

SURVEY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
North Side of City

GRANBURY, TEXAS

Corrections and Revisions
April 2009

Items Underscored have Been Corrected

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Located 35 miles southwest of Fort Worth along the banks of the Brazos River on the eastern edge of the Texas plains, Granbury is the county seat of Hood County. The Texas Grand Prairie meets the Western Cross Timbers in the area of North Central Texas where Hood County's 436 acres are situated. Comanche Peak, or "Que-Tah-To-Yah," a 1,129-foot mesa, is the area's most salient natural landmark. Nomadic Comanches once revered Comanche Peak as a sacred meeting place and lookout point.

Throughout its colorful history, Hood County's character has been shaped and developed by natural forces and man-made ventures. The area's lush prehistory and abundant natural history created an attractive home for diverse tribes of Native Americans. Anglo settlers brought a period of wild lawlessness followed by a post-railroad economic boom. As Americans moved to cities as part of an industrial society, Hood County suffered a gradual loss of economic vitality. Then preservation and heritage tourism brought the community revitalization and rebirth. Hood County's special "sense of place" grew from these distinct historical contexts. Each one of these historic periods created cultural resources and vernacular architecture that should be preserved to keep Hood County's unique "sense of place."

The twenty-first century dawned in Hood County with continuing rapid growth. Between 1990 and 2007, the county's population grew from 28,981 to 49,170. The North Texas Council of Governments estimates that the current county population has surged this year to 54,900. Granbury's population grew from 4,045 in 1990 to 8,029 in 2007.ⁱ

In 2004, *The Wall Street Journal* identified the Hood County area as a "micropolis." A new term coined by the U.S. Census Bureau, "micropolis" describes a growing population center far removed from a big city that draws residents from both rural areas and suburbia. A "micropolis" is usually appealing because it offers many of the cultural attractions and conveniences once found only in large cities. In 2005, according to the Hood County Economic Development Foundation, Granbury was identified as the eighth top "micromarket" and the thirty-sixth wealthiest statistical area in the United States.ⁱⁱ

Historic Preservation in Granbury

Under the leadership of far-sighted preservation advocates, the City of Granbury passed its first Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1972, just six years after the federal government enacted the National Historic Preservation Act. Granbury's ordinance designated the Hood County Courthouse Square in Granbury as a local historic district. It also created a historic preservation commission and authorized its seven members to protect and preserve the architectural and historic integrity of the courthouse square.

Article 14, Historic Preservation Regulations, of Granbury's Zoning Ordinance authorizes the designation of individual historic landmarks and additional historic districts. Since the city council passed this ordinance in 1994, 24 buildings and two trees have been designated as Granbury Historic Landmarks. Two houses within the North Side Survey area are designated as City of Granbury Historic Landmarks:

1. The Cogdell House, 616 Thorp Spring Road, built in 1905;
2. The Smith-Savage House, 826 Thorp Spring Road, built in the 1870s; and
3. The Granbury College President's House, 801 North Lipan Highway, built circa 1873.



Figure 1. Cogdell House, Built in 1905 to 1907. Photo by Author.



Figure 2. Smith-Savage House, Built in 1873 and 1892. Photo by Author.



Figure 3. Granbury College President's House, Built Circa 1873. Photo by Author.

Trees within the North Side survey area include the two that have been designated as historic landmarks by the city:

1. Live Oak Tree at 305 East Moore Street, where Local Legend had Long Maintained was the Site of the Hanging of Billy Mitchell During the 1870s, and
2. Live Oak Tree at 801 Lipan Highway, known as the "Granbury College Presidents' Tree, which has been noted by the Texas Forest Service and estimated to be at least 500 years old.

In 2002, the Granbury City Council approved a citywide Preservation Plan. During preparation of the plan, the preservation commission conducted a comprehensive survey of 208 historic resources in neighborhoods surrounding the courthouse square. The 2001 survey and 2002 preservation plan resulted in designation of a City of Granbury Historic District encompassing neighborhoods surrounding the Hood County Courthouse Square.

In 1974, the Hood County Courthouse Square became the first in Texas to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. The National Register listing application described it as a "virtually intact late-19th century courthouse square . . ."iii There are just two buildings individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Granbury:

1. Baker-Carmichael House at 226 East Pearl Street, which was built in 1905, and
2. Wright-Henderson-Duncan House at 703 Spring Street, which was originally built circa 1870.

Within the city limits of Granbury, there are 32 Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks and several historic site and subject markers.

2007 – 2008 Survey of Historic Resources Within the North Side of Granbury

This survey is a comprehensive survey of historic resources within the north side of Granbury. The north side is defined as north of the Hood County Courthouse Square in downtown Granbury, extending north, east, and west from the railroad tracks to the city limits. The south edge of the survey area is bounded by the railroad tracks. See Figure 6. The size of the area surveyed within the north side is 249.84 acres or .39 square miles.

Most of the resources within the north side have never been surveyed before. In 2002, five resources north of the railroad tracks and along the east side of Thorp Spring Road were surveyed. When they approved the Granbury Preservation Plan, the city council also included a small area along the east side of Thorp Spring Road within the new Granbury Historic Preservation Overlay District. That area contains five historic houses:

1. Cogdell House at 616 Thorp Spring Road, built in 1905 to 1907;
2. Vernacular House, 704 Thorp Spring Road, built circa 1880s;
3. Vernacular House, 716 Thorp Spring Road, built circa 1900;
4. Vernacular House, 824 Thorp Spring Road, built circa 1870s to 1880s; and
5. Smith-Savage House, 826 Thorp Spring Road, built circa 1885.



*Figure 4. Vernacular House, 704 Thorp Spring Road, Built Circa 1880s.
Photo by Author.*



*Figure 5. Vernacular House, 824 Thorp Spring Road, Built Circa 1870s to 1880s.
Photo by Author*

At the same time, the city council designated the north side of downtown Granbury as a historic compatibility district that is governed by the following regulations and requirements:

- 1. Placement of a building shall fit within the range of front and side yard dimensions existing among adjacent buildings or in the block face, so that the new building is placed in alignment with neighboring buildings.*
- 2. Off-street parking should not interrupt the continuity of landscaped front yards and should therefore be placed at the rear of the property or behind the building. Driveways shall be located perpendicular to the street, so that the character of landscaped front yards is reinforced.*
- 3. A building should be of appropriate human-scale, with mass and size similar to those in the adjacent block face or within the historic overlay district. The height of finished floor from grade should be similar to traditional houses in the vicinity, and should be sufficient to suggest a traditional pier-and-beam foundation. The height of the cornice and the roof ridge(s) should also fit within the range of dimensions of traditional or historic residences in the block face or district.*
- 4. Roof forms should be sloping, either hipped or gabled, with an eave overhang dimension that reflects traditional roof conditions.*
- 5. Exterior building materials shall reflect the traditional materials of similar buildings in Granbury: wood siding (horizontal lap or novelty siding); limestone or field stone in traditional dimensions and tooling, or brick in traditional dimensions.*
- 6. New buildings should be designed so that the facade's organization closely relates to surrounding or similar buildings. Spacing and size of window and door openings should be similar to their historic counterparts, as should the proportion of window to wall space.*

7. *Provide a one-story entrance porch on the front elevation that is scaled similarly to porches on nearby traditional residential buildings. Porches should be designed in dimensions and proportions adequate to create usable space.*
8. *New designs should draw upon the traditions of historic styles and designs in the community, but should be seen as products of their own time while being compatible with the historic environment of the block, neighborhood or community.*
9. *Design of signs and choices of exterior colors on new buildings shall be reviewed subject to the Historic Preservation Guidelines.^{iv}*

Certificates of Appropriateness are not required prior to issuing a building permit in the North Side Historic Compatibility District, but the city manager or his designee may choose to have projects reviewed by the historic preservation commission.

In 2001, the Texas Historical Commission designated Granbury Cemetery as a Historic Texas Cemetery after an application was prepared and submitted by seventh- and eighth-grade students during a summer history camp conducted by the Hood County Historical Preservation Council, Inc. Granbury Cemetery is located within the north side survey area—it sits high atop “College Hill” overlooking the town square.

Within the north side survey area, there are no individual resources or districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places. There is just one Recorded Texas Historic Landmark within the north side survey area: the Smith-Savage House, located at 826 Thorp Spring Road.

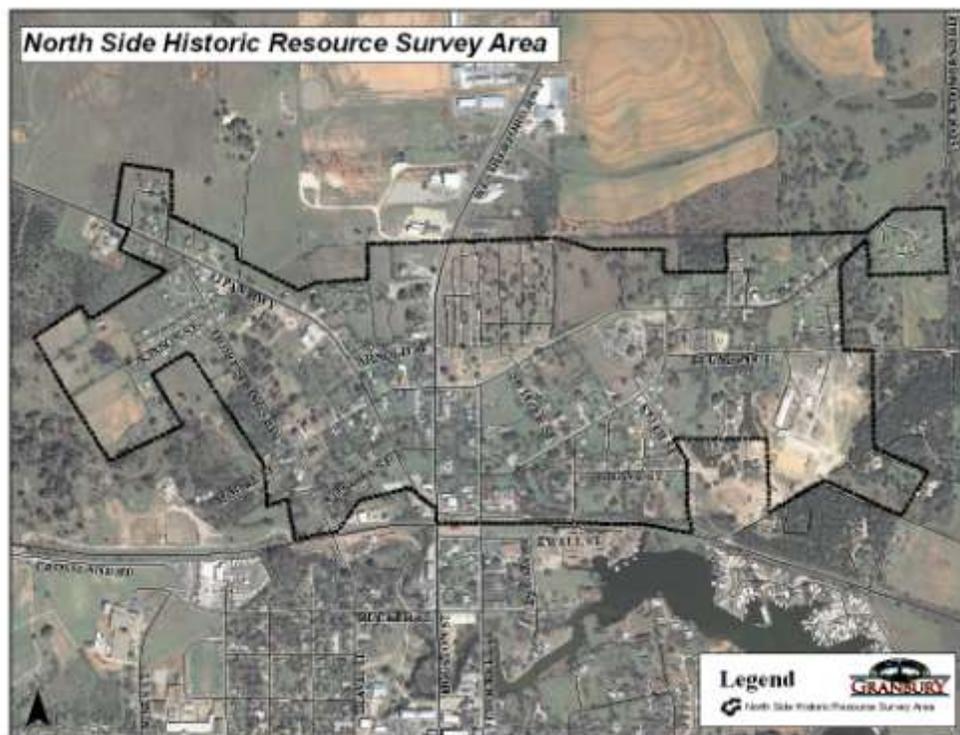


Figure 6. Survey Area Showing North Side of Granbury.

Survey Objectives

All of Granbury is currently undergoing rapid development, including the north side of downtown. In 2008, developers built Victorian Court, a small enclave of new “Victorian” houses on Moore Street across from Granbury Cemetery.

Just east of the cemetery, along the north side of Moore Street, plans call for a new multi-family housing development called Shady Grove to be built on a 13-acre parcel of land that now features hay bales, mature trees, and an old vernacular farm house set back from the roadway.

Further east along Moore Street, a developer is demolishing old houses and replacing them with new construction (see Figure 7). Within that area of new development are some historically significant storm cellars (see Figure 8 and Chapter 4, *Observations*).



Figure 7. Craftsman-style Bungalow at 712 East Moore Street, Slated for Immediate Demolition. Photo by Author.



Figure 8. Old Storm Cellar and Outbuildings at 712 East Moore Street. Photo by Author.

Because of this immediate and planned new development, it is important to identify and preserve significant historic, architectural, and cultural resources located within the north side of downtown Granbury. The objectives of this comprehensive survey are to:

1. Identify significant historic and cultural resources so that future planning will ensure their preservation.
2. Recommend national and local historical designation for significant resources to acknowledge and protect them while providing accurate interpretation for future generations.
3. Broaden Granbury's local preservation program to encourage revitalization and renewal of this culturally diverse neighborhood.

Endnotes

ⁱ "Population Finder," U.S. Census Bureau, <http://factfinder.census.gov/>, and "County Population 54,900," Granbury/Hood County Economic Development Corporation, www.granburyhoodedc.com.

ⁱⁱ "Top U.S. Micromarkets," and "Wealthiest U.S. Core-Based Statistical Areas," Granbury/Hood County Economic Development Corporation, www.granburyhoodedc.com.

ⁱⁱⁱ James Wright Steely, *A Catalog of Texas Properties in the National Register of Historic Places* (Austin: Texas Historical Commission, 1984), 104.

^{iv} *City of Granbury Zoning Ordinance 01-819*, November 20, 2001, Revised July 15, 2003, 77.