

**Dallas Landmark Commission  
Landmark Nomination Form**

**1. Name**

historic: Betterton House  
and/or common:

date: 1888-89

**2. Location**

address: 705 N. Marsalis

location/neighborhood: Oak Cliff-Lake Cliff

block: 40/3021 lot: pt. of 1 land survey: Original Oak tract size: 100x150

**3. Current Zoning**

R 7.5

Cliff

**4. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> residence
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> other, specify
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	

**5. Ownership**

Current Owner: Nancy Wilson/Jon Radke

Contact: same

Phone: 946-4800

Address: 705 N. Marsalis

City: Dallas

State: Tx.

Zip: 75203

**6. Form Preparation**

Date: June 29, 1994

Name & Title: Jon Radke/Kate Singleton/ Marcel Quimby

Organization: Designation task force

Contact: Kate Singleton

Phone: 821-7533

**7. Representation on Existing Surveys**

Alexander Survey (citywide)  local  state  national

H.P.L. Survey (CBD)  A  B  C  D

Oak Cliff

Victorian Survey

Dallas Historic Resources Survey, Phase   high  medium  low

National Register

Recorded TX Historic Ldmk

TX Archaeological Ldmk

*For Office Use Only*

Date Rec'd: \_\_\_\_\_ Survey Verified: Y N by: \_\_\_\_\_ Field Check by: \_\_\_\_\_ Petitions Needed: Y N

Nomination:      Archaeological      Site      Structure(s)      Structure & Site      District

## 8. Historic Ownership

original owner: Charles Betterton

significant later owner(s): Charles Betterton/ Dr. William Browne

## 9. Construction Dates

original: 1888-89

alterations/additions: 1935

## 10. Architect

original construction: not known

alterations/additions:

## 11. Site Features

natural:

urban design:

## 12. Physical Description

Condition, check one:

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

unaltered

altered

Check one:

original site

moved(date \_\_\_\_\_)

*Describe present and original (if known) physical appearance. Include style(s) of architecture, current condition and relationship to surrounding fabric (structures, objects, etc). elaborate on pertinent materials used and style(s) of architectural detailing, embellishments and site details.*

The Charles Betterton House, built in 1888-1889, is one of the oldest large Victorian homes left in Dallas. Constructed during the initial development of Oak Cliff, this house is one of a handful left which epitomizes what was to be called "the grandest suburban town in the South". (p.212 Dallas Rediscovered quoting the Daily Herald) The structure echoes the long-gone grandeur of Oak Cliff: the Marsalis mansion, the Dargan house, the mammoth Stick style Oak Cliff College (Park Hotel) and many others. Stylistically, it can be considered Victorian Eclectic with a strong Eastern Stick style influence. The asymmetrical composition of the Stick style emphasizes the skeleton of the building, the horizontal-vertical interior construction with boards applied over the horizontal siding. This feature becomes highly decorative. The Queen Anne style is also represented by the decorative fish scale shingles, sunburst decoration, and the projecting bay on the south facade. It is important to note that the sunburst pattern is often seen as a decorative feature on the small cottages in the Tenth Street Historic District which includes Betterton Circle, named after Charles Betterton's father.

The structure is wood, clad in horizontal siding. The windows, although some are a latter addition, are all wood frame. The roof is hipped with a bracketed clipped gable, or jerkinhead, on the front (east) facade. The original facade is decorated with unadorned corner posts, fish scale shingles, and the sunburst pattern. There are two brick chimneys on the original portion of the house; one on a 1930's addition.

The main facade (east), facing North Marsalis, is the front entry into the house. On the clipped gable portion of the east facade, first and second story, there are three tall one over one single pane, double hung windows. Set in the gable is an attic vent, originally a window,

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that is surrounded by the most decorative features of the house. On either side of the vent are fish scale shingles; plain studs separate the shingles from the sunburst patterns. There is a series of decorative studs directly beneath the vent. Fish scales are below each sunburst pattern on either side of the three windows. Corner posts and window surrounds nicely accent the fish scales. The entry door has a transom over it. Next to it is a small one over one, single pane window. This window was probably altered in ca. 1934 when the doctor who owned the house constructed a two story addition just north of this window. On the second floor offset between the door and the window is a small window. The 1930's addition, for the doctor's office, begins at this point. The addition is hardly noticeable; the single window on the first floor and the paired ones on the second floor are the same as the other tall ones on this facade. The original porch was replaced in the 1930's with an inappropriate design. A new, more compatible porch is being designed for the house.

The north facade of the house is the doctor's office addition; again it was well done at the time and blends with the original structure. On the first floor, there are two single tall windows then a paired set, all which match in size the ones on the east (front) facade. On the second floor there are two sets of paired windows, one set at each end of the north facade. A simple corner post accents the corner of the building.

The west facade of the house consists of the two story doctor's office addition, the original house and another addition which is primarily one story. Again the doctor's office addition is well done; plain corner post at the corner, a single tall window on the second floor and another tall window on the first floor which has been filled in at a later time. There is a plain exterior stud delineating the doctor's addition and the original house. On the upper story is a tall window and on the lower story is a multi-pane window the same size as the tall window. Here the other addition begins, being two story at this point. It is wood construction with horizontal siding and has a cast stone foundation. The addition is punctuated irregularly with windows and doors. The south end of this addition has a quaint bracketed gable with plain corner posts. There is a vent under the gable and the facade is punctuated with one small window and a door. The south face of this facade has two small one over one, single pane, double hung windows.

The south facade (facing Sabine Street) is a continuation of the 1930's addition also done by the doctor. This facade extends south from the addition. Again, as with the south end of this addition, there is a bracketed gable with corner posts and a gable vent. There is a multi-pane double hung window on this facade. There is a brick chimney on the hipped roof of the addition. On the front facade of this addition (facing east onto Marsalis), there is a multi-pane window, the same as

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the one on the south face and a door which was added in the 1960's. On the south facade of the original house (facing Sabine), there is a projecting two story bay with a dormer. On the west face of the bay, on the second story is a single tall window like those on the east facade. The south facade of the bay has a small dormer window then, on the second floor, paired tall windows. On the first floor, below the paired windows was a sunburst design which was damaged and will be replaced. The oval glass door is below the paired windows. The fish scale ornamentation is repeated on this facade in a frieze above the second story windows. This ornamentation includes an abbreviated exterior stud pattern over the second floor windows. On the east facade of the bay, on the second floor is another single tall window. Below the window was fish scale shingles; these will be replaced. On the first floor is a small multi-pane window. On the south face of this facade on the second floor is a single tall window; below it on the first floor is another one.

The date and unusual architectural styling of this house make it eligible for designation as a City of Dallas Landmark. One of the last remaining mansions of Oak Cliff's grand beginnings, this eclectic Victorian was built to reflect Marsalis' view of the future of that community.

### 13. Historical Significance

*Statement of historical and cultural significance. Include: cultural influences, special events and important personages, influences on neighborhood, on the city, etc.*

In 1887, Thomas L. Marsalis' dream of a cultural, educational and moral haven for the city of Dallas became a reality with the founding of Oak Cliff. Charles L. Betterton, in July of 1888, purchased the lot at the northwest corner of Grand (Marsalis) and Fourth (Sabine). Less than a year later he was residing with his family in their new home. The Charles L. Betterton home has stood for more than a century in the original town of Oak Cliff. One of the few large, late 19th century Victorian houses remaining in Dallas, this structure has seen the best of times and survived the worst in the dynamic history of Oak Cliff.

The Charles L. Betterton house, located at 705 North Marsalis (formerly 69 Grand Avenue, the northwest corner of Grand and Fourth), was constructed in 1888-1889. The son of William J. Betterton, the "Barrel King of Dallas", Charles was heavily involved with his father in the commerce of the city of Dallas and the newly established town of Oak Cliff. They owned a restaurant and saloon and were wholesalers of liquor and cigars. The Bettertons owned and operated the Dallas Cooperage Company and a cistern manufacturing plant. The family was also active in real estate and operated a land agency. Betterton Circle, in the Tenth Street Historic District, was given by the family to the local African American community.

Charles, active in the other family businesses, was also president of Betterton Lumber Yard and Planing Mill in Oak Cliff. No doubt materials for his new home came from his lumber yard and mill. His wife, Maud Betterton was active in the Oak Cliff social community. Mrs. Betterton along with Elizabeth Ewing, Mr. and Mrs. Millard Storey and Mr. and Mrs. Lathrop were the founding members of the Oak Cliff Presbyterian Church in 1890. Interestingly, Charles was not listed in the membership roles of the church.

The Bettertons were a prominent, well-to-do family that made their home in Marsalis' grand suburban town. The home of Charles L. Betterton was built at the core point of the development of Oak Cliff. This home is the last remnant of the early development of Oak Cliff and Dallas.

Dr. William Browne purchased the Betterton home in 1935, using it as a residence and office. It is Dr. Browne that made the additions to the house soon after he purchased it. In the post war years, like many of the large homes in Dallas, this structure was used as a boarding house. This use and a parade of owners continued until the 1980's. For many years the house was vacant and in 1991, it was bought and changed back into single family. Some restoration on the interior was completed. Recently, in 1993, it was purchased and exterior restoration has begun. This lovely home has survived the Panic of 1893, the Great Depression, two World Wars, social change and urban decay. With the rebirth of Oak Cliff, this house will continue into the next century and beyond.

## 14. Bibliography

Currie, Thomas W. Jr. **On the Right Side of the Trinity: The History of the Oak Cliff Presbyterian Church, 1890-1990.** Dallas, Texas: Nortex Press, 1990.

Dallas County Deed Records, volume 97, page 158.

MacDonald, William. **Dallas Rediscovered.** Dallas, Texas: The Dallas Historical Society, 1978.

Mason, Alan. **Historical and Architectural Survey of Oak Cliff.** Dallas, Texas: Old Oak Cliff Conservation League, 1980.

Minutaglio, Bill and Williams, Holly. **The Hidden City: Oak Cliff, Texas.** Texas: Elmwood Press, 1990.

Polk, R.L. and Company. **Dallas City Directory 1889.** Dallas, Texas: R.L. Polk and Company, 1889.

## 15. Attachments

District or Site Map

Site Plan

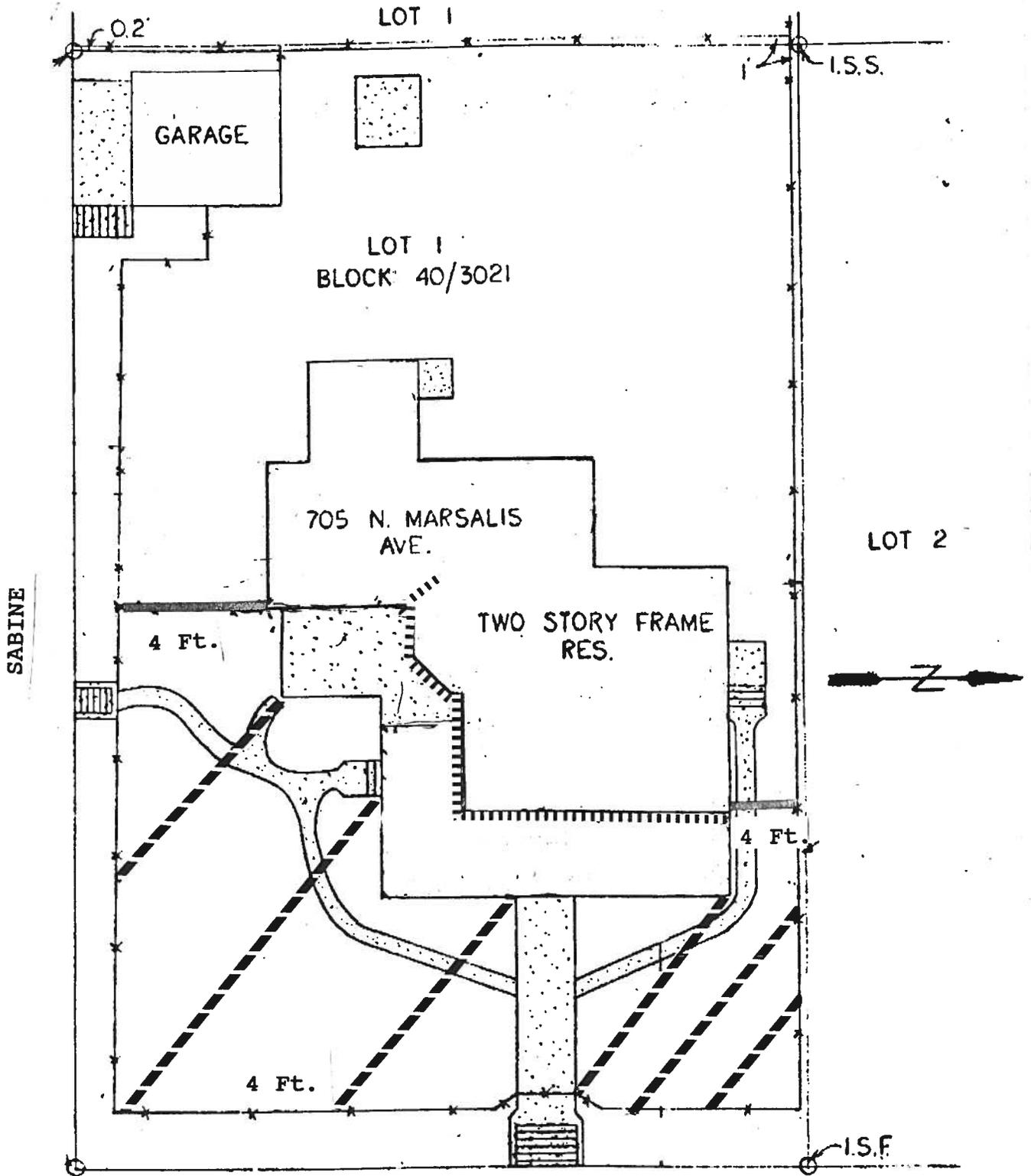
Photos (historic & current)

Additional descriptive material

Footnotes

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# EXHIBIT B



NORTH MARSALIS AVENUE

NO BUILD ZONE  
PROTECTED FACADE

## Designation Merit

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Dallas, State of Texas or the United States. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>G. Identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city. _____</p>  |
| <p>B. Location as the site of a significant historical event. _____</p>   | <p>H. Embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, material or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation. _____</p>                               |
| <p>C. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>   | <p>I. Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites or areas which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on historic, cultural or architectural motif. _____</p> |
| <p>D. Exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historical heritage of the city. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>   | <p>J. Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar feature of a neighborhood, community or the city. _____</p>                         |
| <p>E. Portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style. _____</p>  | <p>K. Archaeological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories or historic or prehistoric value. _____</p>                                    |
| <p>F. Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or specimen. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>   | <p>L. Value as an aspect of community sentiment of public pride. _____</p>  |

## Recommendation

The Designation Task Force requests the Landmark Commission to deem this nominated landmark meritorious of designation as outlined in Chapter 51 and Chapter 51A, Dallas Development Code.

Further, the Designation Task Force endorses the Preservation Criteria, policy recommendations and landmark boundary as presented by the Department of Planning and Development.

Date:

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chair  
 Designation Task Force

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Jim Anderson, Urban Planner  
 Historic Preservation