

Texas Historical Commission staff (AD), 10/25/2010, revised 12/7/2010
27" x 42" Official Texas Historical Marker with post
Jeff Davis County (Job #10JD01) Subject (Atlas) UTM: 13 605940E 3384446N
Location: Fort Davis, 100 West Woodward Avenue

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY JAIL

THE COMMUNITY OF FORT DAVIS GREW UP AROUND THE MILITARY POST OF THE SAME NAME, ESTABLISHED BY THE U.S. ARMY IN 1854 TO PROTECT TRAVELERS ON THE SAN ANTONIO-EL PASO ROAD. FORT DAVIS WAS DESIGNATED AS THE PRESIDIO COUNTY SEAT WHEN THE COUNTY WAS ORGANIZED IN 1875, BUT THE COUNTY SEAT WAS RELOCATED TO MARFA IN 1885. WHEN JEFF DAVIS COUNTY WAS ORGANIZED IN 1887, FORT DAVIS WAS AGAIN SELECTED AS A COUNTY SEAT.

THIS JAIL STRUCTURE WAS BUILT IN 1910-1911 ALONG WITH A NEW COUNTY COURTHOUSE; THE TWO BUILDINGS REPLACED AN ADOBE COURTHOUSE AND JAIL STRUCTURE BUILT IN 1880, WHEN FORT DAVIS WAS THE SEAT OF PRESIDIO COUNTY. ARCHITECT L.L. THURMAN OF DALLAS DESIGNED BOTH THE NEW COURTHOUSE AND JAIL, AND FALLS CITY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY OF LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, WAS CONTRACTED TO CONSTRUCT BOTH BUILDINGS.

THE STRUCTURE IS A SMALL-SCALE EXAMPLE OF THE FORTRESS-STYLE JAILS AND PRISONS THAT WERE POPULAR IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE 19TH CENTURY. THE ONE-STORY JAIL BUILDING WAS CONSTRUCTED WITH PRESSED CONCRETE BLOCK WHICH WAS PLASTERED AND SCORED TO RESEMBLE ASHLAR BLOCKS. A CRENELLATED PARAPET TOPS THE FOUR EXTERIOR WALLS. THE INTERIOR IS DIVIDED INTO FOUR ROOMS, INCLUDING A FRONT ENTRYWAY AND OFFICE, A KITCHEN, A JAILER'S BEDROOM, AND THE CELL BLOCK THAT INCLUDES THE ENTIRE REAR PORTION OF THE BUILDING.

THE JAIL RETAINED ITS ORIGINAL FUNCTION UNTIL 1978, WHEN THE BUILDING NO LONGER COMPLIED WITH CURRENT JAIL STANDARDS, AND IT WAS DECIDED THAT SENDING PRISONERS TO MARFA WOULD BE MORE ECONOMICALLY SOUND. AMONG OTHER TENANTS, THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE OCCUPIED THE BUILDING 2002-2009.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK – 2010

MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS:
2010 Official Texas Historical Marker
Sponsorship Application Form**

Valid September 1, 2009 to November 30, 2009 only

This form constitutes a public request for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to consider approval of an Official Texas Historical Marker for the topic noted in this application. The THC will review the request and make its determination based on rules and procedures of the program. Filing of the application for sponsorship is for the purpose of providing basic information to be used in the evaluation process. The final determination of eligibility and therefore approval for a state marker will be made by the THC. This form is to be used for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (building marker) requests only. Please see separate forms for either Historic Texas Cemeteries or subject markers.

Proposed marker topic (official title will be determined by the THC): Jeff Davis County Jail

County: Jeff Davis

Town (nearest county town on current state highway map): Fort Davis

Street address of marker site or directions from town noted above: 100 West Woodward Avenue, Fort Davis, Texas 79734

Marker Coordinates:

If you know the location coordinates of the proposed marker site, enter them in one of the formats below:

UTM Zone Easting Northing
Lat: Long: (deg, min, sec or decimal degrees)

Otherwise, give a precise verbal description here (e.g. northwest corner of 3rd and Elm, or FM 1411, 2.6 miles east of McWhorter Creek): SW Corner of West Woodward Avenue and State Street, Fort Davis, Texas 79734.

NOTE: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers must be placed at the structure being marked.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers definition: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) markers are awarded to structures deemed worthy of preservation for their historical associations and architectural significance. RTHL is a legal designation and comes with a measure of protection; it is the highest honor the state can bestow on a historic structure, and the designation is required for this type of marker. The RTHL designation becomes effective upon approval by the THC. Official Texas Historical Markers signify the RTHL designation, which comes only through application to and approval by the THC and must include public display of an Official Texas Historical Marker. Owners of RTHL-designated structures must give the THC 60 days written notice before any alterations are made to the exterior of the structure. RTHL status is a permanent designation and is not to be removed from the property in the event of a transfer of ownership. Only the THC can remove the designation or recall the marker. The marker must remain with the structure and may not be removed or displayed elsewhere until or unless the

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THC gives express approval in writing for such action. Once designated as RTHL, properties are subject to provisions of Texas Government Code, Section 442.006(f).

Criteria:

1. **Age:** Structures eligible for the RTHL designation and marker must be at least 50 years old.
2. **Historical significance:** Architectural significance alone is not enough to qualify a structure for the RTHL designation. It must have an equally significant historical association, and that association can come from an event that occurred at the site; through individuals who owned or lived on the property; or, in the case of bridges, industrial plants, schoolhouses and other non-residential properties, through documented significance to the larger community.
3. **Architectural significance:** Structures deemed architecturally significant are outstanding examples of architectural history through design, materials, structural type or construction methods. In all cases, eligible architectural properties must display integrity; that is, the structure should be in a good state of repair, maintain its appearance from its period of significance and be considered an exemplary model of preservation. Architectural significance is often best determined by the relevance of the property to broader contexts, including geography. Any changes over the years should be compatible with original design and reflect compliance with accepted preservation practices, e.g., the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.
4. **Good state of repair:** Structures not considered by the THC to be in a good state of repair are ineligible for RTHL designation. The THC reserves the sole right to make that determination relative to eligibility for RTHL markers.

Special National Register considerations for RTHL marker applications: If a structure has been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under either Criterion A or B **and** Criterion C (Architecture), the historical text compiled as part of the National Register nomination process may be submitted as part of the marker process, provided it includes the required reference notes and other documentation. Acceptance of the National Register information for the purposes of the marker process will be up to the sole determination of the THC. Listing in the NRHP does not guarantee approval for an RTHL marker. See the THC web site at <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madnrcrit.html> for National Register criteria.

Check this box if the property is individually listed in the NRHP.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Any individual, group or county historical commission (CHC) may apply to the THC to request an Official Texas Historical Marker for what it deems a worthy topic. Only complete marker applications that contain all the required elements and are submitted online as required can be accepted or processed by the THC (for RTHL markers, the required elements are: sponsorship application form; narrative history; documentation; legal description of the property; site plan; floorplan; historic photograph; and current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure—please resize photographs to 1-2 MB, or approximately 1024 x 768 pixels).

- Completed applications must be duly reviewed, verified and approved by the county historical commission (CHC) in the county in which the marker will be placed.
- The sponsorship application form, narrative history and documentation must be submitted as Microsoft Word or Word-compatible documents and sent via email attachments to the THC by no later than November 30, 2009.
- Required font style and type size are a Times variant and 12-point.
- Narrative histories must be typed in a double-spaced (or 1.5-spaced) format and include separate sections on context, overview, significance and documentation.
- The narrative history must include documentation in the form of reference notes, which can be either footnotes or endnotes. Documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of all available resources, both primary and secondary.

- Upon notification of the successful preliminary review of required elements by the THC, a non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required. The fee shall be submitted to the THC within ten working days of application receipt notification.

APPROVAL BY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The duly appointed marker representative (chair or marker chair) noted below for the county historical commission will be the sole contact with the THC for this marker application. To ensure accuracy, consistency and efficiency, all information from and to the THC relative to the application—and throughout the review and production processes—will be via direct communication with the CHC representative. All other inquiries (calls, emails, letters) to the THC will be referred to the CHC representative for response. By filling out the information below and filing the application with the THC, the CHC representative is providing the THC with notice that the application and documentation have been reviewed and verified by the CHC and that the material meets all current requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker program.

As chair or duly appointed marker chair, I certify the following:

- Representatives of the CHC have met or talked with the potential marker sponsor and discussed the marker program policies as outlined on the THC web site. CHC members have reviewed the history and documentation for accuracy and made corrections or notes as necessary. It is the determination of the CHC that the topic, history and documentation meet criteria for eligibility.

CHC comments or concerns about this application, if any: This application originates with the CHC.

Name of CHC contact (chair or marker chair): Mary Williams, Chair

Mailing address:P.O. Box 430 **City, Zip:** Fort Davis, Texas 79734

Daytime phone (with area code):432-661-9398 **Email address** (required):

marjon3218@sbcglobal.net

PERMISSION OF PROPERTY OWNER FOR MARKER PLACEMENT

Property owner: Jeff Davis County, George Grubb, County Judge

Address:P.O. Box 836 **City, state, zip:**Fort Davis, Texas 79734

Phone:432-426-3968 **Email address:** jdcjclerk@hotmail.com

Legal Description of the property (metes and bounds, lot and block, etc.): W. Keesey Subdivision, Out Block 7.

Upon receipt of the application, the THC will provide the owner with a letter that outlines the legal responsibility of ownership under the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark statute. The letter must be signed by the owner and returned to the THC before the evaluation can be completed.

NOTE: The property owner will not receive any additional copies of correspondence from the THC. All other correspondence—notice of receipt, request for additional information, payment notice, inscription, shipping notice, etc.—will be sent via email to the CHC representative, who is encouraged to share the information with all interested parties as necessary. Given the large

volume of applications processed annually and the need for centralized communication, all inquiries about applications in process will be referred to the CHC for response. The CHC is the sole liaison to the THC on all marker application matters.

SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT INFORMATION

Prospective sponsors please note the following:

- Payment must be received in full within 45 days of the official approval notice and must be accompanied by the THC payment form. The THC is unable to process partial payments or to delay payment due to processing procedures of the sponsor. Applications not paid in the time frame required may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be cancelled or postponed.
- Payment does not constitute ownership of a marker; Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers and other Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas.
- If, at any time during the marker process, sponsorship is withdrawn, a refund can be processed, but the THC will retain the application fee of \$100.
- The Official Texas Historical Marker Program provides no means of recognizing sponsors or property owners through marker text, incising or supplemental plaques.

Marker sponsor (may be individual or organization): Jeff Davis County Historical Commission

Contact person (if applicable): Mary Williams, Chair

Mailing address:P.O. Box 430, **City, zip:** Fort Davis, Texas 79734

Email address (required):marjon3218@sbcglobal.net **Phone: 432-661-9398**

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, neither post office box numbers nor rural route numbers can be accepted. To avoid additional shipping charges or delays, use a business street address (open 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Name: George Grubb, County Judge

Street address:100 West Court Avenue **City, zip:** Fort Davis, Texas 79734

Daytime phone (required): 432-426-3968 **Email** (required): jdcjclerk@hotmail.com

TYPE AND SIZE OF RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS

As part of its review process, the THC will determine the appropriate size marker and provide options, if any, for the approved topic based on its own review criteria, including, but not exclusive of, historical significance, replication of information in other THC markers, relevance to the Statewide Preservation Plan and the amount of available documented information provided in the application narrative. In making its determination, however, the THC will also take into account the preference of the CHC, as noted below.

The sponsor/CHC prefers the following size marker:

- 27" x 42" RTHL marker with post (\$1500)
 27" X 42" RTHL marker without post* (\$1500)

- 18" x 28" RTHL marker with post (\$1000)
- 18" x 28" RTHL marker without post* (\$1000)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque with post (\$750)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque without post* (\$750)

*For an RTHL marker without post, indicate to what surface material it will be mounted:

- wood
- masonry
- metal
- other (specify)

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION (via email required)

When the CHC has determined the application is complete, the history has been verified and the topic meets the requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, the materials should be forwarded to the THC via email at the following address:
markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us.

- The CHC or marker chair should send an email containing the following attachments (see attachment function under file menu or toolbox on your computer):
 - This application form
 - The narrative history (including documentation)
 - Legal description of the property
 - Detailed floor plan for each floor of the structure
 - Detailed site plan of the property
 - At least one historic photograph
 - Current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure

RECORDS RETENTION BY CHC: The CHC must retain hard copies of the application as well as an online version, at least for the duration of the marker process. The THC is not responsible for lost applications, for incomplete applications or for applications not properly filed according to the program requirements. For additional information about any aspect of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, see the Markers page on the THC web site (<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigs/madmark.html>)

Texas Historical Commission
History Programs Division
P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276
Phone 512/463-5853
history@thc.state.tx.us



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

RECEIVED

JUN 23 2010

History Programs Division

Narrative History
of
The Jeff Davis County Jail

A Part of the
Application for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark
Marker

for
The Jeff Davis County Jail

Submitted to the Texas Historical Commission
November 2009
by
The Jeff Davis County Historical Commission

Research done by Commission Members

Application Prepared and Historical Text Written by
Historical Commission Member

Lonn Taylor

THE FORT DAVIS COUNTY JAIL

I. Context

The community of Fort Davis grew up around the military post of Fort Davis, established by the United States army in 1854 to protect travelers on the San Antonio-El Paso road laid out by the army in 1849. The original settlement consisted of a few adobe structures clustered around the fort, but by the 1880s the town had begun to take its present shape, strung along the San Antonio-El Paso road with St. Joseph Catholic church and the hotel, saloon, and mercantile store operated by Daniel Murphy at the north end of town, next to the fort; a second mercantile store operated by Whitaker Keesey about a half-mile away at the south end; and scattered residences and commercial buildings between the two. In 1880 the civilian population was 509; by 1890 it was estimated at 800. The fort was the mainspring of the local economy, employing a number of civilians and generating a military payroll and contracts for meat and vegetables, fodder, wood, and services valued at about \$250,000 annually. Additional prosperity came from the designation of Fort Davis as the county seat of Presidio County when that county was organized in 1875.ⁱ

In 1883 the transcontinental Southern Pacific railroad was completed, passing though Marfa, twenty-one miles south of Fort Davis. The county seat was moved in 1885 from Fort Davis to Marfa, but in 1887 Jeff Davis County was organized from the northern portion of Presidio County and Fort Davis was made the county seat of the new county. Ranchers, lured by plentiful grass and the ability to ship their cattle to market by rail, began to move herds into the area in the 1880s. But in 1891 the fort was closed as

part of a general reorganization of western military posts brought about by the end of the Indian Wars, and the town of Fort Davis languished economically in spite of the growing ranching industry. By 1910, however, Texans discovered that Fort Davis's mile-high altitude provided relief from the summer heat in the rest of the state, and summer visitors replaced the army as the most visible mainstay of the local economy. Affluent residents of Galveston, Houston, and San Antonio, fleeing the heat and humidity of those cities, built a row of imposing summer homes down Court Street in the early 1900s, and in 1911 the Limpia Hotel was constructed across the street from the courthouse to accommodate shorter-term visitors. The Limpia became part of a town square and civic center that took shape between 1906 and 1913 and included the remodeled 1906 Union Trading Company, the 1910 courthouse and jail, and the 1913 Fort Davis State Bank Building.

Tourism was bolstered by the creation of the Davis Mountains State Park in 1933, the opening of the Indian Lodge resort hotel in the park in 1935, the opening of McDonald Observatory in 1939, the completion of the 72-mile long scenic loop through the Davis Mountains in 1947, and the establishment of Fort Davis National Historic Historic Site at the old military post by the National Park Service in 1963.

Ranching has continued to be a vital part of the economy in the Fort Davis area with many ranchers supplementing their income with hunting leases and adding wildlife management to their operations. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, there were 25,000 head of cattle in Jeff Davis County in 2009. Several local families have been honored by the Texas Department of Agriculture for their continual livestock operations here over the past one hundred years. Recreation and tourism are also important parts of the local economy and have become part of some ranch

operations. In 2008 the National Trust for Historic Preservation designated the small unincorporated town one of its Dozen Distinctive Destinations due to its many well-preserved historic structures, of which the Jeff Davis County jail is one.

II. Overview

The Jeff Davis County jail was built in 1910 and has remained relatively unchanged since then. The jail was built at the same time as the present Jeff Davis County courthouse. The two buildings replaced an earlier adobe building which housed both jail and courthouse; the present courthouse was recorded as a Texas Historic Landmark and received a Texas Historical Commission marker in 2003.

The original county jail was in the three-room adobe building built in 1879 to serve as the courthouse for the newly-organized Presidio County, of which Fort Davis was the county seat. That building was constructed on a plot of land donated to the county in 1875 by Fort Davis merchant Whitaker Keesey and which is still part of the site of the present courthouse. Were it not for Whitaker Keesey's donation, Fort Davis might have developed around a traditional Hispanic plaza. In 1870 the population was 68% Hispanic and the leading businessman was Daniel Murphy, a native of Ireland who served in the U.S. army during the Mexican War and settled in San Antonio in 1852. Murphy and his family came to Fort Davis in 1854 and built a home, saloon, hotel, and mercantile store just south of the fort. After the Civil War he donated a tract of land due east of his store to the Catholic Church for St. Joseph Church, probably assuming that a plaza would develop between his property and the church that would become the center of town, as it was in San Antonio, Presidio del Norte, and the towns he had visited in

Mexico. He laid out a five-block long subdivision, the Murphy Addition, south of his property, in hopes that proximity to the church and the plaza would increase the value of the lots there as Fort Davis grew.

Whitaker Keeesy, a native of Ohio, was Murphy's principal business rival. In 1874 he patented an eighty-acre tract of land a half-mile south of Murphy's store and with his brother, O.M. Keeesy, opened a mercantile store on it. The next year, 1875, the state legislature created Presidio County and Keeesy immediately donated a tract of land due west of his store to the new county for a courthouse, gambling that the courthouse and not the Catholic church would become the center of town. In 1883 William Lempert built a large adobe hotel on a block northwest of the courthouse and laid out a subdivision, now known as the Home Addition, north of the hotel. In 1891, when the fort closed, the town's commercial center shifted toward the courthouse, and by 1913 an Anglo-American town square had developed there that consisted of the Keeesy store, by then the Union Trading Company, the new 1910 courthouse and jail, the 1911 Limpia Hotel, and the 1913 Fort Davis State Bank. Murphy's hoped-for plaza never materialized, and Keeesy's town square became, and still is, the center of town.ⁱⁱ

The adobe courthouse built on Keeesy's donated tract served as the Presidio County courthouse until 1885, when the county seat was moved to Marfa. However, in 1887 the Texas legislature created Jeff Davis County from the northern part of Presidio County, and the adobe building once again served as a courthouse and jail, this time for Jeff Davis County. The jail consisted of several steel cells in the building's basement, to which access was provided by a trap door.ⁱⁱⁱ

By 1910 the adobe courthouse and jail were in a dilapidated condition. According to the county commissioners' court minutes, the district attorney and the district judge had condemned the jail and prisoners awaiting trial were being taken to the Presidio County jail in Marfa "causing this county considerable unnecessary expense."^{iv} On May 11, 1910 the county commissioners' court resolved that ". . . the old adobe courthouse is in such a condition that it would require a large expenditure of money to repair it and place the District and County Court rooms and the county offices in a suitable condition for the transaction of county business" and that "Any further expenditure of the tax payers' money in repairing the courthouse would be a useless expenditure and money wasted." The commissioners instructed the county judge to correspond with "various parties who are in the business of building courthouses" and ask them to present plans, specifications, and costs for a new courthouse and jail, with the understanding that the buildings would be paid for with county warrants bearing 6% interest. The warrants were to be paid off by a special property tax surcharge of 20 cents on each \$100 valuation.^v

On May 30, 1910, the commissioners' court met with Leslie L. Thurmon, architect, and examined plans and specifications for several courthouses built by him. They agreed to build a courthouse in accordance with his plan for the Mason County courthouse, and then agreed to build a one-story jail "of either rock or cement" in accordance with "the grand plan of a jail this day exhibited by the said Thurmon, to cost no more than \$6,000." The wording of this sentence seems to imply that Thurmon showed the commissioners a standard plan for a jail. The commissioners authorized Thurmon to draw up plans for both buildings and advertise for construction bids, which

would be opened at the commissioners' court meeting on August 13, 1910. Thurmon's fee was to be 5% of the cost of both buildings.^{vi}

Leslie L. Thurmon was a Dallas architect who had an office in that city from 1910 to at least 1915. He is not listed in the Dallas city directory for 1909, but he and his family appear on the 1910 federal census of Dallas County. He and his wife Theresa lived at 5 Wall Street with their two children, Jack, 7, born in Texas, and Lewis, 3, born in Georgia. The elder Thurmons were both born in Louisiana. He gave his occupation as "architect." He and his family are listed in the 1911 Dallas city directory as living at 1001 Browder, with his office in the Andrews Building. In 1915 he was still listed in the Andrews Building, and in addition to his architectural practice he was owner of the Lone Star Multigraphing and Printing Company. He is not listed in the 1918 Dallas City Directory nor on the 1920 federal census of Dallas County. In addition to the Jeff Davis County courthouse, Thurmon designed courthouses for Kinney County (1910), Floyd County (1911), Franklin County (1912), and Henderson County (1913). He did not design the Mason County courthouse, which is credited to Edward C. Hosford and Company, so he must have shown the Jeff Davis County commissioners proposed plans for that building.^{vii}

At their August 13, 1910 meeting, the Jeff Davis County commissioners awarded the contract for building both the courthouse and the jail to the Falls City Construction Company of Louisville, Kentucky, which submitted the low bid of \$48,470 to construct both buildings. The bid was accepted with the proviso that certain items could be eliminated in order to bring the cost down to \$45,500. The contract specified that both

buildings should be constructed using “a combination system of hollow tiles and concrete” and should be built on concrete footings reinforced with twisted steel bars.^{viii}

At that same August 13 meeting the court noted that the courthouse lot donated by Whitaker Keesey in 1875 was a rectangle measuring 210 by 410 feet, and that “it would be much better for the interest of the public to have the ground as near square as possible.” The court therefore authorized the county judge, J.P. Weatherby, to purchase an additional strip of land from Whitaker Keesey “for a reasonable price.” Weatherby actually purchased two tracts of land from Keesey, one adjoining the old courthouse lot on the east, which became part of the square on which the new courthouse was built, and one south of the courthouse lot, which is the tract on which the jail was built. The county paid Keesey \$938 for both tracts. The transaction was complicated by the fact that the county then sold Keesey back the western end of the jail tract for \$1.00, and Keesey then sold that land to the Methodist Church for \$1.00. The Methodist parsonage was later built on it. At its September 17 meeting, the commissioners’ court resolved that the courthouse should be built in the center of the expanded courthouse lot, and that the jail should be built “about 20 feet from the south side of Webster Avenue [now Woodward Avenue] and fronting north.”^{ix}

The jail built by the Falls City Construction Company is a small one-story, flat-roofed building, 36 feet wide in front and 36 feet six inches deep. The rear portion of the structure, which encloses the cells, is six feet narrower than the front. The building is constructed with pressed concrete blocks plastered with a thick cement-based plaster, which has been deeply scored to resemble ashlar blocks. A crenelated parapet tops the four exterior walls. The north façade is pierced by two windows and a door; the south

wall has three windows, and the east and west walls each have four windows. All of the windows are barred with iron bars. Two downspouts in the angles where the rear portion of the building joins the front conduct water from the flat roof. A wide concrete front stoop, not shown on the blueprints, was added to the building during construction.

The interior of the building is divided into four rooms. There are three rooms in the front portion. The central one, into which the building's only door opens, is 9' wide and 10' 6" deep; the rooms on each side are 11' by 10' 6". by 11" 6". A door in the back of the central room leads to the rear portion of the building, a room 30' x 24' which contains a steel cell block with a wide corridor on all four sides. The cell block consists of four cells divided by a narrow corridor, two cells on each side. On the original blueprints for the building, the room on the east side of the front corridor is labeled "condemned cell" and the one on the west side is labeled "women," but as long as the building was in use as a jail these rooms were used as a jailer's bedroom and a kitchen where meals for prisoners were prepared. The central room served as the booking office. Artificial light was originally provided by a carbide system, with the carbide plant in the jail yard. The same system also lit the courthouse. There is no record of the original heating system., although the room containing the cell block and two of the front rooms were provided with stove flues. Toilet facilities were a a privy behind the bulding.^x

At its October 4, 1910 meeting the commissioners' court approved a contract with the Southern Structural Steel Company of San Antonio to fabricate and install four steel jail cells in the jail. The cells were to be manufactured from material salvaged from the cells in the old court house. The total cost was \$3054. The cells were contained within a steel cell block and were arranged in adjacent pairs divided by a corridor, with their doors

opening into the corridor and the passage from the end of the corridor into the rest of the building blocked by a barred steel door that could only be opened from outside the corridor. The cells were installed and accepted by the commissioners' court in January 1911 and are still in place in the building.^{xi}

The jail building and the courthouse were completed by the contractor in March 1911 and were accepted by the county commissioners on March 25, 1911. At that same meeting the commissioners instructed the county judge to have a well drilled in the jail yard; it was drilled on the south side of the building. The commissioners then placed the jail in the care of the sheriff's office, where it remained until it was closed in 1978. The only written record concerning the jail kept by the sheriff's office was the booking book in which the names of prisoners and the dates of their incarceration and release were entered. This document disappeared shortly after the jail was closed. However, major expenditures for the building were recorded in the county commissioners' court minutes.^{xii}

The cost of the jail and courthouse was completely paid off on January 1, 1920, and on May 12, 1920, the county commissioners' court cancelled the special court house and jail surcharge to the property tax. In May 1926 the commissioners decided to use the jail's back yard as the county equipment yard, and at their May 11 meeting they requested that all tools and implements belonging to the county, including those kept at Mrs. James Stewart's corral, be brought to the jail yard and stored there. The following year, 1927, the commissioners granted a permit to Central Power and Light Company to build an electric plant in Fort Davis and to erect poles and wires for the transmission of electricity. The jail must have been wired for electricity shortly afterward.^{xiii}

In 1930 the first major repairs to the building took place. On April 11 the commissioner's court approved a contract with Evan J. Wood to put a new roof, gutters, and downspouts on the courthouse and to repaint the interior walls and woodwork. At the same time Wood undertook to put a new roof on the jail building and to "stucco [the] parapet walls" for \$100. The stucco must have been applied to the inside of the parapet walls, as the outside was covered with the same cement-based plaster as the lower portions of the walls. No additional repairs to the jail building are recorded in the commissioners' court minutes until 2000, when the commissioners approved a contract with RANCO to "fix the roof on the old jail building." Neither of these repairs altered the exterior appearance of the structure.^{xiv}

However, several interior changes were made that are not recorded in the commissioners' court minutes. At some point in the 1930s an unenclosed commode and shower head were installed in the corridor that separated the jail cells, so that prisoners no longer had to be escorted to the outdoor privy. This may have occurred in 1934, when on May 19 the commissioners' court authorized the county judge to purchase and install an electric pump over the well in the jail yard. Subsequently an enclosed commode, shower stall, and sink were installed in the southeast corner of the room that served as the jailer's bedroom. The kitchen in the room across the hall from the jailer's room was periodically updated, and in 1975 it was furnished with an electric stove, a refrigerator, and a sink.^{xv}

The jail does not appear to have ever been heavily used. In July 1940 Sheriff J. C. Walker stated that with two suspected cattle thieves and three young men suspected of burglary incarcerated at the same time, "the jail had sheltered more occupants in the past week than it had ever known before." He added that none of the prisoners were from Jeff

Davis County. Jeff Davis County Justice of the Peace Fred Granado, who served as jailer from 1973 to 1976 as part of his duties as courthouse janitor, recalled in an interview that during those years the jail seldom had more than one overnight prisoner a week. If there was a prisoner in the jail, Granado would spend the night on the bunk in the jailer's room and would prepare the prisoner's breakfast, lunch, and dinner in the jail kitchen, performing his janitorial duties at the courthouse between those meals. "I mostly fed them beans, biscuits, and potatoes, sometimes a little ground meat," Granado said. Most of the prisoners were charged with traffic violations or were what Granado called "weekend warriors," jailed for public intoxication or fighting.^{xvi}

In 1977 the Fort Davis Volunteer Fire Department built a metal building due west of the jail to house their fire engines, replacing a smaller adobe structure built northeast of the jail in about 1940. At the same time the fire department constructed a steel hose drying tower whose concrete foundations abut the west wall of the jail. Sheriff McCutcheon and other county officials enjoyed telling tourists that it was the gallows from which condemned criminals were hanged, but in fact no one was ever executed in the Fort Davis County jail.^{xvii}

In 1975 the Texas Legislature passed the Texas Jail Standards Act, establishing minimum standards of construction, maintenance, and operation for all county jails. The Fort Davis County Jail could not comply with these standards without a large expenditure of county funds, and Sheriff Wid McCutcheon advised the county commissioners' court that, given the small number of prisoners housed in the jail each year, it would be more economical for the county to make use of the Presidio County jail in Marfa. This arrangement was put into effect by a contract signed by Sheriff McCutcheon and Sheriff

Rick Thompson of Presidio County on August 14, 1978, and the Jeff Davis County Jail ceased to function as a jail after that date.^{xviii}

Other uses have been made of the building since 1978, but none have involved any substantial changes to the jail's exterior or interior. In 1982 the commissioners' court turned the building over to the Jeff Davis County Library Board for use as the county's public library, and on October 11 of that year the county judge reported to the court that the library had received a grant of \$5000.00 from the Burkett Foundation of Houston "for use in renovating the jail for the library." The funds were used for the purchase of books, bookcases, and furniture. Bookcases, an easy chair, and a floor lamp were placed in each of the cells, the kitchen fixtures were removed from the kitchen, and the jailer's room became the librarian's office. The library remained in the jail building for seventeen years, until the county purchased and renovated the historic Union Mercantile Company building on the east side of the square and the library was moved to that location. In 1991 the back yard of the jail was landscaped with funds donated by Mrs. Henry Clay Espy and on July 4 of that year was dedicated as Clay Espy County Park.^{xix}

When the library was moved to the Union building in 1999, the county commissioners voted to make the building available on a temporary basis to the Jeff Davis County Food Pantry as a distribution center for food and old clothes to the needy. The arrangement was temporary because planning was already underway for the renovation of the courthouse, and the jail was slated to serve as the home for the county clerk's office during the renovation. The county clerk and the county records moved into the jail building in April 2002 and remained there until the summer of 2009, even though the courthouse renovation was completed in November 2003. In February 2009 the need

for plumbing and wiring repairs in the jail building caused the commissioners' court to reconsider the use of this historic building as a repository for the county records. The clerk's office and the records were moved to another location and the commissioners' court appropriated funds with which to retain a preservation architect to evaluate the structure for a more appropriate adaptive reuse. At the same time the court instructed the Jeff Davis County Historical Commission to apply for Texas Historic Landmark status and a Texas historical marker for the building.^{xx}

III. Cultural and Historical Significance

The historical and cultural significance of the Jeff Davis County jail is twofold. The building is architecturally significant as a superb and astonishingly late example on a miniature scale of the fortress-like prison architecture that flourished in the United States in the nineteenth century. This style of prison architecture has its origin in the Gothic Revival of the early 19th century; John Hamland's Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, built between 1823 and 1836, is often cited as the American prototype. Thomas and James Dixon's towered and battlemented Baltimore City Jail, built in 1859, is one of the more ornate surviving examples of this style. In Texas the style persisted into the very late nineteenth century: the Milam County jail in Cameron, built in 1895, and the Austin County jail in Bellville, built in 1896, are both good examples. The Jeff Davis County jail is undoubtedly the last jail built in Texas in this archaic but charming style. It more closely resembles a Foreign Legion outpost than a medieval fortress, but its roots go directly back to the romantic architecture and penal theories of the early 19th century.^{xxi}

The jail is also significant in terms of the history of community planning and development in Texas, as it is part of an ensemble of buildings that form an Anglo-American town square centered on a county courthouse, rather than a Hispanic plaza focused on a Roman Catholic church. That ensemble, with its courthouse, bank, and hotel, is the center of county government, commerce, and tourism in today's Fort Davis.

IV. DOCUMENTATION

¹ Robert Wooster, *Frontier Crossroads: Fort Davis and the West* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), pp. 11-14, 250; Paul Wright, "Residential Segregation in Two Early West Texas Towns," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 102:3 (January 1999), p. 301.

² Wright, "Residential Segregation," p.301; Lucy Miller Jacobson and Mildred Bloys Nored, *Jeff Davis County, Texas* (Fort Davis: Fort Davis Historical Society, 1993), pp. 353-357, 363-369; Lonny Taylor, "The Shape of Fort Davis," *The Desert Candle*, Winter 2000, pp. 10-11.

³ Jacobson and Nored, *Jeff Davis County*, pp. 95-96, 151-152.

⁴ Jeff Davis County Commissioners' Court Minutes (hereinafter cited as CCM), Vol. 2, p. 138.

⁵Ibid.

CCM, Vol. 2, p. 139.

⁷ United States Census, manuscript returns for Dallas County, Texas, 1910 and 1920; The Williams Company, AIA, "Jeff Davis County Courthouse: Architectural and Historical Development" undated report to Jeff Davis County Commissioners in possession of author, pp. 9-10; Mavis P. Kelsey and Donald H. Dyal, *The Courthouses of Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), pp. 110, 137, 166, 190.

⁸ CCM, Vol. 2, pp. 143, 170.

⁹CCM, Vol. 2, pp. 143-144, 173, 183-184; Jeff Davis County Deed Records, Book 15, pp. 199, 502.

¹⁰ L. Thurmon, "Blueprints for Jeff Davis County Courthouse and Jail," Sheet 16, Jeff Davis County Judge's office; Jacobson and Nored, *Jeff Davis County*, p. 172; Interview, Wid McCutcheon, former sheriff of Jeff Davis County, November 9, 2009.

¹¹ CCM, Vol. 2, pp. 178, 192.

¹²CCM, Vol. 2, pp. 200, 203; Wid McCutcheon interview.

¹³CCM, Vol. 3, pp. 13, 137, 159.

¹⁴CCM, Vol. 3, p.249; Vol. 7, p. 530.

¹⁵CCM Vol. 3, p. 369; Interview, Fred Granado, former jailer, November 13, 2009.

¹⁶ *Alpine Avalanche*, July 14, 1940; Fred Granado interview.

¹⁷ *Alpine Avalanche*, June 12, 1940; Jacobson and Nored, *Jeff Davis County*, pp. 292-293; Wid McCutcheon interview.

¹⁸ Wid McCutcheon, interview; Jeff Davis County Sheriff's Office Records.

¹⁹ CCM, Vol. 5, p.164; Vol. 6, p. 2; Interview with Marvin Watson, former library board member, November 11, 2009.

²⁰ CCM, Vol. 5, pp. 164, 200; Vol. 6, p. 405; Vol.7, p. 452; Vol. 8, p. 88; Vol. 10, pp. 155, 208, 210, 220.

²¹ Norman Johnston, *Forms of Constraint: A History of Prison Architecture* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006), pp. 64-66, 85-87; Website, "Courthouse Lover's Photostream," www.flickr.com/photos/99491151@NOO; Website, "American Memory," www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/browse/ListSome.php?category=Architecture.

RECEIVED

JUN 23 2010

History Programs Division

REC'D JUN 23 2010

Jeff Davis County Historical Commission
% Mary L. Williams, Chair
P.O. Box 430
Fort Davis, Texas 79734

June 21, 2010

Amanda Dyer
History Program Division
Texas Historical Commission
The Historical Marker Team
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, Texas 78711-2276

Dear Amanda,

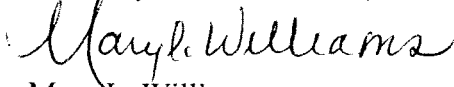
Enclosed please find a slightly revised copy of the narrative section of the Application for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Marker for the Jeff Davis County Jail that was sent to the Texas Historical Commission in November, 2009. Per your correspondence of February 2, 2010, the application was approved (#10JD01).

This revised copy does not change the information on the jail in any way, it merely corrects spelling and typing mistakes and on page 2 (the introduction) revises the paragraph about ranching in the county.

As we filed a revised copy with our papers housed in the courthouse, we thought we would send along a copy to you.

We are excited about the marker as the county jail will be 100 years old in 2011 and we look forward to working with you on the text.

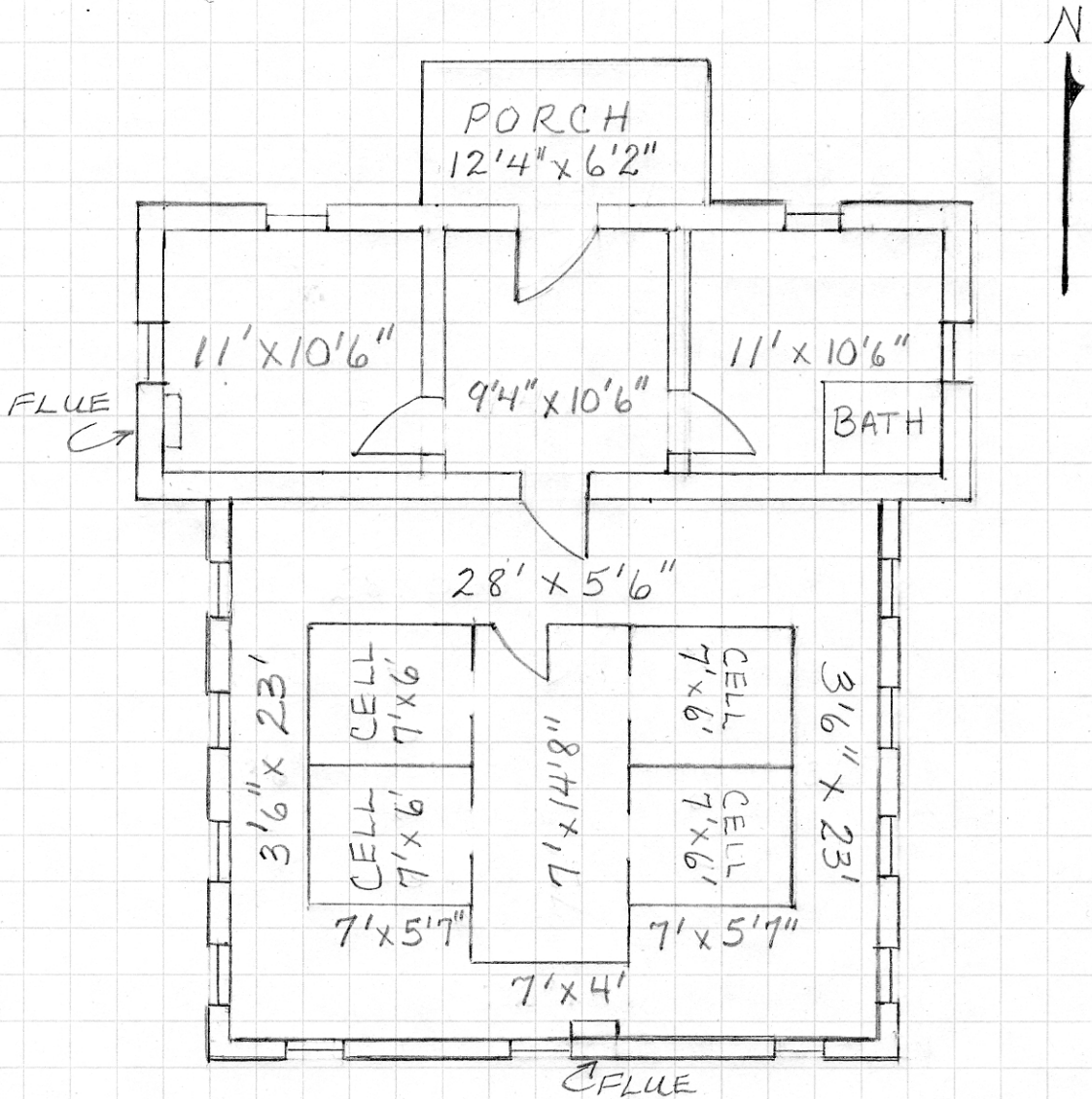
Sincerely,


Mary L. Williams

Encl.

JEFF DAVIS
COUNTY

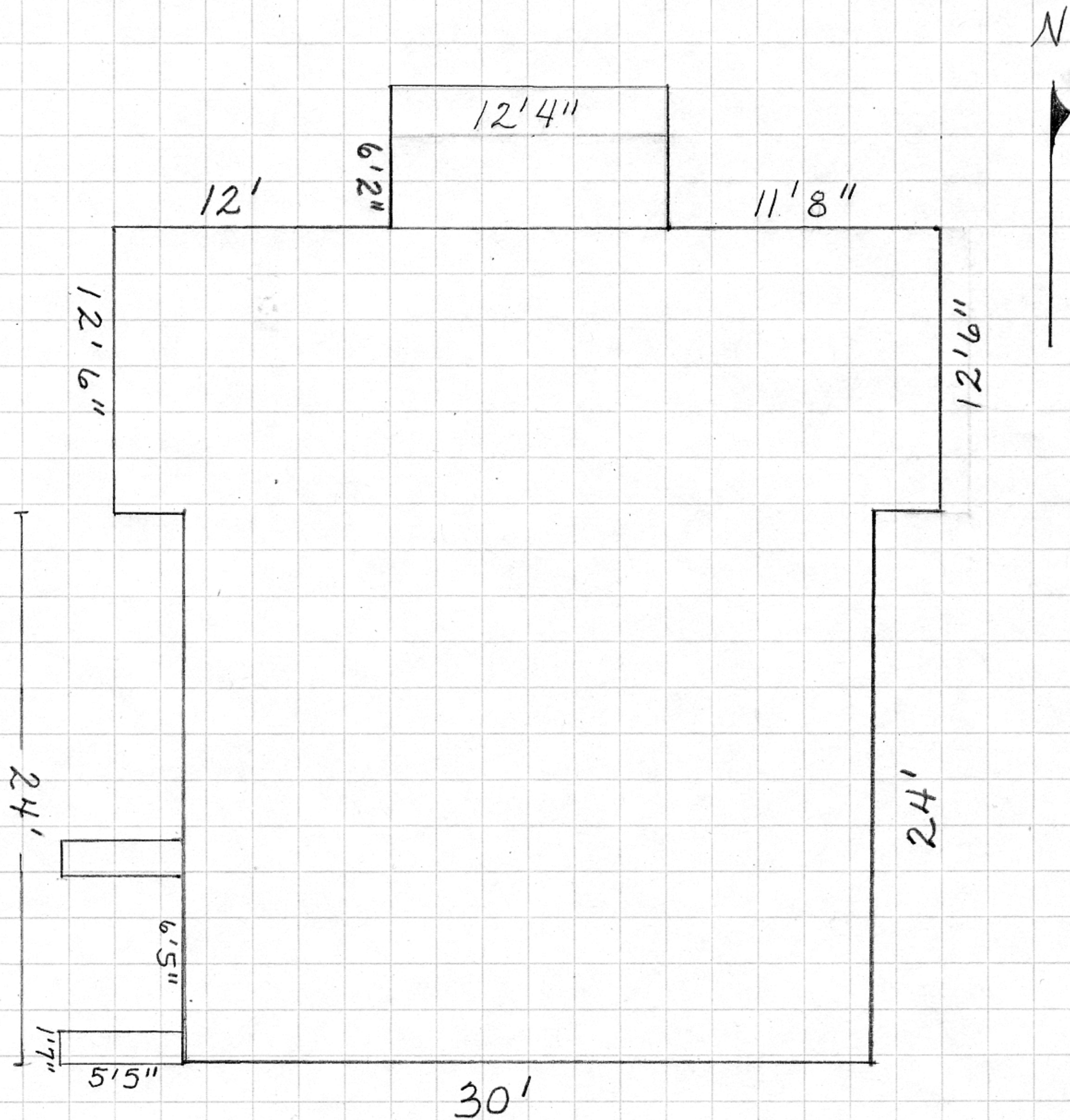
1910 JAIL
INTERIOR DIMENSIONS



1/4" = APPROX. 2'

JEFF DAVIS
COUNTY

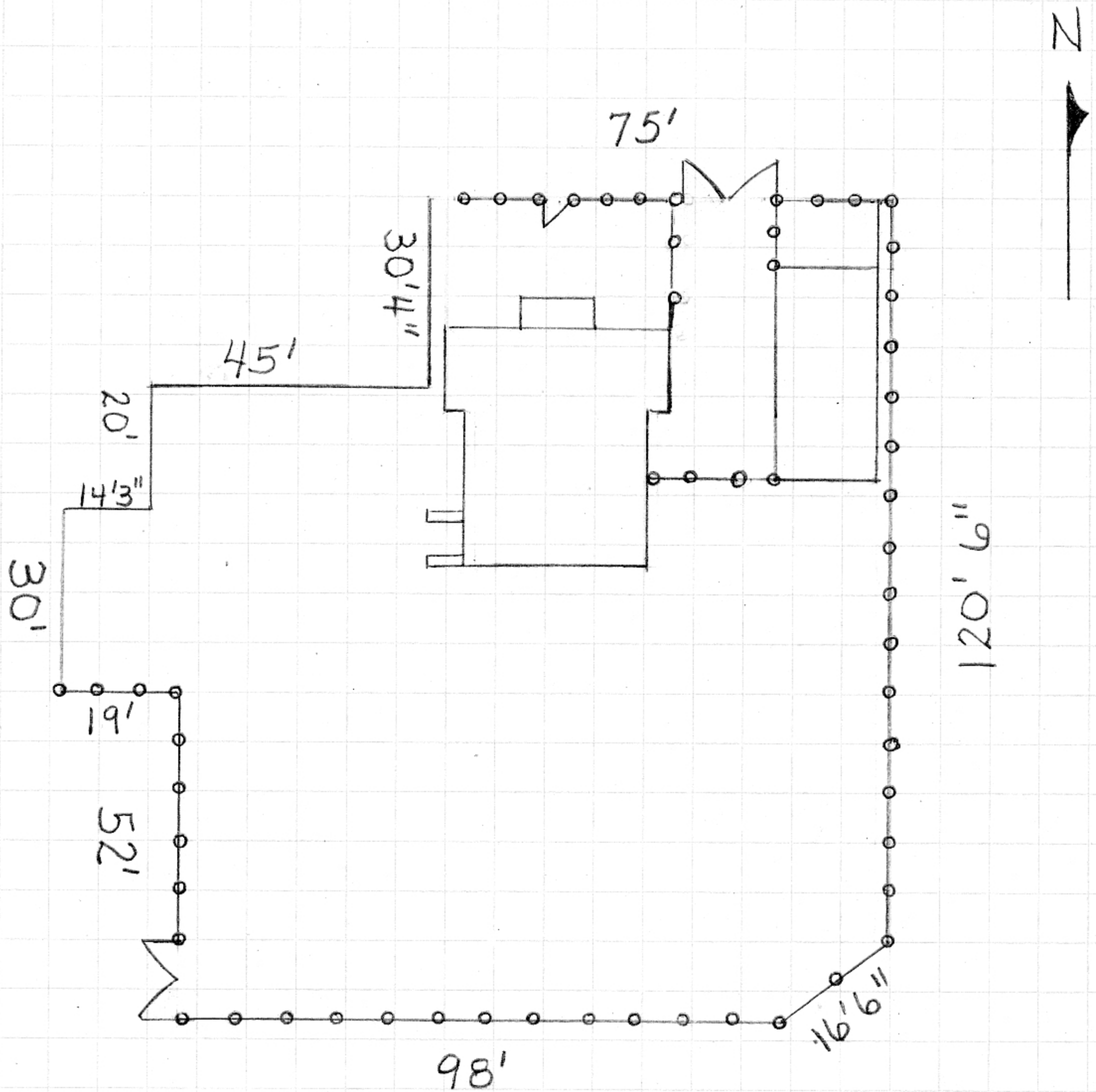
1910 JAIL FOOTPRINT



1/4" = APPROX. 2'

JEFF DAVIS
COUNTY

1910 JAIL SITE PLAN



$\frac{1}{4}'' = \text{APPROX. } 8'$

●—●—●—● = FENCE LINE

JOB # 10JDO1

Authorization for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Designation

Property considered for designation:

Name of House, Address of House, Name of County, Texas:

Jeff Davis County Jail, 100 W. Woodward Ave., Fort Davis, Jeff Davis County



Legal Description (Lot and Block or Metes and Bounds):

The Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) designation is awarded to historic structures deemed worthy of preservation for their architectural integrity and historical associations. Authorized by the Texas Legislature under Texas Government Code, Chapter 442, RTHL is the highest honor the state can bestow on historic structures in Texas. Designated properties are afforded a measure of legal protection and become part of the recorded history of the state's built environment.

Benefits of the RTHL designation:

- Recognition that a property is of local, regional or state significance.
- Protection for up to 90 days from exterior alterations, including demolition or relocation.
- Ad valorem tax exemptions, where granted by local taxing authorities.
- Inclusion in the Texas Historic Sites Atlas.
- Technical preservation assistance through the THC.

Responsibility of the property owner under the RTHL provision, as noted in Texas Government Code, Chapter 442.006 (f):

A person may not damage the historical or architectural integrity of a structure the commission has designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark without notifying the commission at least 60 days before the date on which the action causing the damage is to begin. After receiving the notice, the commission may waive the waiting period or, if the commission determines that a longer period will enhance the chance for preservation, it may require an additional waiting period of not longer than 30 days. On the expiration of the time limits imposed by this section, the person may proceed, but must proceed not later than the 180th day after the date on which notice was given or the notice is considered to have expired.

Additionally:

- The designation requires the public display of the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark marker. The marker is the property of the State of Texas and may not be removed or relocated without the prior permission of the Texas Historical Commission.
- RTHL status is a permanent designation which is retained with the property even upon transfer of ownership. Only the Texas Historical Commission may remove the designation.
- Structures designated as RTHLs do not have to be open to the public, but the marker must be accessible to the public.
- RTHL designation does not imply eligibility for federal tax incentives for rehabilitation.

I, the property owner or legal administrator of the property noted herein, signify below that I have read the information regarding Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks and that I voluntarily seek the designation for the property. I further promise to comply with the provision noted in the Texas Government Code.

Name (print) George E. Grubb

Mailing address: PO Box 836

City, state, zip: Fort Davis, TX 79734

Phone: 432-426-3968 Email: _____

Signature: George E Grubb



Acct: K450-000-00700000	Parcel/Type: 9146 / R	Loc Code: FISD	Jur Code: CAD JF 30
O-Acct:	Owner/Seq: 72533 / 1	Legal 1: W KEESEY	Cat Code: XF1
Name: JEFF DAVIS COUNTY	Owner Int: 1.000000	Legal 2: OUT BLOCK 7	Neighbor:
Careof:	HS Code:	Legal 3:	Rd Type: DIRT
Addr1: P O BOX 836	Disable Vet: 0	Legal 4:	Util Type: ALL
Addr2:	Ceiling Year: 0	Prop Addr: 100 WOODWARD AVE	Econic: 0.00
City/St: FORT DAVIS TX 79734-0000	Ceiling Tax: 0.00	Prop City/St: -	Agent:

Seq	Acres	Sq Ft.	Front	Rear	FF Avg	Depth	Dep %	Class	Cost	%GD	%RD	Extra	Mkt Value	Prod Class/Cd	Prod Cost	%GD	Prod Extra	Prod Value
1	0.230	10000	0	0	0	0.00	1.00	FD7	6.00	1.00	1.00	0	60000	FD7/	0.00	1.00	0	0

Bldg	Type	Class	HS	BIYr	EfYr	Age	Cond	Notes	Tot Area	Cost	%GD	%FC	%EC	%CP	%EX1	%EX2	Extra	Total Value
1	COMM		N	0	0	0			1	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0	0

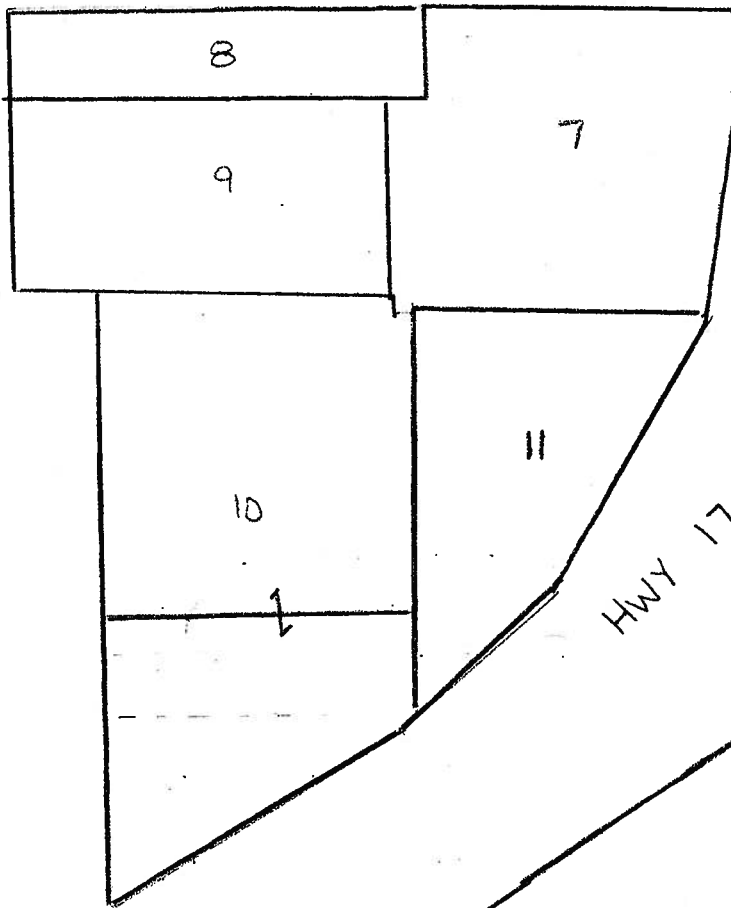
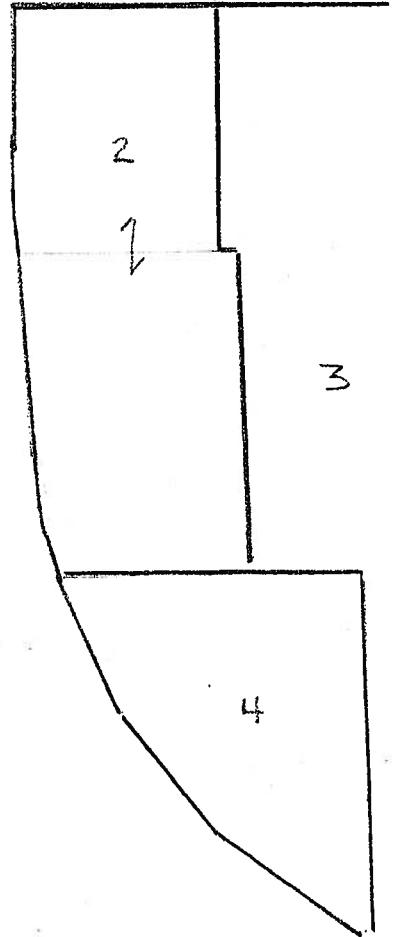
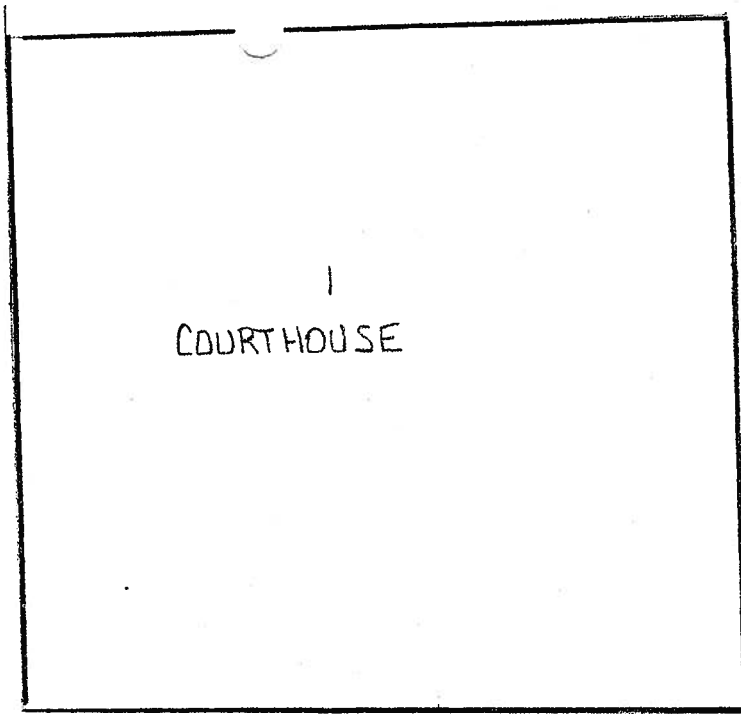
Acres: 0.230	Owners Acres: 0.230	Larger Tract: 0.000000	Land HS: 0	Imp HS: 0	Total Mkt: 60,000
Abst Num:	MH Serial:		Land NHS: 60,000	Imp New HS: 0	
Abst/SubDiv: W KEESEY	MH Label:		Production Mkt: 0	Imp NHS: 0	Total Taxable: 60,000
Tract/Lot: OUT BLK	MH Name:		Prod:(Ag/Timber) 0	Imp New NHS: 0	Owner Int: 1.000000
Block: 7	MH ID: 0		Total Land Mkt: 60,000	Imp Total: 0	Owner Value: 60,000

TOTAL EXEMPT

Notes:

Seq	Building Calls	Seq	Commentary	Value	Unit
1					

Num:	Previous Owner	Deed Date	Volume	Page



HWY 18

HWY 17

12

K45D-000-0000-0000
W KEESEY











1880-1890
DISTRICT CLERK



