

SURVEY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
North Side of City

GRANBURY, TEXAS

Corrections and Revisions
April 2009

Items Underscored have Been Corrected

Chapter 4

Observations

Landscapes and Streetscapes

The landscape of the North Side of downtown Granbury still speaks of its rural roots. There is much scenic open space remaining, and a significant number of mature trees: live oaks, post oaks, and pecans. Because the Brazos River bounds the south and east sides of downtown Granbury, the north and west sides became the rural fringes of the community. Both the open space and trees provide a peaceful, rural sense of place to Granbury's North Side.

Two trees within the North Side survey area have already been declared City of Granbury Historic Landmarks. But there are many other noteworthy trees in the survey area that frame the streetscapes there, including the mature tree canopy created by six live oaks along North Stockton Street. Jo Ann Massey, who has always lived along Stockton Bend Road northeast of Granbury, said that “everyone has tried to hold onto” the mature trees throughout the city's North Side.



*Figure 27. North Stockton Streetscape Featuring Live Oak Tree Canopy.
Photo by Author.*



Figure 28. Mature Pecan Trees Along Thorp Spring Road. Photo by Author.



*Figure 29. Open Land Still Remaining Along Thorp Spring Road
Where C.F. Rodgers' 1897 Map Indicates Farmland. Photo by Author.*

Along with the trees, the open land still remaining throughout the survey area reflects its roots as a sparsely populated rural landscape. A piece of land that is undeveloped today could have once been the site of a notable resource of the past, like the entrance to the city's maintenance yard on Keith Street, where the community's African American School was once located. Massey said that the North Side landscape was historically dotted with "little houses, not close together, and narrow caliche roads." In fact, even today, the south end of Keith Street, all of Taylor Street, all of Menefee Street and part of Valley View Street remain unpaved.



Figure 30. South End of North Keith Street Remains a Narrow Unpaved Road. Granbury's African American School and African American Baptist Church were Located on the East Side of Keith Street, Near the Entrance to the City's Maintenance Yard (to the Left in the Above Photo). Many of Granbury's African American Families Lived in Small Frame Houses Located Along the South End of Keith Street. Photo by Author.



Figure 31. Undeveloped Property Along Grove Street. Photo by Author.



Figure 32. Undeveloped Property Along East Side of North Stockton Street Along Railroad Tracks. Photo by Author.



Figure 33. Undeveloped Land located along East Side of North Keith Street that was part of Hopper Farm, just north of the site of Granbury's African American School. Photo by Author.

Open land within the North Side survey area also includes the 30 acres along Reunion Street that are home to Granbury's historic "Reunion Grounds," where the community's "Old Soldiers and Settlers Reunion" was held each year from 1899 through at least 1986. Today, the Hood County Livestock Raisers Association owns the Reunion Grounds, which has developed as a social cultural landscape over the past century. It is used for the annual Junior Livestock Show and Fair, and also contains a rodeo arena and stands. The old reunion tabernacle was torn down about four years ago. Over the years, other significant community events and gatherings have taken place on this spot high on the hill north of the courthouse square.

Designed landscapes within the North Side survey area include Granbury cemetery, with approximately 3,200 graves, the oldest dating back to 1873. The cemetery is located on the highest point within the city limits. The other public designed landscape within the survey area is the city baseball complex located within the western half of the North Side at the west end of Moore Street in an undeveloped area. The baseball fields were built there within the last 30 years.

Built Resources

This survey utilized the definitions of built resources developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places. *Buildings* are "created principally to shelter any form of human activity," and include houses, churches, offices or hotels. *Structures* are "functional constructions made usually for purposes other than creating human shelter," and include bandstands, fences and bridges. *Objects* are "primarily artistic in nature or are relatively small in scale and simply constructed." Fountains, monuments, sculptures and statuary are examples of objects.ⁱ

Most of the resources within the North Side survey area are post-railroad National Folk houses. They are vernacular buildings constructed by Granbury residents with no professional design training. Rather, these houses reflect the forms and traditions of the community's cultural heritage. The predominant forms are all one story: hall-and-parlor, gable-front-and-wing, and pyramidal. They reflect the socio-economic realities of the area's early residents.

There are some exceptions. The Cogdell family, one of Granbury's wealthiest families in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, built at least three houses within Granbury's North Side: the high-style Craftsman-era Cogdell House on Thorp Spring Road; a house of similar design located at the end of Kinson Street in a rural setting beneath old live oak trees; and a small Folk Victorian house located just north of the Cogdell House on Thorp Spring Road. These houses were built within the western half of the North Side, when that area was mostly farm and ranchland, and they preceded many of the simple folk houses built later.

There are several noteworthy Folk Victorian houses and two Gothic Revival houses located within the survey area. Later styles represented include small Craftsman-inspired bungalows, vernacular rock houses, and a few Ranch-style houses.

There are a few commercial buildings within the survey area, including an Italian Renaissance Revival-style service station built in 1924 in Mineral Wells and recently moved and rebuilt in Granbury along North Crockett Street just north of the railroad tracks.

Architects, Builders and Craftsmen

Architects

The Cogdell House reputedly represents the only known professionally designed resource originally built within the North Side survey area. In 1988, former owner Dorothy Little said that Wyatt Hedrick, a well-known Fort Worth architect, designed the house for Dan Cogdell just after the turn of the 20th century. However, Wyatt Hedrick was born in 1888 in Virginia and was just 17 to 19 years of age in 1905 to 1907 when the Cogdell House was built. Hedrick graduated from Washington and Lee College in 1910.

In 1903 in Fort Worth, Marshall R. Sanguinet and Carl G. Staats founded Sanguinet and Staats, which writer Christopher Long called “one of the most successful and influential architectural firms in Texas from the turn of the century through the 1930s.”ⁱⁱⁱ Hedrick later joined the firm in 1922 after running his own construction company in Fort Worth from 1914 to 1921. Further research would have to be done on the Cogdell House to determine who actually designed the high-style Arts and Crafts period bungalow.

The Allison House at 222 West Moore Street was one of the first houses built in Fort Worth’s Arlington Heights neighborhood. Constructed in about 1891 at 5628 Pershing Avenue, the Allison House was moved to Granbury to save it from neglect and restored in 2004. A booklet issued illustrating works of Messer, Sanguinet, and Messer contained an illustration of this house as an example of one of their designs built before 1892. Messer, Sanguinet, and Messer was a 19th century Fort Worth architectural firm created by Marshall Sanguinet and brothers Arthur and Howard Messer. Both Messer brothers returned to their native England around the turn of the 20th century.

Builders

Within the North Side survey area of Granbury are several well-built, intact storm cellars. The presence of so many historic storm cellars seems to be a unique feature of this area of town—when the neighborhoods around the courthouse were surveyed in 2001, there were no notations of visible old storm cellars.

Both Mary Kate Durham and her sister, Jo Ann Massey told stories about an African American man they called “Uncle Frank” who was known for building

substantial storm cellars. Durham remembered that his name was Frank Thorp and he lived in nearby Cleburne. She wrote that her father, Keith Randle, had seen storm cellars built by Thorp in the communities of Acton and Fall Creek.



Figure 34. Randle Farm Storm Cellar Built by “Uncle Frank” Thorp. Photo by Author.

“From the time ‘Uncle Frank’ built it, we found untold uses for it,” Durham wrote about her family’s storm cellar behind their home in north Granbury. “We played on it and in it. We stored foodstuff inside and dried peaches on top. Several times we even retreated there when the storm clouds looked ominous.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Massey remembered the shelves in Uncle Frank’s substantial storm cellars that could be used for storing foodstuff. She recalled that when he was excavating the site for the Randle’s storm cellar, “Uncle Frank” dug until he could go no further. “Mr. Keith, God made this for you, and I can’t go no further,” Frank told Keith Randle.^{iv}

Besides the storm cellar at the Randle Farmhouse, storm cellars were visible in the yards of 109 West Arnold, 803 Switzer, 712 East Moore, and 720 Stockton. “Uncle Frank” Thorp could have built these cellars.

Craftsmen

Many of the houses located within the east side of the North Side survey area are examples of the craftsmanship of stonemason Donald Bird. Born in Hood County in 1937, Bird’s father, J.D., was a ranch hand on the large Black Ranch near Lipan.

Donald Bird began teaching himself to be a stonemason during the middle to late 1960s. Otis Moore, a local mason who built the limestone walls of the Hood County

Library, taught Bird how to safely and effectively built a limestone fireplace and chimney. Bird “hired a guy to mix mud in a wheelbarrow,” and started his stone-laying career, remembered his wife, Frances Umphress Bird.^v

Bird began his career in stonework about the time that Granbury’s historic preservation movement began and restoration and rehabilitation began on old buildings around the courthouse square. He worked on the old limestone walls on many of Granbury’s historic buildings, including the walls of the Granbury Opera House when it was rehabilitated in a community-wide effort in the early 1970s.

“Before the new roof could be put up, the rock walls had to be leveled and straightened up and tuck pointed so they would be level to hold the trusses straight across,” wrote Joe Nutt in his book, *The Restoration of the Granbury Opera House*. “Here again, with little or no money but a great deal of civic pride, Donald Bird, one of our young men who is a fine rock mason and does a great deal of work in the county, volunteered to do the work for his actual cost in employee labor and materials. He charged nothing at all for his own time. He would up doing quite a bit of the work himself. This young man rides Brahma Bulls for recreation, and he is interested in everything civic that goes on in the community.”^{vi}

Frances Bird recalled that her husband traveled to Austin with Mary Lou Watkins, one of the leaders of Granbury’s historic preservation movement, to learn about proper restoration techniques for old limestone construction. Donald Bird died in Granbury in 1999.

The buildings within the North Side survey area that exhibit Donald Bird’s skills as a rock craftsman are his home at 700 Reunion and the two houses to the east, 703 Reunion and 900 Bird Court. Bird added a limestone exterior to the houses at 707 East Moore and 417 East Barton. Bird also added a limestone exterior to Dr. Roger Nunnallee’s Granbury Animal Clinic at 1317 Lipan Highway.

Endangered Resources

Many of the houses within the North Side survey area are endangered by neglect and future development. An example is the small farmhouse located on 13 acres just east of Granbury Cemetery along Moore Street. This small side-gabled hall-and-parlor house with a shed-roof porch is set back from the road under of grove of trees in a distinctly rural setting. Brush has grown up to encompass the exterior of the house. Its original clapboard was covered with asbestos siding at some point, and the roof has collapsed. Many of the interior features have been removed. Plans call for it to be demolished. The 13-acre lot where it is located is being developed for a multi-family housing project known as Shady Grove.

Just east of that 13-acre plot planned for new development are some new houses built along the north side of East Moore Street. The builder is planning to demolish the

Craftsman-style bungalow located at 712 East Moore and construct a new house in its place. Two old storm cellars are also located on the land west of 712 East Moore, and they are also endangered by pending new development.

The west half of the North Side survey area still contains scenic open rural land. Two developers have contacted the owners of the historic Cogdell family house at the end of Kinson Street with an interest in acquiring it along with the open land surrounding the house. Along North Houston Street, a Craftsman-style bungalow has been removed since the survey fieldwork was completed.

Another endangered property within the west half of the survey area is the National Folk pyramidal-form house at 723 Thorp Spring Road. Built circa the early 20th century, this house is now for sale with 4.16 acres of tree-covered land for \$1.1 million. The listing real estate agent is advertising the property as “suitable for building new homes in the historic neighborhood of Granbury.” If not purchased by a buyer who will preserve it, this small vernacular house could be lost to the community.



Figure 35. Small Neglected Farmhouse Set Back from East Moore Street. This House is in Its Original Rural Setting, Beneath a Grove of Trees on 13 Acres of Land Atop College Hill. Plans Call for the House to be Demolished and the Land to be Developed for Multi-Family Housing. Photo by Author.

Endnotes

ⁱ “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” *National Register Bulletin*, 4-5.

ⁱⁱ Christopher Long, “Administrative History of Sanguinet and Staats,” *Sanguinet, Staats, and Hedrick: An Inventory of Their Drawings, Photographs and Records*, Alexander Architetural Archive, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utaaa/00005/aaa-00005pl.html.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mary Kate Durham, “January Ritual Provided Us with Fresh Meat Rest of Year,” *Hood County News*, 3 January 2001.

^{iv} Jo Ann Massey, Interview by Mary G. Saltarelli, Diane Lock and Andra Cryer, 29 September 2008.

^v Frances Umphress Bird, Telephone Interview by Mary G. Saltarelli, Granbury, Texas, 25 September 2008.

^{vi} Joe L. Nutt, *The Restoration of the Granbury Opera House* (Granbury: The Granbury Opera House, 1980), 11 – 12.