taylor Fair, formed in 1880 by a group of sheepmen who gathered annually to shear their flocks, became a widely-anticipated annual event until 1916. It was originally held at Washington Heights then moved to northwest Taylor, where an exhibition hall and stables were built, grandstands erected and a race track laid. In the 1890s, people could ride Doak's streetcar part of the way to the fair along Fairground street.⁷⁷ Taylor had at least four opera houses, the first of which was located on the corner of Second and Main, the second at Fourth and Main (in the old City Hall), another in a building that became Gelman's Department Store, and the last building to be used as opera house was the 1905 city hall. In 1910, the City Directory lists several theaters including Candy Jim's Theater and Moving Pictures (305 Main), and the Airdome Moving Pictures (Third Street between Main and Porter). "Picture shows" or "moving picture houses" appeared in force in Taylor in May 1914 when Howard Hoke and AA Zizinia opened the Colonial on Main Street (fig. 9). The Colonial Picture Show was "one of the finest playhouses in the country" and was designed in accordance to nationwide trends towards architectural Exoticism; the building featured a dramatically stepped parapet with painted Greek keys. The Colonial regularly featured weekly shows of "moving picture stars and the best films that can be obtained."⁷⁸ In 1915, Howard Bland and his son bought out Zizinia's part and The Colonial became Bland and Hoke Co. Picture Shows. Other Taylor movie theaters included The Don (Second Street, possibly the theater that was housed in Property #23), The Rita on Main (now The Howard, Property #125), and The Howard (originally across street from present-day location). When The Rita was renamed The Howard, the old sign was transferred. The current Howard (Property #125) is the only historic movie theater that remains in the district. As important as entertainment, social clubs played a significant role in local culture. The Odd Fellows Lodge was one of the first fraternal organizations in Taylor. By 1915, Taylor had the Elks, Moose, Odd Fellows, Woodmen of the World, Masons and Knights of Columbus, and the Ku Klux Klan.⁷⁹ Of particular note was the "exclusive and unusual" Bicycle Club which had at least six members: Mrs. J.P. Sturgis, the organizer, took bicycle lessons in New York at \$2.50 an hour and owned the first bicycle in Taylor.⁸⁰

⁷² Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 20.

⁷³ Ibid. 18.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 28.

⁷⁵ Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 8.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Mantor 4.

⁷⁸ "Taylor, Texas The City of Opportunity", 1915: 15, 17.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 9.

⁸⁰ Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 5.

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The population between 1910 and 1920 increased rather slowly, from 5314 to 5965 (a growth of only 651). However, the next decade showed an increase of 1498 residents, huge in comparison to the depression decade between 1930 and 1940 when Taylor grew from 7463 to 7875 (412 residents).

Taylor in the Great Depression

Taylor's traditional community-oriented life (formed around family, church, and social groupings) was rooted in the culture of cotton and rural isolation; the proliferation of the automobile in the 1910s and 1920s changed this. Autos were an expensive luxury in the first decade of the twentieth century (the first car in Taylor appeared in 1906); in 1909 there were only about 96 cars in the entire county. In 1922, 6300 cars were registered in Williamson county and by 1930, there were more than 12,000 (one for every four residents).⁸¹ State and city governments began to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars for road improvement. The direct impact on the physical composition of the city was marked in Taylor. Gas stations began to appear on the periphery of the commercial district (and a few within the residential areas); at least three new stations were built around 1930. Auto garages replaced wagon works, and automotive dealerships became some of the largest buildings in the district. The biggest shift was, however, in the main transportation arteries. Before the advent of the auto, First Street with its proximity to the railroad, was the major locus of development. Once the automobile came, Second Street (originally called Broad Street because of its breadth) became the major thoroughfare and site of the newest businesses, including a number of gas stations. This street was eventually developed as Highway 79. Farmer's lives were also changed at this time by the introduction of the automobile (particularly the truck), the tractor and other mechanized farm equipment, which rapidly began to replace the horse and the mule. These were more efficient, less work, and did not require feeding have to be fed when they weren't working.

The 1920s and early 1930s brought extremes in financial prosperity and losses. The onset of economic hardship that hit the rest of the United States in October 1929 did not immediately affect Taylor, as there were several major construction and remodeling projects underway in downtown, including the construction of the United States Post Office and the Swift & Company Plant. Although American urban centers had enjoyed nearly a decade of progress and prosperity during the 1920s, farmers had experienced ten years of declining fortune. Between 1923-29, prices received by farmers were 40 to 50 percent above pre-war years but prices paid by farmers were 60 percent higher.⁸² Part of the decline was attributed to a reduction in international demand for cotton following World War I, as foreign competition and new synthetic materials reduced the demand for American-grown cotton fiber. The flood of 1921 was also detrimental to the local economy. The contrast between urban wealth and rural stagnation collided in the economy of the farm city, of which Taylor was a prime example.⁸³ Taylor in 1929 was urban in character and amenities, if small-scale and still relatively isolated. Although just thirty-four miles from Austin, poor road meant that trip to the "big city" were rare; weeks would even pass between visits to Georgetown. These conditions, paired with alluring commercial and entertainment facilities, allowed Taylor to become a locus of activity. Movie houses, entertainments, famous visitors, and bustling commerce particularly on Saturdays and during harvest drew town and rural dwellers into the central business district.

⁸¹ Leffler, John J. "Williamson County History" in *Williamson County Sesquicentennial 1848-1998*. Austin: *Austin American Statesman* commemorative edition, September 27, 1998: 60. See also *Texas Almanac* for vehicle registration data by county.

⁸² Rice, Bradley Robert. "The Beginnings of the Great Depression in Taylor, Texas." unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1971 (1).

⁸³ Rice, (2).

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In keeping with trends from past decades, most industrial activities in 1929 and early 1930 were related to agriculture. Taylor Bedding was largest of these industries, and in 1930 employed 100 people. Two cotton seed mills, eight gins, and a compress also fueled the local economy. A few minor industries included a sausage factory, ice cream maker, ice plant, two planning mills and three hatcheries.⁸⁴ In late 1929, as the rest of the nation flew into panic, Taylor seemed to be continuing in relative comfort. The Blazilmar Hotel had just undergone a massive remodeling. The Methodist Church was constructing a new education building, and foundations were laid for the new United States Post Office (Property #88). Construction on the Swift & Company Packing Plant (Property #12) had also commenced in 1929, offering not only a major income in the building trades, but an opportunity for economic diversification as it was to be the area's largest poultry packing plant. At least three new filling stations were under construction, including one south of the tracks, in the "Negro" section of town (this new filling station became the first brick building south of the tracks).⁸⁵ Many new homes were being built. According to the *Taylor Daily Press*, over \$300,000 worth of new construction was started in 1929, with Swift and Co comprising at least half.⁸⁶ The city was doing well economically, and the holdings of Taylor's major banks reached a high in that year. The stock market crash of October 1929 seemed remote and the typical attitude seemed to be "let the other fellow worry about that."⁸⁷ From October into the new year, local business thrived and there seemed to be plenty of money in circulation.

In early 1930, Taylor's economy received a temporary boon, or at least a glimpse of future profits. Oil came to Taylor in 1930. The Thrall oil field about ten miles east of Taylor was discovered in 1915, and by 1929 still had some active producing wells. But the most significant strike in the history of Taylor was the Chapman-Abbott Field in 1930. However, in January 1930, oil prices were dropping and would continue to drop as production was increasing across the state and nation. On January 18, 1930, a gusher was discovered at Abbott Well (twelve miles southeast of downtown). Thousands of spectators from all over state came to Taylor to view the strike. Only 2 days after the well "blew in," the newly-remodeled Blazilmar was packed. The *Taylor Daily Press* reported that beds were placed in the hallways, and clerks still had to turn people away.⁸⁸ Experts predicted that the well would bring over \$20 million into the local economy before the end of the year, and that population would double as a result.⁸⁹ Representatives were sent in from major oil company, such as Humble, Texaco, Gulf, Atlantic, Magnolia and Pure. Over 1500 leases were negotiated within a few days, and by February at least twenty new derricks were erected in the field. Local restaurants and hotels prospered, but Taylor as a town didn't experience "profiteering" characteristic of oil boom town. And success was short-lived. Two months after the first gusher, the Simms Oil Company Number One hit the first dry well. By mid-1930, it was clear that Williamson County wasn't going to be the next Spindletop. But oil prospects in Taylor had not quite disappeared. In June, 6000 barrels of oil were reaching markets through the newly constructed Williamson County Pipeline.⁹⁰ Taylor oil was shipped primarily to Sinclair Oil in Houston, the Atlantic Oil and Refinery Company in Fort Worth, and Centex Refiner at Minerva.⁹¹ Local promoters saw that profits were being made by distant refineries, and began construction on two new

⁸⁴ *Taylor Daily Press* 5-25-30

⁸⁵ *Taylor Daily Press* 11-19-29.

⁸⁶ Note that Taylor didn't require building permits until at least the 1940s, although a recent inquiry with the building department suggests that permits were not issued (or at least not archived) until the 1970s.

⁸⁷ *Taylor Daily Press* 11-27-29.

⁸⁸ *Taylor Daily Press* 1-23-30.

⁸⁹ Rice, (10).

⁹⁰ Rice, (13).

⁹¹ Rice, (14).

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refineries, one in Thrall and one in Taylor. The All-State Refinery in Thrall opened in September 1930, and construction on the Taylor Refining Company, located on the Katy tracks one mile south of town (with offices in the Taylor National Bank), began at about same time but was not in full operation until the end of 1930. "Taylor made" gasoline was primary product of Taylor refinery.⁹² The company eventually had nearly statewide distribution, as it had good freight connections in all directions. The Taylor Refining Company operated its own gas station in Taylor in addition to fifteen other stations in the vicinity which pumped "Taylor made" fuel.⁹³ As the Taylor Refinery expanded to fields in East Texas and started a plant in Tyler, but maintained its central offices in Taylor. The oil market finally declined in the late summer of 1931, due to overproduction and declining nationwide prices. The impact of the 1930 oil discovery was not large; it may have only provided short-term boosts to hotels, cafes, and the local Ford Dealership.⁹⁴ A few people who owned leases or royalties prospered, but the most important effect was the establishment of the Taylor Refining Company, which employed ten to thirty-five full time workers. Despite this short-lived oil boom and dreams of bigger things, Taylor was destined to remain a cotton town for several more decades.

With the boost of the Chapman-Abbott oil boom and a few major construction projects, Taylor held off the effects of the depression well into 1930. Many vendors reported a slight increase in sales, and the harvest was good. Swift and Company Poultry Packing Plant had its grand opening, an occasion that warranted a parade and a publicity motorcade that canvassed Granger, Bartlett, Holland, Temple, Belton, Jarrell, Georgetown, Round Rock, Pflugerville and Hutto.⁹⁵ The *Taylor Daily Press* ran a special Sunday supplement with numerous pictures of the Swift and Company building. The plant intended to hire sixty full-time employees, adding more in the peak seasons. Facilities could handle 18,000 chickens and 144,000 eggs a day, and would also purchase and process "all the cream this territory will furnish."⁹⁶ In 1930, the new post office opened, as did the West End Fire Station, and the Magnolia filling station (Property#42). Infrastructure continued to improve: the city had successfully taken over the municipal water ownership, and in July 1930 purchased the municipal sewer system (then owned by Hamilton Brothers of Battle Creek, Michigan).⁹⁷ Governor Daniel Moody, a Taylor native who began his illustrious career as a Williamson County prosecutor who defeated the Ku Klux Klan, was leaving office. But by the fall of 1930, local retail sales began to decline, even at Sturgis-Goldstein, the town's largest merchant. To keep their minds off declining fortunes, Taylor opened its first mini-golf course (the latest craze across the nation), which quickly became a favorite spot for family entertainment.⁹⁸ Notably, the Colonial Theater re-opened, which had been closed since the advent of the talkies in 1927.⁹⁹ The Green and White Bowling Alley opened with three lanes, "ladies welcome," but did not last through the depression. The City Commission voted to fund lights for tennis court.¹⁰⁰ Lighting was also erected at the newly established high school football field, and the first night-time game in Taylor was held in October 1933.¹⁰¹

⁹² Rice, (15).⁹³ Ibid.⁹⁴ Rice, (17).⁹⁵ Rice, (23).⁹⁶ Rice, (24). TDP...⁹⁷ Rice, (25).⁹⁸ Rice, (27).⁹⁹ Rice, (29).¹⁰⁰ Rice, (36).¹⁰¹ Johnson, T.H. "Down the Years," 7.

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By 1931, the depression finally hit Taylor. Bank resources fell by three quarters of a million dollars, and there were numerous store failures. Rosenberg's Dry Goods, one of many to fail, was purchased by the Bankrupt Sales Company at the end of January. In an effort to provide some immediate relief, the city commissioners granted forty-five day extension on payment of city taxes. Still, the town's largest merchant, Sturgis-Goldstein (Property #35) closed its doors in April 1931. Financial hardship had been on the horizon since the drought of 1925, when farmers and tenants bought groceries, dry goods and other items on credit and paid when their crops went to market (of course after he had bought more cotton seed and mule feed first). By 1931, Sturgis-Goldstein, like many other merchants, became overextended and had to close.¹⁰² Charles Rosner of Austin bought all of the Sturgis-Goldstein stock and began to offer it at bargain prices.¹⁰³ Despite a resurgence of sales, Rosner was soon forced to move all stock to first floor and cut elevator, phone and light services on the second floor of his massive building. As a direct result of hard times, the town's two largest banks merged in 1931: The First National and Taylor National became First-Taylor National Bank.¹⁰⁴ Part of this bank failure had to do with the same credit problem, as the First National was involved with large businesses as Sturgis-Goldstein. The City National Bank, run conservatively by the Griffith family, remained strong. In this period, Blackshear Elementary (for Negro children) burned, but was rebuilt by the fall of 1931. In October 1931, Forwood Furniture closed after twenty-nine years, announcing that the owner wanted to dedicate more time to interests in Taylor Bedding.¹⁰⁵ The real situation was that the furniture store was about to go broke. The city's first unemployment survey was made in December 1931, when the Boy Scouts went door to door to query residents. Of the 286 unemployed, 145 were Negro (20% rate for this ethnic group) and 22 were Mexican-American. The town's first soup line appeared in 1931 when Speegle Grocery store (Property #115) offered soup, crackers and water to all comers. On the first day, fifty people were fed and the grocer declared "no one will ever starve in Taylor."¹⁰⁶ It is unclear how long they operated the soup line, but by 1933 the bread and soup line was administered by the county government.¹⁰⁷ In an effort to cooperate with President Hoover's Emergency Committee for Employment, locals were asked to list odd jobs that could be filled by the less fortunate. Because of proximity to rail lines, vagrants soon became a problem, and were thought responsible for the petty crime wave that hit the city in the 1930s.¹⁰⁸ To make a glum situation worse, a major typhoid fever epidemic hit, due in part to fact that city water was cut off to many homes whose residents could not afford to pay water bills, relying on water supply from creeks on south of tracks.¹⁰⁹ Dr. James Lee Dickey, who was at the time the only black physician in Williamson County and one of only 130 black doctors in Texas, provided health care before integration and was instrumental in launching a vaccination program to fight typhoid.¹¹⁰ There was a slight resurgence in construction in early 1931, and the larger projects included the ice plant, a gin near Rice Crossing, two service stations, and a small number of homes. Work

¹⁰² Rice, (36).

¹⁰³ Rice, Bradley Robert. "The Beginnings of the Great Depression in Taylor, Texas. " unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1971 (39).

¹⁰⁴ Harris Melasky, the attorney who engineered merger, later described it as taking "two broke banks, put them together, and came up with one broke bank." Rice, Bradley Robert. "The Beginnings of the Great Depression in Taylor, Texas. " unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1971 (37).

¹⁰⁵ Rice, (53).

¹⁰⁶ TDP 1-18-31. quoted in Rice, (34).

¹⁰⁷ Rice, (34).

¹⁰⁸ Rice, (41).

¹⁰⁹ Rice, (57).

¹¹⁰ *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "DICKEY, JAMES LEE,"

<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/DD/fdi41.html>

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also began on paving the highway south to Elgin.¹¹¹ The bright spot of Taylor in the 1930s was Taylor Bedding, which in January 1932 was awarded a war department contract that would provide jobs (though not without pay cuts and some layoffs) through the depression.

In 1931, Taylor was still the leading agricultural center in county (the county had about 86.5% of land in farms, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of that in cotton). Industry depended almost entirely on cotton (with some in poultry businesses and new oil). Prices had been slowly falling since 1929, and the city government began encouraging diversification into dairy and poultry (this was significant in luring Swift and Company to town). By October 1931, cotton hit its lowpoint of 5.3 cents per pound, down from 20 cents a pound in 1928.¹¹² 1931 was also driest year of the 1930s. As a side note, between 1930 and 1934, a million agriculturists lost their farms across the nation; this mirrored the situation in Taylor and the surrounding countryside. With fewer farmers, the average land holdings increased, but laborers and tenants – mostly black and Mexican-American – began to leave farms for the city and towns like Taylor.¹¹³ By 1940, hundreds of farmers were driven off their land. The area's population and cotton production declined, and ranching and poultry steadily replaced cotton. The decline was worsened by the seven-year drought of the 1950s. By 1960, there were about half the number of farms than were counted in 1930.¹¹⁴

Taylor in the post-World War II period (to 1955)

The greatest shift following World War II occurred not so much within the physical fabric of the city, but within the economic activities of its residents. Agriculture, the cotton industry in particular, once the core of Taylor's economy, was no longer as viable. While the number of farms decreased, the average acreage of each increased significantly, signaling a change in land use. Farmers became ranchers, and livestock trade began to bring a significant profit. While cotton was still the leading cash crop in Williamson County, the function of the Taylor market was slowly modified. Farming and ranching both were mechanized and commercialized, and Taylor expanded its industrial and commercial activity in response to these forces. While many cities across the United States benefited from war industry in the 1940s, Taylor did not. There were no war-time plants, and the war contracts obtained by local manufacturers were limited to Taylor Bedding and a few other small clothing manufacturers. Although there was a significant population of migrant farm workers (at least 8000 to 9000 a season) employed in the Taylor area through the 1950s, manufacturing began to take on a larger role in the economy. New plants included the Dr. Pepper plant, the Delta Manufacturing plant (Taylor's second largest manufacturer, who made army breeches on government contract), the Blackland Creamery owned by EW Stromberg and Ray Garrett, the Danek Packing Company, MoTex Manufacturing (for store fixtures), the Taylor Pecan Company owned by local attorney WC Wofford, the South Texas Cotton Oil Mill, and Taylor Iron-Machined Works owned by Louie Kincl (who could fabricate anything from a front door ornament to a 20-ton truck bed).

World War II halted the physical development of downtown Taylor for a time, due in part to material rationing and a dispersal of the young labor force. Population increased slightly, but the entire growth between 1950 and 1980 was only a

¹¹¹ Rice, (35).

¹¹² Rice, Bradley Robert. "The Beginnings of the Great Depression in Taylor, Texas." unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1971 (43;50).

¹¹³ Rice, (51).

¹¹⁴ Leffler, John J. "Williamson County History" in *Williamson County Sesquicentennial 1848-1998*. Austin: *Austin American Statesman* commemorative edition, September 27, 1998: 70.

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hundred or so more than the growth in the single decade between 1940 and 1950, and less than the growth between 1920 and 1930. Few new buildings were constructed in the downtown district between the close of World War II and the mid-1950s. Only one "modern" service station sprang up on the periphery of the district, on Business 79, but none appeared within the core of the commercial sector. A number of significant properties were demolished during this period and up to 1965, most to make way for new banks. Half of block 10 and half of block 16 (which included the T.W. Marse Department Store) were demolished in the mid-1960 for just this purpose. The commercial district expanded north of Fifth Street along Main, as is evidenced by a number of late buildings constructed in this area. Although there was not a great deal of new construction in the commercial district, there were a significant number of renovations in the postwar era. The most significant trend was the enveloping of historic buildings in metal slipcovers, or refacing facades with new brick or new stucco finishes, as is evidenced by a number of buildings along Main, including 206 Main Street (Property #122). A number of buildings were slip-covered until at least the mid-1980s, including what is now the Cotton Seed Annex and 204 Main Street (Property #121), that later of which still remains encased in corrugated metal. Storefronts were altered and replaced, interiors were modified to accommodate new fixtures and mechanical systems. Despite these alterations, downtown Taylor retains much of its historic fabric and a sense of its historic form. The physical character of the postwar town is not altogether different from that of Taylor in the 1930s, following the end of the last building phase which had culminated with the construction of the Taylor City Hall in 1935. Certainly, Taylor like other small Texas towns, expanded on its periphery. The downtown historic district, on the other hand, retains a discernable boundary and high concentration of intact commercial buildings.

Conclusion

The Taylor Downtown Historic District has played a significant and varied role as a commercial, agricultural, and transportation center of Williamson County from its foundation in 1876 to the present day. The platting of the town and the extension of the first I&GN lines into Taylor, both occurring in 1876, mark the beginning of this historic district's period of significance. The oldest extant buildings date to immediately after the fire of 1878. The arrival of the MK&T railroad in 1882 encouraged both physical and economic expansion, and catapulted Taylor to the forefront of regional commerce. The coming of the second railroad coincided with the legal incorporation of Taylor, and the installation of the first mayor-alderman city government. With increased access to rail lines, Taylor became Williamson County's major center for agricultural processing and transportation of goods, thus linking the economies of the town and outlying rural agricultural areas, a trend which continued into the 1950s. Taylor not only became the center of cotton production in the county, but grew to be the largest inland cotton port in the United States. Taylor played host to numerous related commercial and industrial endeavors, including wholesale, retail, small scale industry and manufacturing, the most notable of which was Taylor Bedding Company (which had national distribution of its Sanidown and Morning Glory mattresses). Taylor's development and significance is tied to a variety of different themes, and is therefore eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under a number of Criteria. The Taylor Downtown Historic District is eligible for listing under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the area of Community Planning and Development as an excellent example of a late 19th-century town plat expanded to accommodate physical and functional growth; in the area of Commerce for its role as one of the largest inland cotton markets in the United States, an important center of livestock trade, and a host to numerous influential wholesale, retail and industrial establishments. This district is also eligible under Criterion C at the local level of significance in the area of Architecture as an intact sampling of late 19th and 20th century commercial buildings that are reflective of local and national architectural trends during the period of significance (1876-1955).

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Representative Properties



First National Bank of Taylor (1883)

115-117 Main Street
Property #21
Two-Part Commercial
Contributing
Photo #1

In 1883, The First National Bank of Taylor was founded with John R. Hoxie as the first president.¹¹⁵ Hoxie, a railroad magnate and former mayor of Chicago, came to Texas in 1878 and purchased 9,000 acres of ranchland about six miles northeast of Taylor.¹¹⁶ The First National Bank of Taylor was the first national bank in Taylor and in all of Williamson county.¹¹⁷ The First National Bank of Taylor was

first housed in a temporary location at the corner of Second and Main streets. The bank's permanent home, was completed toward the end of 1883 on the opposite corner at 115-117 Main Street. This two-story bank building occupies a prominent location on the northeast corner of Block Four, at the intersection of Main Street and Second (what is now the intersection of Business 79 and Highway 95). This bank is one block to the north of the railroad tracks, and opposite the Taylor National Bank (Property #34). The First National Bank of Taylor occupied this building for+- almost fifty years, from 1883 until 1931.

This building was the only two-story structure on its block until 1892, and still is the most prominent building on the block. From its inception, the building was always divided into several businesses, with the bank floor occupying the corner space on the lower level, and the southern half of the building housed a saloon and billiards parlour (1883-1904), a restaurant and pool hall. The Texas Café occupied space for almost thirty years, and was perhaps most significant occupant of the building. The small space in the northwest corner of the building (105 West Second) alternated between a

¹¹⁵ Hoxie was also a relative of Herbert Hoxie, who was manager of Gould's Railroad lines in Texas and instrumental in the establishment and naming of Taylorsville after his colleague Edward Moses Taylor.

¹¹⁶ Hoxie built the Hoxie House in 1882, which was the scene of various entertainments put on by the Hoxie family for Chicago guests, townspeople from around Williamson County, and local farmers and ranchers. The estate was sold and broken up into small farms after 1910, and Hoxie House burnt down in 1934. *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "HOXIE, TX," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/HH/hnh47.html> (accessed April 4, 2005).

¹¹⁷ Borgialli, Susan. "Four commercial Buildings in Taylor, Texas." Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1985: 31.

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barber shop and a storage space for either the bank or the saloon, billiards, and café in the southern part of the building.¹¹⁸ The second story of the bank building was used as a Masonic Lodge until the turn of the century, and was additionally occupied by professional offices for lawyers, physicians, cotton buyers, and real estate and insurance agencies (including the Fisher & Hafernik Insurance Agency, which leased the upper floors)¹¹⁹ A printing office and Western Union Telegraph were also among its occupants. The First National Bank owned and occupied the building until the bank merged with Taylor National Bank to form First-Taylor National Bank in 1931. The banking hall was then occupied by several grocers until it was leased in 1960 by R.E. Kollman, which eventually became Kollman & Gant Cotton Buyers until mid-1980s.

The First National Bank Building is a two-story brick structure, clad in stucco, displaying influences from late Victorian commercial architecture with Italianate inflections. The ground floor exterior treatment is scored to resemble stone, while the second story exterior treatment remains smooth. The primary entrance faces northeast, and is placed on a chamfered corner of the main façade. This entry represents the main façade, and is set off by corner pilasters and a gabled cornice. Secondary entrances occur on north elevation facing Second Street, and on the east elevation facing Main Street. These secondary portals provided entry into the various businesses housed within the bank building. The north elevation displays consistent rhythm and clearly was designed as a subsidiary elevation. The rhythm of the east elevation is broken by the insertion of a secondary storefront, complete with a central entrance flanked by larger display windows. Lower floor windows are tripartite arched windows, with each section partitioned by milled wood trim. Several of these windows feature decorative leaded glass. The second floor of both the north and east elevations are separated from the ground floor by a double banded string course. Windows at this level are similar on both elevations, characterized by segmental arch windows capped with hood moldings. The building is crowned by a pressed metal cornice, supported by pressed metal brackets and crowned with finials. The cornice was fabricated by Jno. Buass of Austin, who did much of the work on Congress Avenue. Significant interior features include a bank vault toward the northwest end of the building.

¹¹⁸ See Sanborn Maps from 1885, 1889, 1893, 1900, 1904, 1912, 1916, 1923, 1931.

¹¹⁹ Borgianni, Susan. "Four commercial Buildings in Taylor, Texas." Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1985: 33.

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Taylor National Bank (1888)

200 Main Street
Property #34
Two-part Commercial
Contributing
Photo #2

The Taylor National Bank, the town's second major banking house, was established in 1888. C. H. Booth, Sr., formerly a director of the First National Bank of Taylor, was instrumental in establishing the new bank as a "people-owned" bank that would have a large and diverse group of stockholders. In 1888, Booth, a Virginia native who settled in Texas in 1878, made his fortune in cattle ranching and was credited with stringing the first barbed wire in the area to enclose nearly 60,000 acres. Upon the bank's establishment in 1888, Booth served as senior vice president and later

became president. The bank purchased the lot at Main and Broad (or Second) Streets in 1888 for \$4800, and established business in the one-story building on that lot. The three-story structure of brick and stone was designed by prominent Austin architect A.O. Watson, and construction began in 1894 (the building first appears on the 1898 Sanborn map).

In addition to housing the Taylor National Bank, this building provided professional offices for law firm of Mantor and Briggs from 1894-1934. The third floor of the building was occupied by the United States Weather Bureau from 1901-1930. The Taylor Refining Company leased the third floor from 1930-39, a tenancy that coincides with the discovery of oil in Chapman-Abbott field in 1930. The economic decline of the Depression years, which began in earnest in Taylor in 1931, forced a merger of the Taylor National Bank with the First National Bank. The new financial institution was named the First-Taylor National Bank, and operated from 200 Main until 1966. At this time, the bank constructed a new facility on the opposite end of the block (Property 49). The building at 200 Main was leased sporadically until 1979 when it was scheduled for demolition. The Taylor Conservation and Heritage Society, with financial backing from the Heritage Society of Austin, purchased the building in May 1980.

The Taylor National Bank is located on a corner lot at the intersection of Second and Main Streets. The lot is narrow and deep in configuration (approximately 25' x 90'). The three storied building exhibits characteristics common to commercial buildings around turn of century, and combines the language of Renaissance and Romanesque revivals. At one time a four-sided wooden cupola sat on the roof above the tower formed by the southwest corner of the structure, but this feature has been removed. The exterior walls of the ground floor are faced with rough-cut red sandstone, while the second and third stories are red brick (laid in running bond) with limestone and granite decorative detailing. The brick and stone coursing is running bond. The primary entry at the southwest corner of the building is placed at an angle to the street, and is marked by slightly projecting tower element that extends from ground to roof. At the ground floor, the tower is supported by two intersecting arches which are in turn supported by three gray granite columns with rounded bases and Corinthian capitals executed in red sandstone. The entry portals, paired doors with beveled glass panels, are recessed within this tower structure. The floor of this entryway is mosaic tile, inlaid with "Taylor National Bank." A door at the southeast corner provides access to the second and third floors. Ground floor windows form ribbons, connected by the series of arched, and are arched double-hung wood sash. In addition, a large arched opening accommodates the single window of the west facade. This window has two small sections of stained glass. The second and third floors are separated

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from the ground floor by a limestone stringcourse; the character of these upper two floors is decidedly different from that below. The upper floors are clad with red brick. Single windows, (square, double-hung wood sash) are set apart from one another by brick pilasters capped with abstracted limestone capitals on the second level, and derivative Corinthian capitals on the third level. The building is capped with a pressed metal cornice. Significant interior features include carved window and door trim, pressed metal ceiling panels, gray marble revetment, three vaults and original safe deposit boxes.



Eikel-Prewitt Building (1893)

316 North Main

Property #128

Two-part commercial block

Contributing

Photo #3

The Eikel-Prewitt Building at 316 North Main Street was designed by Henry Struve and constructed in 1893 to house the Eikel Hardware Company. This two-story, three-story brick building was the second home of the City National Bank occupies a prominent location at the corner of Main and Third Streets.

Albert Eikel, born in New Braunfels in 1852, was a descendant of German settlers who came from Germany with Count Solms-Braunfels in 1845. Eikel moved to Taylor in 1886 and founded a hardware store. In the mid-1880s, Taylor had at least five hardware stores. In 1888, in partnership with his two brothers Paul and Fred, Albert Eikel purchased the lot for his building and commissioned local architect Henry Struve to design a new building for his hardware company. Struve, who was also the architect of the Taylor City Hall (1905), the First Presbyterian Church, the Eanes building, and the city National Bank Building (1909), and may have completed as many as two hundred bldgs in Williamson county. In 1900, Eikel purchased the entire lot, which included a tin shop, two barns and ten small buildings in 1898. By the time of his bankruptcy sale to Ira Prewitt in 1923 there was a two-story storage building behind the hardware store with about the same amount of floor space as the store. Eikel retired in 1907, and returned to New Braunfels. He left the company to his twin sons Max and Paul, who were educated at ST. Edwards and studied accounting at New York State. Both had married daughters of prominent land holders in Taylor. The brothers brought the Studebaker Automobile Agency to Taylor, a logical step since the hardware store had sold the Conestoga wagon.

Ira Prewitt came to Taylor in 1888, and went into the harness and buggy business with GB Randle. Prewitt left for a while to go to Rockdale, but returned and worked for Taylor Hardware Company. In 1890 he and James Blane bought Wilkenson and Peyton Company, six years later this company purchased Taylor Hardware Company on Main Street. In 1900, Prewitt bought out Blane., and in 1918 he bought Hoch Hardware Company. Ira Prewitt Hardware company incorporated in 1918, bought estate of Albert Eikel in 1923. Ira died in 1929, but his large business stayed in the family until 1981. The last Prewitt to operate the family business was Ira's grandson Louis Bond Prewitt. Prewitt Hardware was responsible for outfitting many post-World War II migrant farm workers hoes and cotton sacks.

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Prewitt was active in Taylor, was vice president of the Taylor Savings and Loan Association, president of Board of Education for ten years, a Baptist Deacon and a member of the Knights of Pythias.

Prewitt Hardware closed in 1981, and building stood vacant until 1983 when Louis Bond Prewitt sold it to John Selman. Danze and Davis were hired to prepare plans for restoration of building, which was undertaken in 1984. Original façade restored to its natural color, as it had been painted white for over forty years. Pediment writing restored, says Eikel Bros. recessed entryway was brought out to line up with the façade and the floor was filled in with concrete to gain additional floor space replacing elevated display windows. Common brick walls on north and south were cleaned of their stucco and left remain exposed.

The Eikel-Prewitt Building is a two-story red-brick building, facing west onto Main Street. The building is characterized by its symmetrical massing and consistent rhythm. Seven identical cast-iron columns divide the ground floor into six bays, while five brick pilasters divide the upper floors into four bays. The squared cast-iron columns, manufactured by the Pullis Brothers Iron Company of St. Louis, feature bands of fluting on the shaft (though cast as a sheaf that is tied in the center by a rosette) and abstracted acanthus leaf capitals. The lower bays each house paired half-height display windows enframed in wood, with decorative kick plates below and paired transoms above. The central entry is positioned in the center bay, and access is gained through a paired set of wooded doors. Each of the four bays on the upper floors house paired round-arched windows crowned with hood molding. The returns of the hood molding resemble a Greek-key pattern. The building is encircled by a single band of decorative cornice work carved in relief, and is crowned by a gabled pediment that spans the two center bays of the upper floor. The pediment is flanked by acroterium, and "1893 A.Eikel Bro." is inscribed in the tympanum. The exterior façade has been restored to its original deep red color, and the removal of plaster from the north and south walls reveal common buff brick, locally made at Taylor Brick.

Significant interior features include long-leaf yellow pine plank flooring on all levels, and interior walls on the north and south constructed of locally-made yellow common brick from Taylor Brick Company; this brick was once covered with plaster. A third-level atrium may be original to the building, though it was only revealed during the 1984 renovation of the building. When the Eikel Hardware Store was in operation, it had a cash cup catapulted system that was strung overhead and would send money from the point of sale to the bookkeeper's office at rear of store. The building also featured an elevator, which had been manually operated but was electrified in 1934 (this was replaced in the 1984 renovation).

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Peterson Block (1893-1898)

113 West Second

Property #20

One-Part Commercial Block

Contributing

(113 West Second, first building on left)

Photo #4

The one-story brick building at 113 West Second Street was originally owned by J. Peterson, and was part of a block of three nearly identical buildings collectively called the Peterson Block. This building, along with the building to the west, first appear on the Sanborn maps in 1893 and are excellent examples of one-part commercial blocks of the late-nineteenth century. This building served as a hardware store or dry goods storage for almost four decades, until 1931 when it served as a restaurant.

The façade of this one-story brick building is divided into four equal bays, each delineated by a brick pilaster fronted by a round cast iron column. Each of the three cast-iron columns feature a square based, smooth round shaft, and sculptural Corinthian capital. Bays house fully-glazed display windows, with four-part transoms above. Entrance is made through either of the two central bays. The lower store-front is divided from the transom and parapet section by a flat awning suspended on iron rods. The building has a simple corbelled cornice line, and is crowned by a pressed metal parapet. Parapet details included brackets, dentils, and finials. The significance of this singular building must not be separated from that of the remainder of this block; all three were constructed within five years of each other, and are nearly identical in massing, rhythm and detailing.

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Odd Fellows Hall (1907)

120 West Fourth

Property #87

Two-part commercial block / Eclectic

Contributing

Photo #5



The Odd Fellows Hall at 400 North Main Street was designed by committee and constructed by S. F. Evans in 1907. In the same year that the town of Taylor was founded, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) Lodge 240 was organized. This was a fraternal organization devoted to "betterment of man's relation with his neighbor." For twenty-eight years, the lodge regularly met in rented hall space on Second Street. In 1904, the Lodge purchased the lot at the corner of Fourth and Talbot. Two years later, in January 1906, the Lodge appointed a building committee to investigate the possibility of constructing a new hall on this site. The building committee consisted of S.F. Evans, a prominent contractor in the Taylor Area, P.O. Wilson, owner of the *Daily Democrat*, A. Alexander, manager of Sturgis-Goldstein Department Store, S.N. Nelson, a farmer; and W.D. Pane, a local dentist. Evans recommended that the new lodge be constructed of cast-on-site concrete blocks rather than brick. This innovative method of construction was rather new, as the use of concrete block did not gain huge popularity until after 1909 when mail-order companies such as Sears and Roebuck began to sell concrete block presses. The Lodge membership voted to

allow Evans to oversee the construction, and he was paid a fee 2.5% of the total building costs. The Woodmen of the World contributed the memorial window that was installed as the centerpiece of the central bay. The I.O.O.F. moved into the new building in May 1907, but had to borrow \$4000 to pay for cost of materials and labor for the construction. The I.O.O.F. continued to use the second floor of the building for their private meetings, and when not in use by the lodge, let the space out to over thirty other organizations. These included the Woodmen of the World, Mary B. Welch Rebekah Lodge, the Ku Klux Klan, Knights of Pythias, Knights of Columbus, the Methodist Sunday School, and a Lutheran Church. The ground floor tenants were few. In 1908, P.O. Wilson moved his *Taylor Daily Democrat* and *Taylor Weekly Texan* into building. As a side note, the *Taylor Daily Democrat* was the first daily newspaper in Williamson County, and had the first linotype machine in the Taylor area (which required a massive concrete foundation to be imbedded into the floor of the building for support). When the two papers folded in 1927, the first floor was rented to John Cornforth for his furniture and antique store. Cornforth occupied the ground floor for the next thirty-one years, making his own furniture on the east side of the first floor, and selling antiques on the west side. When he retired in 1958, the Cowands Home Decorating and Supply Company moved into the first floor space. The Odd Fellows discontinued meeting in their

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building in 1976 due to lack of new members and the fact that the older members could no longer negotiate the stairs; however, the Lodge retained ownership of the building until 1984 when it was sold to Tom Greer. Following the sale, the "secret room" on the second floor was unlocked – and found inside were minutes, bookkeeping records, and "mystical garb" of the Odd Fellows dating back to 1876. This represents a unique and concise record of the evolution of the organization, as well as the construction of their lodge building

The Odd Fellows building displays a distinct and unusual architectural expression. This two-story concrete block building is rectangular in plan, and symmetrically disposed. The concrete blocks were cast on site to resemble rusticated stone. The ground floor is characterized by a recessed storefront framed by cast iron columns. Two glazed display windows flank this central entrance, with kick plates below and four-part transoms above. On the upper story, two symmetrical bay windows are placed above these ground-floor display windows. The bay windows are each divided into three portions, with leaded glass windows inserted between the wood framing. An arched window is positioned in the center of the façade, between the bay windows, on the upper story. This is glazed with decorative leaded glass (in diamond and rectangle patterns), and framed by concrete block voussoirs. The building is crowned by a castellated parapet, with a protruding centerpiece carved with "1907 IOOF." These stone battlements and cornice continue around entire façade and elevations. Though this building is an eclectic mixture, Queen Anne and Castellated influences are visible. Significant interior features include a pressed metal ceiling. Interior has pressed metal ceiling and structural cast iron columns as interior dividers. The Odd Fellows Building remains virtually unaltered, with exception of partition walls on the second floor and now some detailing added in the display windows. The only other building of similar construction in Taylor is the house built by Evans for PO Wilson, a member of the Lodge and a participant in the Lodge building committee.

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City National Bank (1909)

210 North Main

Property #124

Temple-front

Contributing

Photo #6

The City National Bank at 210 North Main Street was designed by Henry Struve and constructed in 1909. This one-story temple-front building was the second home of the City National Bank, and is the only remaining historic building on its block. The City National Bank was founded in February 1900 by John H. Griffith, Dr. R.H. Eanes, J.J. Thames, C.C. Hooper, S.A. Easley, H.T. Kimbro and Robert D. Penn. The bank was first housed in a one-story building constructed in 1900. The bank remained in that location until 1908, when it purchased the lot at 210 N. Main. The new building, a Classical Revival temple-front, was designed by Struve and demonstrates that architects and clients in Taylor were attuned to nationwide architectural trends. The Struve-designed building was home of the bank until a new building (Property #49) was constructed and opened on May 13, 1965.

Constructed of buff brick, the façade is left untreated and the subsidiary elevations are stuccoed and scored to resemble cut stone. The temple-front building is raised on plinth, and accessed by tow low steps. The dominating pediment is supported by four Ionic columns, and accented at the corners and apex by acroterium. The primary façade set behind the portico, with each column defining a bay of the façade within. The central entry is flanked by one-over-one sash windows with paired transoms above. The City National Bank Building remains the only example of high-style Classical Revival architecture in Taylor.

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas



Blazilmar Hotel (1918)

101 Porter Street
Property #6
Two-Part Commercial
Contributing
Photo #7

The Blazilmar Hotel at 101 Porter Street was constructed in 1918 at the corner of First and Porter Streets. Built on the site of the former Taylor Hotel (1885), which was later called the LaGrande Hotel (1898) and the Murphy Hotel (1904), The Blazilmar was positioned directly to the north of the passenger rail depot, and vied for tenants with nearby hotels such as the International. The name for this impressive four-story, ninety room hotel was taken from the first three letters of the last names of each of its three owner-investors, Howard Bland, A. J. Zilker, and T. W. Marse.

Bland, Zilker and Marse were significant figures in the development of Taylor's economy and contributed a great deal to bolstering the town's built environment. Bland, who was born in Zanesville, Ohio, came to Texas in 1878 and settled on ranch two miles east of Taylor. He was among the first ranchers in the area, and made a great deal of money running sheep and cattle. He was also a charter member and later director of the First National Bank (1883). Bland, and later his son Howard Bland, JR. owned and developed a significant amount of real estate in Taylor, including the Taylor Warehouse (Property #1), and the Howard Theater (Property #125). A.J. Zilker, although not a resident of Taylor, was part owner of Taylor Water Company and Taylor Ice.¹²⁰ T.W. Marse owned the largest department store in Taylor for many years (in partnership with Scarbrough out of Austin), though sold his interests in Taylor around 1921 and relocated to California.

The impressive (for the time) four-story Blazilmar was fireproof, had steam heat and ceiling fans in each of its ninety guest rooms. The rooms were furnished with "Sanidown" mattresses, locally made at the Taylor Bedding Company (with locally grown cotton). A ballroom on the second floor of the Blazilmar was used for social gatherings, and was the site of dinners, dances, receptions, and reunions. In 1920, The St. Louis Browns wintered in Taylor. They roomed at the Blazilmar Hotel and practiced on what is now Memorial Football Field. In later years, the hotel also housed the Greyhound Bus Station and the telegraph office. By 1923, the hotel included an office, a "hotel" office, beauty shop, dining room, sample room, office, office and stage, WC, and a kitchen all on ground floor. In those years, the adjacent one-story building served as a restaurant and bowling alley, and may have been connected to the Blazilmar. The hotel underwent extensive remodeling in 1929 at a cost of \$100,000. Among the improvement made at that time, as described in the *Taylor Daily Press*, were a stairway made of tile and inlaid by hand, the first floor glazed in plate glass to make

¹²⁰ Zilker was director of the American National Bank in Austin, and on Travis County School Board and owned part of Ice Plant in Austin. He also donated Barton Springs to the city of Austin for "pleasure resort for the public."

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
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interior lighter and giving "loungers" a good view of the street, a lobby fitted with writing desks, reading lamps, ceiling fans and wall-hung medieval tapestries, a new Otis elevator, the second floor Sample Room which was used for salesmen's samples was converted into sample room and bedroom, the second floor banquet hall was redecorated by Harcourt Decorating of Taylor with walls painted pink with flower border. The guest rooms were all furnished completely, and amenities included desk telephones, and Simmons beds with "A" box springs and mattresses are "Famous Taylor-made Sanidown mattresses."¹²¹ The Blazilmar was renovated again in 1978, and by 1982 was renamed the Taylor Station Inn, later to be called the Landmark Inn. The Landmark Inn closed in 1989, but was used as the film location for Dennis Hopper's *The Hot Spot*, starring Don Johnson.

The four-story Blazilmar is characterized by its block-like massing and u-shaped plan that wraps around an interior lightwell. The primary façade faces onto First Street, and has six asymmetrically arranged bays on the ground floor, and three major bays on the upper three floors (these are read as three masses, though consists of five bays of windows). The exterior is clad in buff brick, left unpainted and unadorned. There are two entrances on the ground level, indicating the primary hotel lobby and a secondary storefront to the west. A simple, squared string course sets the lower floor apart from the upper levels. The three upper stories are symmetrically arranged around a central bay of paired windows, with each of the two flanking bays consisting of two sets of three-part ribbon windows. Each level is identical, and are not separated by horizontal or vertical articulation. The building is crowned with a projecting cornice, accented by over-sized dentils. The Porter Street façade has similar rhythm and dispensation of fenestration. Ornamentation is limited to tilework at the beltcourse on the east elevation (Porter Street). This hotel remains the only four-story building in the downtown district.

¹²¹ *Taylor Daily Press*, Wednesday July 17, 1929. "Formal Opening of New Blazilmar Friday Places Taylor In Front Rank With a Hotel that Leads Central Texas."

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas



**Swift & Company Poultry and Produce
(1930)**

105 Vance Street
Property #12
Industrial
Contributing
Photo #8

The Swift & Company Poultry and Produce Building at 105 Vance Street was constructed in 1930. This three-story warehouse occupies a prominent location directly to the north of the railroad tracks, and east of the historic Taylor Bedding Complex. Although Swift & Company had a warehouse adjacent to the railroad tracks as early as 1916, it was not until the late 1920s that city government officials, an effort to lure industry and diversify Taylor's economy, tried to lure Swift to install a major processing plant in Taylor.

Construction on the Swift & Company Packing Plant commenced in 1929, just as the Depression hit many American cities and curtailed major building projects. The project offered Taylor not only a major income for the building trades, but an opportunity for economic diversification as it was to be the area's largest poultry packing plant. According to the *Taylor Daily Press*, over \$300,000 worth of new construction was started in 1929, with Swift and Company comprising at least half. The grand opening of the Swift and Company Plant warranted a parade and a publicity motorcade that canvassed Granger, Bartlett, Holland, Temple, Belton, Jarrell, Georgetown, Round Rock, Pflugerville and Hutto. The *Taylor Daily Press* ran a special Sunday supplement with numerous pictures of the Swift and Company building. The plant intended to hire sixty full-time employees, adding more in the peak seasons. Facilities could handle 18,000 chickens and 144,000 eggs a day, and would also purchase and process "all the cream this territory will furnish."¹²²

This massive three-story building features an exposed concrete frame with red brick infill. The cubic mass is divided into six bays on each façade, each marked by the concrete structure. The building is industrial in character, with the only embellishments occurring at the cornice line, where the terminations of the major vertical elements have been articulated with an incised square motif. One small rectangular unit projects from the south façade, and two from the north façade (forming an entry sequence).

¹²² Rice, Bradley Robert. "The Beginnings of the Great Depression in Taylor, Texas." unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1971 (24). TDP...

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas



Mobil Gas Station (1930)

400 West Second

Property #42

Gas Station, House-with-Canopy

Contributing

Photo #9

The Mobil Gas Station at 400 West Second was constructed in 1930. This filling station occupies a prominent location on West Second Street, now Business 79 just before the core of the central business district and directly to the north of the railroad tracks, and directly north of the Taylor Bedding Complex. This filling station represents the shift in transportation methods from rail to auto; with this shift, Second Street began to

overshadow First Street as the main transportation and commercial artery of the district. The station serves as a visual reminder that Taylor is not only at intersection of two major rail lines, but two important highways. At least five historic gas stations still exist in Taylor, all of different types. This was one of the most prominent due to its location, but undoubtedly experienced competition from the filling station in the next block. In addition to a growth in filling stations, a number of auto-related businesses including auto repair garages and Taylor Motor Company located on Second Street around 1930.

This one-story filling station represents the house-with-canopy gas station type, common in the United States between 1916 and 1940. The form of this type was directly borrowed from residential design, a tactic that not only accommodated imposing service stations and integrated them into existing neighborhoods, but also played to building skills of laborers accustomed to house construction. The station at 400 West Second is a one story wood-frame structure with a hipped roof. Two box columns support the hipped canopy, under which the pump islands were positioned. Two additional gas pumps were located on Second Street just beyond the canopy. Interior space included an office and restrooms in the rear. The form of this station mimics the neighboring hipped-roof residence, which was erected at approximately the same time and was perhaps associated.

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas



Taylor Motor Company (1930-31)
200 Porter Street
Property #32
Streamline Moderne
Contributing
Photo #10

The Taylor Motor Company Building at 105 Vance Street was constructed in 1931. This one-story automotive dealership is located along Second Street, which by 1930 was the major transportation corridor for automobile travel. While businesses along First Street maintained close ties to the rail corridor, Second Street began to cater to auto. Several gas stations, auto garages, and this automobile dealership sprang up in response to growing

demands of the consumer. The Taylor Motor Company Building is a one-story building clad in painted brick and stucco. The building is conceived in two parts: the south half consists of the automotive showroom completed with rounded and glazed corner treatment; the north half houses the garage bays. Fenestration is asymmetrically arranged, and the size and placement reflects the interior function beyond. Windows are metal casement with hoppers. This building is an excellent example of Streamline Moderne, an aesthetic that was long associated with modernization, simplification and the quickening speed of life with the automobile.



United States Post Office (1929-30)
202 West Fourth Street
Property #88
Central Block with Wings / Classical Revival
Contributing
Photo #11

The United States Post Office at 202 West 4th Street, designed by U.S. Treasury supervising architect James A. Wetmore, was constructed in 1929-30. The United States Post Office is located one block east of the commercial core along Main Street, on the north side of West Fourth Street, one block west of Taylor City Hall.

In smaller rural communities, the United States Post Office was often the only representation of the Federal Government, and the Postmaster was the only representative. Because Congress and the Postmaster General actively encouraged and

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
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supported extensive network of post offices, the history of post office construction tells the story of federal government administration at the local level. The first United States Post Office opened in Taylor on August 9, 1876 with J.B. Loper as first Postmaster. This post office located in a wood-frame building on the east side of Main Street near the railroad tracks, but was destroyed by fire in 1879. The second post office was at the corner of East Second and Porter, with John O. Fink as the Postmaster. In 1890, the Post Office was moved to the south side of the John Threadgill building at Main and Fourth. A year later, it moved to West Second and Talbot. For a short time, it was housed in the J.J. Crim Furniture Building at the corner of East Second and Talbot. On Jan 15, 1903, Postmaster Henry C. Payne signed a lease for the Post Office to be housed in the Sturgis-Goldstein Building at Main and Fourth. On September 15, 1903, rural free delivery was instituted, and Taylor opened three routes. On October 12, 1914, the United States government purchased the site of the present-day United States Post Office (Property #88) from Robert J. Eckhardt and Oscar E. Roberts for \$5000. Still unready to construct a new facility, the post office continued to rent, and in 1922 occupied space in the T.W. Marse Building at the southeast corner of Fourth and Talbot (demolished for new bank facilities in 1965). During the Hoover administration, Texas Congressman James Buchanan was instrumental in acquiring appropriations for the present building, which opened on June 28, 1930. The post office represents one of the few major building projects executed in Taylor during the beginning of the depression; it was perhaps the income generated from this project that delayed economic devastation that many other regions of the country faced in late 1929.

James Wetmore's United States Post Office is a 2-story brick building resting on a raised concrete foundation. The building is composed as a central block with wings, characterized by the slightly projecting center section and subordinate flanking units articulated by quoins. This three-part composition reads as a single mass with a projecting portico as the centerpiece. Entry is in the center bay of the central block, and consists of an entry portico flanked by two single-fanlight windows. All windows in the central portion of the main façade are 10/15 wood sash windows capped with arched fanlight window, and decorative architecture hood with protruding carved stone voussoirs and keystone. The single widow in each of the wings 8/12 wood sash, these have been inserted into an architecture-top opening identical to those in the central bay, but the fan light was never added and the area was filled in with brick. All windows on the second level are paired 6/6 wood sash with stone sills. The property exhibits typical Classical Revival details that include limestone stringcourse above the portico and below the cornice, decorative quoins separating the central block from the wings. This building is Registered Texas Historic Landmark. It is one of only two Classical Revival properties in Taylor (the other is Property #124, the City National Bank designed by Henry Struve).

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Continuation Sheet

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas



**Williamson County Equipment Company
Building (1949)**

200 East Fourth Street

Property #78

One-Part Commercial / Postwar

Contributing

Photo #12 and Photo #13



Designed as an automotive dealership in 1949, the Williamson County Equipment Company Building is an excellent example of postwar commercial development in Taylor. This one-story building has a complex plan consisting of an automotive showroom (facing Fourth Street) with integrated office space, and two large garage facilities attached to the south end of the property. The defining feature of this building is the fully-glazed display floor, bisected by the protruding pylon in the center of the primary façade. This design element was common in the 1950s and 1960s, and exhibits the designer's knowledge of architectural trends. Materials in this building included glass framed in aluminum and brick along the primary and subsidiary elevations and service bays. Service bays feature single and double height overhead doors, hung from a steel structure. The portion of this building that served as a showroom is capped with a flat roof, juxtaposed against the hipped-roof service building attached at the rear. This building is strikingly modern, intentionally designed, iconic and unique within the building stock of the Taylor commercial district.

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas



**Taylor Office Products Building /
Richter Furniture (ca 1904)**
119 West Third Street
Property #46
One-part commercial
Non-contributing
Photo #14 and Photo #15

The building that currently houses Taylor Office products was constructed around 1904, and was originally part of the five-bay Richter Furniture Building (adjacent to the east). The Richter Furniture Company was founded in 1903 by Langdon Spivey and his son-in-law, George Richter, Sr. Richter originally came to Taylor to operate a chain of the GA Stowers Furniture Company (of San Antonio). In 1903, he bought out the Stowers store on

West Second (located in the Peterson Block), and established his own furniture company. Their first location was rented from Mr. Blackburn in the J.E. Tucker Building (who was Thompson's partner in the lumber business). As was common around the turn of the century, the furniture business included undertaking. About 1910, Richter sold this portion of the company to Amor Fontaine and Jason Forwood (of the Taylor Bedding family) and business became simply GA Richter Furniture Company. Richter was acting manager until 1922, when his son Albert took the position. When Albert retired in 1945, his brother Langdon (who had been living in California and working for Howard Hughes Industries) bought him out and became manager. Langdon incorporated the business and changed name to Richter Furniture Co Inc.. In 1973, Langdon sold to his son Randall.

When the Forwood Company closed their furniture store in 1931, the Richters moved into their Third Street location, where they have remained for the last five decades. This building, of which 119 West Third was formerly a part, is representative of a typical one-part commercial building erected in the first decade of the twentieth century. The portion of the building that now houses Taylor Office Products has been altered beyond recognition. The proportions of the building remain intact, as do the protruding pilasters that suggest the continuation of bay rhythm from the neighboring building. The placement of the central entry and flanking display windows is consistent with historic form, though the overall sense of design has been lost. The exterior façade treatment is a highly textured stucco, uncharacteristic of any historic stucco technique. In the place of transom windows, two round windows have been inserted (and are now blocked in). The original brick and fenestration pattern is still visible on the west elevation, but the primary façade does not retain integrity of design.

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas



City National Bank (1965)

212 North Main Street

Property #49

One-part commercial / enframed
window wall

Non-contributing

Photo #16

The current City National Bank building (formerly the First-Taylor National Bank) at 212 North Main was constructed in 1965, and opened in 1966. This was the third home for the prominent Taylor Bank, and replaced the Classical Revival building designed by Henry Struve in 1909. This building is an excellent representative of the architectural language chosen by financial institutions in the 1960s. While earlier designs often featured Classical language, banks of this later

period often chose the inflections of Brutalism intermingled with the glass-box aesthetic that came to characterize large-scale corporate buildings of the postwar era. The City National Bank, along with its second location at 116 West Third, are typical of infill development that occurred within the historic district in the mid-1960s. The City National Bank on Main Street replaced a series of historic building, including the two-story Warren Tire Building and the one-part commercial block that housed Melasky Drug, and the one-story Hub Tailoring Building. The city National Bank Building on Third, also constructed in 1965, replaced the T.W. Marse / Montgomery Ward Building.

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: approximately 95 acres

UTM REFERENCES: Zone 14

1. 652270E 3383191N
2. 652585E 3383224N
3. 652585E 3383224N
4. 652844E 3382823N
5. 652158E 3382757N
6. 652158E 3382757N

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-59)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-59)

11. FORM PREPARED BY (with assistance from Gregory Smith, National Register Coordinator)

NAME/TITLE: Monica Penick, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Taylor Conservation & Heritage Society, Inc.

DATE: April 2005

STREET & NUMBER: 4101 Sinclair Avenue

TELEPHONE: (512) 426-3014

CITY OR TOWN: Austin

STATE: TX

ZIP CODE: 78756

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see continuation sheet Map-59)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-60 through Photo-61)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: ON FILE WITH TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

STREET & NUMBER:

TELEPHONE:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

ZIP CODE:

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the intersection of North Main and East Fifth, proceed east one block to Porter Street. Then proceed south one block to East Fourth, then east on East Fourth to Washburn, taking in lot 7 block 13. Proceed south on Washburn to the intersection of East Third. Turn west and proceed one half block to the alleyway between Porter and Washburn. Proceed south for one block down the alley, then turn east and proceed one half block to Washburn. Proceed south for one half block to the east-west alley in block 1, taking in lots 4 through 6. Proceed east down this alley to Elliott Street, then turn south and proceed to First Street. At the intersection of Elliott and First, turn west and proceed seven blocks to Davis Street. Proceed north on Davis for one block, turning east on Second Street. Proceed one half block to the north-south alley between Davis and Fowzer, turning north and taking in lots 1-2 in block 48. Proceed west along this mid-block line to Vance Street. Turn north, and proceed one and one-half block to West Fourth Street. Proceed west along East Fourth for one-half block, turning north to encompass lots 1-2 block 19. Proceed east to Vance Street. Travel one-half block to West Fifth, and proceed east along this street to the North Main and Fifth. This boundary encompasses blocks 1-11, 14-17, 20-23, 37, portions of 19, 38 and 24.

Boundary Justification

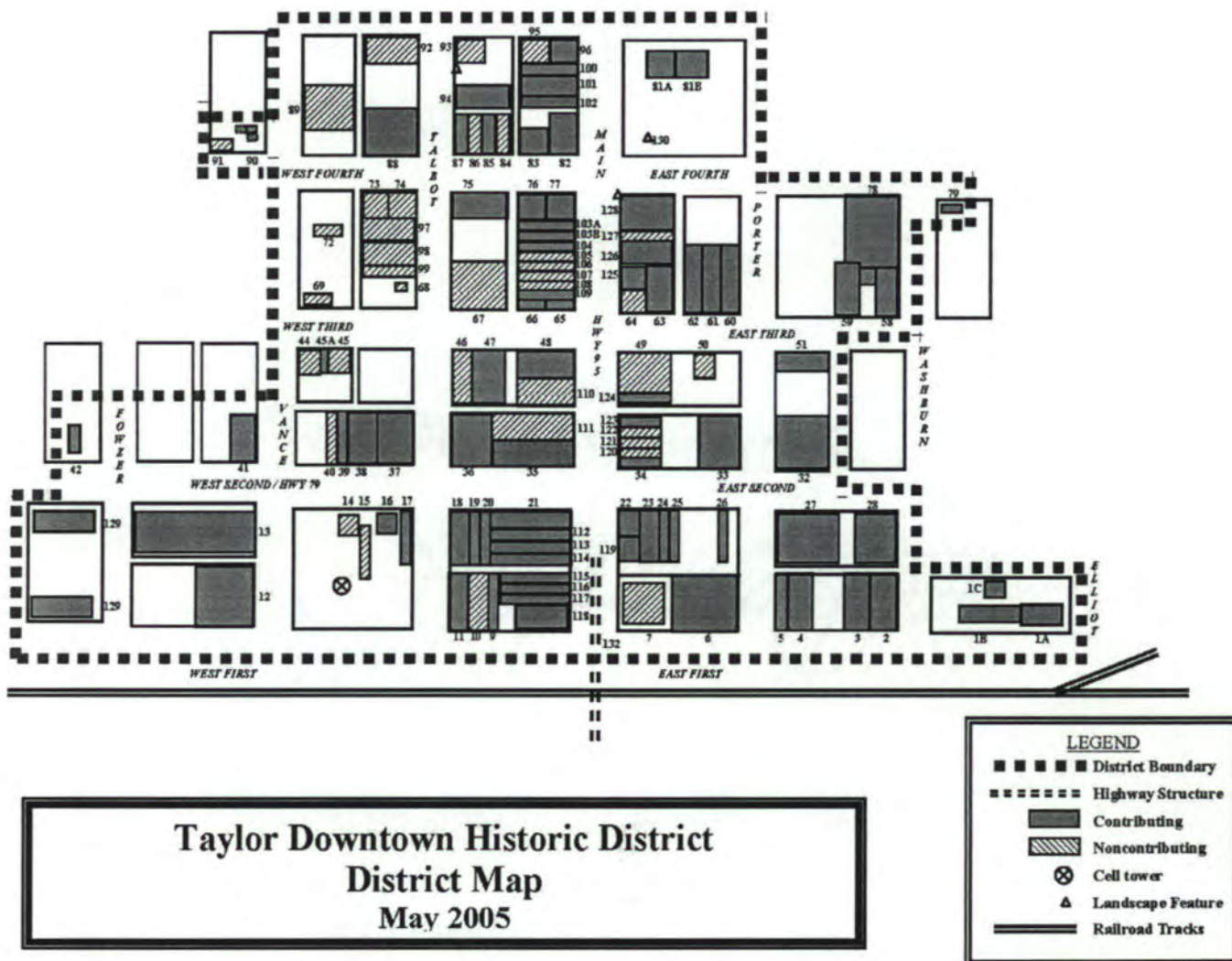
The boundaries of the district are based on those determined by the consultant and staff of the Texas Historical Commission in January 2004. These boundaries have been modified to include the largest number of properties dating from the period of significance, and the portions of the downtown district that retain the highest degree of integrity with the fewest vacant lots and intrusions. The railroad tracks on the southern edge of the district provide a logical division between commercial core and the industrial areas to the south of the tracks. Fifth Street to the north provides a logical boundary between historic and non-historic commercial development, and Vance and Fowzer Streets to the west, and Washburn on the east likewise divide the highly concentrated commercial sector from a less dense commercial and residential areas. The properties and types of development within these boundaries have retained their character since the late 1880s.

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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas



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Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas

PHOTO LOG

Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas
Photo grapher: Monica Penick
April and May 2005

First National Bank of Taylor (1883)
115-117 Main Street
Property #21
Contributing
Camera facing Southwest
Photo 1 of 24

Taylor National Bank (1888)
200 Main Street
Property #34
Contributing
Camera facing Northeast
Photo 2 of 24

Eikel-Prewitt Building (1893)
316 North Main
Property #128
Contributing
Camera facing Northeast
Photo 3 of 24

Peterson Block (1893-1898)
113 West Second
Property #20
Contributing
Camera facing Southeast
Photo 4 of 24

Odd Fellows Hall (1907)
120 West Fourth
Property #87
Contributing
Camera facing North
Photo 5 of 24

City National Bank (1909)
210 North Main
Property #124
Contributing
Camera facing East
Photo 6 of 24

Blazilmar Hotel (1918)
101 Porter Street
Property #6
Contributing
Camera facing Northeast
Photo 7 of 24

Swift & Company Poultry and Produce (1930)
105 Vance Street
Property #12
Camera facing Northwest
Photo 8 of 24

Mobil Gas Station (1930)
400 West Second
Property #42
Contributing
Camera facing Northwest
Photo 9 of 24

Taylor Motor Company (1930-31)
200 Porter Street
Property #32
Contributing
Camera facing Northeast
Photo 10 of 24

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Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 61

Taylor Downtown Historic District
Taylor, Williamson County, Texas

United States Post Office (1929-30)
202 West Fourth Street
Property #88
Contributing
Camera facing Northwest
Photo 11 of 24

Williamson County Equipment Co. Building (1949)
200 East Fourth Street
Property #78
Contributing
Camera facing South
Photo 12 of 24

Williamson County Equipment Co. Building (1949)
200 East Fourth Street
Property #78
Contributing
Camera facing Southwest
Photo 13 of 24

Taylor Office Products Building /
Richter Furniture (ca 1904)
119 West Third Street
Property #46
Non-contributing
Camera facing Southeast
Photo 14 of 24

Taylor Office Products (ca 1904)
119 West Third Street
Property #46
Non-contributing (Richter Furniture portion =
Contributing)
Camera facing Southwest
Photo 15 of 24

City National Bank (1965)
212 North Main Street
Property #49
Non-contributing
Camera facing Southeast
Photo 16 of 24

Taylor City Hall (1935)
400 Main Street
Property #81A
Contributing
Camera facing Southeast
Photo 17 of 24

Streetscape
2nd Street
Camera facing East
Photo 18 of 24

Streetscape
2nd Street
Camera facing West
Photo 19 of 24

Streetscape
100 block of Main Street
Camera facing Southwest
Photo 20 of 24

Streetscape
100 block of Main Street
Camera facing Northwest
Photo 21 of 24

Streetscape
200 Block of Main Street
Camera facing North
Photo 22 of 24

Streetscape
300 block of Main Street
Camera facing Northeast
Photo 23 of 24

Streetscape
300 block of Main Street
Camera facing South
Photo 24 of 24

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Taylor Downtown Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Williamson

DATE RECEIVED: 9/15/05 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/30/05
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/15/05 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/29/05
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05001193

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 10-26-05 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN Historic District
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON Co., TEXAS
PHOTO #1



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO # 2



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #3



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO # 4



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO., TEXAS
PHOTO # 5



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO # 6



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO # 7



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO., TEXAS
PHOTO # 8



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO # 9



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #10



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO # 11



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO # 12



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO # 13



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #14



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #15



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #16



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #17



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO # 18



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #19



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #20



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #21



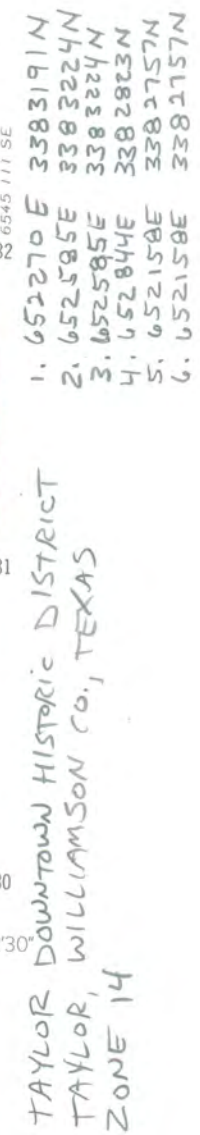
TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #22



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #23



TAYLOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
TAYLOR, WILLIAMSON CO, TEXAS
PHOTO #24



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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Rick Perry • Governor

John L. Nau, III • Chairman

F. Lawrence Oaks • Executive Director

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

TO: Linda McClelland
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Gregory W. Smith, National Register Coordinator
Texas Historical Commission

RE: Taylor Downtown Historic District, Taylor, Williamson County, Texas

DATE: September 7, 2005

RECEIVED 2230

SEP 15 2005

The following materials are submitted regarding Taylor Downtown Historic District:

☒	Original National Register of Historic Places form
☐	Resubmitted nomination
☐	Multiple Property nomination form
☒	Photographs
☒	USGS map
☐	Correspondence
☐	Other:

COMMENTS:

☐ SHPO requests substantive review

☐ The enclosed owner objections (do ☐) (do not ☐) constitute a majority of property owners

☐ Other: _____

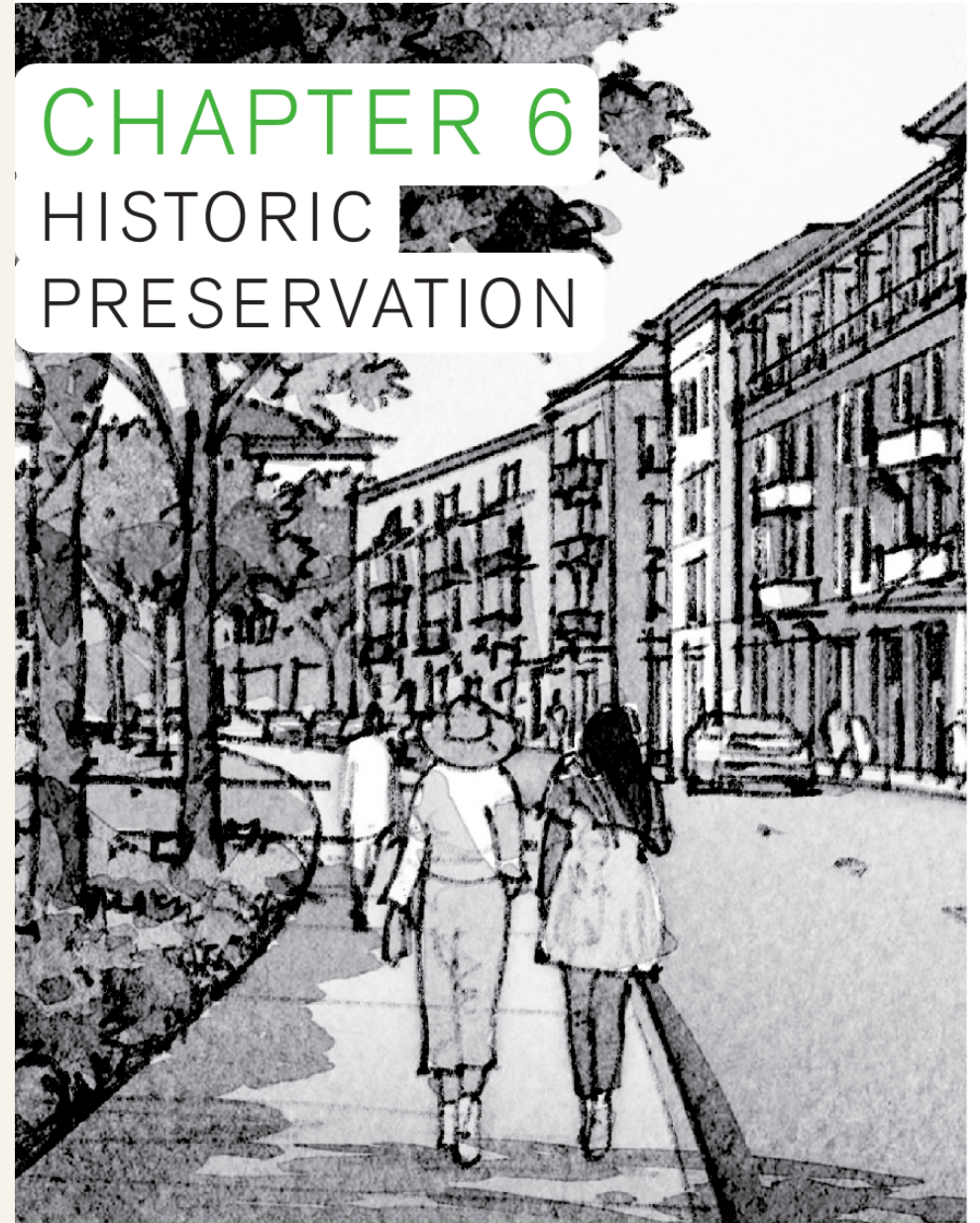
City of Taylor, Texas

Historic Preservation Ordinance Update

Historic Preservation Commission
July 1, 2026



Chance Sparks, FAICP, CNU-A, ENV SP
Principal



What we need to accomplish today

Plain-language framework for revising Chapter 6 and defining when COAs are required.

1

Understand current rules

What Chapter 6 already covers and where it is broad.

2

Check CLG readiness

Compare Taylor ordinance to Texas Historical Commission Certified Local Government requirements.

3

Anchor design review

Use the Secretary of the Interior Standards as the common decision-making language.

4

Discuss COA matrix

Decide which project types go to HPC, HPO, or need no COA.

5

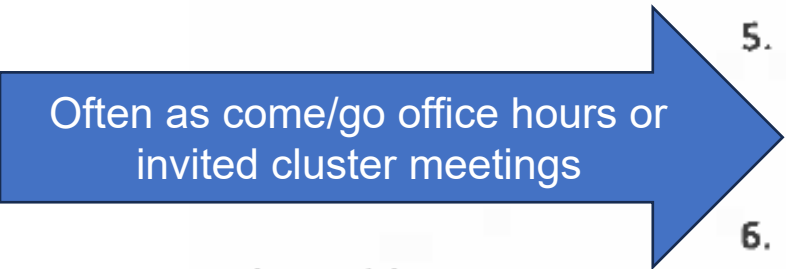
Map the district

Insert and review the proposed overlay map.

What is Freese and Nichols Tasked With?

Understanding the Scope

Project Name:	TA1: Taylor Historic District Support
Description of Services:	1. Review data related to recent local historic district effort, including presentations, GIS data and meeting recordings. 2. Evaluate the content of the historic district language in LDC. 3. Develop updated draft local historic district map generally aligned with the current downtown national register district (includes 1 revision). 4. Develop recommendations for types/levels of review applicable to Certificates of Appropriateness, and associated code amendment. 5. Develop a public engagement strategy, including up to: a. 4 board, commission or city council meetings, 1 virtual and 3 in-person b. 1 5-hour ½ day of stakeholder meetings, in-person c. 1 community open house, in-person 6. Training/initial best practices (launch plan) including communication/implementation
Deliverables:	Meeting materials; Draft map and final map; code amendment language as needed; Delivery memo with summary of engagement, findings and recommendations



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Deliverables:	Meeting materials; Draft map and final map; code amendment language as needed; Delivery memo with summary of engagement, findings and recommendations

Come and go approach;
informational and question opp.

Current ordinance: strong bones, broad applicability

Chapter 6 establishes the City policy and basic regulatory structure for local preservation.

TAYLOR-MADE LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

6.1 HISTORIC PRESERVATION.

6.1.1 PURPOSE.

The City Council of Taylor, Texas, hereby declares that as a matter of public enhancement, and perpetuation of landmarks and districts of historical and significance is necessary to promote the economic, cultural, educational, and public. This ordinance is intended to:

- (1) Protect and enhance the landmarks and districts which represent distinct historic, architectural, and cultural heritage;
- (2) Foster civic pride in the accomplishments of the past;
- (3) Protect and enhance Taylor's attractiveness to visitors and the support and thereby provided;
- (4) Insure the harmonious, orderly, and efficient growth and development of the its historic resources;
- (5) Promote economic prosperity and welfare of the community by encouraging use of historic properties within the City;
- (6) Encourage stabilization, restoration, and improvements of such property offering incentives for rehabilitation.

6.1.2 HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER.

The City Manager or their designee shall appoint a qualified City official or staff as Preservation Officer (HPO). The City may utilize in-house staff or contract using expertise are required to deliberate on specific, related matters. In addition, the be responsible for coordinating the City's preservation activities with those of state and with local state, and national preservation organizations.

Responsibilities. The HPO shall be empowered to:

- (1) Administer this LDC and advise the HPC on matters submitted to it.
- (2) Maintain and hold open for public inspection all documents and records pertaining of this LDC.
- (3) Receive and review all applications pursuant to this LDC to ensure their compliance.
- (4) Review and take action on all certificates of appropriateness applications review pursuant to this LDC.
- (5) Review and forward with any recommendations all applications for certification subject to review by the HPC pursuant to this LDC.

Purpose

Protect landmarks and districts; foster civic pride; support visitors and local economy; encourage stabilization, restoration, and rehabilitation incentives.

HPO role

City Manager/designee appoints an HPO; HPO receives applications, reviews administrative COAs, supports HPC meetings, and coordinates with state/federal partners.

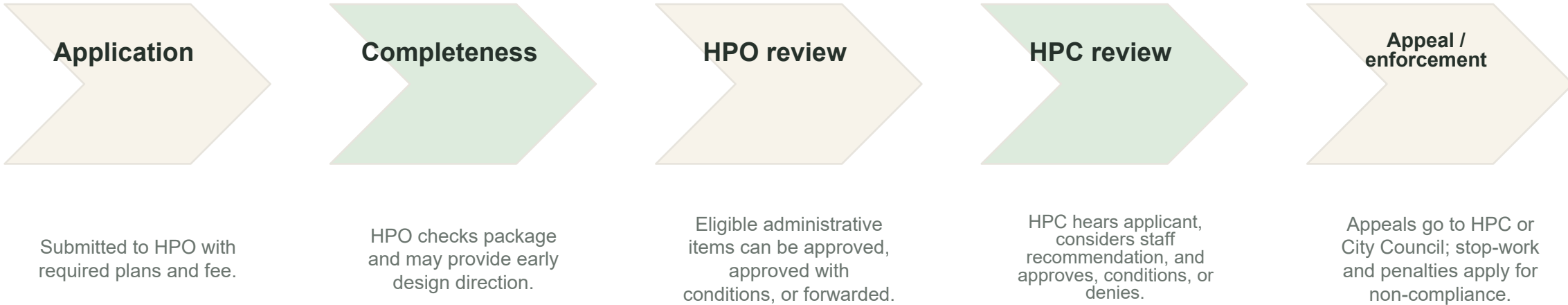
Designation criteria

Uses National Register criteria, with local character factors for districts, such as scale, style, materials, rooflines, setbacks, and relationships to the street.

Chapter 6 already speaks the same language as state and federal preservation practice; the update can focus on clarity, review thresholds, and implementation.

Current ordinance: how a COA moves through the system

The ordinance requires review before permits or work affecting landmarks or properties in districts, often requiring a Certificate of Appropriatenes.



Decision test now in ordinance: compliance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and any adopted design guidelines.

Update opportunity: convert broad applicability language into an easy-to-administer matrix of project circumstances, and right-size the level of review to Taylor’s needs and culture.

CLG alignment: Taylor is close, with a few items to confirm

Texas CLG certification depends on ordinance structure plus ongoing program administration.

Meets	Purpose stated	Chapter 6 includes a policy purpose with preservation, economic, and community welfare goals.
Meets	HPO appointed	Section 6.1.2 appoints an HPO and gives administrative duties.
Meets	Designation process	Local landmark/district process uses National Register criteria and City Council action.
Meets	COA review	COA required for work affecting landmarks and districts; reviews use SOI Standards.
Meets	Enforcement & appeals	Includes stop-work, penalties, administrative/HPC appeals, and City Council appeals.
Confirm	Commission details	Provided pages reference HPC duties but do not show member qualifications, terms, or meeting cadence.
Exceeds	60-day demolition stay	Ordinance provides 120-day postponement, with potential 60-day extension.
Meets	Demolition by neglect	Includes minimum maintenance standards and a demolition-by-neglect process.

Recommended ordinance update priorities

Focus revisions where they make decisions clearer for applicants, staff, and commissioners.

1 Define/cross-reference the HPC in Chapter 6

Confirm commission composition, qualifications, terms, quorum, and required training are easy to find.

2 Add the COA circumstances matrix

Clarify HPO vs HPC vs not-required decisions by scope of work and resource significance.

3 Tie review to adopted district-specific design guidelines

Secretary Standards are broad; local guidelines make them more predictable. This is outside of the current scope, but could be a future option with grant potential.

4 Clarify non-contributing resources

Use surveys and National Register status to determine contributing status, then scale review accordingly.

5 Keep demolition safeguards strong

Retain delay period, hardship criteria, alternatives analysis, and demolition-by-neglect tools. Review to confirm they align with Taylor's needs and culture.

Steps to Creating the Historic Overlay District

These are REQUIREMENTS under state law, which shapes how we think about approaches that get Taylor successfully to a proposed district

Texas Local Government Code Sec. 211.0165:

- **Owner consent**
 - Simple majority if owner consents (understood to mean written/on-record statement of consent like a petition; silence is not consent)
 - ****Owner can withdraw consent at any time*
 - *Consider updating Section 6.1.4 to reflect a 50% petition threshold*
 - **¾ majorities of both Commission and Council** to establish a historic landmark or district without consent
 - If creating a “district,” reality for nearly all cities has been to assume ¾ majority approach
 - Religious institutions must consent if included (no ¾ majority override)
- **Written statement of impact must be sent to property owners** 15+ days before initial hearings
 - List the regulations that may be applied as result
 - Procedures for the designation
 - Tax benefits that may be applied after designation, and
 - Rehab/repair programs that city offers for designated properties

Steps to Creating the Historic Overlay District

These are elements beyond mandates under state law, but tend to result in more positive dialog and outcomes. Aspects of this are integrated into the scope.

PRELIMINARY STEPS (NOT MANDATED BY STATE LAW):

- **Initiation - City Council resolution** to initiate historic overlay district designation (know you aren't wasting time)
- **Confirm the Boundary** - Consider factors like the age and architectural style of buildings, property lines, and natural or man-made features that could define the district's boundaries. Ideally a recent historic resources survey is used, but not essential. This is part of reason for using National Register District for Downtown Taylor.
- **Conduct Property Survey** - Engage with your local historic preservation office or staff for guidance on the process, potential survey needs, and any existing resources (again, reason for using National Register).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- **Informational Meetings** - Organize public meetings to educate residents about the potential historic district, its benefits, and the process.
- **Boundary Discussions** - Discuss proposed boundaries with residents and property owners, addressing concerns and incorporating feedback.
- **Workshops** - Conduct design standards workshops to inform residents about the guidelines they will need to follow within the district.

Steps to Creating the Historic Overlay District

These are elements beyond mandates under state law, but tend to result in more positive dialog and outcomes.

APPROVAL

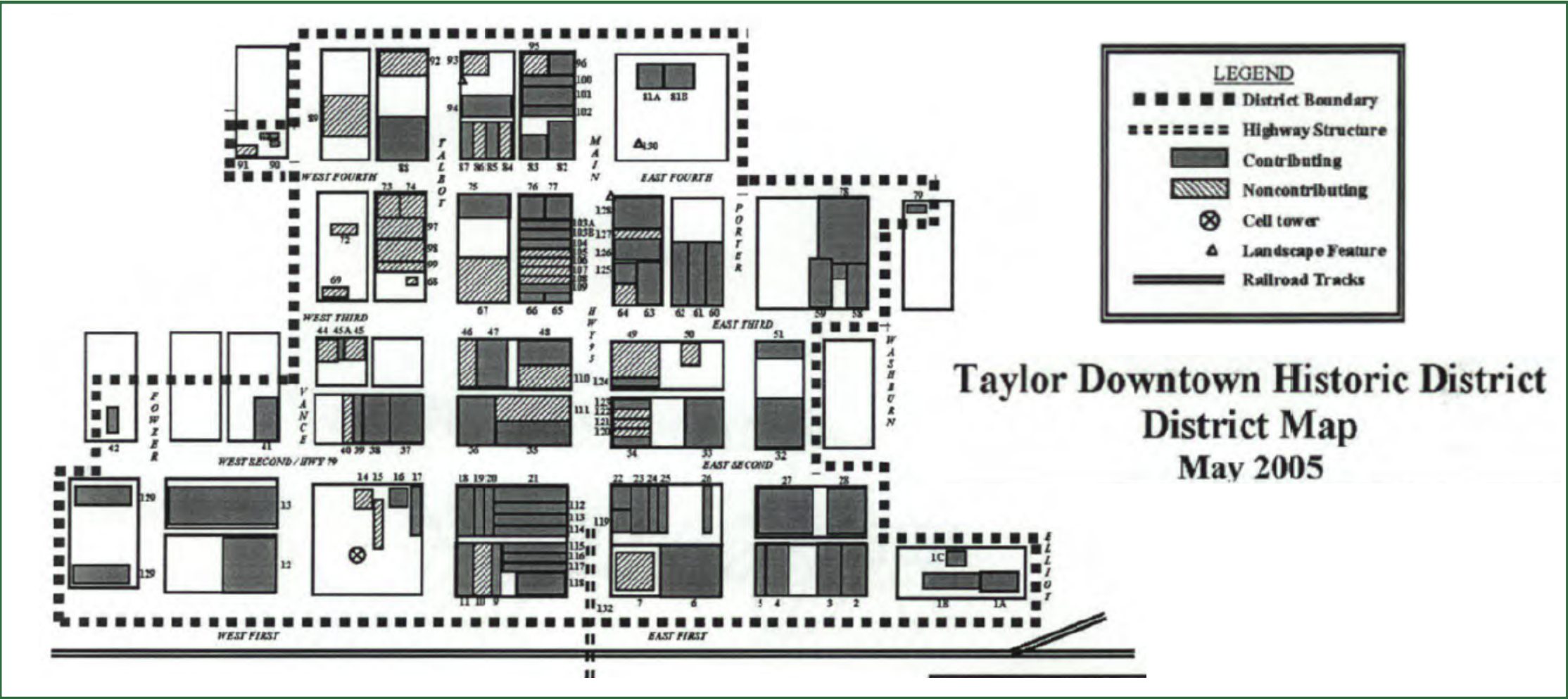
- **Historic Preservation Commission** – public hearing and recommends historic district zoning/landmark designation and the case proceeds to the Planning and Zoning Commission
- **Planning and Zoning Commission** – public hearing processed like a zoning map amendment, and the case proceeds to City Council
- **City Council** - The case proceeds to the City Council for a final decision.

ONGOING MANAGEMENT:

- **Certificate of Appropriateness and Design Review** – Works like a thermostat... you can turn it up or down based on your community's needs, whether a property is or isn't contributing to the historic district, etc.
 - You can decide what types of changes/improvements/construction trigger different levels of review and compliance.
 - Adopting locally-based design guidelines vs. just using Secretary of Interior Standards
- **Incentives** – Some cities adopt further tools to support property owners outside of regulatory practices
- **Apply to the THC** to be certified as a local historic district and be part of the “Certified Local Government” program where THC provides technical assistance, grants, etc.

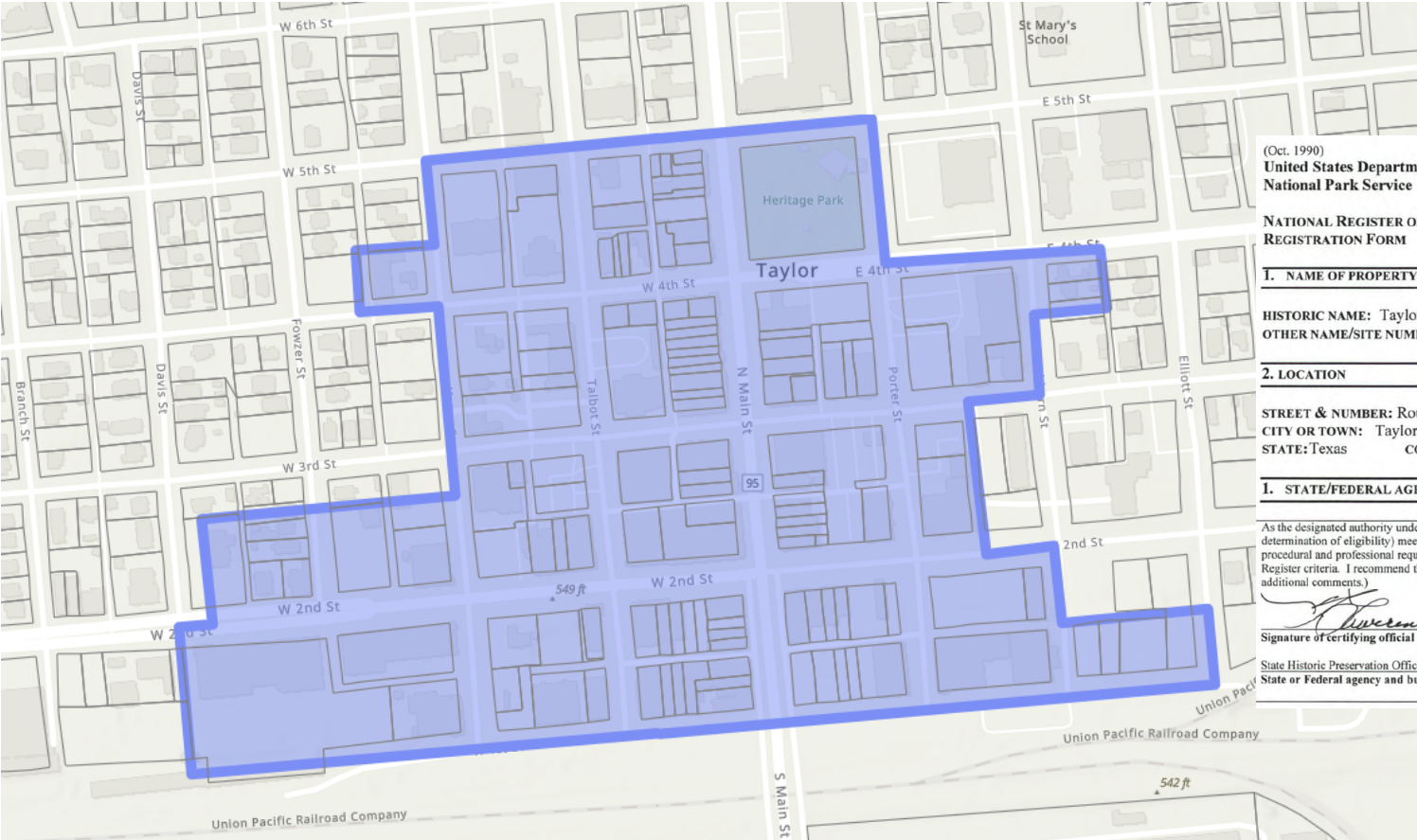
Proposed Historic Overlay District

Based on prior Commission feedback to focus on the current National Register Historic District as an initial boundary



Proposed Historic Overlay District

Based on prior Commission feedback to focus on the current National Register Historic District as an initial boundary



(Oct. 1990)
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

SEP 15 2005 1193

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

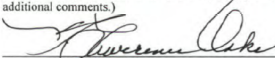
HISTORIC NAME: Taylor Downtown Historic District
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Roughly bounded by Fifth Street, Washburn, First Street, and Vance Street.
CITY OR TOWN: Taylor **VICINITY:** N/A **NOT FOR PUBLICATION:** N/A
STATE: Texas **CODE:** TX **COUNTY:** Williamson **CODE:** 491 **ZIP CODE:** 76574

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x nomination) (request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (x meets) (does not meet) the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant (nationally) (statewide) (x locally). (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

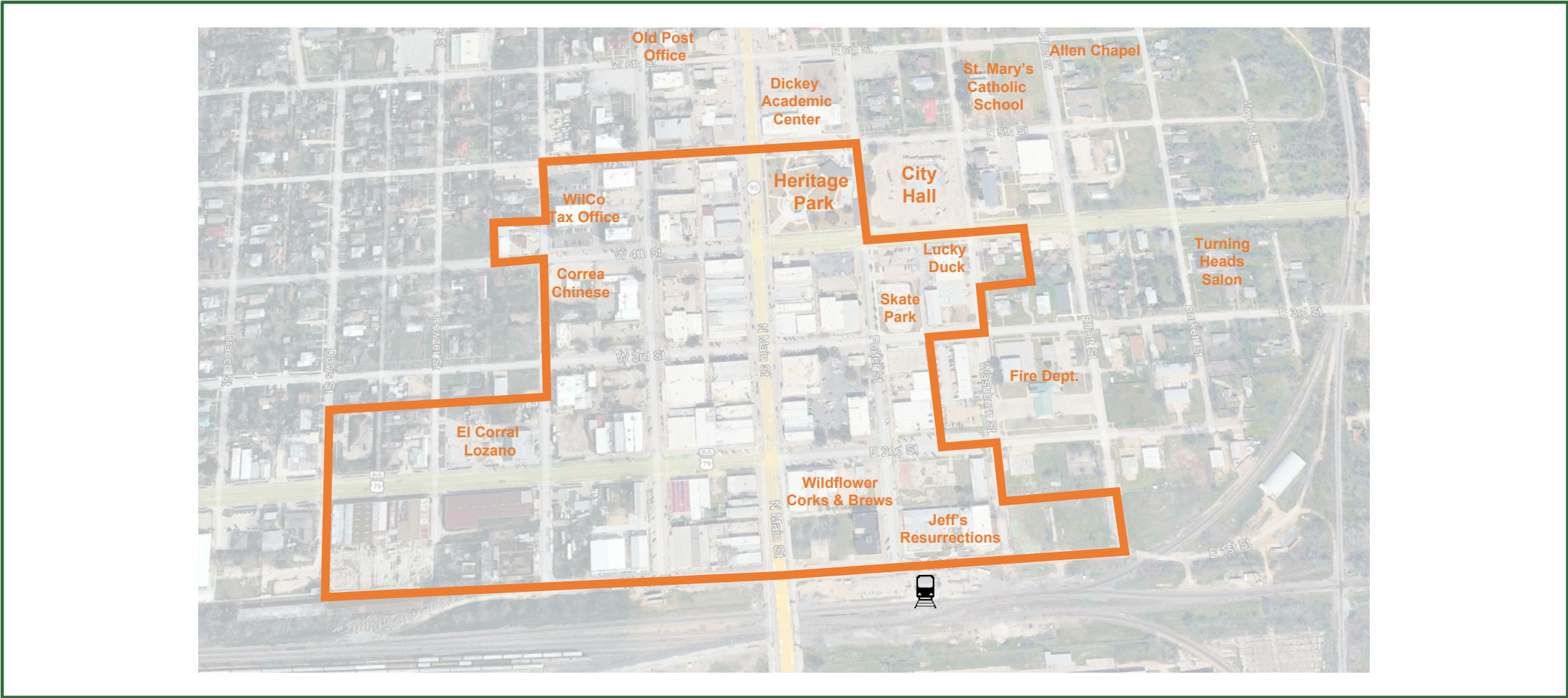

Signature of certifying official
State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

9-6-05
Date

Approx. 122 Properties

Proposed Historic Overlay District

Based on prior Commission feedback to focus on the current National Register Historic District as an initial boundary



Secretary of the Interior Standards: what they are

The Standards are not architectural taste preferences; they are a consistent preservation decision framework.

Preservation

Sustain existing historic materials and form.

Rehabilitation

Allow compatible new use while preserving character-defining features.

Restoration

Return property to a specific documented period.

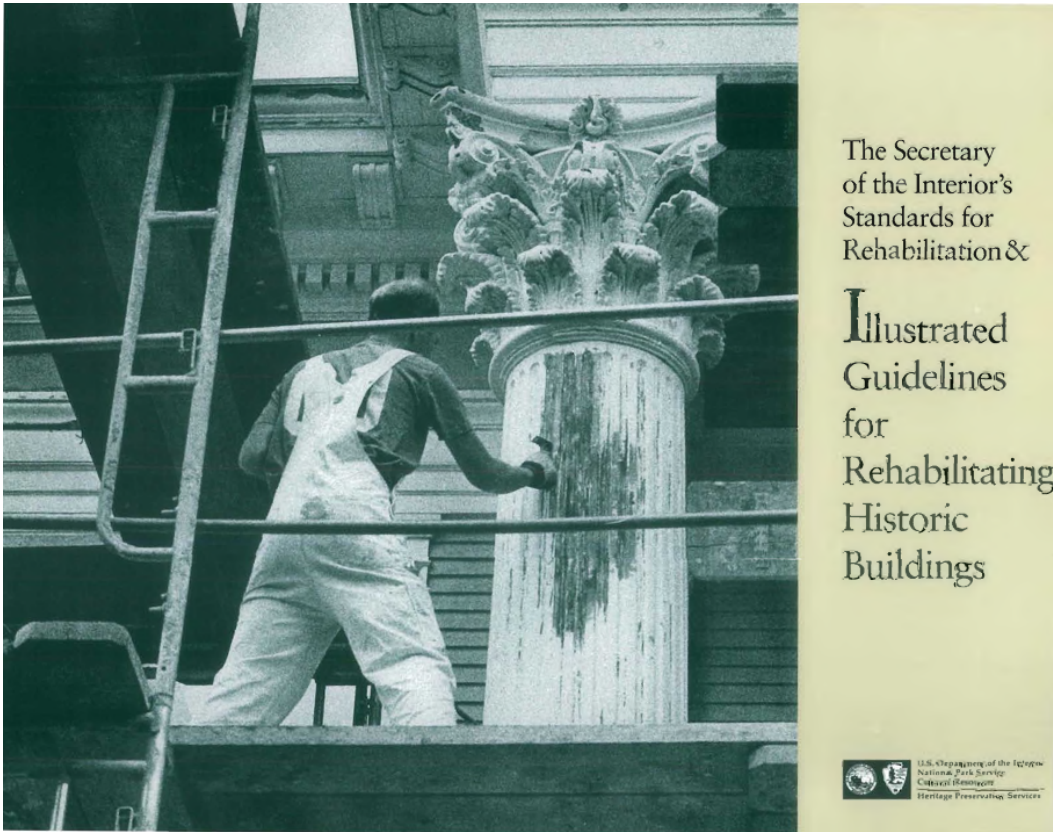
Reconstruction

Re-create a non-surviving property with evidence.

Rehabilitation is usually the everyday standard because it accommodates continued use, code needs, and compatible change.

Secretary of the Interior Standards – Guidelines for Rehab

In the absence of locally-adopted guidelines, the Secretary of Interior Standards Guidelines for Rehabilitation drive review frameworks



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Using the Standards in COA review

A simple way to explain the review question to residents and applicants.

What is historic?

Identify character-defining features: massing, roofline, porch, windows, materials, storefront, setting.

What changes?

Separate ordinary maintenance, in-kind repair, alteration, addition, relocation, and demolition.

What is the impact?

Retain and repair where feasible; replace only when necessary and compatible.

Can new work be compatible?

New additions should be differentiated yet compatible, and ideally reversible.

Commissioner rule of thumb: protect what makes the property historic; allow change where it avoids, minimizes, or sensitively manages impact.

COA circumstances: what drives the level of review

The same type of project can be treated differently based on significance and visibility.

Historic significance

Landmark, contributing high/medium priority, contributing low priority, or non-contributing.

Visibility

Street-facing or visible from the street generally receives more scrutiny than rear/non-visible work.

Impact level

New construction, demolition, relocation, and incompatible materials are elevated to HPC.

Consistency with guidelines

Projects consistent with adopted standards can often be handled by HPO.

The matrix is not a design approval standard by itself; it is a routing tool. Design approval still uses the Secretary Standards and local guidelines (once they exist).

COA circumstances by project family

This gives commissioners a quick mental map before reviewing the detailed table.

New construction	HPC	Infill changes district character.
Additions	HPC/HPO/NR	Street-facing and landmark work elevated.
Alterations	HPC/HPO/NR	Material changes and facade modifications drive review.
Demolition/relocation	HPC	Loss or movement of resources is highest impact.
Signs & fences	HPO/HPC/NR	Consistent signs/fences may be administrative; inconsistent public-facing work goes to HPC.

Project (Scope of Work)	
HPC = Historic Preservation Commission * HPO = HPO to review any building permit application in a HPO review for NR would occur with building Whether a structure is contributing is based on most	
	Reg
historic overlay district (includes relocation of buildings or structures within the historic overlay district)	N
Relocation of a building or structure from inside to outside of the historic overlay district	N
	Sign
Master Sign Plan	
New signage, to include new signage that is consistent with an approved Master Sign Plan	
New signage that is inconsistent with an approved Master Sign Plan or applicable guidelines	
Changes in content or configuration (re-facing) that do not involve changes in sign location, dimensions, lighting, or total sign area	
Amending an approved Master Sign Plan	
	Fen
New fence, railing, or wall inconsistent with the overlay district's characteristics and applicable guidelines located along a street or in street yard	
New fence, railing, or wall consistent with the overlay district's characteristics and applicable guidelines located along a street or in street yard	
New fence, railing, or wall that is not located along a street lot line or located in a street yard	
	Miscell
Exceptions, incentives or bonuses on building height, setback, and lot coverage/impervious cover standards pursuant to this Code	
Renewal of an expired Certificate of Appropriateness	

Color logic in the working matrix: red = HPC; yellow = HPO; green = not required.

Proposed COA circumstances matrix: the basic idea

The matrix converts one broad COA rule into predictable review paths.

Certificate of Appropriateness Circumstances Matrix		
Project (Scope of Work)	Historic Significance	Decision Making
HPC = Historic Preservation Commission * HPO = Historic Preservation Officer * NR = Not Required HPO to review any building permit application in a Historic District or affecting a Historic Landmark HPO review for NR would occur with building permit package to verify it meets exemption Whether a structure is contributing is based on most recently adopted historic resources survey/National Register		
New Construction (Infill Development)		
New building construction (some cities opt to make this an HPO action rather than HPC, but I suggest not since this is National Register)	All Historic Overlay Districts	HPC
Additions		
Addition that creates a new, or adds to an existing, street-facing facade	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority)	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority)	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	HPO
Addition of a non-street-facing facade (not visible when viewed perpendicular to street)	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR
New addition does not comply with the zoning standards of the historic overlay district	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure	HPC
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	HPC
Addition of awning or canopy visible when viewed perpendicular to street	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (High and Medium Priority)*	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority)*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure*	NR
Addition of porch, patio, deck, pergola, or sail sunshade visible when viewed perpendicular to street	Historic Landmark	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure *	HPC
	Contributing Historic Structure (Low Priority)*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure*	NR
Reconstruction, Alterations, Changes		
Restoring historic architectural features	Historic Landmark	HPO
	Contributing Historic Structure*	HPO
	Non-Contributing Historic Structure	NR

HPC review

High-impact or policy-sensitive work, such as new construction, street-facing additions to landmarks and high/medium contributing structures, demolition, relocation, and incompatible work.

HPO review

Lower-impact work or work likely to be consistent with adopted guidelines, such as certain non-street-facing additions, restoration, signage, and renewals.

Not required

Limited changes or exempt work, typically non-contributing resources or locations not visible from the street, verified by HPO during permit review.

Key implementation principle: HPO screens all permit applications in historic districts or affecting a landmark to verify whether a COA is required.

Discussion questions for the Commission

These are the decisions that most affect how the updated ordinance will work in practice.

- Should new construction in the district always go to HPC, or can staff approve clearly compliant infill?
- The National Register package for Downtown Taylor only identifies contributing vs. noncontributing, with no identification of preservation priority or degree of contribution. Based on this, should we treat anything contributing under the National Register as a high/medium contributor?
- How do you feel about differentiating based on whether the alteration/addition is visible from the street?
- What work should be exempt, provided HPO confirms the exemption during permit review?
- Are the current demolition, relocation, and economic hardship protections clear enough?

Outcome sought: direction to prepare ordinance language and a final COA matrix for review, and prepare engagement.