

In 1931, the first oil well in Victoria County was brought in at McFaddin. Population on the ranch peaked in 1934, when there were 141 employees, their wives, and 296 children. As mechanization became more commonplace, the need for farm laborers and ranch hands dwindled. Many of the younger generation left the ranch in search of different opportunities. By 1977, the number of families on the ranch dropped to 55. The deaths of Claude McCan in 1976, Dennis Adler and William Peavy in 1977, and Frank Ernst in 1986 represented the passing of the generation that had led McFaddin ranch through much of the twentieth century. In 1989, the ranch was subdivided by James McFaddin's heirs. Some portions of the ranch were still used for cattle raising by the family, while the farmland was leased. The McFaddin Grain Company remained in operation as well (Hand 2000:105). In 1983, the historic schoolhouse was replaced with a new brick building, but this school closed in the early 1990s. By the late 1990s, the town still supported a post office, and the former general store was converted to a café.

Due to the community's association with the McFaddin ranch the proposed district is recommended eligible for its local significance in the area of agriculture (Criterion A). For its concentration of buildings constructed in the regional vernacular style prior to 1930 with little to no influence from prevailing national styles, the district is recommended eligible for its local significance in the area of architecture (Criterion C). The district is recommended eligible for its local significance in the area of community development as it demonstrates a vernacular, rural pattern of land use and community development initially driven by the establishment of a railroad through the area in the early twentieth century. The period of significance for the district is 1906-1987, the former date being the year that the St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico Railroad built a route through the area and established the town of Marianna, and the later date being the year the original James A. McFaddin ranch property was divided among his heirs, thereby altering the historic operation of the ranch as a single, cohesive entity, to which the town's historic significance is associated.

Resources recommended as contributing to the Town of McFaddin Historic District retain their architectural integrity, in addition to maintaining their historic and architectural continuity as components of an early twentieth-century ranching center. The majority of the contributing resources are domestic single dwellings, but commercial and institutional buildings, as well as agricultural outbuildings, are also present. The 36 resources are all of the regional vernacular style and maintain a continuity that reflects the historic character of the rural community.

Potential for Visual Impacts on the Proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District and its Contributing Resources

The proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District is located immediately south of the project site. The landscape between the project site and the town of McFaddin consists primarily of open pasture (Figures 262 and 263), though small pockets of vegetation consisting of mesquite and other trees are present in McFaddin and the surrounding area (Figure 264). The absence of substantial vegetation to screen the view of the proposed construction from the town indicate that the proposed structures (at either 166 or 250 feet in height) and associated steam plume would be visible from McFaddin year round. As a town founded to support, and historically associated with, the McFaddin Ranch, open space is a physical feature paramount to the town's historic setting and feeling and to the setting and feeling of the individual historic resources therein. These factors, combined with the proximity of the town to the project site indicate that the proposed structures (at either 166 feet or 250 feet in height) and steam plume would impact the setting and feeling of the district as a rural ranching center and would therefore have an adverse effect on the proposed district and its individual contributing resources.



Figure 262. View toward Victoria County Station project site from Proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District, looking north.



Figure 263. View toward Victoria County Station project site from Proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District, looking north-northwest.



Figure 264. View toward Victoria County Station project site from Proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District, looking west-northwest.

Street Number Unavailable, FM 445: Historic McFaddin Mercantile/Café (Property #420)

Constructed in 1910, the Historic McFaddin Mercantile/Café (Figures 265 and 266) is a one-story building with board-and-batten siding and a composite shingle roof. The building has a front-gabled roof and one shorter, front-gabled wing. The forward wall surface of the front-gabled wing is flush with that of the primary building; the wing extends approximately two-thirds of the length of the primary building. A double door entry with double four-light screen doors on the exterior is located on the east elevation. The front-gabled wing has an attached corrugated metal addition with a shed roof and screen windows projecting perpendicularly from its east elevation.

Each front-facing gable has a broken-bed pediment. A corrugated metal shed-roof projection extending from the wall surface of the primary bay is supported by narrow square posts. An additional, low-pitched shed roof extends from the shed roof awning creating an additional covered area at the entrance. The building has a concrete pier and beam foundation. Each entrance has a corresponding elevated wood platform with wood stairs to provide access to the elevated building. The main double-door entry features a wood platform that spans the width of the bay. Window composition varies, with four-over-four, one-over-one, and nine-over-six double-hung wood sash windows present on the building.



Figure 265. Street Number Unavailable, FM 445, McFaddin Mercantile/Café, looking southeast.



Figure 266. Street Number Unavailable, FM 445, McFaddin Mercantile/Café, looking west-southwest.

The McFaddins built the mercantile building adjacent to the rail road tracks in the nascent ranching community in 1910. F. P. Marberry and E. P. Stubblefield briefly ran a competing mercantile but sold their concern to the McFaddins in early 1912. Families living between the Guadalupe and San Antonio rivers bought their food, clothing, and hardware at the store, much of it on credit. Frank Ernst acted as the store's general manager from 1920 and held the job for more than 60 years. At its peak of operations, the store had nine clerks. Inventory ranged from sewing thread, buttons, fabrics, shoes, boots, linens, a candy counter, rope, hoes, rakes, and buckets, to a variety of canned goods, fruits, and vegetables. Gas pumps were installed at the front of the mercantile, and flat tires could be repaired and oil changed while customers waited. The McFaddin ranch office also operated in the store. Dennis Adler and William Peavy managed day-to-day business operations for a combined total of 104 years. A café offered ice cream cones and, for a time, a meat market. Before the ranch received electricity, an ice house adjacent to the café stored ice brought from Victoria. The ice was sold to ranch residents and those from the general area (Hand 2000:101, 103).

The McFaddin Mercantile/Café became an RTHL in 1990. The building is recommended as contributing to the proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District due to its prominent role in the town's history and its integrity as an early twentieth-century commercial structure that embodies the regional vernacular style. The building is located approximately 5.7 km (3.5 mi) from the center point of the project site. As discussed in the previous section titled "Potential for Visual Impacts on the Proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District and its Contributing Resources," the proposed structures (at either 166 or 250 feet in height) and associated steam plume would have an adverse effect on the proposed district, and on the McFaddin Mercantile/Café as a contributing resource.

Street Number Unavailable, FM 445: Historic McFaddin Post Office (Property #417)

Constructed in 1914, the historic McFaddin Post Office (Figures 267 and 268) is a one-story, front-gabled building with board-and-batten siding and a composite shingle roof. Four-over-four double-hung wood sash windows are present on the side elevations. A shed-roof extension spanning the width of the front façade forms the awning of the front porch and is supported by three narrow square posts. A rear entry is sheltered by a small shed-roof projection supported by solid triangular brackets.

The post office operated originally within the Marberry/Stubblefield store, and then in the McFaddins' store. Crowded conditions prompted the 1914 construction of this separate building, measuring 12 feet by 18 feet, that remained in use until 1995. The railroad delivered mail to the ranch for many years. For a time, the train made a scheduled stop for passengers, and to deliver packages and letters. After scheduled train service ceased, an outgoing mail pouch was hung from a pole near the track and a hook on the train snagged it; incoming mail was tossed to the ground without the train ever stopping. During the mid-1990s, the U.S. Post Office replaced the historic building with a prefabricated metal building that included air conditioning, disability access, and restrooms, all of which had been lacking previously (Hand 2000:101, 103; Roell 1990d:74).



Figure 267. Street Number Unavailable, FM 445, Historic McFaddin Post Office, looking east-northeast.



Figure 268. Street Number Unavailable, FM 445, Historic McFaddin Post Office looking southeast.

The historic McFaddin Post Office is an RTHL and is recommended as a contributing resource to the proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District due to its important role in the town's history and its integrity as an early twentieth-century building that embodies the regional vernacular style. The building is located approximately 5.6 km (3.5 mi) from the center point of the project site. As discussed in the previous section titled "Potential for Visual Impacts on the Proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District and its Contributing Resources," the proposed structures (at either 166 or 250 feet in height) and associated steam plume would have an adverse effect on the proposed district, and on the historic McFaddin Post Office as a contributing resource.

**Street Number Unavailable, FM 445: Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church
(Property #418)**

Constructed in 1916, Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church (Figures 269 and 270) is a one-story building with horizontal wood siding and a composite shingle roof. The building has a front-gabled roof with a lower front-gabled entry vestibule. A wooden ramp and wooden double doors lead into the entry vestibule. Four-over-four double-hung wood sash windows are present throughout the building. As the population on the ranch and in the town grew, the McFaddins had the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church built for Catholic families on the ranch, primarily for those of Mexican descent.



Figure 269. Street Number Unavailable, FM 445, Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church, looking south.



Figure 270. Street Number Unavailable, Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church, FM 445, looking southwest.

The church is an RTHL and is recommended as a contributing resource to the proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District due to its important role in the town’s history and its integrity as an early twentieth-century building that embodies the regional vernacular style. The building is located approximately 5.8 km (3.6 mi) from the center point of the project site. As discussed in the previous section titled “Potential for Visual Impacts on the Proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District and its Contributing Resources,” the proposed structures (at either 166 or 250 feet in height) and associated steam plume would have an adverse effect on the proposed district, and on the Infant Jesus of Prague Catholic Church as a contributing resource.

Street Number Unavailable, FM 445: Historic McFaddin School (Property #520)

Constructed circa 1910, the historic McFaddin School (Figure 271) is a one-story building with vertical wood siding and a composite shingle roof. The central, primary mass of the building has a hipped-roof with one hipped-roof side projection at the rear. On the west elevation, a flat roof projection extends westward from the main entrance. A hipped awning supported by two narrow wood posts provides shelter over the front entry, which is a single wood door. One-over-one double-hung westward from the main entrance. A hipped awning supported by two narrow wood posts provides shelter over the front entry, which is a single wood door. One-over-one double-hung wood sash windows are present throughout the building. The historic McFaddin School is recommended as a contributing resource to the proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District. The building is located approximately 5.8 km (3.6 mi) from the center point of the project site. As discussed in the section titled “Potential for Visual Impacts on the Proposed Town of



Figure 271. Street Number Unavailable, FM 445, Historic McFaddin School, looking southwest.

McFaddin Historic District and its Contributing Resources,” the proposed structures (at either 166 or 250 feet in height) and associated steam plume would have an adverse effect on the proposed district, and on the historic McFaddin School as a contributing resource.

Street Number Unavailable, FM 445: Barn 1 (Property #415)

Constructed circa 1910, Barn 1 (Figures 272 and 273) is a single-story, front-gabled barn with shed-roofed extensions flanking the main gabled mass. The shed-roofed extensions form one-story areas that run the length of the barn. The barn is constructed of vertical wood planking. Three entries of varying sizes are present on the primary façade, and a narrow dormer window is present in the front gable. The barn retains its integrity and reflects the agricultural activities on which the town and the ranch were founded, and is therefore recommended as contributing to the proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District. The building is located approximately 5.6 km (3.5 mi) from the center point of the project site. As discussed in the section titled “Potential for Visual Impacts on the Proposed Town of McFaddin Historic District and its Contributing Resources,” the proposed structures (at either 166 or 250 feet in height) and associated steam plume would have an adverse effect on the proposed district, and on Barn 1 as a contributing resource.



Figure 272. Street Number Unavailable, FM 445, Barn 1, looking north-northeast.



Figure 273. Street Number Unavailable, FM 445, Barn 1, looking northwest.