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Historic Preservation and Public Relations Consultant

June 26, 2018

Mr. Gregory Smith
National Register Coordinator
Texas Historical Commission
PO Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276

Dear Greg,

I'm writing on behalf of the City of Granbury to request a determination of eligibility for the historic Granbury General Hospital building, which is located one block south of the Hood County Courthouse Square in Granbury. Granbury Historic Properties Corporation is the owner of the hospital building. The city designated it a Granbury Historic Landmark in 2006.

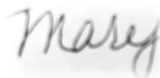
Since the mid-1970s, Granbury General has been used as a dormitory for drama students and interns who spend their summers and seasonal breaks acting at the Granbury Opera House. It is currently closed for much-needed rehabilitation and the city is interested in applying for grants this fall for the development of a preservation plan for the building.

Included in this request are:

1. a proposed statement of significance and significant dates,
2. a brief description of the building,
3. an overview of the history of Granbury General,
4. a current map and footprint of the hospital,
5. current photographs,
6. historic photographs, and
7. the architect's original east elevation of the hospital.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this request. Thank you for your time and consideration—we look forward to working with you on a National Register nomination for Granbury General Hospital.

Best Regards,



Mary G. Saltarelli

cc: Mr. Chris Coffman
Granbury City Manager

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Proposed Statement of Significance

Located one block south of the Hood County Courthouse Square and one-and-a-half blocks north of Lake Granbury, along the Brazos River, Granbury General Hospital is significant as the first large medical care facility built in Hood County. In 1946, Dr. L.G. Ballard and Dr. J.O. Carr opened Granbury General. The new hospital accommodated 20 patients, and featured two modern operating rooms and a delivery room and nursery. The hospital qualifies for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the area of Health and Medicine. Designed by architect C.O. Chromaster and built by contractor C.E. Lewis, both of Fort Worth, the hospital exhibits characteristics of Modern Movement architecture with its low, horizontal design; flat roof; ribbons of original steel casement windows; and hollow-clay tile construction. Granbury General also qualifies for listing under Criterion C in the area of architecture for its local significance as one of the few intact examples of Modern Movement buildings in the community. The period of significance of Granbury General Hospital is 1946 through 1968, ending at the 50-year point.

Dates of Significance

1945—Architect C.O. Chromaster of Fort Worth designs a one-story hospital that will be fireproof. Designed to be built of finished tile with steel windows, the hospital will feature air conditioning.

Summer 1945—Construction of the hospital by C.E. Lewis of Fort Worth begins.

February 1946—Grand opening of Granbury General.

January 1959—Grand opening for enlarged hospital is attended by 1,000 residents. Dr. R.N. Rawls, Dr. R.L. Brock and Dr. W.R. Jenkins are owners of hospital.

May 31, 1970—Granbury General closes for a “multitude of unreconciled problems.”

1976—Granbury Opera Association acquires Granbury General for use as dormitory for acting interns.

2006—Granbury Historic Properties Corporation receives Granbury Opera House and Granbury General from the Granbury Opera Association.

2018—City closes Granbury Opera House dormitory.

Brief Description

Granbury General Hospital is an L-shaped one-part commercial block featuring a projecting entryway with an upward angled awning supported by modern concrete columns. Today, the old hospital building contains 8,383 square feet of interior space. Unlike the early buildings on the Hood County Courthouse Square one block to the north, Granbury General is freestanding and set back slightly from the road.

Designed and constructed during the Modern Movement of the twentieth century, Granbury General features characteristics of the International style, including a flat roof, ribbons of casement windows, and plain unadorned walls. *The Hood County News Tablet* wrote that the new hospital was fireproof, with steel windows and finished tile. The hospital building still has its original steel casement windows and hollow-clay tile construction. Unlike many mid-twentieth century buildings, there has never been a parking lot in front of or adjacent to Granbury General Hospital

History of Granbury General Hospital

Architect C.O. Chromaster of Fort Worth designed Granbury General Hospital in 1945 for Dr. L.G. Ballard of Granbury. Chromaster's other designs include St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, University Christian Church, and Worth Heights Elementary School in Fort Worth. Chromaster's hospital elevation is shown in Photo 9 on page 9. It depicts a more pronounced International-style design than was carried out when C.E. Lewis of Fort Worth constructed the hospital the next year.

Chromaster designed a hospital 3,800 square feet in size with two operating rooms and accommodations for fourteen patients. When Granbury General opened in February 1946, the local newspaper touted a "well-equipped hospital, modern in every respect." The layout included two laboratories, two utility rooms, two operating rooms with one scrub room, a delivery room and nursery, and a linen room, along with accommodations for 20 patients. The new hospital's modern equipment featured infra-red and ultra-violet lighting, an oxygen tent, and two x-ray machines.

The opening of Hood County's first large medical-care facility was greeted with much fanfare and excitement by local residents. The *Hood County News Tablet* published a special edition featuring photos of the hospital and ads congratulating the two doctors who opened Granbury General, Dr. L.G. Ballard and Dr. J.O. Carr. The paper also included a photo of the first five nurses who worked there: Mary Barton, Mrs. Dola Belle James, Mrs. Era Carter, Mrs. Lloyd Musick, and Mrs. R.H. Hendricks, the great-granddaughter of David Crockett. The opening of Granbury General Hospital was a major advancement for Hood County and the surrounding region because residents would no longer have to drive to Fort Worth for hospital care, baby deliveries, and surgeries.

In 1958 to 1959, Dr. W.G. Jenkins, Dr. R.L. Brock, and Dr. R.N. Rawls enlarged and expanded Granbury General Hospital. They added about 2,000 square feet to house a new delivery room,

nursery, obstetrical ward, x-ray and laboratory facilities, and offices. The number of beds in the hospital had dropped to 14, so they increased patient space to accommodate 23 beds. One thousand local residents attended an open house in January 1959 to celebrate the improvements to Granbury General.

Norma Crawford, publisher of the *Hood County News-Tablet*, wrote in July 1958 that the new addition “fits into the original hospital so beautifully that no one would know it wasn’t all done at the same time.” The projecting bottom of the current “L” shape was added along the south and east elevations, along with the projecting entryway and distinctive modern columns. The changes include the same design features as the original building, including a flat roof, metal casement windows, and tile construction. Two small round windows on either side of the main entry were covered when the new entry was added.

In 2009, two of the hospital’s nurses, Jane Smith and Gloria Whitley, recalled working at Granbury General during the mid-twentieth century. At the time, the ambulance service was operated by the local funeral home. When the ambulance arrived at the hospital, nurses were called to help disperse the throng of locals who had gathered.

“Everybody chased it in their cars,” Smith said in 2009. “There just wasn’t a whole lot going on and there would be so many people there to see who was in the ambulance that we’d have to ask them to leave.”

There are hundreds of personal stories about life in Granbury connected to its original community hospital. Doctors added a cafeteria, and unlike most hospital eateries, it became famous for Emma Perkins’ delicious homemade food. Many locals chose it as their favorite lunch spot. Granbury General became the heartbeat of the community—hundreds of babies were born there and countless lives were saved.

On May 31, 1970, the doctors who owned Granbury General closed the hospital for “a multitude of unreconciled problems,” including the expense of implementing changes required by new federal Medicare legislation. In 1976, the Granbury Opera Association acquired Granbury General for use as a dormitory for acting interns, a function that continued until the building was closed for much-needed rehabilitation this year.

The historic general hospital building reflects the continuum of history during the twentieth century in Granbury. It is significant as the center of Hood County’s medical community for 24 years, and as one of the city’s few remaining outstanding examples of modern architecture from the middle of the twentieth century.

Current Photographs



Photo 1: Northeast elevation of Granbury General showing hospital's 1959 entrance.



Photo 2: East elevation or front of Granbury General Hospital.



Photo 3: South elevation of Granbury General Hospital.



Photo 4: Southwest elevation of Granbury General Hospital.



Photo 7: Interior hallway in Granbury General Hospital building.



Photo 8: Interior Room in Granbury General Hospital building.

Historic Photographs

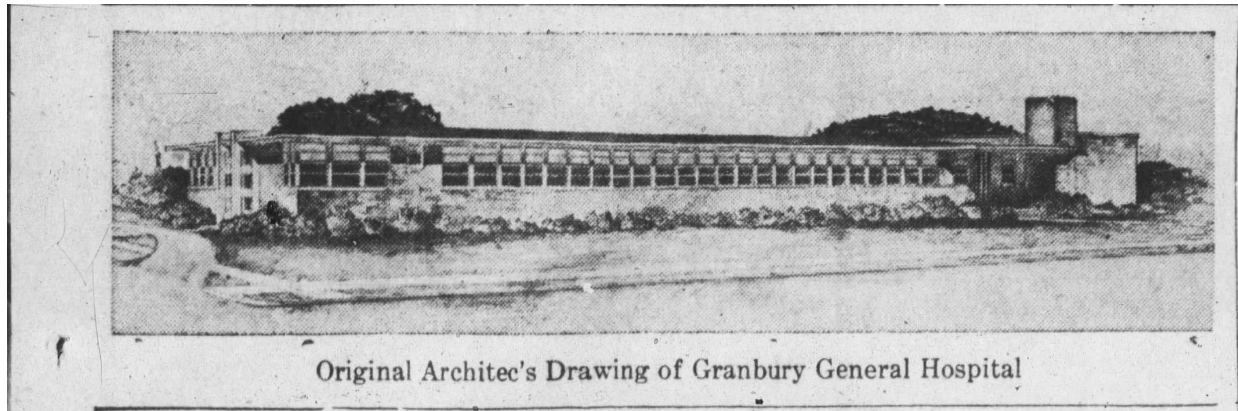


Photo 9: Architect C.O. Chromaster's 1945 elevation of Granbury General Hospital

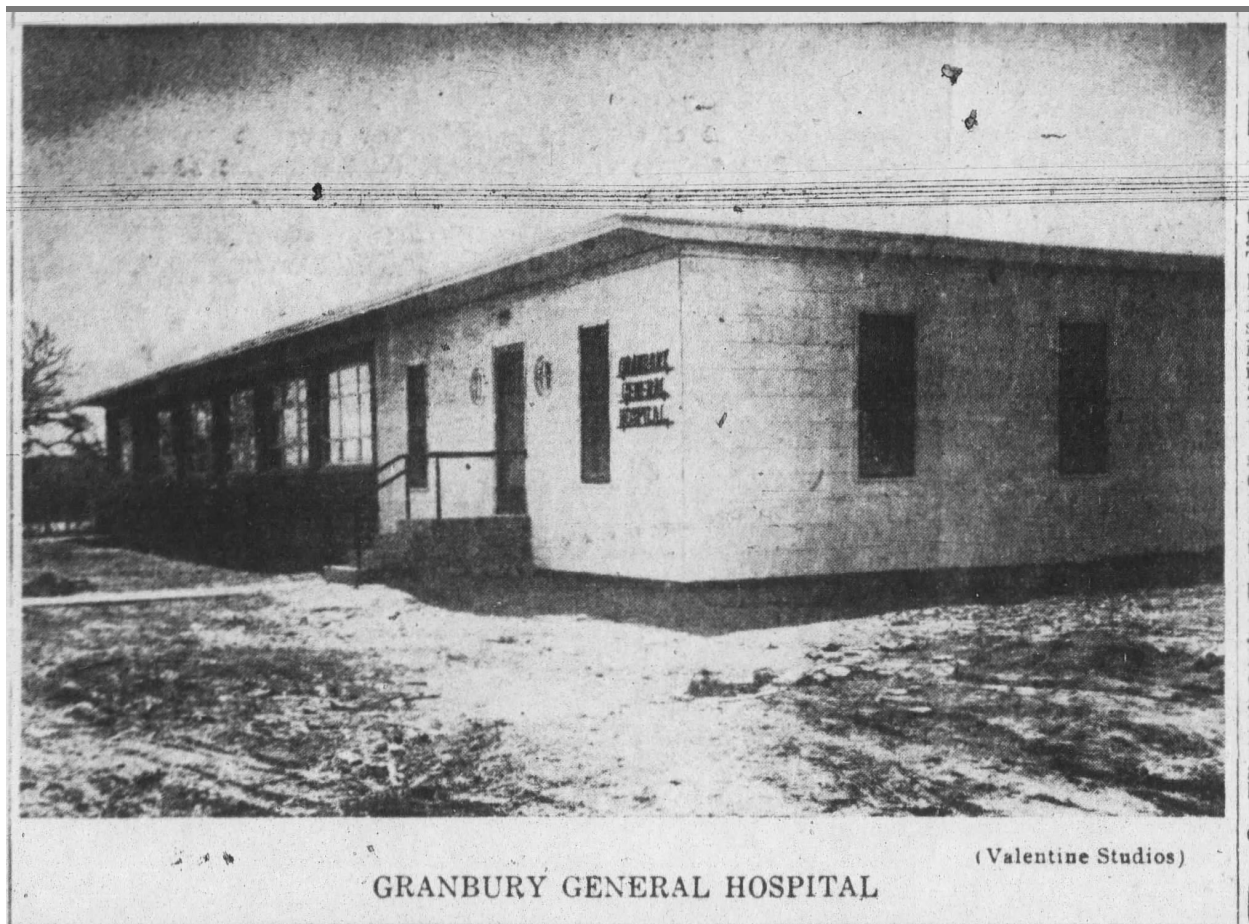


Photo 10: Granbury General's northeast elevation in 1946 when it opened.

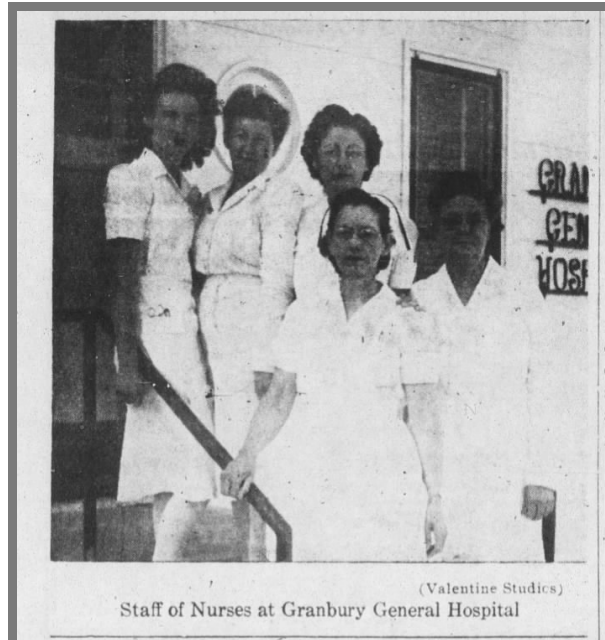


Photo 11: Nurses standing at entrance of Granbury General Hospital in 1946.

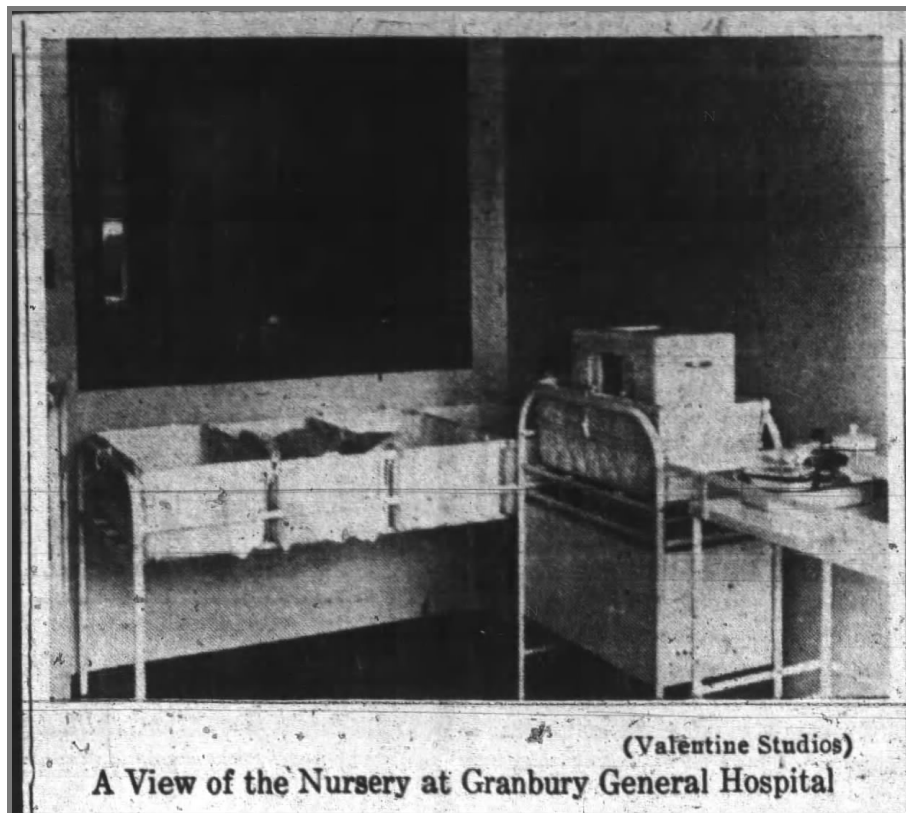
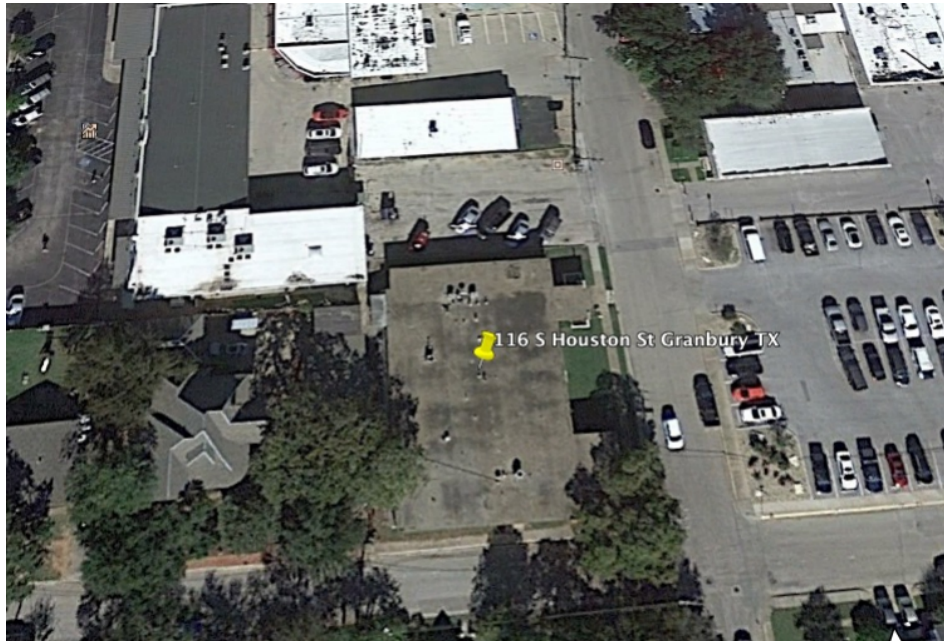
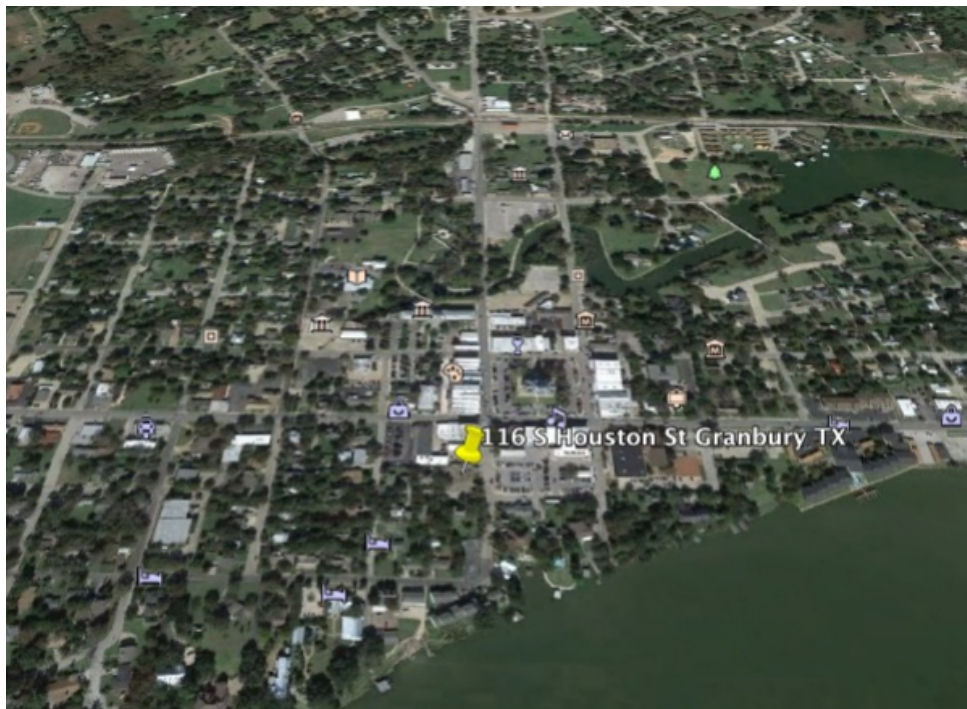


Photo 12: Nursery at Granbury General in 1946.

Maps



Map 1: Footprint of Granbury General Hospital at the corner of South Houston Street and Bluff Street in Granbury.



Map 2: Granbury General located one block south of the courthouse square in Granbury and just north of Lake Granbury, which is along the Brazos River.

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