



Marathon Historic Resources Survey 2021

Architectural historians from Houston-based McDoux Preservation LLC will be in Marathon, Texas, conducting a historic resources Survey on October 19-21, 2021.

You may see us around Marathon taking photographs of buildings and making notes about what the building looks like. We will be wearing orange vests, and we will only be in the public right-of-way. *We will not enter private property.* (We have let Brewster County Sheriff Ronnie Dodson know that we will be in town.)

While we're in Marathon, we are staying in AirBnBs, shopping at French Co. Grocery, and enjoying restaurants like the Oasis Café and Big Bend Pizza. If you see us, please say hello! We would love to meet you.

What is a historic resources survey?

A historic resources survey examines an area and describes the resources (buildings, structures, objects, and sites) found there. That data is used to determine whether any of those resources are architecturally or historically significant and, therefore, eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Why do a historic resource survey of Marathon?

Many cities, towns, and neighborhoods in Texas have been documented through historic resource surveys. For example, the Texas Historical Commission has photographs of a few buildings in Marathon from 1978. Back in those days, historians only documented buildings that were at least 50 years old and considered architecturally important or otherwise "historic." Today, we document everything. It is very common to include an entire town or small city in a historic resources survey.

What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Register of Historic Places is the United States' official inventory of historic places that contribute to our country's heritage because they are architecturally, archeologically, or historically significant for their associations with important persons or events. The National Register includes properties of local importance, not just great national landmarks. A general store, a community park, a main street, or the remains of a prehistoric village may be just as eligible for inclusion in the National Register as the Texas State Capitol or the Alamo.

Does this survey mean my property will be listed on the National Register of Historic Places?

No. This project will only identify properties that are *eligible* for the National Register. To be listed on the National Register, a property or potential historic district has to be nominated through a lengthy process that involves preparing a detailed description of the property or district and its history, notifying property owners and getting approval from the Texas Historical Commission State Board of Review and the National Park Service.

Does listing on the National Register take away my property rights?

Nope! The National Register does not restrict property owners in any way. They can still do whatever they want with their property. The National Register is strictly an honorary recognition.

Are there any benefits to having a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places?

Yes! A property that is either individually listed on the National Register or is classified as contributing to a National Register historic district is eligible for federal and state tax credits for rehabilitation; the federal historic tax credit is only available to income-producing properties, but the Texas state historic tax credit program is open to nonprofit organizations. In addition, commercial properties can apply for a state sales tax exemption on construction labor, as well as a state sales tax exemption on “amusement services” such as movies or concerts, antique shows, museums or zoos, spectator sports, participatory games and sports (like bowling or go-carts), carnivals, and tourist attractions. A listing on the National Register also makes properties eligible for some state and federal grants.

Who is paying for this historic resources survey?

In 2020, McDoux Preservation LLC prepared a National Register nomination for the Gage Hotel. During that process, we learned a lot about the history of Marathon and how it developed over time. Earlier this year, Gage Hotel owner J. P. Bryan asked us to do this survey, and he is sponsoring the project.

Who decides if any properties in Marathon are eligible for the National Register?

McDoux architectural historians will tentatively make a recommendation, but we will discuss it with the National Register staff at the Texas Historical Commission. We will report our findings to the Marathon community in early 2022.