

McKenzie House

Historical Background

Also known as the Belle Booth House, the Robert L. McKenzie House is a historical building located just blocks from the Panama City Marina. The Dutch Colonial-style house was built by Belle Booth in 1909, when northwestern Florida was largely unsettled. Belle Booth married Robert L. McKenzie shortly after the house was built, after which it became known as the McKenzie House. Though from Georgia, McKenzie helped develop the City and the waterfront area. He became the first mayor of the City of Panama City and went on to represent the jurisdiction as a State Representative.

Beside the historic McKenzie House is McKenzie Park, known by locals as a quaint spot with oak trees and fountains. The park was named to honor McKenzie and his efforts over nearly 50 years to establish, develop, and build the City of Panama City.

The McKenzie House was badly damaged in Hurricane Michael. In addition to structural and water damage, many of the interior furnishings were damaged or destroyed, leaving this piece of the City's history in need of major repairs.

Recovery Progress

Working with the Historical McKenzie House Foundation Board, the City earned approval from the state to begin renovations to the McKenzie House in early 2020. The House received a new roof and new flooring inside in addition to many cosmetic and structural repairs. The repairs are approximately 80% complete. The City is also pursuing funding to install a new playground at McKenzie Park to rejuvenate the space and make it a more active park.

In addition to making repairs to the historic McKenzie House, the City aims to restore the home to historical standards. Along this line of effort, the City is currently working to the McKenzie House added to the National Register of Historic Places.



The McKenzie House is undergoing restorations and repairs in 2020. Photo credit: City of Panama City.