

**Dallas Landmark Commission  
Landmark Nomination Form**

**1. Name**

historic: Oak Cliff United Methodist Church      Date 7/17/97  
and/ or common: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

addresses: 541-49 E. Jefferson  
location/ neighborhood: Jefferson Boulevard

block:                      lot:                      land survey:                      tract size:  
107/3090                      6 part of 7 and 8                      55,880 sq ft

**3. Current Zoning**

current zoning: RR- Regional Retail

**4. Classification**

<b>Category</b> district ___ building(s) <u>X</u> structure ___ site ___ object	<b>Ownership</b> ___ public X private ___ both <b>Public Acquisition</b> ___ in progress ___ being considered	<b>Status</b> X occupied ___ unoccupied ___ work in progress <b>Accessibility</b> <u>x</u> <u>X</u> yes: restricted ___ yes: unrestricted no	<b>Present Use</b> ___ agricultural ___ commercial ___ educational ___ entertainment ___ government ___ industrial ___ military	___ museum ___ park ___ residence X religious ___ scientific ___ transportation ___ other, specify _____
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**5. Ownership**

current owner: North Texas Conference, United Methodist Church  
Contact: Katherine Spinks, Phone: (214) 943-4328

Address: 549 E. Jefferson Blvd. Dallas, Texas 75208

## 6. Form Preparation

date: 6/18/97

name & title: , Jim Anderson, Preservation Planner, phone: (214) 670- 4131

## 7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide)     local  state  national     National Register  
H.P.L. Survey (CBD)     A  B  C  D     Recorded TX Hist Ldmk  
Oak Cliff     X      TX Archaeological Ldmk  
Victorian Survey   

Dallas Historic Resources Survey, Phase  X  high  medium  low  
*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: North Texas Conference, United Methodist Church

significant later owner(s):

## 9. Construction Dates

original: Church-1915, School-1926, Youth Building-1951

alterations/additions:

## 10. Architect

original construction: Church- Sanguinet and Staats Architects, School-Eugene Davis

alterations/additions:

## 11. Site Features

natural: no topography

urban design: Early 20th century retail street

## 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 of pertinent materials used and style(s) of architectural detailing, embellishments and site details.*

Oak Cliff United Methodist Church, located at the corner of Jefferson Boulevard and Marsalis Avenue, currently consist of three main buildings: the Church Building, the School, and the Youth Building. The rear corner of the church is connected to the school building. In 1887 the first congregation members met in a residence located at Eight and Lancaster. In 1889 St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church was built on Eighth near Marsalis. This church was destroyed by the cyclone of 1894. In that same year the second church was built at the corner of Marsalis and Jefferson. In 1913 the church's name was changed to the Oak Cliff Methodist Church.

The current church was built in late 1915 in the Classical Revival style. The dark red brick building has 4 white, classical, two story columns flanking three double french door units, each with an arched stain glass transom. These door units fit inside a brick arched opening with a cast stone key stone. Above each of these three doorways are three triple unit stained glass windows. Above the four columns is a large classical pediment. A great wide series of steps extend across the entire front of this predominant entrance. A three tiered step buttress stair- steps on each side of this main feature. A major focal point to the interior is a great domed stained glass ceiling. The interior arrangement is unique with the front door opening facing the congregation the main entrances being on each side of the choir loft and pulpit platform. There is a wing and balcony on each side of the auditorium. The organ was built in 1908 and was moved from the 1894 church. The pipe organ from the fellowship hall of Oak Cliff Methodist Hospital has been incorporated into this organ as well.

The school was built in 1926 and was designed to coordinate with the church with dark red brick and classical details. The front facade is symmetrical with the front entrance flanked by cast stone fluted pilasters topped with a cast stone broken pediment. The front facade consists bands of wood six over six windows. Four brick pilasters delineate three predominant sections of the facade. The parapet has a pediment detail in line with the pediment in the front entry.

### 13. Historical Significance

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

Oak Cliff began to develop in 1887, when Thomas Marsalis and John Armstrong purchased 2,000 acres of property and renaming Hord's Ridge for the large oak trees in the area. To provide transportation from the City of Dallas to the City of Oak Cliff, Marsalis developed the first reliable transit service across the Trinity River. The right-of-way of that transit line was Jefferson Boulevard along which the steam train ran; then the electric street cars and the Inter Urban which ran to Fort Worth, and finally automobiles and buses.

The City of Oak Cliff was annexed into Dallas in 1903. In the succeeding years from 1910 to 1935, West Jefferson Boulevard, originally platted for residential development, became the commercial, financial and social heart of Oak Cliff. Businessmen saw West Jefferson as an opportunity to locate along this busy transit line, providing professional services, retail goods, and other services to the surrounding neighborhoods which were developing during this time: Winnetka Heights, Miller-Stemmons, King's Highway, Ruthmede, Kessler Park, Lake Cliff and Trinity Heights. West Jefferson Boulevard developed as the Central Business District or Downtown for Oak Cliff. It was easily accessible to all the surrounding neighborhoods listed above because of the street car lines which ran down West Jefferson and turned north on Tyler branching east and west; south on Tyler into Ruthmede; south on Zang and continuing along West Jefferson to the Boundary district and linking to the Inter Urban to Fort Worth.

Dallas, during this time, became a bi-nodal city; a city with two central areas, one represented by Downtown Dallas and one represented by West Jefferson. Another period of growth along West Jefferson occurred during the years after World War II and continued into the early 1950's further confirming its position as the downtown for Oak Cliff. Several large retailers built new buildings along West Jefferson, Sears and the first suburban Kress in Dallas, and other property owners refaced their 1920's buildings to accommodate the tastes of the prosperous post war consumer. This idea of a bi-nodal city, or at least the importance of West Jefferson as a substantial commercial

center, was often acknowledged in the Dallas newspapers, articles in 1933, 1948, and 1965, describe this area as second only to Downtown Dallas in size and sales tax generation.

It is believed that no other city in Texas has this type of development of a "city within a city" and two downtown commercial districts. West Jefferson continues to be the downtown of Oak Cliff expressing the cohesive yet culturally diverse community which it serves. (Niederauer and Singleton, Jefferson Boulevard Report)

Jefferson Boulevard was originally platted as the right-of-way for the major thoroughfare through Oak Cliff, first for the steam line, then the street car and Inter Urban, and finally the automobile. West Jefferson, although platted for residential development, became the center for commercial activity in Oak Cliff. The surrounding streets of Sunset, Center, and Twelfth developed as suburban residential streets for the working and middle class. The architectural styles in the West Jefferson Historic District reflect the urban commercial forms prevalent from 1910 to 1950. The majority of the commercial growth in this area occurred between 1920 and 1940. Because this was not a planned shopping center such as Highland Park Village, the individual property owners constructed their commercial buildings as they would their homes, in styles they personally liked. This resulted in the construction of a variety of commercial styles. Many of these smaller scale commercial buildings are stylistically unique. West Jefferson contains a variety of urban commercial styles of which there is no other comparable collection in Dallas. Although many of the buildings have been altered, as noted above, several of these alterations occurred in the post War years. These alterations and the other later alterations that have occurred are mainly to the first floor retail area, exchanging weed fronts for aluminum and covering over transom windows. Architectural analysis indicates that these buildings can be restored with minimal work and guidance.

West Jefferson Boulevard commercial development originally occurred at two nodes: between Beckley and Zang and between Polk and Tyler. The architecture in these areas reflect early commercial styles from 1910 to 1925.

More common along West Jefferson is the one story commercial building which houses several retail spaces. One particular style of this genre is a tan brick one story with a mansard type roof and a pedimented entry and, usually, a corner entry with an arch and fan light. Transom windows are above the large single pane display windows. This style can be seen in four retail segments along West Jefferson:

In the period from 1925 to 1935, West Jefferson Boulevard saw a great deal of commercial growth. Despite the Depression, this is the period during which most of the growth occurred on West Jefferson. Such buildings as the Texas Theatre and several other commercial buildings were constructed between 1925 and 1935. (Niederauer and Singleton, Jefferson Boulevard Report)

## 14. Bibliography

A History of the Oak Cliff Methodist Church 1887-1962 by Mayanne McCarley  
Dallas City Directories, microfilm archives

Niederauer, Tom and Singleton, Kate. Jefferson Boulevard Study. 1990

Dallas City Directories, microfilm archives

## 15. Attachments

District of Site Map  
 Site Plan  
 Photos (historic & current)

Additional descriptive material  
 Footnotes  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_