



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

MANSFIELD HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION

# MANSFIELD TEXAS





### WHO WE ARE

The Historic Landmark Commission was established in 1988 through Ordinance No. 782. It consists of seven dedicated Mansfield residents who volunteer their time. The City Council appoints the Commissioners for two-year terms.

### WHAT WE DO

The Historic Landmark Commission is on a mission to celebrate and protect Mansfield's rich heritage. This team works to recognize, document, and preserve the city's historic treasures. They champion iconic buildings and properties for local landmark status, steer the Preservation Plan, and meticulously review any proposed changes to landmarks. Plus, they advocate for incentives to inspire and support the preservation of our city's historic gems.

### OUR VISION

The Historic Landmark Commission will use the power of preservation to save our cultural landscapes and living heritage, create a sense of place, and protect and promote the unique identity of Mansfield through education.

### OUR COMMITMENT

Mansfield has experienced significant growth in recent years, which has occasionally led to the loss of historic resources. The Historic Landmark Commission is dedicated to preserving both Mansfield's rural heritage and its modern character. The review requirements outlined in the preservation ordinance provide crucial protection for the historic buildings that convey our city's story.

### PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

On August 8, 2024, the Commission was honored with the President's Volunteer Service Award, recognizing the significant positive impact of its volunteers on the community. The Commission is among the City boards to receive this esteemed accolade. From left to right, David Littlefield, Bob Klenzendorf, Jennifer Johnston, Dr. Robert Smith, Tom Leach, Anne Weydeck, and Mark Walker.



## Message from the Chair

It is said that the days pass slowly but the years fly by, and it seems that is truly the case. This letter marks the completion of another year of work by the dedicated members of the Historic Landmark Commission and the City staff members who so ably support us.

The Historic Landmark Commission had a very successful year. We were fortunate to assist three designated landmarks in refurbishing their buildings. These were the Troy Hackler House at 507 E. Broad Street, the McKnight Building at 125-129 N. Main Street, and the Dennis Mahoney Building at 115 N. Main Street.

At a ceremony in May, we recognized nine additional properties as being historically significant, and although they have not come in as designated Historic Landmarks at the present time, their owners were made aware that they own valuable and significant pieces of property. We will welcome them to apply for Historic Landmark status at any time.

This year, the Historic Landmark Commission revised the Design Guidelines for Historic Mansfield which were originally adopted in 1991. The revision was approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission and the City Council this year. The Commission is currently working to update our Historic Preservation Ordinance, and we hope to complete this in the coming year.

Finally, we take great pride in promoting Mansfield’s heritage during the Historic Preservation Month festivities which are held in May each year. Activities in 2023 included themed, guided walking tours, a car show, demonstrations at the Man House Museum, a special “From the Vault” exhibit at the Mansfield Historical Museum, Chalk the Walk and student art contests, and cemetery tours. We had approximately 1000 people attend the various activities during the month. While this number may seem small, it was a substantial increase from the previous year, and all the participants had positive feedback. We are so grateful for the work that our subcommittee did to bring this to fruition, and we are already working to build on this year’s success.

In closing, it is always my pleasure to serve as Chairman of this fine Commission and to work with dedicated individuals who want to preserve, share, and promote the history of Mansfield.

**Robert A. Smith, O.D., Chair**  
**Historic Landmark Commission**

### COMMISSIONERS

**DR. ROBERT SMITH**  
*Chair*

**DAVID LITTLEFIELD**  
*Vice-Chair*

**JENNIFER JOHNSTON**  
*Commissioner*

**BOB KLENZENDORF**  
*Commissioner*

**TOM LEACH**  
*Commissioner*

**MARK WALKER**  
*Commissioner*

**ANNE WEYDECK**  
*Commissioner*

### CITY STAFF

**JASON ALEXANDER**  
*Executive Director of Planning and Development*

**ARTY WHEATON-RODRIGUEZ**  
*Assistant Director of Planning*

**ART WRIGHT**  
*Historic Preservation Officer*

*Cover photograph: A 1954 Chevy truck on display at the Historic Downtown Mansfield Car Show in May 2024.*

*Historic photographs used in this report are courtesy of the Mansfield Historical Society.*

# AUTHENTICITY OF PLACE

## *It's What Makes Downtown Mansfield Unique*

Mansfield's historic downtown embodies the city's unique essence, character, and heritage. Unlike any other place, this historic area showcases Mansfield's transformation from an agricultural community to the vibrant city it is today.

The historic buildings in downtown Mansfield are key to understanding the city's history and growth, reflecting the authentic built environment that defines our community. Prioritizing historic preservation is essential for maintaining this authenticity and ensuring that Mansfield remains a distinctive destination where businesses can flourish.

These historic structures play a vital role in shaping the community's character, enhancing quality of life, and promoting economic development by offering unique spaces for businesses and startups. They also help define the scale of new developments and integrate them harmoniously into the existing environment. Additionally, repurposing older buildings is an environmentally sustainable practice.

From the commercial buildings on Main Street to the historic homes on the surrounding streets, downtown is filled with architectural treasures. Here are just a few examples:



*The R.D. Miller House, c. 1935, at 213 Sycamore Street is one of the most unique houses in downtown. This Tudor Revival house has an unusual stone veneer.*



*This 1885 center passage house at 400 South Second Avenue is an example of a once common plan type (center passage) that is becoming increasingly rare.*



*The Elm Street District has houses from six decades of the city's history. Clockwise from top left: Cantrell House, c. 1946; Hood-Grow House, c. 1910; Fowler-Boyd House, c. 1905; and W.G. Ralston House, 1900.*



*The 1890 Muncy House is a one-of-a-kind Colonial Revival style house at 206 West Oak Street.*

### ***Interested in a historic property? Have questions?***

We have advice and incentives to assist with the rehabilitation of Mansfield's historic buildings. Contact the Historic Preservation Officer at (817) 276-4226 or [art.wright@mansfieldtexas.gov](mailto:art.wright@mansfieldtexas.gov) for more information.

# Preservation in 2023-2024

Here are highlights of the Historic Landmark Commission's activities in 2023-2024.

## **PRESERVATION PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Commission began the process of updating the 1999 Historic Preservation Plan, which was originally designed to provide a framework for managing the City's historic and cultural resources. To support this effort, the Commission established the Preservation Plan Advisory Committee in March 2024.

Comprising Commission members, preservation volunteers, and city staff, the Committee is tasked with drafting the plan's goals and recommendations. The updated plan aims to modernize the City's preservation program to address contemporary challenges effectively.

## **PRESERVATION EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE**

Founded in 2022, the Preservation Education Sub-Committee initially focused on organizing events for Historic Preservation Month. In 2024, its role expanded to encompass all aspects of the Commission's preservation outreach program.

Comprising three Commissioners, preservation volunteers, and city staff, the Sub-Committee not only plans the Commission's educational programs but also collaborates with the Historical Services Department to support programs hosted by the Mansfield Historical Museum and the Man House Museum, such as Founders Day and History Talks.

## **CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Mansfield is one of just 76 cities and counties in Texas recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG) by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). As a CLG member, Mansfield benefits from access to grants, technical assistance, training opportunities, and the collective expertise of other CLG communities. In return, the Commission is committed to upholding a robust local preservation program. To retain CLG status, the Commission provides an annual report to



*Retired U.S. Deputy Marshall and author D. Preston Davidson speaks on the need for historical research to ensure accuracy in his books at a History Talks session at the Man House Museum in April 2024. Mr. Davidson is author of a series of period novels on the U.S. Marshall Service in the 1800s in Texas.*

the THC detailing the progress of Mansfield's preservation efforts.

## **EMERGENCY REPAIRS ORDINANCE**

In 2023, two of Mansfield's historic landmark buildings were damaged by vehicle collisions. At that time, the preservation ordinance lacked provisions for managing emergency repairs, which often require swift action to secure the building and address public safety concerns.

In response to these incidents, the Commission introduced an ordinance to streamline the emergency repair process. The new ordinance allows the Historic Preservation Officer to authorize temporary repairs to secure the building or address safety hazards. Property owners must then obtain approval from the Commission for permanent repairs through the Certificate of Approval process. The ordinance took effect in December 2023.

## **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM**

The Commission reached out the Mansfield Youth Council program to involve the city's youth in historic preservation efforts. Several initiatives were proposed to the Youth Council to consider, including creating educational videos for the Man House Museum, launching a marketing campaign to encourage young people to join historic preservation programs, and appointing a Youth Commissioner to work with the Historic Landmark Commission. The Youth Engagement Program is one of the Commission's priorities for the coming year.

# PRESERVATION PROGRAMS



The owner of the historic 1894 Post Office Building is now in the third year of a tax exemption that covers 25% of the building's improvement value. The tax savings can be used for rehabilitation projects, such as removing the slipcover from the building.



In May 2024, the E.O. Driskell House at 106 Pond Street, built in 1895, was officially designated as a historic resource. E.O. Driskell, who was Mansfield's postmaster from 1914 to 1948, owned the house. In response to this new designation, the current owner made some improvements to the property.

## HISTORIC MANSFIELD FAÇADE GRANTS

The Historic Mansfield Façade Grant Program aims to safeguard the City's cultural heritage by supporting the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of historic buildings. Established in 2018, the program provides grants to owners of eligible historic properties to help cover the costs of exterior restoration work.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX EXEMPTION

Maintaining a historic building can be costly. The Historic Preservation Tax Exemption program helps support preservation efforts by offering tax relief to property owners who repair, restore, or maintain their historic structures. The program provides three levels of exemption: 1) for properties with a Historic Landmark designation; 2) for exterior work costing over \$5,000 on historic residential structures; and 3) for exterior work costing over \$5,000 on historic commercial structures.

## OFFICIAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Not all owners of historic properties wish to receive a Historic Landmark designation. The Official Recognition program provides a way for the Commission to acknowledge the owners of historic properties without granting them landmark status. Properties that receive Official Recognition are not subject to the landmark design guidelines, and owners do not need to seek Commission approval for changes. This program aims to raise awareness about the importance of preservation and may encourage property owners to consider applying for landmark status in the future.

## HISTORIC MARKER PROGRAM

Identifying a local Mansfield landmark is simple. The City awards owners of landmark properties a distinctive medallion featuring the Man and Feild Mill. You can see these markers on many historic buildings and sites throughout town.



# Preservation Volunteers



Guided by preservation volunteer Carolyn Wright, our team involves the community with preservation through a range of events. A retired teacher and current historical interpreter at Nash Farm in Grapevine, Carolyn leverages her expertise to craft engaging experiences that connect with both Mansfield's residents and visitors. Pictured above, Carolyn sketches at the Chalk the Walk contest on historic Main Street.

Many of the Commission's outreach efforts are the contributions of our preservation volunteers. They wear period costumes to bring old Main Street to life, making history meaningful and accessible to both residents and visitors.

Preservation volunteers are essential in making history and passion bring history to life, ensuring that we can learn from our past. Through hours of work, we focus not just for historic buildings, but the stories and experiences that enhance our surroundings but also inspire and uplift the spirit of our shared heritage.



David Davidson explains to a young History Hunter how cotton was produced and sold in the 1800s. Cotton played a crucial role in Mansfield's economy during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The town was home to several cotton gins, such as the Mansfield Gin and Stewart Gin, and cotton was shipped to market via the train depot on Depot Street.



Glenda Davidson and Teena Rodgers, seated, led participants on a tour of the Farr Best Theater, sharing insights about the entertainment that has been showcased there since its opening in 1917.



Volunteers gather at the Farr Best Theater during the Historic Downtown Mansfield Car Show. Pictured are Carolyn Wright, Vanessa Tweedy, Rusty Davis, Jacqueline Piasecki, Preservation Officer, Shari Linville, Lynn Linville, Shelly Pearson.



Volunteer Vanessa Tweedy models in front of a Mercury station wagon at the Historic Downtown Mansfield Car Show.

# Make History Come Alive

Efforts owe their success to the invaluable efforts of our volunteers. Whether organizing a car show or donning period clothing to bring history to life, our volunteers play a vital role in making our city a special place for residents and visitors.

Maintaining our cultural heritage. Their dedication ensures that future generations can appreciate and learn from the work they promote historic preservation, not just the buildings and memories they hold. Their efforts not only educate others to value and protect the rich tapestry of our city's past.



Volunteers at the Historic Downtown Mansfield Car Show. From left, top row: Carolyn Hill, Sharon Williams. From left, bottom row: Art Wright, Dana Hill, Kim Hill, and Craig Williams.



The doctor and his wife shared insights on historical medical practices with visitors at the Mansfield Historic Museum during the Mansfield History Hunters Scavenger Hunt. Dana Hill, left, and Kim Hill.



Amanda Kowalski, a former Historic Landmark Commissioner and the editor of the Mansfield Record, volunteers with the Preservation Education Sub-Committee. She applies her skills to champion educational programs designed to teach history to young students.



Volunteers staff the registration station for the Historic Downtown Mansfield Car Show. The event featured cars from various decades, showcasing the types of vehicles that might have been seen in front of historic buildings over the years.



Audrey Shea outlined the fashion trends at the Big Daylight Store in the early 1900s. Established in 1901, the store was a leading retail destination before World War II.



Ann Smith interacts with a family at Kids Day during Arts Week, one of the annual events where the Commission sets up a preservation table. The Commission is also present at Music Alley and the Founders' Day festival.

# Commission recognizes a historic neighborhood

## The Patterson Addition reflects life in 1950s Mansfield

On May 9, 2024, the Historic Landmark Commission officially recognized the Patterson Addition as a historic neighborhood. Developed in 1950, the Patterson Addition was the City's first tract subdivision and is notable for its collection of Mid-Century homes from the 1950s and 1960s.

W.A. and J.W. Patterson began the construction of 25 new homes southwest of the historic downtown, along Elizabeth Lane and Patterson Street. These residences were among the first signs of Mansfield's transformation from an agricultural trade center to a suburban city. Today, this Mid-Century neighborhood remains largely intact.

With modern Ranch-Style homes, the neighborhood attracted Mansfield residents such as Bill Hogg, owner of the Kowbell Rodeo. According to a 1960 newspaper ad, you could buy a new home on Elizabeth Lane featuring parquet hardwood floors, ash cabinets, built-in Tappan gas ovens, central heat, and a one-car garage, all for \$10,500.

The Patterson Addition is the first neighborhood to receive the historic designation. The Commission hopes that designating the Patterson Addition as a historic neighborhood will inspire the property owners to preserve its 1950s charm and maintain its historic character.



Map of the Patterson Addition showing the oldest homes in green, homes from the late 1950s through 1970s in yellow, and newer homes in red.

Houses in the Patterson Addition range from bungalows based on earlier homes in Mansfield and Ranch-Style homes that were designed for the automotive age. Ranch-Style houses have low-pitched roofs, a garage or carport, asymmetrical facades, and low horizontal lines. The top photograph shows a bungalow in the Patterson Addition with a garage, reflecting the progression to Ranch-Style homes.

# In the News

## DR. SMITH RECEIVES AWARD OF MERIT

On October 7, 2023, Dr. Robert Smith, chair of the Historic Landmark Commission, was honored with an Award of Merit by the Texas Historical Commission during the Founders' Day celebration at the Man House Museum. The award recognized Dr. Smith's commitment to preserving Mansfield's historic resources and fostering a citywide preservation ethos.



Dr. Smith and his family at the award presentation at the Man House Museum.

## NEW HISTORICAL MARKER FOR THE BOARD AND CHORN DRUGSTORE

The Texas Historical Commission approved a state historical marker for the old Board and Chorn Drugstore at 126 N. Main Street. A special ceremony is planned at the building to unveil the marker.

The building boasts a rich history. Originally opened as a saloon by A.J. Hunt in 1895, the building transitioned to various medical uses after the saloon closed. In 1898, James A. Board and Ebenezer H. Chorn established their pharmacy at this location. The building was purchased by C.A. Smith and his sons in 1911, and the Smith family maintained ownership for nearly a century.

The Board and Chorn families continued to run the pharmacy until 1925, and later other pharmacies and drugstores operated from the site. Prominent local doctors had offices in the back of

the pharmacy. For over a century, the building has been a cornerstone of medical services in Mansfield.

## CITY COUNCIL RECOGNIZES HPO

On June 10, 2024, the City Council honored Art Wright, Historic Preservation Officer, for his contributions to the Historic Downtown Mansfield Car Show. The event, held on Main Street, showcased vehicles from various decades that were displayed in front of historic buildings, allowing visitors to experience the evolution of Main Street through the years.



Art Wright addresses the audience at the June 10, 2024, City Council meeting.

## COORDINATION MOVES PROJECTS FORWARD

The Commission is delighted to collaborate with the city's Historical Services Department on various preservation projects. This department oversees the Mansfield Historical Museum and the Man House Museum.

Jessica Baber, Museum Manager, and Amanda Brown, Museum Education and Engagement Specialist, have played key roles in the success of programs. Jessica is a member of the Preservation Plan Sub-Committee, while Amanda contributes to the Preservation Education Sub-Committee.

## POSTER CONTEST WINNERS SELECTED

There were 68 entries in the Mansfield Historical Society Poster Contest this summer. Four posters were selected as winners, two from Grades 1 through 3 and two from Grades 4 through 6. The entries will be on display at the Man House during Founders' Day in October.

# HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION GOALS FOR 2023 - 2024

The Commission's annual preservation goals guide its work for the upcoming year. These goals supplement the Mansfield Preservation Plan and represent the most immediate needs of the preservation program.

## 1) Identify and prioritize Mansfield's historic resources.

- Work with the Tarrant County Historic Preservation Commission on updating the Historic Resources Survey as part of a county-wide effort
- Expand on the windshield surveys taken by preservation volunteers.
- Request funding from City Council for a formal Downtown Historic Resource Survey in conjunction with a CLG grant
- Integrate survey information into the City's Geographic Information System (GIS).

## 2) Develop incentives for historic preservation in conjunction with the City Council.

- Formulate a proposal for incentives such as tax abatements, low-interest loans, and grants to promote the restoration, rehabilitation and reuse of historic resources and discourage the demolition of these resources.
- Request a joint work session with the

Downtown Revitalization Subcommittee and City Council to discuss the historic preservation program.

## 3) Promote the work of the Historic Landmark Commission.

- Produce an annual report of the Commission's activities to educate the public on the Commission's role and the need for historic preservation.
- Keep other City departments and boards abreast of the Commission's policies and actions so they may act in a mutually supportive fashion.
- Seek recognition for the City's preservation efforts through programs such as Preserve America.

## 4) Increase the Commission's public engagement programs.

- Promote events to celebrate Historic Preservation Month.
- Inform owners of historic properties of the benefits and incentives for becoming a designated historic landmark.
- Work with the Museum on educational programs for adults and youth to connect them with Mansfield's history.
- Support a heritage tourism program.



# MANSFIELD'S ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES 2024

In Mansfield, historic preservation is a voluntary effort, so only properties designated as Historic Landmarks are safeguarded by the City's preservation ordinance. Without this landmark status, many of our historic buildings have faced incompatible changes, demolition, or neglect.

Here are some historic resources and districts at risk of being lost.

## **ENDANGERED: Historic Downtown Mansfield**

Historic resources throughout the Original Town face threats from neglect, demolition, and alterations. Specifically, these resources are at risk:

- **Buttrill-Nifong-Barnett House, c. 1904**

Although it appears to be structurally sound, the house at 302 E. Broad Street requires repairs to its roof, eaves, windows, and colonnade to prevent further damage. As the highest-ranking historic resource in Mansfield, this city property is of paramount importance.



*The Buttrill-Nifong-Barnett House is the last intact grand house in the historic downtown.*

- **Dr. Raymond Thomas House, 1913**

The house at 106 E. Kimball Street, once home to the notable local doctor Dr. Raymond Thomas and his family, is set to be demolished to clear the site for a new townhome development.



*The Thomas House, built in 1913, was a massed pyramid house. The second floor was added around 1940.*

## **ENDANGERED: Cook Cabin, c. 1864**

Found during the demolition of a house in Kennedale, this log cabin was relocated to Dr. Percy Cook's backyard in 1964 and reconstructed there. The cabin was originally built in 1864 by Mr. Ray, an early attorney in southeast Tarrant County. In 2017, the City acquired the property with plans to move the cabin to the Man House Museum on West Broad Street. However, various delays have stalled the relocation, and exposure to the elements has led to significant deterioration of the cabin.



*The Cook Cabin was discovered within a house being demolished in Kennedale. Once relocated to the Man House Museum, it will be used as a demonstration kitchen. The Man House itself was originally built around a similar cabin.*

# DEMOLITION PERMITS FOR 2023-2024

City staff reviewed five demolition permits for properties listed in the Historic Resources Survey Update. These properties, all at least 50 years old, were classified as low-priority resources. Demolition permits for resources with a medium or higher priority are submitted to the Historic Landmark Commission for review.

Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit, staff performs a historical review, examines property history, and photographs historic resources that might be demolished. This review documents the current condition of the structure, and any historical details and associations.

When historic buildings are demolished or improperly altered, the unique character of both the building and its surroundings can be lost. It's important to carefully consider any plans for demolition or modification of historic resources. Often, preserving and rehabilitating the historic structure is a viable alternative.



346 Cotton Drive



501 West Kimball Street



911 Lakeview Drive



106 Van Worth Street

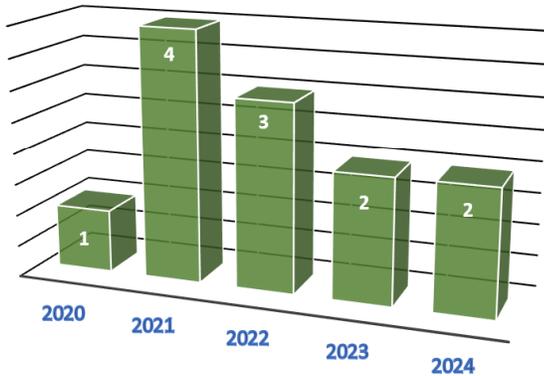
ADDRESS	YEAR CONSTRUCTED	PRIORITY	PERMIT DATE	NOTES
346 Cotton Drive	1955	Low	11/13/2023	Front-gable bungalow; may have been one of the original houses in the Hamman Terrace Addition
501 West Kimball Street	c. 1900	Low	11/17/2023	Bungalow with siding
911 Lakeview Drive	1935	Low	1/4/2024	Cross-gable bungalow in the Town of Britton
700 East Broad Street	1920	Low	5/13/2024	Mary Orr House
106 Van Worth Street	c. 1900	Low	5/17/2024	L-Plan with siding



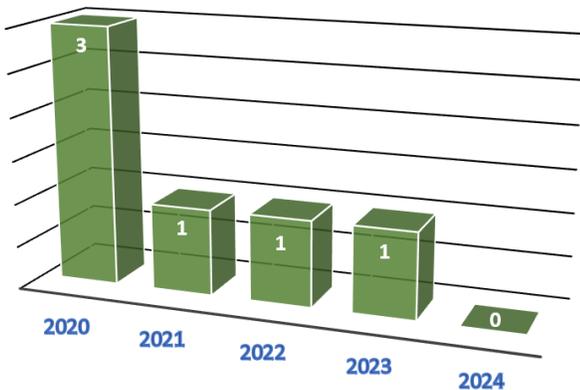
The J.T. and Mary B. Orr House at 700 East Broad Street. Mrs. Orr was an English teacher in the Mansfield Independent School District from 1943 through 1976.

# PRESERVATION BY THE NUMBERS

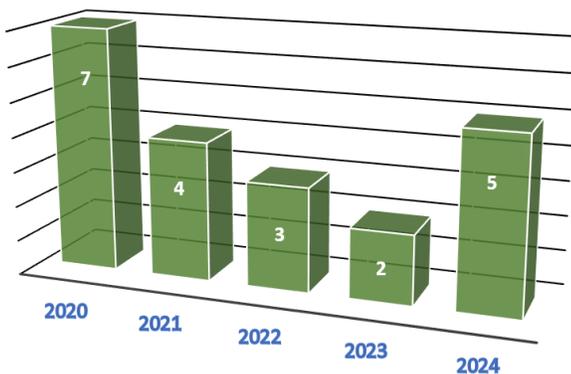
## Cases



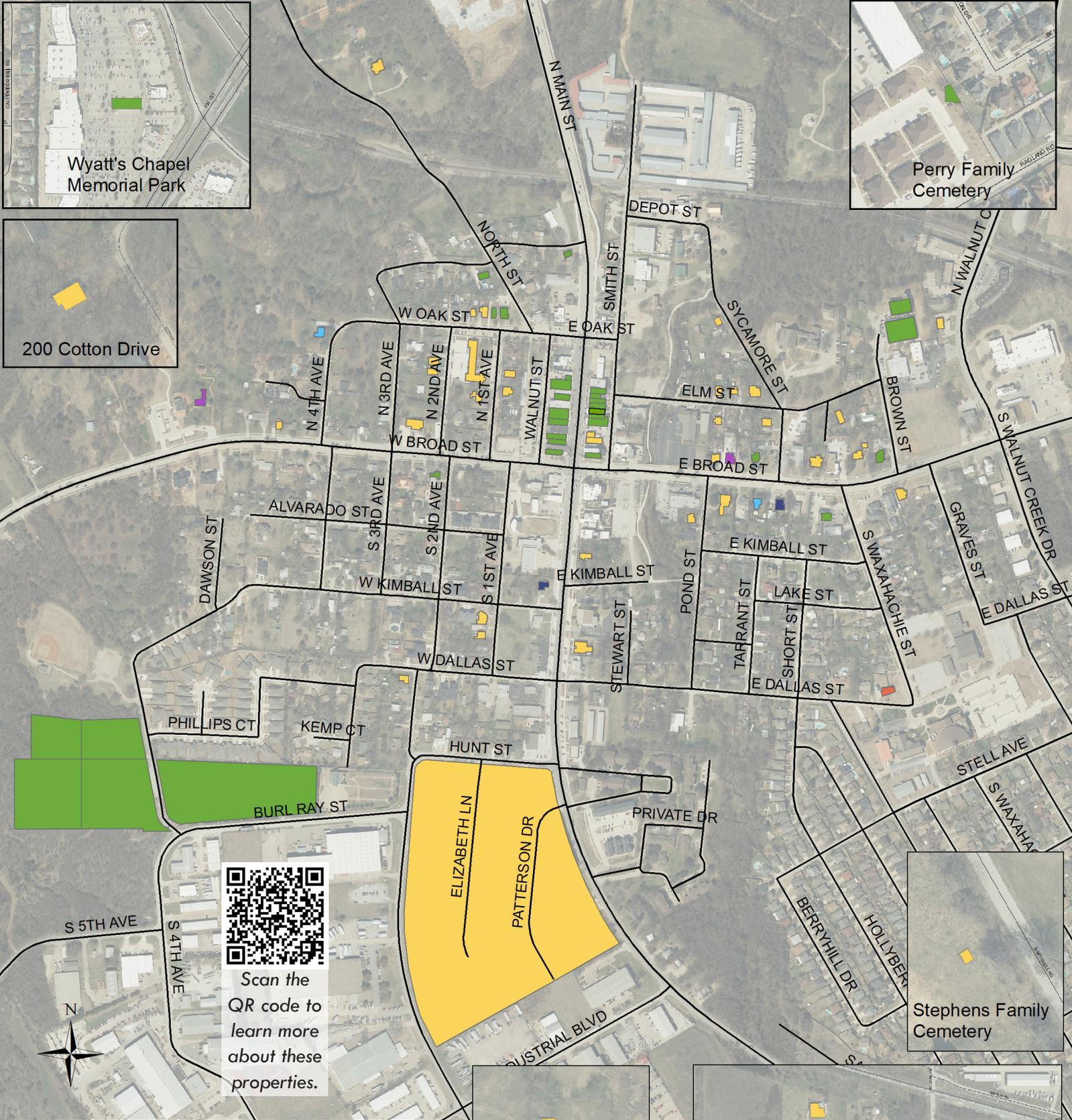
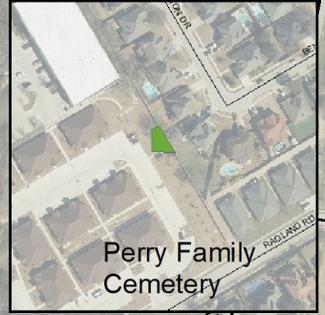
## Landmarks



## Demolitions



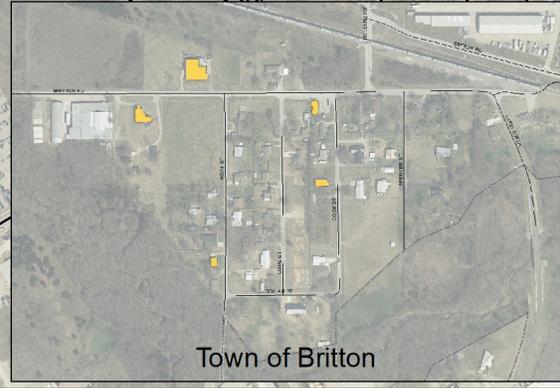
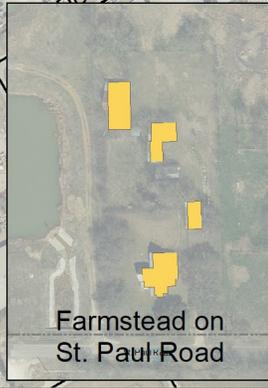
- Mansfield has 32 designated historic landmarks, including the Historic Cemetery District.
- Forty-nine properties have been designated Officially Recognized individual historic resources, and the Patterson Addition is the first Officially Recognized Historic Neighborhood.
- The Harrison property on North Street at the creek is Mansfield's first vernacular cultural landscape, once site of the Mansfield Gin.
- Six properties in Mansfield are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Ralph Man Homestead.
- There are nine Texas State Historical Markers in Mansfield, with another marker application approved.
- Mansfield has one Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, the Nugent-Hart House.
- The Commission has reviewed 12 applications for Certificates of Approval since 2020.
- There have been six local historic landmark designations since 2020, but none in 2023 - 2024.
- Since 2020, there have been 21 demolition permits issued for structures listed on the City's Historic Resources Survey. Five of the permits were issued this year.



Scan the QR code to learn more about these properties.

**DESIGNATION**

	Historic Landmark
	Historic Landmark/National Register
	Historic Landmark/Recorded Texas Historic Landmark
	National Register
	National Register/Officially Recognized
	Officially Recognized



# MANSFIELD HISTORIC RESOURCES MAP