

#265 Mercedes City Hall and Fire Station, 323 S. Ohio Ave., Mercedes, 1927, Ralph H. Cameron and R. Newell Waters, architects.

In 1927, Newell Waters collaborated with the established San Antonio architect Ralph H. Cameron on building projects in Mission, Weslaco, and Mercedes. The most architecturally notable of these is the combined City Hall and Fire Station in Mercedes. It is a tour de force of romantic 1920s' eclecticism; the limestone-trimmed brick building evokes early seventeenth-century English architecture with its stepped gable facing Ohio Avenue and its stone-cased bay window and entrance alcove on West 4th Street. Exhibiting the skill with which eclectic architects accommodated modernity, Cameron and Waters integrated the three fire truck stalls facing 4th Street into their picturesque design.

The combined City Hall-Fire Station was an innovative building type of the 1920s that enabled small towns, such as Mercedes, to conserve civic resources by investing them in a single building serving two very different functions. One of Waters's early masterpieces is the City Hall-Fire Station he designed in his home city of Weslaco. Built at the same time as the Mercedes City Hall and Fire Station, the Weslaco City Hall is one of the landmarks of 1920s' Spanish Mediterranean architecture in the Valley.