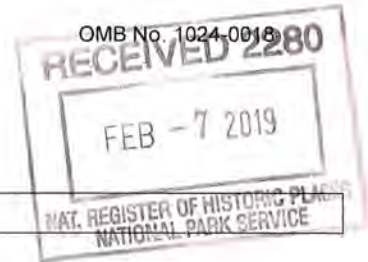


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

3536



1. Name of Property

Historic Name: McWilliams Building  
Other name/site number: Southwest Life Insurance Building; Cargill Tower; Weaver Building; Heritage Tower  
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 208 North Green Street  
City or town: Longview State: Texas County: Gregg  
Not for publication:  Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:  
 national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer Date 2/5/19  
Signature of certifying official / Title  
Texas Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] Date of Action 3/25/2019  
Signature of the Keeper

McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

### Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: NA

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** Commerce/Trade: Business

**Current Functions:** Commerce/Trade: Business

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:** Modern Movement/Art Deco

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Brick, Concrete, Glass

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-10)

McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>A</b>	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>C</b>	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Commerce; Architecture

**Period of Significance:** 1935-1969

**Significant Dates:** 1935

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** Clements, Martin T. (Architect); T.L. James & Co. (Builder)

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 8-11 through 8-21)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheets 9-22 through 9-23)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. (*Part I approved 11-21-2018*)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: Longview Public Library

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** Less than one acre

### Coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 32.49478° Longitude: -94.736606°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The boundary of the nominated property is the legal boundary of the rectangular parcel, specifically Longview Original Townsite, Lot 15, Block 53.

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary includes the property historically associated with the nominated resource.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Rachel Nugent (National Register Coordinator), Emily Lenhausen (Historic Preservation Specialist)

Organization: Rosin Preservation, LLC

Street & number: 1712 Holmes

City or Town: Kansas City State: Missouri

Zip Code: 64108

Email: rachel@rosinpreservation.com

Telephone: 816-472-4950

Date: September 14, 2018

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheets MAP-24 through MAP-25)

**Additional items** (see continuation sheets FIGURE-26 through FIGURE-33)

**Photographs** (see continuation sheets PHOTO-34 through PHOTO-41)

McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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**Photograph Log**

McWilliams Building

Longview, Gregg County, Texas

Photographed by Brad Finch, f-stop Photography, August 2018

Photo 1

West elevation, view E.

Photo 2

North elevation, view S.

Photo 3

East elevation, view W.

Photo 4

South elevation, view NE.

Photo 5

Ornament detail, north elevation, east corner, view S.

Photo 6

Typical storefront with modern alterations, north elevation, view S.

Photo 7

Lobby, view NE.

Photo 8

North retail space, first floor, view S.

Photo 9

South retail space, first floor, view NW.

Photo 10

Elevator lobby with historic finishes, fourth floor, view W.

Photo 11

Corridor with modern alterations, sixth floor, view S.

Photo 12

Corridor with historic finishes, fifth floor, view SW.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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## Narrative Description

The McWilliams Building at 208 North Green Street in Longview, Gregg County, Texas, is a rectangular, two-part vertical block, six-story office building in downtown Longview. Two blocks east of the county courthouse, it is one of five multi-story buildings in a commercial area that is characterized by one- and two-story commercial edifices constructed in the early to mid-twentieth century. Built in 1935 for the McWilliams Furniture Company, the nominated building exhibits mid-rise concrete frame construction, buff-colored brick cladding, a flat roof, and a symmetrical fenestration pattern with bays defined by zigzag brick piers. Its monolithic form features restrained Art Deco design that emphasizes its verticality, and ornamentation includes intact stylized terra cotta palmettes, stepped finials atop piers, tile spandrels, and Greek keys. Designed for ground-level retail and upper-level professional offices, the interior McWilliams Building lobby provides access to these areas and has original finishes such as decorative plaster ceilings, marble wainscoting, terrazzo floors, and a Cutler mailbox and chute. Several upper-level floors retain historic layouts and finishes. Although many of its historic windows and storefronts were replaced with modern fixed pane glass, the McWilliams Building retains intact openings, fenestration pattern, and Art Deco details that communicate its historic function and era of construction to show overall good integrity.

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## Setting (Maps 1-2)

The McWilliams Building is located at 208 North Green Street in Longview, Gregg County in northeast Texas (*Maps 1-3*). Longview, the county seat, is approximately 45 miles west of the Louisiana-Texas border and 125 miles east of Dallas. The original city townsite, dubbed “the Hundred Acre,” is the commercial and civic core of the city. Streets in this section are oriented northeast/southwest in alignment with the railroad, the southern terminus of the historic commercial zone. Alternatively, surrounding blocks east and north are oriented true north. The commercial district is a densely developed area that includes some of Longview’s earliest historic civic and commercial buildings. Low and mid-rise civic, industrial, and commercial buildings characterize the district, and there are five multi-story commercial edifices downtown.

## Site (Map 3)

Block 53, on which the McWilliams building stands, is at the eastern edge of Longview’s original orthogonal townsite, and it is 1.5 blocks north of the railroad tracks. The block bounded by East Methvin Street (north), North 1<sup>st</sup> Street (east), East Tyler Street (south), and North Green Street (west); East Bank Alley runs east-west through its center. The nominated building has a rectangular footprint and occupies the northeast corner of Block 53 at the intersection of E. Methvin and N. Green. The 1953 4-story Bramlette Building is north of the McWilliams Building. Other resources immediately around the nominated building are one- and two-story commercial buildings (historic-age and modern), a public park (Heritage Plaza), and a large parking lot is directly east of the McWilliams Building. The McWilliams Building is approximately 50’ x 150’ with a narrow setback to accommodate pedestrian sidewalks on its north and west elevations. Otherwise, it occupies the entirety of its lot.

## Exterior

The McWilliams Building (presently named Heritage Tower) is a six-story, two-part vertical block Art Deco office building with a concrete foundation, buff brick cladding, and a flat roof (*Photo 1*). It is approximately 150-feet-long with nine bays on each long elevation, and approximately 50-feet-wide with three bays on each narrow elevation. The interior is approximately 45,000 square feet. A parapet with terra-cotta coping rises from the flat roof higher at the north and west elevations than the rear facades, which has salt-glazed earthenware coping. A buff brick elevator penthouse extends above the roof and is offset west of roughly center. Primary facades, which face E. Methvin and N. Green, on the rectangular building feature modest Art Deco ornamentation and vertical piers that height and weight of

McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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the otherwise box-shaped building. This style and form is shown in alternating wide and narrow piers with stepped finials, low-relief decorative terra cotta tile, and a narrow terra cotta tile beltcourse above the ground level at the second story. Piers emphasize the building's vertical form while low-relief tiles at the roofline are the visual terminus, and the beltcourse defines the McWilliams Building's two-part vertical form. Historic windows are one-over-one wood frame and modern windows are single fixed pane. Windows on the primary elevations are separated by tile spandrels.

*West (Primary) Elevation (Photo 1)*

The west (primary) elevation faces North Green Street and wide full-height brick piers define its nine tripartite bays. At ground level, the historic commercial configuration is intact with two, large retail areas that flank a primary entrance to the McWilliams Building. Brick piers separate each historic opening. The entrance, which leads to an interior lobby, is in Bay 6. It is demarcated by textured concrete panels that are stepped inwards to a modern glazed door in an anodized aluminum frame with a narrow sidelight and fixed transoms. A non-historic metal sign reads "Heritage Tower" above the entryway. Five storefronts occupy historic openings north of the entrance and three are south. Non-historic bronze anodized aluminum storefronts fill the historic display window openings between the brick pilasters in Bays 1-5 on the first story. These openings have eight-light fixed display windows on concrete bulkheads. A three-part storefront system is located in Bay 8. The storefront features a pedestrian door with glazing and narrow transom. Fixed display windows flank the door and a six-light transom (boarded and obscured by signage) spans the width of the storefront. Historic two-part fixed display windows with six-light transoms fill Bays 7 and 9. The transoms are partially-covered with painted wood. A modern black canvas canopy spans the length of the first floor above the storefronts. It covers a historic decorative brick Greek Key motif that ornaments the area between the storefronts and terra cotta beltcourse (*Photo 6*).

Five floors rise above the terra cotta beltcourse that divides the first-story commercial area from the upper floors to create a two-part vertical block. The upper stories have a regular fenestration pattern with nine tripartite bays that align with the ground-level storefront bays. Broad brick engaged piers, topped with stepped terracotta finials, delineate bays that are sub-divided by two narrow brick piers that separate three windows. Brown tile spandrels separate floors within the bays. The alternating pattern between wide and narrow piers, which are topped with scaled versions of the larger terracotta finials, creates a zig-zag effect at the frieze. A narrow sailor course band of angled bricks spans the elevation above the sixth-story windows, but the wide piers interrupt this brick band. Geometric low-relief terracotta tiles with a palmette pattern ornament the flat roof line and terracotta coping tops the parapet (*Photo 5*). Of the 108 windows on the west façade, twenty-seven are historic one-over-one wood frame windows and five are infilled with louvers. The remaining windows are non-historic fixed aluminum frame. Although the window materials in the west-elevation bays are primarily non-historic, the historic openings and fenestration pattern are intact.

*North Elevation (Photo 2)*

The north elevation, which faces East Methvin Street, mimics the west elevation in verticality and ornament but has a different façade rhythm. The narrow elevation is three bays wide with a symmetrical configuration in an ABA arrangement. Like the west façade, wide brick piers separate each bay. One narrow pier subdivides each end bay and three narrow piers subdivide the central bay. At ground level, there are three non-historic aluminum-framed storefronts. The street level entrance is in the center bay where recessed aluminum doors with glazing and a single-light fixed transom are flanked by fixed three-part display windows. Storefronts on either side of the entrance are modern, three-over-three fixed display windows with lower panes that are substantially shorter than the upper panes. Like the west elevation, non-historic materials were used in historic openings, and all windows on the north elevation are modern fixed pane.

McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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*East Elevation (Photo 3)*

The east (rear) elevation is unadorned and shows non-historic alterations to the first three floors. At ground level, painted and damaged brick show the outline of a one-story commercial building that once shared party walls with the McWilliams Building. It was demolished prior to 1995. The second-story bays are asymmetrical and are non-historic alterations. Exterior fire doors occupy the center two bays while pairs of fixed aluminum windows fill the remaining three bays. The third-story fenestration is irregular. Pairs of fixed aluminum windows fill the north two bays while modern, single fixed aluminum windows fill Bays 1, 2, and 4. One historic six-light wire glass window fills Bay 3. This bay is the only historic opening. Fourth through sixth story fenestration is regular. Groups of three windows form the south eight bays while two single fixed aluminum windows occupy the north bay. This elevation does not have pilasters, but the brick wall between the bays is wide while the brick between the windows within the bays is narrow. Fixed aluminum windows fill most openings. Historic multi-light wire glass awning sash windows fill three bays on the fourth story and two bays and a single window on the fifth story. Historic window openings have brick sills and lintels.

*South Elevation (Photo 4)*

The south elevation is five bays wide and faces East Bank Alley. Bays 1 and 2 at the ground level lack fenestration while a historic one-over-one wood window with metal grille occupies Bay 3. A historic freight elevator door defines Bay 4 while a pair of historic metal doors with nine-light wire glass glazing occupy Bay 5. Smaller square historic, three-over-two wire glass windows with metal awning sashes top all bays except for the freight elevator bay. A concrete loading dock projects from the elevation below the elevator door and entrance. The second through sixth stories have regular fenestration. Windows at these stories are a mixture of historic one-over-one with wood sash and non-historic fixed sash. Concrete stairs with a historic metal bar railing access the basement at the west corner of the building. The historic basement door is metal with nine-light wire glass over two recessed panels. A tiered metal fire escape stair with a ladder between the sixth floor and the roof is on this elevation.

**Interior**

Typical of an early twentieth-century office building with flexible interior partitions, the interior of the McWilliams Building has been renovated multiple times. As a result, a mixture of historic and non-historic configurations and materials remain intact.<sup>1</sup> The ground level interior retains its overall historic layout. Two retail spaces are divided by the central lobby that provides access to upper floors (*Figure 1*). The lobby retains its historic configuration and finishes with an L-shaped plan, plaster ceiling with low relief decoration in a geometric Art Deco motif, terrazzo floor with large-scale checkerboard pattern, and marble wainscoting (*Photo 7*). The lobby also retains its historic Cutler Mailing System box with chute. A passenger elevator is in the northeast corner of the lobby adjacent to a historic marble stairwell. A historic wood door in the northwest corner opens to the basement stairwell. A short run of historic marble stairs accesses a non-historic two-part aluminum-framed storefront entrance that fills a historic opening at the east wall that leads to the north retail space. A non-historic three-part aluminum storefront system fills the large historic opening in the south wall that provides interior access to the south retail space.

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<sup>1</sup> Exact dates of alteration are unknown, however an advertisement in the March 7, 1976 issue of the Longview News-Journal references a "remodeling home sale" and announcing the "remodeling of Cargill Tower is almost completed." "Remodeling Home Sale," *Longview News-Journal* (March 7, 1976): 9.



McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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The commercial areas north and south of the lobby have historic and non-historic finishes. The southwest retail space, historically a drug store, currently functions as a salon (*Photo 9*). It retains its rectangular plan, historic plaster ceiling and walls. Alterations include vinyl plank flooring, non-historic interior doors that open to a bathroom in the southeast corner and a modern loft. The north retail space, formerly the McWilliams furniture showroom, is larger and accounts for approximately 75% of the total ground-level square footage. Its irregular plan is characterized by large, open space broken by a regular grid of structural columns (*Photo 8*). Partial-height non-historic partitions create small offices near the south end of the space (*Figure 1*). Historic materials in the open showroom include plaster ceilings and exterior walls retain historic plaster. The partitioned area has dropped acoustical tile ceilings. Floor materials present include vinyl plank, carpet, non-historic wood, and concrete.

The second floor features a double-loaded corridor that accesses the bathrooms, a storage area, a mechanical room, and a large office suite. A narrow lobby adjacent to the primary circulation core on the west side of the building has non-historic finishes and accesses the main corridor as well as a non-historic five-room apartment with an L-shaped plan at the south end of the second floor. A secondary stairwell is located on the east side of the building and accesses only the first and third floors. The second floor has been extensively renovated and features non-historic partitions and finishes, including a dropped acoustical tile ceiling, ceramic tile and parquet floors, and drywall partitions. The second floor retains its historic freight elevator with its clay tile shaft at the south end and its historic Cutler Mailing System tubing adjacent to the passenger elevator.<sup>2</sup>

Office spaces flank a double-loaded corridor on the third floor. Restrooms are located roughly center in the east half of the floor. The offices accessible from the corridor are suites that vary in size, with one large suite occupying the north half of the floor. A large elevator and stairwell lobby is adjacent to the primary circulation core. A secondary stairwell on the east side of the building and accesses the second floor. This stairwell and the south freight elevator shaft terminate on this floor. All partitions and finishes on the third floor are non-historic. Finishes include carpet and parquet floors, dropped acoustical tile ceilings, non-historic wood or rubber baseboards, and non-historic wood doors.

The fourth and fifth floors retain their historic floor plan and most historic finishes, particularly in the corridors (*Figures 2*). The corridors have terrazzo floors, marble wainscot with solid and glazed panels above, wood chair rails and crown molding, wood office doors with large glazed panels, and non-historic dropped ceilings (*Photo 12*). Offices have historic anterooms and multiple private offices within. Offices that line the corridor on each floor typically retain plaster ceilings and wood trim and doors (*Photo 12*). Fourth and fifth floor bathrooms retain historic hex tile flooring, marble wainscoting, plaster walls and ceilings, historic windows, and entrance doors. Alterations to the fourth and fifth floors include non-historic dropped tile ceilings in corridors and some offices as well as floor materials in all offices.

Renovations to the sixth floor retained the basic historic footprint, but modern materials replaced historic finishes (*Photo 11*). Single offices line a double-loaded corridor in the south two-thirds of the floor. A large suite truncates the north end of the corridor (*Figure 3*). Finishes are non-historic and include drywall walls, dropped acoustical tile ceilings, and carpet or vinyl flooring. Some historic single-panel wood doors remain in offices, but most are modern.

The basement is accessed by stairs positioned in the northwest corner. Storage rooms are arranged along a central double-loaded corridor. Historic finishes include the concrete floor and brick, concrete, and fire tile walls. Storage rooms typically feature historic wood doors and concrete ceilings.

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<sup>2</sup> The Cutler Mailing System was first installed in the Elmwood Building, Rochester, New York by inventor James G. Cutler. The gravity-based system simplified the collection of mail at multi-story buildings and flourished during the turn of the 20th Century. Nancy Pope. "James Cutler's Revolutionary Mailbox Idea." Smithsonian National Postal Museum. <http://postalmuseumblog.si.edu/2012/09/james-cutlers-revolutionary-mailbox-idea.html>. accessed August 27, 2018.

McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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**Integrity**

The McWilliams Building retains excellent integrity that communicates its era construction and historic function as a 20<sup>th</sup>-century office building constructed in 1935. Located at its original site, the surrounding downtown district contributes to its association with Longview's commercial development in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Although scattered demolitions introduced additional surface parking and greenspace, the setting otherwise remains much as it was during the building's period of significance. The exterior of the McWilliams Building retains integrity of design and workmanship. There have been no additions or alterations to the original rectangular form and its massing, scale, and proportions as a six-story two-part vertical block are intact. Its brick façade with Art Deco ornament—alternating piers with zig zag finials, Greek Key decorative brick work, and terra cotta tile—demonstrates its original workmanship and design. Historic storefront openings and its overall fenestration pattern are intact, which communicates the historic retail and professional function of the McWilliams Building. Modern alterations diminished the building's integrity of materials. Non-historic first-story storefront assemblies and fixed windows replaced historic counterparts within the existing historic masonry openings. However, the remaining historic 1/1 wood frame windows and storefronts serve as examples for future rehabilitation work. Although the interior was designed to accommodate a variety of retail and professional layouts, the McWilliams Building retains original materials and floor plans on three of its interior levels, including the first floor. Any diminished integrity of materials, particularly the exterior windows, are offset by the preponderance of good integrity in its design, setting, location, workmanship, feeling, and association. The McWilliams Building's form, historic fenestration pattern, and Art Deco ornamentation are intact, and it is an excellent example of a 1935 Art Deco office building in Longview, Texas.

McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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### Statement of Significance

The 1935 McWilliams Building is a 6-story Art Deco office building in downtown Longview, Texas that was named for the McWilliams Furniture Company. Local businessmen and the furniture company co-funded its construction to provide modern office space for incoming oil businesses that flocked to Longview following the discovery of nearby oil fields in 1930. The Arkansas-based McWilliams Furniture Company's investment and occupation of the building symbolized secondary commercial activity that followed the economic boom. The McWilliams Building is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Commerce because its construction represented the intense commercial development of Longview following a regional oil industry boom in the 1930s. Its tenants throughout the period of significance were prominent businessmen, medical professionals, oil companies, and the McWilliams Furniture Company. It is also nominated under Criterion C for Architecture as an excellent local example of an Art Deco modern office tower. Designed by architect Martin T. Clements with Wichita Falls-based firm Voelcker and Dixon, the McWilliams Building is characterized by its restrained Art Deco ornamentation including low-relief terracotta tiles with a stylized palmette motif, zig zag piers with terra cotta finials, and Greek Key decorative brick work. Modern in its design and function, the McWilliams Building has continued to be a prominent fixture of the Longview skyline since its construction and represents a distinct development period characterized by Art Deco commercial and institutional buildings in downtown Longview. The period of significance is 1935, the date of its completion, to 1969, the current fifty-year cut-off for National Register eligibility.

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### Twentieth Century Commercial Development in Longview, Texas

The first land patents in present-day Gregg County were issued to Anglo settlers in 1835. By 1838, Gregg County was nearly surveyed and its land patented.<sup>3</sup> In 1870, Ossamus Hitch Methvin, Sr. deeded one hundred acres of land to the Southern Pacific Railroad with the understanding that the railroad would build within the townsite.<sup>4</sup> With the establishment of the Texas & Pacific Railroad line in Longview in 1869 and the subsequent Southern Pacific Railway, Longview quickly became an area transportation center.<sup>5</sup> Longview grew steadily during the nineteenth century as a regional trading center for lumber and cotton due in large part to the railways connecting it to surrounding communities. Longview incorporated on June 24, 1871 and in 1873 became the county seat of Gregg County.<sup>6</sup> In 1877, a fire destroyed much of early Longview which consisted of frame buildings and the commercial center was reconstructed with brick and stone buildings. Rapid growth closely followed reconstruction during the 1880s with the construction of dwellings, boarding houses and hotels, two schools, multiple churches, industrial operations, and entertainment or recreation facilities.<sup>7</sup>

Longview's economy and population were relatively stable in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Cotton, lumber, and agricultural implement manufacturing plants characterized local industry and supported civic improvements like public water, sewer, and electric services. Between 1900 and 1920 the population was approximately 5,700. Growing optimism followed the construction of a state highway through the town in 1926. Longview, a transportation junction,

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<sup>3</sup> After the railroad bypassed Earpville it dissolved by 1871. *Charlotte Allgood, "EARPVILLE, TX," Handbook of Texas Online* (2010) <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hve53> (accessed September 11, 2018); Eugene W. McWhorter, "LONGVIEW, TX (GREGG COUNTY)," *Handbook of Texas Online* (2010) <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdl03> (accessed September 11, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Beth Holloway Dodson. "METHVIN, OSSAMUS HITCH, SR.," *Handbook of Texas Online*, (2010) <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fme57> (accessed August 29, 2018); Van Craddock. *The History of Gregg County*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> "Texas and Pacific Completes Century of Service," *Longview Morning Journal* (October 10, 1971): 5.

<sup>6</sup> Craddock, *History of Gregg County*.

<sup>7</sup> McWhorter, "LONGVIEW, TX (GREGG COUNTY)."

McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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became the headquarters for the newly-established East Texas Chamber of Commerce that represented 71 counties in the region. The local population spiked to approximately 7,000 in 1929 as a reflection of this hopefulness. Financial reverses, however, started in the late-1920s, with fluctuating cotton prices and dwindling lumber supplies. In 1929, the onset of the Great Depression, although not immediate felt in Texas, compounded local economic uncertainty. Finally, when the Texas and Pacific Railroad relocated its division office out of Longview, hundreds of families left the city, and by 1930, the population dropped to 5,000.<sup>8</sup>

The discovery of the East Texas Oilfield in 1930 initiated a region-wide boom that largely shielded Longview from the nationwide recession. The oilfield, the “largest and most prolific oil reservoir in the contiguous United States,” was first discovered in neighboring Rusk County. Additional wells were discovered across a five-county area (including central Gregg County) of approximately 140,000 acres.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the year, four wells were constructed and produced 27,000 barrels annually. Hundreds of small operators flocked to the East Texas oilfield, leading to an economic and population boom. Locally, Longview’s population more than doubled to approximately 13,700 by 1940, and the city’s downtown business district reflected the growth.<sup>10</sup>

Longview leveraged its position as the geographic center of the five-county-wide oil field and transformed into a commercial center catering to the burgeoning regional oil industry. The local Chamber of Commerce made efforts to promote the town’s businesses and hotels with signs along regional highways.<sup>11</sup> Large oil companies—like Republic Production Company, Sun Oil, Gulf, Humble Oil, and Southern Crude—leased land from local property owners, and the influx of that money stimulated the local economy. As early as late-1930, local businesses reported old debts paid and new purchases made after the Republic Production Company leased a 16,000-acre block for \$1 per acre.<sup>12</sup> As the sheer scale of the oilfield became apparent – the East Texas oilfield was larger than the next six largest oilfields in the United States combined – the leasing frenzy accelerated with land owners dividing their holdings into mineral leases and realizing as much as \$1,800 to \$3,000 per acre.<sup>13</sup> Longview’s population grew dramatically, more than doubling by 1940. Longview continued to benefit from East Texas oilfield operations with the construction of the Big Inch oil pipeline which originated in Longview to ship crude oil to refineries in the northeast United States.<sup>14</sup>

Downtown Longview underwent a transformation in the early 1930s as oil companies located to the area. The influx of money into the local economy spurred retail, service, construction activity, and filled government coffers with additional tax revenue. Longview passed the one-million-dollar mark for building permits in the beginning of May 1935, which “should be sufficient evidence to anyone that this East Texas oil capital is not waiting for anything.”<sup>15</sup> In 1935, Longview was fourth in the state for new construction, behind Fort Worth, Houston, and Dallas.<sup>16</sup> Several Longview building projects of note are directly attributed to the economic boom in the early 1930s. The 1933 Art Deco-style Gregg County Courthouse replaced a late-nineteenth century courthouse (*Figure 12*).<sup>17</sup> Conrad Hilton

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<sup>8</sup> Opal Hill Munz, “Longview: Geared to Growth, “August 1957,” on file at the Longview Public Library

<sup>9</sup> Smith, “EAST TEXAS OILFIELD.”

<sup>10</sup> Craddock, *History of Gregg County*.

<sup>11</sup> “Business Here Profiting by New Oil Field: Putting into circulation of \$16,000 helps local business much,” *Longview News-Journal* (September 14, 1930): 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> “East Texas Oil Field is bigger than six other larger ones combined,” *Longview News-Journal* (July 8, 1934): 1; Smith, “EAST TEXAS OILFIELD.”

<sup>14</sup> The Big Inch was constructed to ensure the availability of oil in the north and east during World War II as fears of oil tanker sabotage by German U-Boats grew. Jerrell Deal Palmer and John G. Johnson, “Big Inch and Little Big Inch” Handbook of Texas Online (2010, rev. 2016) <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dob08>. (accessed August 31, 2018).

<sup>15</sup> “Beyond the Horizon: An Editorial,” *Longview News-Journal*, (May 7, 1935): 1.

<sup>16</sup> “Longview Fourth in Construction,” *Longview News-Journal*, (September 8, 1935): 1.

<sup>17</sup> Voelcker and Dixon served as architectural firm for both the Gregg County Courthouse and the McWilliams Building.

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purchased Hotel Gregg (originally built 1930) and expanded it as part of his nationwide Hilton Hotel chain in 1936 (no longer extant). A four-story addition to the recently completed two-story Glover-Crim Building at 140 E. Tyler Street made a six-story office building in 1935, at the same time the McWilliams Building was completed two blocks to the northeast.<sup>18</sup> The *Longview News Journal* noted in 1935 that “none of these structures [was] heralded as a ‘skyscraper,’ for the owners [had] no intention of erecting ‘monuments’ of other than utilitarian worth...to assure the maximum return on the investment.”<sup>19</sup>

Commercial development in Longview continued steadily until World War II began. Government-imposed restrictions on construction during WWII significantly decreased construction in Longview during the war. However, construction was permitted when a project was in direct service to national defense.<sup>20</sup> During this period two such projects were completed in Longview. Construction of the Harmon General Hospital south of Longview city limits began in May 1942.<sup>21</sup> The army general hospital opened November 24, 1942 and was one of 59 in the country.<sup>22</sup> The 156-acre complex included medical facilities, barracks, and training facilities in addition to community services such as a post office, gymnasium, and theater.<sup>23</sup> Longview was designated a Defense Housing Area due to its association with Harmon General Hospital, which enabled housing construction to continue during the war.<sup>24</sup> With a peak community of 5,000, the hospital contributed to substantial population growth in Longview during the war.<sup>25</sup> Between 1940 and 1946, Longview’s population more than doubled.<sup>26</sup> In 1945, Harmon General Hospital closed. R.G. LeTourneau transformed the complex into the LeTourneau Technical Institute in 1946.<sup>27</sup> The institute drew students and job seekers to Longview and the complex’s location spurred Longview’s southern development.<sup>28</sup>

In 1942, construction began on the Big Inch Pipeline. The German submarine presence along the East Coast threatened the region’s oil supply, prompting the development of an overland route.<sup>29</sup> The pipeline originated in Longview and transported crude oil to the East Coast for refining to guarantee oil and gas supplies during World War II.<sup>30</sup> War Emergency Pipelines, a private firm, constructed the Big Inch and associated Little Inch, which carried refined petroleum from Houston and Port Arthur to Linden, New Jersey. However, the federal government funded and owned both pipelines.<sup>31</sup> Following the war, Texas Eastern Transmission Corporation purchased the pipelines for natural-gas transmission.<sup>32</sup>

Except for these projects, construction in Longview nearly came to a complete halt. However, the large-scale construction of the hospital and pipeline sheltered Longview’s economy from war time rationing and budget cutbacks. Both projects spurred development near Longview’s city limits while development downtown stalled. The absence of

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<sup>18</sup> “Beyond the Horizon: An Editorial,” *Longview News-Journal*, (May 7, 1935):1.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Terri Myers et.al. “Historic Resource Survey Report Phase I: Downtown Core. Longview, Gregg County, Texas,” Preservation Central, Inc. September 30, 2016:37.

<sup>21</sup> Ken Durham, “HARMON GENERAL HOSPITAL,” *Handbook of Texas Online* (2010) <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qnh11> (accessed October 15, 2018).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> “Plant is City Within Self,” *Longview News-Journal* (November 15, 1942): 8.

<sup>24</sup> Durham, “HARMON GENERAL HOSPITAL.”

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> “A Step Toward Building a Greater East Texas!,” *Longview News-Journal*, (February 24, 1946): 46.

<sup>28</sup> Myers et. al., “Historic Resource Survey Report Phase I,” 38.

<sup>29</sup> Palmer and John G. Johnson, “BIG INCH AND LITTLE BIG INCH.”

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, “BROWN, HERMAN,” accessed October 17, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbr86>.

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construction in downtown Longview during this period contributed to the McWilliams's Building retention of its status as the tallest building in Longview for nearly two decades.

Following World War II, Longview's economy experienced a drastic shift. Gregg County's agriculture-based economy was significantly damaged during the Great Depression and suffered further during the oil boom. Post-war, the allure of new jobs in cities drew the county's residents away from farms and by 1950 most of Gregg County's farms were abandoned or converted to pasture land.<sup>33</sup> To draw businesses to Longview, city leaders created industrial zones and advertised the city's benefits.<sup>34</sup> Longview's population grew from 24,502 in 1950 to 40,050 in 1960, due in-part to the city leadership's successful campaign.<sup>35</sup>

On August 25, 1949 the Texas Eastman Division of the Eastman Chemical Company announced plans to open a Longview plant.<sup>36</sup> Division President Don Scoggins cited "aggressive recruitment by Longview civic leaders and the area's desirable attributes," as the company's reasons for selecting the Longview site.<sup>37</sup> The plant, a subsidiary of the Kodak Company, became Longview's largest employer.<sup>38</sup> In 1951 and 1956, Gregg Memorial Hospital, later renamed Good Shepherd Medical Center, was expanded, doubling its capacity.<sup>39</sup> The hospital complex, located one half mile northeast of the McWilliams Building on Fourth Street, was joined by Longview Regional Medical Center in 1980.<sup>40</sup> During this period, Longview became an important regional medical center.<sup>41</sup>

In 1966, a Schlitz Brewery and associated container factory were established in Longview. At the time, the Longview plant was advertised as "the most modern in the world," with a million-barrel per year capacity.<sup>42</sup> In 1977, the plant employed over 560 Longview residents and was toured by over 8,000 visitors, contributing significantly to Longview's economy.<sup>43</sup> Schlitz later merged with Stroh Brewery and became the largest brewery operation in the state.<sup>44</sup> A second oil boom in 1970 through 1980 and the ongoing development of industrial services led to steady growth in Longview throughout the second-half of the century, including contributing to a nearly sixty-six percent increase in population between 1950 and 2000.<sup>45</sup>

Three notable examples of buildings constructed during the post-war period in downtown Longview are the Citizens' National Bank, Joseph B. Bramlette Building, and the Petroleum Building. The Citizens National Bank, completed in 1954 and located at 211 E. Tyler Street, was the first new construction building project in Longview that was taller than the McWilliams Building. At ten stories, it is still the tallest building in downtown Longview. The Joseph B. Bramlette Building, located adjacent to the McWilliams Building at 300 North Green Street, was completed in 1949. The four-story office building exhibits Modern Movement stylistic influences in contrast to the symmetry and vertical emphasis of the McWilliams Building. The Petroleum Building (1956) at 202 E. Whaley Street was originally

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<sup>33</sup> Eugene McWhorter, *Traditions of the Land: The History of Gregg County, Texas*. Longview, Texas: Gregg County Historical Foundation, 1989: 120.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 124.

<sup>35</sup> McWhorter, "LONGVIEW, TX (GREGG COUNTY)."

<sup>36</sup> Mike Elswick, "City's Catalyst of Economic Vitality Turns 50," *Longview News-Journal* (August 22, 1999): 1.

<sup>37</sup> Elswick, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Van Craddock, *Longview*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2010: 74.

<sup>39</sup> "Work to Begin Soon on Hospital Addition," *Longview News-Journal* (January 1, 1956): 44.

<sup>40</sup> Craddock, *Longview*, 74.

<sup>41</sup> McWhorter, "LONGVIEW, TX (GREGG COUNTY)."

<sup>42</sup> "Precise Control of Product is Plant Feature," *Longview News-Journal* (July 22, 1966): 42.

<sup>43</sup> "Schlitz Longview Plants Set Production Record," *Longview News-Journal* (January 22, 1978): 55.

<sup>44</sup> McWhorter, "LONGVIEW, TX (GREGG COUNTY)."

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*.

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developed in 1953 as the Downtown Auto Park, a five-story parking garage (*Figure 12*).<sup>46</sup> In 1954, it was sold and intended to accommodate parking for a planned nearby office building.<sup>47</sup> However, the new office building was never constructed and instead the Downtown Auto Park was converted into office space with retail on the ground floor.<sup>48</sup> The Modern Movement stylistic elements of these buildings marks their period of development during the mid-twentieth century when Longview's industrial development greatly expanded.

### The McWilliams Building

Attempting to meet the demand for additional office space in 1930s, Longview developers announced plans for a four-story office building at the corner of East Methvin and North Green streets in January 1935.<sup>49</sup> The developers included Longview residents J.B. (Jim) Bond and J.M. (Jimmie) Garrett, H.P. McGaughey of neighboring Gilmer, Texas, and Hubert McWilliams of El Dorado, Arkansas.<sup>50</sup> A few days later, the *Longview News Journal* announced contracts for the now six-story structure were expected to be let by the end of February.<sup>51</sup> The McWilliams Hardware & Furniture Company was to occupy the ground and second floors with floors three through six devoted entirely to office space.<sup>52</sup> Prior to construction, an existing building on the lot was to be demolished. The McWilliams Building replaced the concrete block First Christian Church at the corner of Methvin and Green streets. The building was constructed in 1906, however the congregation had been at this location since 1876 when the Texas & Pacific Railway deeded the land to the congregation. Demolition of the church began in mid-February 1935 and the congregation relocated to a new building in the Nugget Hill neighborhood.

Architect Martin T. Clements with the firm Voelcker and Dixon of Wichita Falls, Texas designed the McWilliams Building while construction was awarded to another regional firm. The Dallas office of T.L. James & Company, headquartered in Ruston, Louisiana, contracted to construct the building in 125 days for \$150,000.<sup>53</sup> Although in operation for a decade by 1936, the McWilliams Building was the first building construction contract awarded to the firm. Until this time, T.L. James & Company operated regionally in the gas, oil, and paving industries as well as in bridge and levee construction.<sup>54</sup> The firm was awarded the contract in April 1935. The *Longview News Journal* reported that by April 19, excavation work was complete and approximately three weeks later the concrete foundation was poured.<sup>55</sup> By June 18, the sixth floor was being poured with the roof to begin a few days later and brickwork to begin the next week. Approximately fifteen thousand cubic yards of concrete were used for the foundation and frame of the McWilliams Building. At this time too, the building was 2/3 let to "unsolicited" tenants.<sup>56</sup> In early 1936, the *Ruston Daily Leader* reported the McWilliams Building ground floor was "so constructed that it accommodates the usual number of drug stores, news counters, etc. that are associated with such structures," while the subsequent two

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<sup>46</sup> At present, a National Register of Historic Places designation for the 1953 Petroleum Building is pending NPS review. Haley Wilcox, "Petroleum Building, Longview, Gregg County, Texas," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Ogee, LLC. Austin, Texas, July 9, 2018:13.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> "New Building Planned," *Longview News Journal* (January 27, 1935): 1. The lot contained the First Christian Church, which Sanborns indicate was built between 1906 and 1911.

<sup>50</sup> "New Building Planned," *Longview News Journal* (January 27, 1935): 1; "Contracts for New \$125,000 Downtown Office Building to be Awarded This Month," *Longview News Journal* (February 3, 1935): 1.

<sup>51</sup> "Contracts for New \$125,000 Downtown Office Building," 1.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> "Contract for New McWilliams Building Here Let to Dallas Firm," *Longview News-Journal*, (April 19, 1935): 3

<sup>54</sup> "T.L. James Co. Celebrate 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," *Ruston Daily Leader*, (March 10, 1936): 1.

<sup>55</sup> "Contract for New McWilliams Building Here Let to Dallas Firm," 3; "Revival of Construction Marks Building Activity During Week," *Longview News-Journal*, (May 5, 1935): 33.

<sup>56</sup> "New Building is Filling Up Fast," *Longview News-Journal*, (June 18, 1935): 3.

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floors housed the McWilliams company.<sup>57</sup> Office space occupied the upper three floors. The building was completed in just 115 working days and was turned over to the McWilliams Building Inc. on October 1, 1935.<sup>58</sup> Construction costs amounted to approximately \$250,000.<sup>59</sup>

At completion, the McWilliams Building was then one of the tallest buildings in Longview and possessed many modern features. It included amenities such as “steam heating devices, modern lighting fixtures,” and, significantly, it was the first building in Longview with air conditioning.<sup>60</sup> Carrier Company installed air conditioning in the top three office floors and an “elaborate refrigeration and fan plan” to provide a constant 75-degree climate with humidity control and with the “entire network of cooling...automatically regulated.<sup>61</sup> The amenity was thoroughly modern and believed to increase office workers’ productivity “to say nothing of its tendency to lengthen the span of one’s life.” Other advertised features included modern office equipment, mail chutes, and a trash incinerator in the basement.<sup>62</sup> Air filtration provided health benefits for the building’s occupants while the concrete reinforced steel frame afforded fire protection.<sup>63</sup>

When finished, the McWilliams Building not only filled the growing need for office space in Longview, but it was the physical manifestation of Longview’s burgeoning economic success. In October 1935, tenants included the McWilliams Furniture Store showroom and the Proctor’s Drug store on the ground floor.<sup>64</sup> The McWilliams Furniture Company offices occupied the second and third floors while doctors, dentists, lawyers, oil, and insurance companies rented office on floors four through six.<sup>65</sup> In October 1935, General Motors Acceptance Corporation opened a branch office in Longview and occupied most of fifth floor.<sup>66</sup> The “necessity for creating the new branch was occasioned by the heavy volume of business transacted in the sixteen counties in this district,” in which Longview was centrally located and easily accessible due to railroads, busses, and highways.<sup>67</sup> For local residents, however, its modern construction and “urban elegance” represented an new economic era in Longview that itself would inspire new investment:

The worth to Longview of the McWilliams building...is not to be measured in its cubic content of brick and mortar, in number of stories or square feet of floor space, impressive as these individually are. It is the application of beauty, convenience, and physical comfort to a structure basically utilitarian that it marks an epoch in commercial construction here.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> “T.L. James Co. First Project at Longview,” *Ruston Daily Leader*, (March 10, 1936) 21.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> “Contracts for New \$125,000 Downtown Office Building,” 1; “Contract for New McWilliams Building Here Let to Dallas Firm,” 3.

<sup>61</sup> “Contract for New McWilliams Building Here Let to Dallas Firm,” 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> “Contracts for New \$125,000 Downtown Office Building,” 1; “Contract for New McWilliams Building Here Let to Dallas Firm; Carl L. Estes, “They Saw Beyond,” *Longview Daily News*, October 24, 1935.

<sup>64</sup> “Proctor’s Store to Stage Opening,” *Longview News-Journal* (October 20, 1935): 12.

<sup>65</sup> *Longview City Directory*, 1936.

<sup>66</sup> “New Office Here to Serve Sixteen ETexas Counties,” *Longview News-Journal*, (October 3, 1935): 3.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Carl L. Estes, “They Saw Beyond,” *The Longview Daily News*, October 24, 1935.



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*McWilliams Furniture Company*

William Frazier (W.F.) McWilliams founded the McWilliams Hardware and Furniture Company in El Dorado, Arkansas in 1907.<sup>69</sup> The high-end retail furniture business was originally formed as a family business and operated under the name “J.S. McWilliams and Sons.”<sup>70</sup> In 1921, the company reorganized and filled multiple high-level positions with individuals outside the McWilliams family. However, W.F. and his brother J.H. McWilliams retained management positions.<sup>71</sup> At this time the firm’s name was changed to McWilliams Hardware Company. In 1931, the McWilliams Company established its first Texas location in Kilgore and operated as McWilliams Inc. The Longview branch opened in 1935 in the McWilliams Building and an additional branch opened ca. 1940 in Marshall, Texas. Both locations operated under McWilliams Furniture Co., Inc.<sup>72</sup> The Tyler, Texas branch of the firm opened in 1943 and operated as Broadway Furniture Co.<sup>73</sup>

In 1950, the McWilliams Guild Galleries opened in a one-story building adjacent to the McWilliams Building in Longview. It housed high-end displays and design services. Although the buildings shared a wall, the Guild Galleries maintained a separate entrance on East Methvin Street. The date of demolition is unknown, however the last known reference to the building in the *Longview News-Journal* occurred in 1972.<sup>74</sup> The building is not present on 1995 aerial imagery. The Longview store remained in the McWilliams Building until November 1968, at which time it relocated to a new building at 325 South High Street, southwest of downtown Longview.<sup>75</sup> In 1983, A.R. Graves, president of the East Texas branches of the McWilliams firm, opened a new Broadway Furniture location in the McWilliams Building.<sup>76</sup> The store remained open until 1987 and was vacated after the store’s lease was lost.<sup>77</sup>

While the McWilliams firm maintained a presence in the building between 1935 and the late 1960s, and again between 1983 and 1987, numerous tenants moved into and out of the building between 1935 and the present. The Southwest Reserve Life Insurance Company purchased the McWilliams Building in 1940 and occupied the sixth floor.<sup>78</sup> The company was no longer occupying the building by 1969.<sup>79</sup> City directories indicate vacancies on the upper office-space floors during the late 1950s and in 1959 the sixth floor was vacant. In the 1960s the upper floors were partially vacant, with realty companies, oil firms, lawyers, and physicians occupying offices. In 1977, Robert Cargill, a prominent area businessman purchased the building and renamed it the K L T V Cargill Tower. During this period, the building housed Cargill Oil Company on the fifth floor and other oil related companies leased office space throughout. The retail space on the ground floor was vacant in 1990 and the entire building was vacant in 1994.<sup>80</sup> The building was purchased by the Weaver family in September 2001, at which time it became known as the Weaver Building.<sup>81</sup> Currently, retail fills the ground floor and the second through sixth floors are office space (*Figures 1-3*). The building was renamed Heritage Tower in early 2018.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> “McWilliams Furniture Co. in Business Since 1928,” *El Dorado News-Times*, (March 30, 1975): 11.

<sup>70</sup> “Store Interior a Panorama of Charm,” *Longview News-Journal*, (November 17, 1968): 20.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> “Graves Devotes Years to Firm,” *Longview News-Journal* (November 17, 1968): 17.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> “Museum,” *Longview News-Journal*, (February 5, 1995): 30.

<sup>75</sup> “Graves Devotes Years to Firm,” *Longview News-Journal* (November 17, 1968): 17.

<sup>76</sup> “Honored at Reception,” *Longview News-Journal* (November 7, 1983): 6.

<sup>77</sup> “Selling Out,” *Longview News-Journal* (November 26, 1987): 24.

<sup>78</sup> “Large Real Estate Deal is Closed Here,” *Longview News-Journal* (April 30, 1940): 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Longview City Directory*, 1969: 144.

<sup>80</sup> “Museum Officials Not Giving Up on Cargill Tower,” *Longview News-Journal*, (October 27, 1994): 9.

<sup>81</sup> “Bank One Building the Next Challenge for the Weaver Family” *Longview News-Journal*, (August 31, 2004): 6.

<sup>82</sup> “Longview Senior Housing Project Part of Company’s Niche,” *Longview News-Journal*, (February 10, 2018):3.

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### Criterion C, Architecture

The McWilliams Building is locally significant under Criterion C for Architecture as an excellent example of an Art Deco office building within a small city context. Although it is only six stories tall, at the time of its construction, the McWilliams Building was the tallest building in Longview.<sup>83</sup> The 1930 discovery of the nearby East Texas oilfield brought an influx of capital into Longview, and developers sought to capitalize on strong economic conditions that were sheltered from the effects of the Great Depression. As a result, some of the city's most prominent architect-designed civic and commercial buildings were constructed at this time, including the nominated property.

#### *Martin T. Clements (1883-1955)*

Born in Kildare, Cass County, Texas in on December 29, 1883, Martin T. ("M.T.") Clements started a construction business with his father when the family moved to Hamlin, Jones County in 1907. Clements' architectural education was primarily result of on-the-job training. Although it is not known where he was accredited, the State of Texas invariably recorded him as a registered architect No. 107. Historic newspapers throughout his career, including Clements' obituary, describe his expertise as a builder, superintendent, foreman, architect, and "one of West Texas' hustling contractors."<sup>84</sup> Indeed, for much Clements' early career he followed the work. In 1914, he lived in San Antonio where he gained employment with the Bexar County Bridge Engineering Corps under noted Texas architect Atlee B. Ayers (then the Architect for the State of Texas). Two years later, Abilene architect David S. Castle hired Clements as his superintendent and fieldman, a position he maintained until 1924. During this time Castle's firm constructed private residences, schools, and civic buildings. In 1917, a newspaper credited Clements as the contractor for the Central Nazarene University Administration Building in Hamlin (destroyed by fire in 1934).<sup>85</sup>

From 1925-1943, Clements worked for the noted Texas architectural firm Voelcker and Dixon of Wichita Falls and was under their employment when he designed the McWilliams Building. Herbert Voelcker (1888-1971) and Jesse G. Dixon (1888-1962) established their firm in 1918, and they operated during the "golden age" of construction in Wichita Falls that was precipitated by the discovery of nearby oilfields.<sup>86</sup> There they designed major civic and commercial buildings, often utilizing steel or concrete forms with stone and brick veneer. Outside of Wichita Falls, the firm was frequently selected to construct county courthouses and by 1940 had completed 11, including the Gregg County Courthouse in 1933.(*Figure 11*)<sup>87</sup> Clements supervised the construction of these courthouses and was credited

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<sup>83</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps list the height of the McWilliams building at seventy-four feet while the nearby Glover-Crim building was seventy feet tall. In 1954 the ten-story Citizens National Bank replaced the McWilliams Building as the tallest in Longview. To-date and aside from Citizens National Bank, no other building in downtown Longview has surpassed the McWilliams Building in height.

<sup>84</sup> *The Hamlin Herald*, August 17, 1912.

<sup>85</sup> "Two Good Hamlin Buildings Nearly Finished," *The Hamlin Herald* (June 22, 1917): 8.

<sup>86</sup> Herbert Voelcker (1888-1971) was born in New Braunfels, Texas in 1888. After graduating from Texas A&M in 1909 with a degree in architectural engineering, Voelcker worked for several Texas firms before relocating to the Midwest.<sup>86</sup> Voelcker was employed at the Kansas City and Chicago offices of Lewis and Kitchen from 1911 to 1915, before working as a draftsman and engineer in Albert Kahn's Detroit office in 1916.<sup>86</sup> In 1916, Voelcker moved to Wichita Falls and formed a partnership with Jesse G. Dixon in 1918. Jesse G. Dixon (1888-1962) was born in Paducah, Kentucky, where he graduated from Paducah High School in 1904.<sup>86</sup> By 1910, Dixon was employed as a draftsman in the Fort Worth, Texas office of Waller, Shaw, & Field. Dixon began employment as a draftsman for the S.W. Bell Telephone Co. that same year where he worked until 1912. Dixon was an active partner in the Voelcker & Dixon firm until 1945.<sup>86</sup> American Institute of Architects, "Voelcker, Herbert: Application for Membership." April 3, 1942. <http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/T-Z/VoelckerHerbert.pdf> (accessed August 30, 2018); American Institute of Architects, "Dixon, Jesse G.: Application for Membership." March 16, 1942. <http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/AIA%20scans/C-E/DixonJesseG.pdf> (accessed September 7, 2018.).

<sup>87</sup> "Court Building Cost to Date Over \$300,000," *Longview News-Journal*, (July 6, 1933): 10.

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as an associate architect for the Gregg County Courthouse. By 1935, Clements and his wife, Grace Anderson, relocated to Longview where he designed more buildings from the firm's satellite office. These projects included the McWilliams Building and a 3-story educational building for the Kelly Memorial Methodist church. It is not known what other projects Clements solely designed while employed by Voelcker and Dixon, and in 1943 he established his own firm in Longview. Ten years later, Clements retired.

The McWilliams Building represents Clement's work during the middle period of his career. Although Clements is credited as the architect of the McWilliams Building, its design is strongly reminiscent of projects completed by the firm of Voelcker and Dixon with whom he was employed. An example of the firm's commercial design is the W.A. Freear Furniture Company/Maskat Shrine Temple Building in Wichita Falls.<sup>88</sup> Constructed in 1929 nearly 300 miles northwest of Longview, the 4-story building shares similarities with the McWilliams Building. Both buildings possess rectangular footprints, flat roofs, and two-part vertical block forms. Striated buff brick clads the exterior of both buildings and their street-facing elevations are significantly more ornate than the secondary elevations. Like the McWilliams Building, the W.A. Freear Furniture Company/Maskat Shrine Temple Building features prominent piers which emphasize the vertical rhythm of the building. Wide piers define the bays of each building while narrow pilasters separate individual windows. Spandrels are positioned between each story's windows.

The W.A. Freear Furniture Company/Maskat Shrine Temple Building also exhibits ornamentation similar to the McWilliams Building, including Greek Key decorative brick work above the ground-level storefronts and a "sawtooth sailor course" above the top row of windows. (*Figure 10*)<sup>89</sup> A band of evenly spaced cast stone tiles highlights the roofline and cast stone coping tops the parapet. While the buildings exhibit many similarities, the Freear Furniture Building is significantly more ornate. Decorative cast stone surrounds and highly stylized pediments highlight the entrances. Cast stone panels and brickwork decorate the spandrels while medallions with stylized floral motifs are positioned between the pilaster tops. Cast stone palmettes top each pilaster, with their stylized foliage forms in contrast to the McWilliams Building's simplified geometric pilaster tops. Although the W.A. Freear Furniture Company/Maskat Shrine Temple Building's ornamentation is more elaborate than that of the McWilliams Building, it represents the beginning of Voelcker and Dixon's transition toward a more simplified, modern aesthetic. Built nearly six years later, the McWilliams Building further demonstrates this transition through its paring down of decorative features.

### *The McWilliams Building and Art Deco in Longview, Texas*

Eliel Saarinen's entry in the 1922 Chicago *Tribune* competition for a new headquarters design marks an early major American exploration of Art Deco. While Saarinen's design ultimately lost to Raymond Hood and John Mead Howells's Gothic submission, it was widely published and strongly influenced the style's popularization in the United States.<sup>90</sup> Art Deco reached peak popularity during the 1920s and 1930s and was frequently utilized in commercial and government building designs. Despite the style reaching popularity during this period, the term "Art Deco" was not widely applied until 1968 when Bevis Hillier popularized the term in his book, *Art Deco of the 20s and 30s* in which he identified two variants of the style: streamlined and classicism.<sup>91</sup> The nominated building represents the latter of the Art Deco iterations.

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<sup>88</sup> The W.A. Freear Furniture Company/Maskat Shrine Temple Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 23, 2017.

<sup>89</sup> Wilcox, Haley. "W.A. Freear Furniture Company/Maskat Shrine Temple Building," National Register of Historic Places Form. Ogee, LLC. Austin, Texas, June 1, 2018: 6

<sup>90</sup> Although it received public praise, Saarinen's design was never built.

<sup>91</sup> Bevis Hillier, *Art Deco of the 20s and 30s*, (London: Studio Vista, 1968). He authored editions in 1985 and 1998. In 2003, Bevis Hillier and Stephen Escritt. *Art Deco Style*.

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Art Deco buildings have flat roofs and boxy massing. They frequently feature stepped parapets which not only maintain light and air movement in urban environments dominated by tall buildings but emphasize the vertical rhythm of the building. Regular fenestration and decorative elements such as pilasters further emphasize building height. Brick and stone are common cladding materials while terra cotta, carved or cast stone, and metal are frequently utilized for ornamentation. Examples of Art Deco ornamental motifs include geometric forms, stylized floral and foliage elements, chevrons, sunbursts, flutes, keystones, reeds, and pilasters.

The McWilliams Building demonstrates a pared down version of Art Deco styling through its form, massing, and decorative elements. A flat roof tops the two-part commercial block form. The brick cladding and terra cotta ornamentation are materials commonly used in Art Deco buildings. Regular fenestration and prominent pilasters emphasize the vertical rhythm of the McWilliams Building. Stepped terra cotta capitals with sharp angles top the pilasters. A row of terra cotta tiles emphasizes the flat roof line. The tiles feature a low-relief Art Deco motif including a chevron and stylized geometric form suggestive of a palmette or other foliage. The restrained version of Art Deco exhibited by the McWilliams Building reflects the influence of Modern Classicism. Popularized by Paul Phillipe Cret in the late 1920s, Modern Classicism is a simplified or “stripped” interpretation of Classical architecture. Hillier distinguishes classicism from streamlined based on inspiration source and design characteristics.<sup>92</sup> The streamline variant looks towards technological advancements, including modern aviation and automobiles, as its source of design inspiration. As a result, it often incorporates rounded corners and a sleek, aerodynamic appearance. In contrast, classicism draws from historical arts and architecture and incorporates modernized versions of classical elements. While Classical proportions, massing, and forms are retained, modern decorative elements replace the classical orders. The result is a style that combines familiar traditional forms, symmetry, and proportions with modern elements tailored to a specific place and time. Architects Voelcker and Dixon frequently employed Modern Classicism in their designs and its influence is visible in the simplified or “stripped” ornament of the building as well as its symmetry, proportions, and massing.

In addition to the McWilliams Building, two other notable buildings in downtown Longview constructed during the 1930s were built in the Art Deco style. The Glover-Crim Building, located at the southwest corner of East Tyler Avenue and North Fredonia Street, was originally constructed as a two-story building in 1933.<sup>93</sup> However, in 1935 an additional four-stories were added.<sup>94</sup> Local architects Peters, Strange, and Company designed the addition and C.S. Lambie and Company was the builder.<sup>95</sup> Like the McWilliams Building, the Glover-Crim Building utilizes buff brick cladding and regular fenestration while commercial storefronts occupy the ground floor. The building exhibits restrained Art Deco ornament on both street-facing elevations. Narrow brick pilasters with geometric terra cotta caps define the bays. Terra cotta bands top the storefronts while geometric and floral motif tiles emphasize the roofline. Known alterations to the exterior include the replacement of historic storefronts with two- and three-part display systems which are recessed substantially and extend to the ground surface. Photographs from the 1940s indicate the original storefronts projected and rested on bulwarks.<sup>96</sup> Additional alterations include replacement of historic awning sash windows with single-pane fixed windows and the enlargement of the east elevation entrance.

The Gregg County Courthouse, another Voelcker and Dixon work, was constructed in 1933 and is an example of Art Deco applied to a government building in Longview (*Figure 11*). Located in the courthouse square approximately two blocks northwest of the McWilliams Building, the Gregg County Courthouse has buff brick cladding and a stepped

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<sup>92</sup> Bevis Hillier and Stephen Escriitt. *Art Deco Style*, (London: Phaidon, 2003) 140.

<sup>93</sup> “Horace Glover and John Crim Rank Leaders,” *Longview News-Journal*, (October 4, 1933):10.

<sup>94</sup> Eugene W. McWhorter, *The Club and the Town: The Rotary Club and the City of Longview, Texas, Year by Year from 1920 to 1995*. Longview, Texas: Longview Rotary Endowment Fund, Inc., 1995:80.

<sup>95</sup> “New Building One of the Most Modern, Comfortable in Texas,” *Longview News-Journal*, (September 4, 1935):9.

<sup>96</sup> McWhorter, *The Club and the Town*: 80.

McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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façade with Art Deco ornamentation. Narrow non-historic one-by-one windows fill each bay and historic piers topped with terra cotta eagles emphasize the main entrance on West Methvin Street. A narrow band of terra cotta tiles with geometric motifs accents the roofline. The ornament and façade detailing are similar to the McWilliams Building. Annexes constructed in 1952 and 1982 flank the original block. While the 1952 annex is complementary in scale and style, the 1982 annex is not.

The Glover-Crim Building is the only building comparable to the McWilliams Building in Longview, and both demonstrate the utilization of Art Deco for the design of commercial architecture in the city during the 1930s. However, alterations to the Glover-Crim Building exterior, including the loss of all historic windows and the alteration of the storefronts, have resulted in diminished integrity.<sup>97</sup> While Gregg County Courthouse also employs Art Deco styling, it exhibits an interpretation of the style adapted to the gravity and institutional nature of a government building rather than a commercial structure.

### **Conclusion**

The McWilliams Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its associations with the commercial development in downtown Longview during the 1930s and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of an Art Deco commercial building in Longview. The six-story building was the tallest structure in Longview at the time of its construction and is a symbol of the aspirations of Longview's early developers. Constructed during a city-wide building boom precipitated by the East Texas oilfield discovery, the McWilliams Building is representative of Longview's commercial development; the building's continued occupancy through the 1960s highlights its importance to the social and economic strength of the city during the period of significance, 1935-1969. The building's boxy massing, vertical emphasis, terra cotta capped pilasters, and geometric terra cotta ornament remain intact and represent the adaptation of Art Deco styling to a mid-rise commercial building in an East Texas city.

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<sup>97</sup> The interior integrity of the Glover-Crim Building was not evaluated.

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**Maps**

Map 1. Location of Gregg County, Texas.



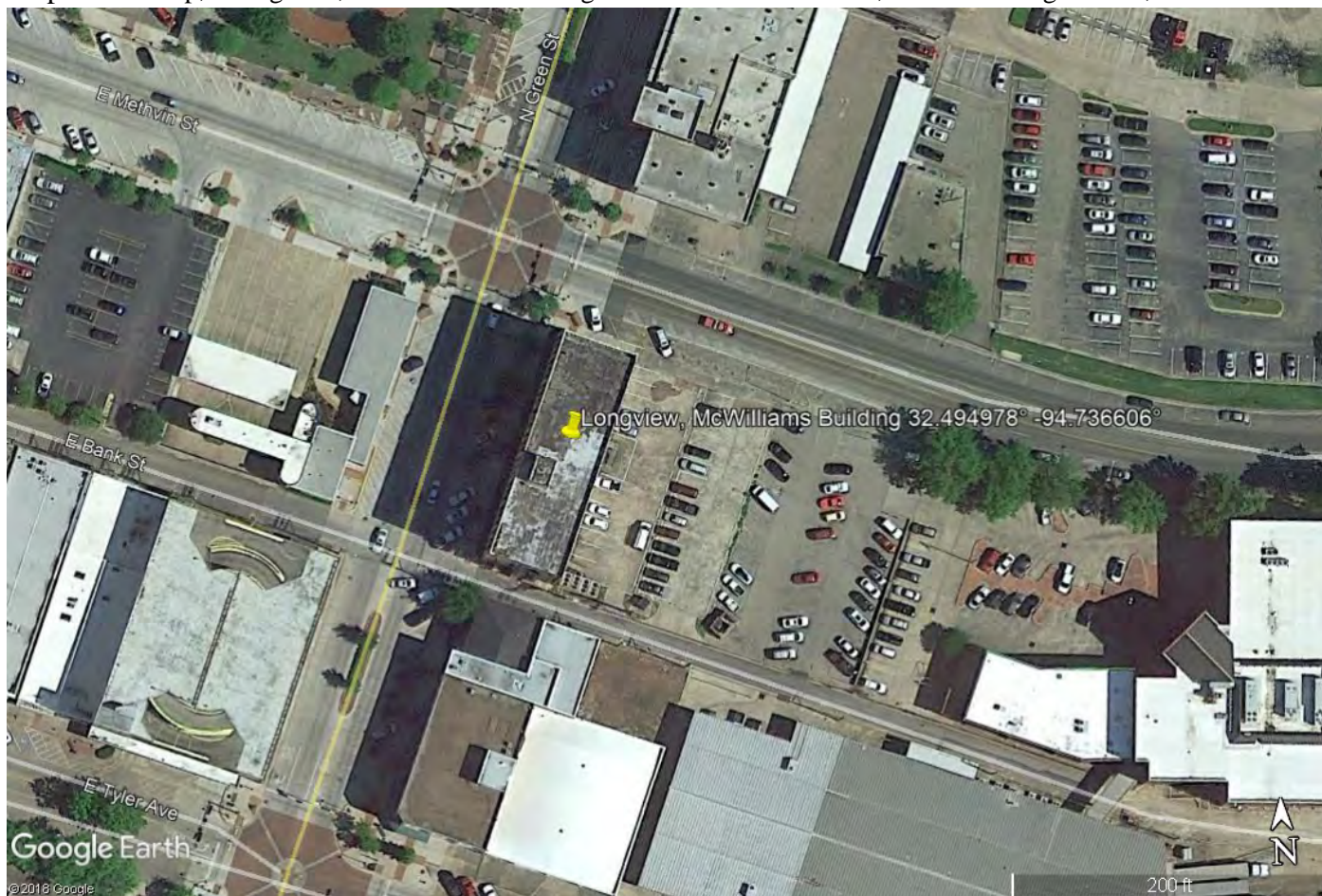
Map 2. Context Map. Source: Google Maps, 2017. The red box identifies Longview's downtown central business district, the original town plat.





McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

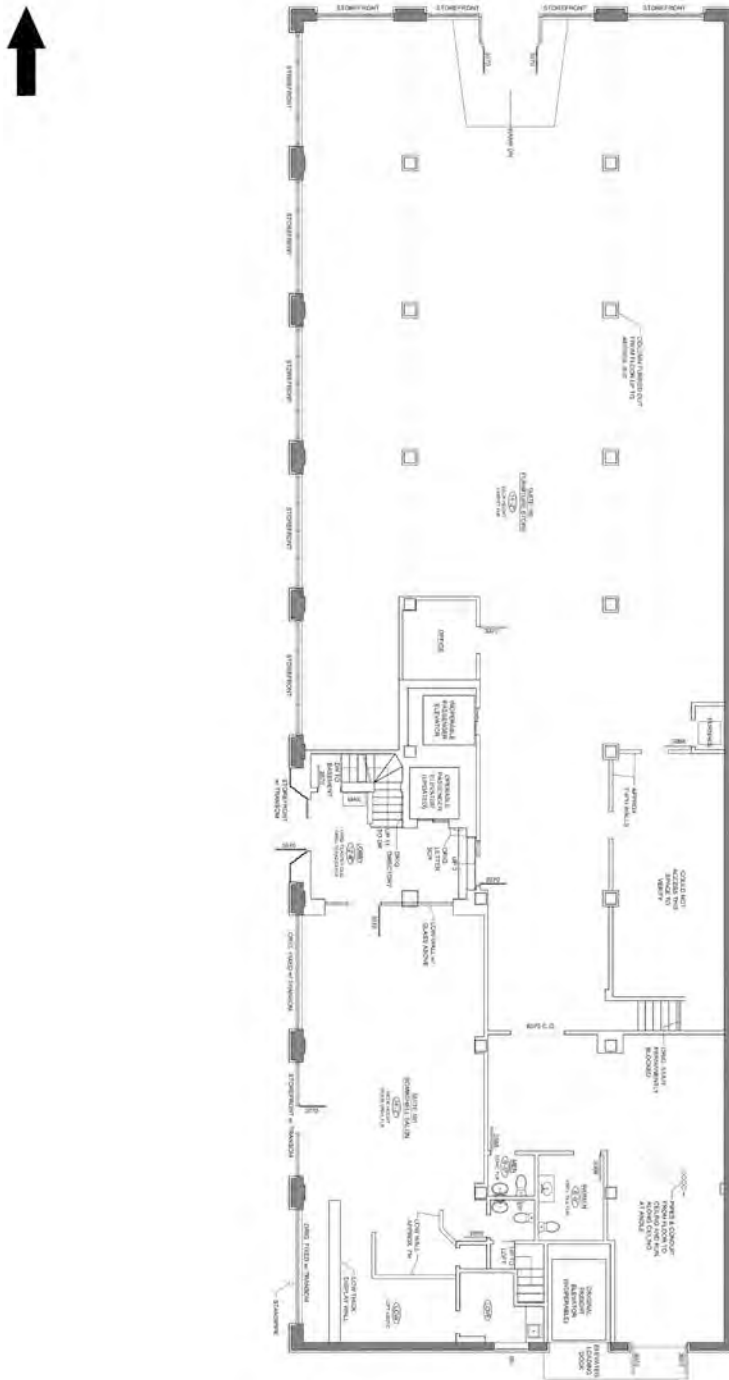
Map 3. Site Map, "Longview, McWilliams Building 32.494978° -94.736606°," Source: Google Earth, 2017.



McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

Figures

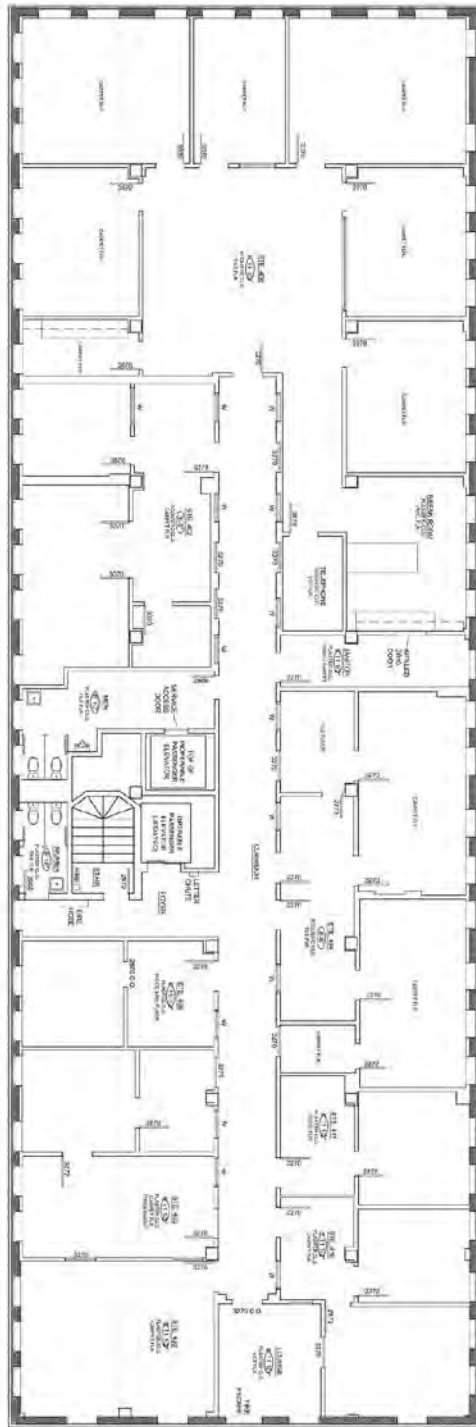
Figure 1. McWilliams Building exterior and first floor current plans. Source: Eden Consulting, LLC. "208 N. Green Street As-Built Drawings," 2018.



McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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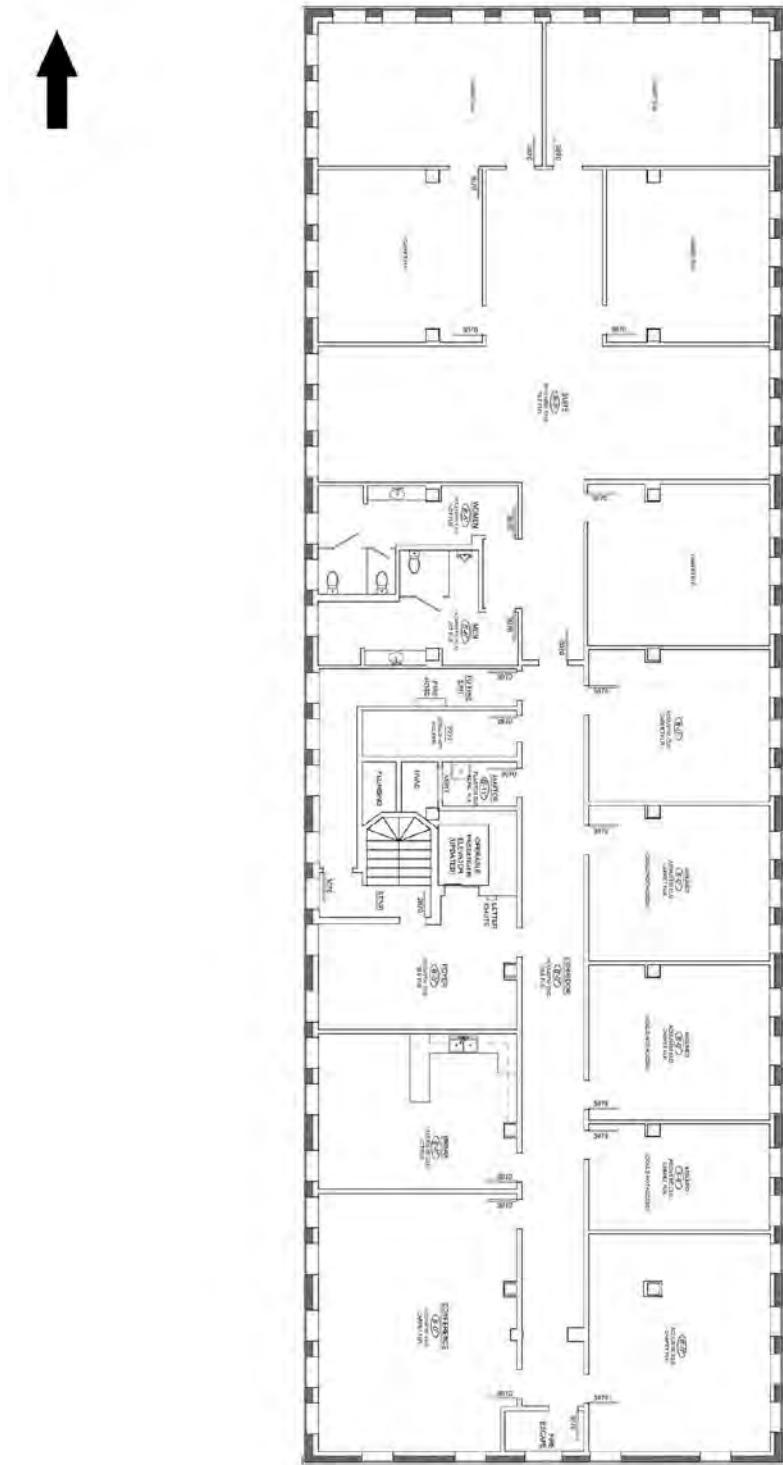
Figure 2. McWilliams Building fourth floor current plans. Floors 4-5 retain the historic layout. Source: Eden Consulting, LLC. "208 N. Green Street As-Built Drawings," 2018.



McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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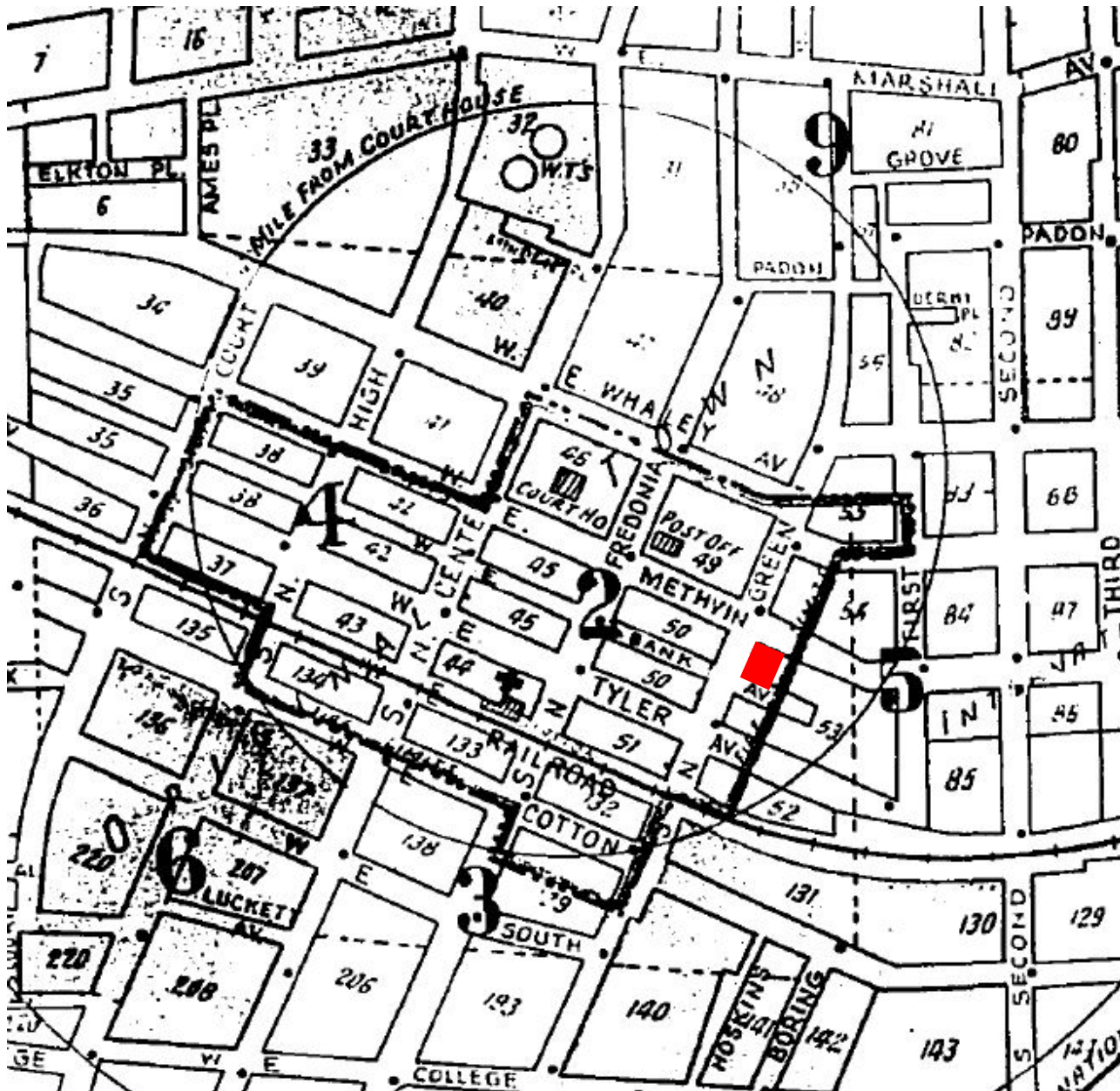
Figure 3. McWilliams Building sixth floor current plans. This floor has modern finishes but retains a layout compatible with the historic floorplan. Source: Eden Consulting, LLC. "208 N. Green Street As-Built Drawings," 2018.





McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

Figure 4. 1932 Sanborn Insurance Map of Longview, Gregg County (fragment). The 1935 McWilliams Building was constructed on the northwest corner of Block 53 and is noted by the red box.  
Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. Longview, Gregg County, Texas. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1932, Sheet 1 ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps.

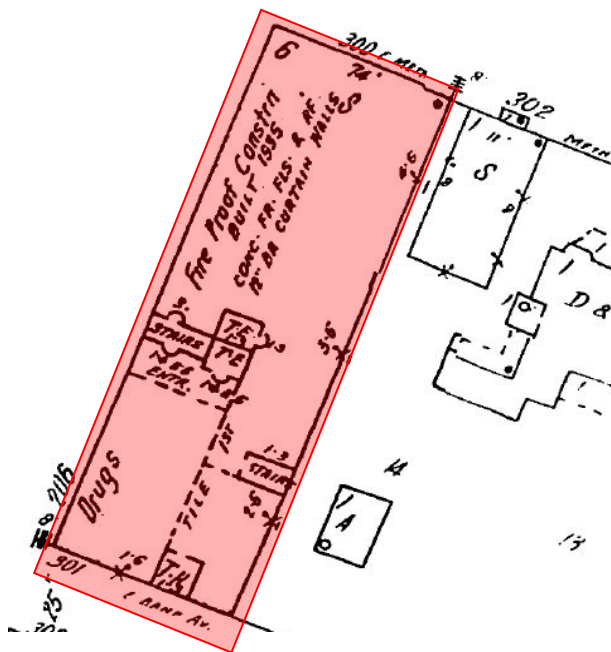


McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

Figure 5. McWilliams Building is on Block 53. Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. Longview, Gregg County, Texas. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1923-1946, Sheet 5.



Figure 6. 1946 Longview Sanborn Map (detail) of McWilliams Building





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Figure 7. McWilliams (Southwest Reserve Life Insurance) Building c. 1940.  
Courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission.



Figure 8. McWilliams (Southwest Reserve Life Insurance) Building c. 1950.  
Source: Tichnor Brothers Postcard Collection, Boston Public Library.





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Figure 9. 1933 Glover-Crim Building, 140 E. Tyler Street, Longview, Texas, c. 1940. Source: Longview Public Library via The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Building.



Figure 10. The Freear/Maskat Building in Wichita Falls, Wichita County is another commercial building designed by Voelker and Dixon.





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Figure 11. Gregg County Courthouse historic postcard, c. 1940. Source: Longview Public Library via The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Building.



Figure 12. 1954/56 Petroleum Building, 202 E. Whaley Street, Longview, Texas. The building is representative of Longview's post-WWII building boom and is currently under review by NPS for listing in the NRHP. Source: Sophie Roark, Rosin Preservation 2018.



McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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**Photographs**

Photo 1. West elevation, view E.





McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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Photo 2. North elevation, view S.



McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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Photo 3. East Elevation, view W.





McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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Photo 4. South elevation, view NE.





McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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Photo 5

Ornament detail, north elevation, east corner, view S.



Photo 6

Typical storefront with modern alterations, north elevation, view S.



McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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Photo 7  
Lobby, view NE.



Photo 8  
North retail space, first floor, view S.





McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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Photo 9  
South retail space, first floor, view NW.



Photo 10  
Elevator lobby with historic finishes, fourth floor, view W.





McWilliams Building, Gregg County, Texas

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Photo 11  
Corridor with modern alterations, sixth floor, view S.



Photo 12  
Corridor with historic finishes, fifth floor, view SW.



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FLOORING

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3	300	11	502
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5	403	13	506
6	404	14	507
7	412	15	510
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: McWilliams Building

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: TEXAS, Gregg

Date Received: 2/7/2019      Date of Pending List: 2/28/2019      Date of 16th Day: 3/15/2019      Date of 45th Day: 3/25/2019      Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: SG100003536

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

<input type="checkbox"/> Appeal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL	<input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo
<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver	<input type="checkbox"/> National	<input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary
<input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Period
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> TCP	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> CLG	

Accept       Return       Reject      3/25/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The McWilliams Building is locally significant under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of Commerce and Architecture. Built in 1935 for the McWilliams Furniture Company and a group of local investors, the six-story, mid-rise, concrete-frame building is a fine local example of restrained Art Deco-inspired design. Clad in buff-colored brick, the commanding building represents the work of local architect Martin T. Clements (Voelcker & Dixon). The building was planned and erected to meet the anticipated commercial growth of Longview after the discovery of nearby oil fields in 1930, and served as a major retail and office space in the community.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept NR Criteria A and C

Reviewer: Paul Lusignan      Discipline: Historian

Telephone: (202)354-2229      Date: 3/25/2019

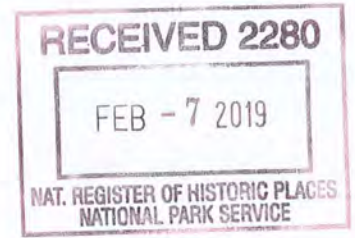
DOCUMENTATION:      see attached comments : No      see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

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TO: Paul Lusignan  
National Register of Historic Places  
Mail Stop 7228  
1849 C St, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

From: Mark Wolfe, SHPO  
Texas Historical Commission

RE: McWilliams Building, Longview, Gregg County, Texas

DATE: February 6, 2019

The following materials are submitted:

X	Original National Register of Historic Places form on disk. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the McWilliams Building, Longview, Gregg County, Texas.
	Resubmitted nomination.
X	Original NRHP signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
	Multiple Property Documentation form on disk.
	Resubmitted form.
	Original MPDF signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
X	CD with TIFF photograph files, KMZ files, and nomination PDF
	Correspondence.

COMMENTS:

- SHPO requests substantive review (cover letter from SHPO attached)
- The enclosed owner objections (do\_\_\_) (do not\_\_\_) constitute a majority of property owners
- Other:

