

Dallas Landmark Commission Landmark Nomination Form

1. Name

historic: The Mayor Bradford House

and/or common:

date: October 1995

2. Location

address: 2905 Maple Avenue

location/neighborhood:

block: 8/943

lot: 1 & 2

land survey:

tract size: 100'x255'

3. Current Zoning

4. Classification

Category

district
 building(s)
 structure
 site
 object

Ownership

public
 private
 both

Public Acquisition

in progress
 being considered

Status

occupied
 unoccupied
 work in progress

Accessibility

yes: restricted
 yes: unrestricted
 no

Present Use

agricultural
 commercial
 educational
 entertainment
 government
 industrial
 military

museum
 park
 residence
 religious
 scientific
 transportation
 other, specify _____

5. Ownership

Current Owner: First Dallas Holdings

Contact: Don Hodges

Phone: (214) 954-1954

Address: 2509 Maple Avenue

City: Dallas

State: TX

Zip: 75201

6. Form Preparation

Date: October 26, 1995

Name & Title: Carolyn Tames

Organization:

Contact: Carolyn Tames

Phone: (214) 821-5027

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: Thomas L. Bradford

significant later owner(s): Catholic Women's League

9. Construction Dates

original: 1906 - 1907

alterations/additions: 1931

10. Architect

original construction:

alterations/additions: A.J. Rife Construction Company 1931

11. Site Features

natural:

urban design:

12. Physical Description

Condition, check one:

 excellent deteriorated unaltered

Check one:

 original site good ruins altered moved(date _____) fair unexposed

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 Mayor Bradford House located at 2509 Maple Avenue north of the Dallas Central Business District is an imposing two-story, Prairie Style house known as an American Foursquare. The Prairie Style is identified by features that include a "low pitched roof, usually hipped, with overhanging eaves; two-stories with one-story wings or porches; eaves, cornices, and facade detailing emphasizing horizontal lines; often with massive, square porch supports". (McAlester, 439) The American Foursquare is a subtype of the Prairie Style and in addition to the above features often displays the following: a simple square or rectangular plan, a centered or off-centered entrance, hipped dormers and double-hung windows. The Prairie Style is an American derived architectural style that was begun in Chicago by a group of architects called the Prairie School. The style was spread throughout the country by building pattern books; however, the Prairie Style was relatively short-lived and was most prevalent from 1900 to 1920. (McAlester, 440) The Mayor Bradford House is one of the few remaining residencies in the Cedar-Springs - Maple Avenue neighborhood.

According to the City of Dallas Building Inspector Record Books, Thomas L. Bradford obtained a building permit on June 30, 1906, for the construction of a house at 2905 Maple Avenue. Building Permit #1038 states that the brick veneer house will have nine rooms and cost \$10,000. (Building Inspector Record Books) Although the permit was obtained in 1906, the first mention of the house in the City Directories does not occur until 1908; thus, a construction date is assumed to be in the period from 1906 to 1907. (City Directory, 1908) In 1930, the house was purchased by the Catholic Women's League and was named St. Rita's. A three-story addition was added by the League in 1931 to provide lodging for young working women. (Building Inspector Record Books) The house was air-conditioned in 1953. (Building Inspector Record Books) The Emrich Survey of 1985 rates the building as having an architectural significance of "good". (Emrich Dallas Historic Resource Survey)

The Mayor Bradford House occupies a corner lot at Maple Avenue and Randall Street. The principal facade of the house faces north toward Maple Avenue. The original house is two rooms deep and two stories high. The plan of the house is roughly square, but the second bay on the west facade does project approximately ten feet. The house has a hipped roof with overhanging

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eaves. The three-story historic addition is a rectangular block with a gabled roof. The slope of the site toward the rear of the property allows the accommodation of a third story while maintaining the roof line of the original house. Both the original house and the historic addition are made out of a tan brick that has been painted a medium grey. The roofing material is dark grey composite shingles. Unpainted decorative white cast stone provides a horizontal accent on all facades. For ease of discussion, each facade of the Mayor's House will be discussed individually.

The north or Maple Avenue elevation of the Mayor Bradford House has square proportions, an imposing front porch and an asymmetrical front entrance. A one-story, monumental porch stretches across the front of the house. The porch is divided into two bays and is supported upon three brick piers. The square piers support a white lintel. Each pier capitol is embellished by a white square block and by an inset decorative panel that is edged by a floral molding. The porch lintel is decorated by an egg-and-dart molding. The porch piers are set in front of the house foundation. The interstitial space between the piers is filled by an inset brick wall that supports a simple metal balustrade. The top surface of each porch pier is capped by white cast stone. The stairs that lead up to the porch consist of five steps that occupy a complete bay of the porch. Two concrete urns sit on the two, low walls that frame the steps. The shed roof of the porch is slightly pitched.

The main facade of the house has two openings on the ground floor and three openings on the second floor. On the ground floor, a roughly square window consisting of a large, single pane of glass is topped by a transom window that is integrated into the window frame. A decorative cast stone lintel and sill frame the window. The primary entrance into the house is through a varnished wood door that contains an elliptical pane of glass. The door is bordered by two sidelights, and this tri-part door is topped by a tri-part transom. The side lights are separated from the main door by two wooden piers and framed at their outer edges by two identical piers. The entire entrance way is capped by a wood entablature. The second story of this facade has two windows that are similar to the window on the ground floor. A third window is in between these two windows. This middle window is slightly smaller than the other two and is decorated by wooden muntins in an intertwined pattern of short and curved segments. All three windows are capped by individual cast stone lintels. A decorative balustrade that sits on the roof of the porch is centered in front of the middle window. This white balustrade is made up of thirteen turned supports that hold a thin, curved railing. A cast stone lintel projects out from the eave over this decorative balustrade. A dormer projects from the hipped roof of the primary facade. The dormer is made up of two windows that are separated by a central column and framed on their outside edges by two square piers. The piers have an inset panel, and the column is capped by an Ionic capitol. The Palladian dormer cap is embellished by bell and swag shaped floral motifs. Also visible on the front facade are two brick chimneys. The tall, thin brick chimneys are topped by cast stone chimney caps.

Visible from the north facade are projections from both the east and west sides of the house. The Maple Avenue facade of the east projecting bay consists of a door with a window directly above. The wood door holds a rectangular pane of glass and is topped by a transom. The second story window is double-hung with sixteen lights in the upper one-half. The window has both a cast stone sill and lintel. Although the roof of the porch does not extend across the facade of this projecting bay, the uncovered porch floor does extend to the eastern extremity of the house. Also seen on the east facade near the junction of the original house and the historic addition is a brick retaining wall that runs perpendicular to the building. This wall is anchored by two piers, climbs in height as it nears the house and is protected by a cast stone coping. On the western side of the Maple Avenue facade, a projecting bay window is visible. A side entrance is accented by this one-

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story bay window that is supported by two wood piers resting on a low brick wall. The bay window flares out in profile along its lower edge. The non-glazed surface of the bay window is shingled while the majority of the bay window holds three rectangular windows. The bay window is capped by a lintel that is finished by an egg-and-dart molding below the cornice.

Adjacent to a parking lot, the east facade of the Mayor Bradford House faces Randall Street. This facade has two parts: (1) the original house and (2) the historic addition. The original house's elevation has three parts: (1) the one-story porch, (2) the first two-story bay and (3) the second two-story projecting bay. The front corner of the porch roof rests on a square pier while the back corner is attached to the house proper. The cap of the front facade dormer is visible from this view. The elevation of the front bay of the house is a three-part design consisting of a central chimney framed by single windows on both the ground floor and the second floor; the three piers that support the metal railing along the eastern edge of the porch cut across the view of the first bay of this facade. All four windows in this bay are of the same design; that is, they are double-hung windows with sixteen lights in the upper-half. The sills and lintels of these windows are of the decorative cast stone seen throughout the house. The plane of the chimney is slightly in front of the plane of the wall, and decorative cast stone accents the transition between the firebox and the flue. Two recessed niches are set into the firebox wall: a curved niche with a keystone at its apex and an inset rectangular box. The decorative cast stone appears again at the transition point where the chimney punctures the roof. The second bay of the east facade is curved in plan. Along the ground, two cast stone capped air vents pierce the stone foundation wall. Four windows divided by thin brick piers exaggerate the curve of the facade on the ground floor. These windows are double-hung, and the top half of each window is embellished with muntins in a pattern of straight and angled pieces. The four windows are framed top and bottom by two strips of cast stone. The upper story of the projecting bay has two windows that match the windows in the front bay of this facade. A decorative band of egg-and-dart molding runs under the length of the original house's eave. A brick chimney is visible along the rear wall of the original house. This chimney is topped with a white cast stone cap. Two skylights pierce the hipped roof. The historic addition abuts the original house, and the transition between the old and the new is somewhat abrupt.

The historic addition is a three-story rectilinear, brick block that on the east facade opens onto a garden that is contained by a wrought iron fence of six to seven feet on the eastern side, by a retaining wall on the northern side and by a three foot cyclone fence on the southern side of the garden. The ground floor of the east facade has seven openings. From the direction closest to the original house, the fenestration pattern is as follows: a triple window with each section having eight lights and a single cast stone sill, three glass openings each topped with an arch of carved stone and a key stone, a second steel door and at the far end of the historic addition a pair of double-hung windows that have six-over-six lights and a single cast stone sill. The ground floor is divided from the second and third floors by a cast stone belt course. A double height window opens onto an interior stairwell at a point near the junction between the original building and the historic addition. This oversized window consists of a tri-part design that is sub-divided across the top third. The three panes of the window are each divided into ten lights. The tri-part transom has four lights in each section. The fenestration pattern after this stairwell opening is identical for the second and third floors. Four single windows are followed by two pairs of windows at the far end of the building. The windows are all double-hung, and the panes are divided into eight-over-eight lights for the single windows and six-over-six lights for the paired windows. The windows all have a soldier course of bricks along their top edge, and the second floor windows rest on the dividing cast stone belt course. The windows of the third floor are embellished by individual cast stone lintels. The gabled roof is punctured by six skylights. A grey metal gutter descends from

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the roof at approximately two feet from the rear edge of the building. A red, metal fire escape of five flights hangs from the back facade of the building. A parking lot occupies the entire back yard.

The south or rear facade of the building is three stories tall and is dominated by an over scaled metal fire escape. The fire escape, supported by thin metal columns, has five landings and covers over one-half of the wall surface. The ground floor, formerly a car garage, has one door next to a multi-paned sheet glass window that now encloses the original garage entrance. A small sixteen-over-one double-hung window is in the corner of the first floor facade. A blue awning shelters the ground floor openings. A cast stone belt course wraps the corner and separates the ground story from the second. The fenestration of the second and third floors is identical. A pair of double-hung six-over-six windows frames a door on both floors. The wood doors have eight glass panes each. Access into a converted attic is via a French door that opens into a dormer. In the direction of Maple Avenue, the rear facade of the projecting east bay displays a window on each of the two floors. The first story window is embellished by decorative muntins in a straight and diagonal pattern and framed top and bottom by cast stone while the second story has a sixteen-over-one double-hung window.

The west facade is adjacent to the driveway of the property and is obscured by a neighboring building. It is not as elaborate as the east facade. This facade can be divided into three sections for ease of discussion: (1) the one-story porch, (2) the original house and (3) the historic addition. The porch facade matches the east facade with the addition of a concrete urn that sits on top of a low wall. The original house bay nearest Maple Avenue matches that of the east facade. The only difference is the absence of the two niches in the wall of the chimney. In the facade of the second bay, however, there are important differences. Whereas the actual plan of the house projects on the east side, there is no projection in plan on the west facade. A one-story bay window projects from the second floor of the facade. This bay window rests upon two square piers that sit on top of a short exterior wall. The bay window is distinguished by its siding of wood shingles and by the three rectilinear fixed windows that reveal an elaborate interior stairway and landing. The three panes are divided by two piers. An interior strip of wood sections off the top quarter of the windows. Underneath the bay window, a paneled wooden door with a single glass pane in its upper half and a small, six-over-one window with a cast stone sill are accessed by a concrete, side service porch. The historic addition on the west facade is less decorative than its counterpart to the east. The ground floor of the historic addition has six windows in its back half. These windows each have eight lights, a cast stone lintel and a soldier course of bricks across the top. One of these windows has been bricked in. Mechanical equipment sits on the ground along the front half of the ground floor. Two bricked-in vents with large cast stone lintels sit behind the equipment. A low brick wall protrudes perpendicularly at a point approximately one-third back from the front corner of the historic addition. A matching brick pillar sits across the drive to form the supports for a gate. The second floor of the historic addition's west facade has seven double-hung windows. The top half of the first two windows are divided into sixteen lights by thin muntins. These windows are framed by cast stone lintels and sills. The next two windows are slightly smaller and are one-over-one. The next two windows are further toward the rear of the building; the first is a one-over-one, and the second, smaller window is a six-over-six. The last window is a pair of six-over-one windows. These last five windows all have cast stone sills. The fenestration spacing and window type of the third floor is similar to the second floor. The difference is limited to the use of a small window in the first window position. The decorative egg-and-dart molding runs the length of the historic addition under the cornice. Three metal gutters visually divide this facade into thirds.

13. Historical Significance

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

The Mayor Bradford House at 2905 Maple Avenue is important to the City of Dallas for two primary reasons: (1) it was the early home of a city mayor, Thomas L. Bradford and (2) it housed St. Rita's, a boarding house for young, professional women. Lots number 1 and 2 of block 8 in the North Dallas Improvement Company Addition passed through several hands until they were purchased by Thomas L. Bradford on March 24, 1905, from A.D. Fife and Helen M. Fife for \$4250. (County Deed Records) According to the Building Inspector Record Books, Bradford obtained a building permit on June 30, 1906. Building Permit #1038 for 2905 Maple Avenue refers to a brick veneer house that will have nine rooms and cost \$10,000. (Building Inspector Record Books, 1906) Although the building permit was obtained in 1906, the first mention of this residence in the City Directories does not occur until 1908; thus the construction date for the house falls between 1906 and 1907. (City Directory, 1908)

Thomas L. Bradford was born in Port Hudson Louisiana on February 13, 1869, and he graduated from Old Centenary College in Jackson, Louisiana and studied business in Lexington, Kentucky. He came to Dallas from Louisiana in 1887 and began working at a wholesale dry goods house, Blakenship & Blake, at a salary of \$30.00 per month. He started a grocery business in 1888 in Oak Cliff and had six stores with the main one located at Elm and Akard by 1911 to 1912. In 1907, the City Directories state that his occupation is as a grocer and that the Bradford Company stores are located at 327 Elm and 590 Cedar Springs. There is no listing for 245 Maple (the address for the Mayor Bradford House prior to the address changes of 1911) in the 1907 City Directory. By 1908, the Directory lists Bradford as living at 245 Maple. By 1911, Bradford had changed careers by accepting a position at Southwestern Life Insurance Company in the financial section. His first assignment at Southwest was to oversee construction of a seventeen story building at Main and Akard that was completed in fourteen months. In 1914, Bradford sold the grocery stores. (The Dallas Times Herald March 15, 1931) In 1929, the City Directory lists Bradford's occupation as the Vice-President of Southwestern and his son Thomas L. Bradford, Jr. as the Assistant Secretary at the same company. In 1929, in his most generous gift to the city, Bradford built the Bradford Memorial Hospital for babies on Maple Avenue in memory of his wife, Maidie Terry Bradford, and his daughter, Elizabeth Bradford May, at a cost of more than \$100,000. (The Dallas Morning News August 28, 1932) Bradford continued to prosper, and in 1930, he became Chairman of the Board at Southwest where he oversaw 256 employees in Dallas and over 1000 throughout Texas and managed company assets of \$36,000,000. The 1931 City Directory lists Bradford as both the Chairman of the Board of Southwestern Life Insurance Company and the Mayor of the City of Dallas and Councilman at Large. His residence by this time was at 4909 Cedar Springs in a house built on twenty acres of the original site of the community of Cedar Springs. (The Dallas Times Herald March 15, 1931) Although Bradford had moved out of the house at 2905 Maple Avenue prior to his election as Mayor, he made this move only six months before the election and less than two years before his death; thus, he lived out the majority of his adult life on Maple Avenue.

Thomas L. Bradford was the first mayor in the manager-council form of city government that Dallas voters approved by electing the Citizen's Charter Association ticket on April 7, 1931. This election heralded the end of the Mayor-commission form of government that had been in effect since 1907. The move toward a manager-council form was begun by The Dallas News about fifteen years previously; however, a charter commission to back the new government form, the Citizen's Charter Association, was not formed until 1927. The Citizen's Charter Association gathered signatures on a petition to bring the manager-council government issue to the polls, and the amendments were passed by a margin of 2 to 1 on October 10, 1930. Bradford was elected by 9,125 votes to Place. no. 9 at-large. In response to the April 1931 election, The Dallas Morning

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News stated that "each of the nine men elected was drafted after the hardest effort on the part of association leaders and their friends, agreeing to serve only through a sense of civic duty." And to reinforce that none of the nine elected men were politicians by nature, none of the charter candidates including Bradford made a speech or gave a promise. About Mayor Bradford, The Dallas Morning News stated that "he has been a community server since he was 19 years old" and that "he was an Alderman before the era of commission government and a member of the Citizen's Committee that formulated the commission form." (The Dallas Morning News April 8, 1931) On May 1, 1931 Bradford was selected as the first mayor of the first council under the new charter. (T.L.Bradford File) Mr. Bradford was Mayor of Dallas from 1931 until his term was cut short by his death on August 22, 1932. Charles E Turner succeeded Bradford as mayor on August 31, 1932 (Armstrong) In an eulogy, Bradford was described as both a "philanthropist and a civic leader". (The Dallas Morning News August 25, 1932) Thomas L. Bradford was buried at at Grove Hill Cemetery. (T.L.Bradford File)

On October 13, 1930, before his election as mayor, T.L. Bradford sold 2905 Maple Avenue to the Catholic Women's League for \$25,000. (County Deed Records) Five thousand dollars was paid in cash, and the remaining \$20,000 was due five years later. (County Deed Records) In 1931, the Mayor Bradford House was listed in the City Directory as Saint Rita's Club with Mrs. Bonnie Bergen, the live-in matron. According to Building Permit Record #16789 dated March 9, 1931, the Catholic Women's League hired the A.J. Rife Construction Company to build a brick addition onto St. Rita's at a cost of \$20,000. (Building Inspector Record Books) An A.J. Rife Construction Company advertisement in the 1931 City Directory states the company's services as engineering, building and general contracting. A.J. Rife was a noted builder in Dallas who founded his company in 1920 and was the contractor for the State Fair Music Hall, the Museum of Fine Arts at Fair Park and Union Station. (The Dallas Morning News December 8, 1972)

St. Rita's Club was begun by Mrs. C.F. Matthews a member of the Catholic Women's League who converted her home at 2214 Collins into a boarding house for 20 employed girls who were new to Dallas. (The Dallas Morning News August 20, 1953) By 1947, the Catholic Women's League had approximately 400 members. (Catholic Women's League Calendar) And in 1958 the Catholic Women's League celebrated its 50th anniversary. In addition to St. Rita's the league sponsored Marian's Cottage, a foster home for Latin American children. (The Dallas Morning News May 18, 1958) The "aim of the Catholic Women's League is to make every resident at its St. Rita's Club feel the club is her home." (The Dallas Morning News August 20, 1953) The 1939 City Directory advertises that St. Rita's Club for Business Women has furnished rooms for rent. St. Rita's was redecorated and remodeled in 1953 and could at this time comfortably house 40 girls in single, double and dormitory rooms; low rates were charged for both rooms and meals. A sewing and laundry room was provided as was a recreation room and a living room for entertaining dates. In 1953, girls from all across Texas, New York, Wisconsin, El Salvador and Ireland called St. Rita's home. The well landscaped grounds included a Grotto of St. Rita and a fountain. (The Dallas Morning News August 20, 1953) According to the City Directories, St. Rita's occupied the house at 2905 Maple from 1931 to 1971. On September 15, 1971, St. Rita's Club was deeded to Thomas Tschoepe, the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese. (County Deed Records)

Following the closing of St. Rita's, the Mayor Bradford House sat vacant for approximately three years until 1975 when International Buildings Systems, a land development, architecture and steel erection company, moved into the building. Vacant again in 1982, the house was occupied by Stern-Monroe Advertising from 1983 to 1990. From 1991 to 1994, various businesses occupied the house until it was purchased in 1995 by the current owner to office First Dallas Securities.

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This same year, the architecture firm Haldermann/Powell with Bob Deering as the designer was hired to renovate the building. The attic was converted into a conference room; the historic addition, into office space; and the original house into office and meeting rooms. The grand entry and stairway as well as interior woodwork were restored. Landscape architect Justin Hollis designed new plantings for the grounds.

14. Bibliography

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- "Catholic Women's League Gets Special Observance," The Dallas Morning News May 18, 1958.
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- City of Dallas Building Inspector Record Books, 1906, 1931, and 1953. Dallas Public Library: Texas Collection.
- County Deed Records.
- Emrich Dallas Historic Resource Survey, 1985. Dallas Public Library: Texas Collection.
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- "Mayor Buried in Simple Rite Without Hymn," The Dallas Morning News August 25, 1932.
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- "Noted Contractor, Arthur Rife, Dies," The Dallas Morning News December 8, 1972.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.
- "Stroke Kills Mayor Tom L. Bradford As Leaves His Club," The Dallas Morning News August 23, 1932.
- "Thomas L. Bradford Eulogy ," The Dallas Times Herald March 15, 1931.
- T.L.Bradford File. Dallas Public Library: Texas Collection.
- "Two Great Public Questions Before Dallas Voters to be Decided in Tuesday Election," The Dallas Morning News April 7, 1931.
- "The Woman's Angle," The Dallas Morning News August 8, 1953.

15. Attachments

- District or Site Map
- Site Plan
- Photos (historic & current)

- Additional descriptive material
- Footnotes
- Other: _____