Dallas Landmark Commission
Landmark Nomination Form

1. Name
   historic: Summit Play Park
   and/or common: Pike Park
   date:

2. Location
   address: 2807 Harry Hines Blvd
   location/neighborhood: Little Mexico
   block: 
   lot: 
   land survey: 
   tract size:

3. Current Zoning

4. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
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<td>private</td>
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<td>_park</td>
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<td></td>
<td>both</td>
<td>_work in progress</td>
<td>_residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>_commercial</td>
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<td>object</td>
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<td>yes:unrestricted</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>_transportation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5. Ownership
   Current Owner: City of Dallas
   Contact: 
   Address: 
   Phone: 
   City: 
   State: 
   Zip:

6. Form Preparation
   Date: February 1996
   Name & Title: Ambrosio Villarreal Jr. & Kate Singleton
   Organization: Designation Task Force
   Contact: 
   Phone:

7. Representation on Existing Surveys
   Alexander Survey (citywide) local state national ___National Register
   H.P.L. Survey (CBD) A B C D ___Recorded TX Historic Ldmk
   Oak Cliff ___ TX Archaeological Ldmk
   Victorian Survey ___
   Dallas Historic Resources Survey, Phase ___ 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
Pike Park, originally called Summit Play Park, is a 14-acre tract of land located in what is known as “Little Mexico”. The land slopes down on the western side of the park behind the Recreation Center. This feature helped to create an interesting site for the building. There are retaining walls on either side of the Center. The park has two large field areas for sports.

The original Recreation Center, designed by locally prominent Lang and Witchell, was constructed in 1915. The Mission style building has been considerably altered. In front of the building was a plaza with a pool. Trees were planted on either side of the plaza area. Swings and other play equipment were located north of the Center.

The Mission style came to prominence in California around the 1890's and spread to the rest of the southwest by the early 1900's. This style is characterized by Mission shaped dormer or roof parapet; widely overhanging eaves, usually open; prominent porches supported by large, square piers, commonly arched above, and wall surface usually of smooth stucco. (McAlester, p. 490-411) This style fell from favor after World War I. Lang and Witchell’s earlier Mission/Prairie style home for D.E. Waggoner (1909) had similar elements to the later Pike Park Recreation Center.

The firm of Lang and Witchell had a strong impact on Dallas architecture. In the book Dallas Rediscovered, the author states, “Between 1910 and 1942, the firm dominated Dallas construction and made such a profound and indelible visual impact that its influence still constitutes a major portion of the Dallas skyline”. (p. 92)

Otto Lang was born in Feiburg, Germany in 1864 and was educated in engineering at the Karlsruhe Polytechnic Institute. Came to the US in 1888 and came to Dallas. He worked for some local architectural firms and then became chief designer for T&P railroad in 1890. In this capacity he was responsible for the second Gould Building and Fort Worth’s wonderful T&P Depot.

Frank Witchell came to Dallas in 1898 from San Antonio. He was working as a designer for the prominent firm Sanquinet and Staats. In 1904 Witchell and Lang met and in 1905 formed their partnership.
They were able to adapt to the changing architectural styles of each age or genre. Neo Classical Revival, Chicago School and Art Deco. They also successfully translated Spanish Colonial Revival a style made famous by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue at the Panama-California Exposition at San Diego in 1915. Another building that has elements similar to the Pike Park Recreation Center was the residence of D.E. Waggoner on Gaston Ave. (p. 165) Mission/Prairie Style constructed in 1909.

Originally, the Pike Park (Summit) Recreation Center was a three story Mission style building. There was a prominent arcade across the front of the building with arched openings. Either end of the arcade had a prominent Mission style parapet on the front and rear facades; the one in the middle of the roof was smaller, slightly different Mission design. The south and north ends of the arcade are pronounced with three arches. The roll tile roof of the arcade was pitched. The second story had windows across the front with a Mission style parapet. There were two chimneys at either end with decorative chimney pots and small tile roofs. The main roof was also roll tile.

The land at the west or rear facade of the building slopes down and there is an above ground basement story. There is an arched opening on the ground level with three windows above it, two small and one large which have been filled in. The building extends out from here and on the north side of the extension there is a door on the ground level and a large multi-pane window above it. The west face of the extension has two of the large multi-pane windows. On the first floor the extension has been filled in with a one story addition that has no openings and a tile roof. The building extends out to the west again; there are three windows on the west facade of this extension but they have been filled in. On the south side of this extension, there is one small window facing south. There is also an addition on this side. Again, there are two large multi-pane windows on the upper floor. There is an arched opening which has a door and above it three windows; two small and one large which have been filled in. On the south facade there are three arched openings, same as the north facade.

In 1950, the upper floor of the Recreation Center was removed. The remaining building was converted into club and Recreation rooms. (DTH 1-19-50) By 1978, the area of “Little Mexico” was being lost to development. In an attempt to increase awareness of the area’s heritage, the Park was redesigned by the neighborhood and the city parks department. The building was renovated again to its current form. The building was redesigned in a Mexican style that included large arched windows from the arched arcade, red-tiled roof and simulated adobe walls. (DMN 12-16-78) The swimming pool which had been in front of the building was removed and a brick plaza was put in its place. A new pool is located next to the south facade of the building. A large gazebo was also constructed which is almost identical to the one in Monterrey, Mexico. The redevelopment of the Park was an attempt to keep the tradition and history of “Little Mexico” alive.
SITE DESCRIPTION:

The park faces east on Harry Hines Boulevard, with small frame houses dating from late 19th to early 20th century directly across the street. The park is raised several steps above street level, with a Center entry stairway. The south end of the east boundary is screened by a row of large holly shrubs in front of a decorative 4 foot wrought iron fence. The north end of the east boundary is lined by the same fencing, fronted by a row of mature live oak trees.

To the southwest, beyond a line of trees and dense bushes, is a large vacant lot which drops steeply towards the bordering Payne Street, with a view of downtown Dallas beyond. Along the southwest corner and bordering the entire west boundary is a continuous concrete retaining wall, outlined by a 15 foot chain link fence. Across from the southwest corner of the park is a recycling plant, beyond to the west is a large concrete grain elevator complex and the city water treatment plant. Directly west of the park boundary is Magnolia Station, a historic industrial complex converted to lofts.

Across from the park’s northwest corner is the construction site for Magnolia Hill Lofts, 20 - three story lofts. To the north, across the park's small car parking area, is the Dallas Housing Authority’s Little Mexico Village project, currently under renovation.

A concrete retaining wall topped by a solid concrete balustrade with square columns and lined by mature deciduous trees divides the east and west portions of the park on the south side of the Recreation Center; the western portion is at a lower level and contains a playing field (soccer) with non-historic lighting fixtures. A concrete walk leads from the Center along the concrete balustrade on the upper level, and ends at a curving concrete stair with balustrade leading to the lower level playing field as well as to a park entrance at Lyte Street.

To the north of the Recreation Center another grassy playing field (baseball) slopes directly from the eastern to the western park boundary, and also has non-historic lighting.

The pool on the south end of the Recreation Center (which is enclosed by a 6 foot modern wrought iron fence) is flanked by a basketball court and a small children’s playground with play equipment. Scattered across this southeast quadrant of the park are reproduction historic streetlight poles topped by four-globe fixtures with a gargoyle motif.

The east and north facades of the Center building are landscaped with foundation plantings of yucca, holly and small ornamental evergreen trees, while the plaza to the front is outline with medium-sized oak trees in low concrete planters. The Gazebo is placed prominently, centered in front of the Recreation Center Building.
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 first recorded arrival of Mexicans in the city came in 1859 when a small band traveled here to purchase flour. By 1875 there were two families with Spanish surnames living in Dallas, and investigation of city directories for the closing quarter of the nineteenth century indicated that there was a slow but steady increase of the Mexican American population.

The late eighteen hundreds brought Mexican migrant farm workers to fields in the Dallas area. However, the first sizable numbers of Mexicans to settle permanently in Dallas came to work for the railroads soon after the turn of the century.

During the period of rapid national railroad expansion, it was common practice to use converted boxcars as housing for the crews and their families. As a result, the city's first Spanish-speaking neighborhood developed near the MKT (Katy) track where the people lived close to the site where they worked, planted their gardens and maintained the strict family order that characterized the Hispanic social structure. Later this group formed the nucleus of the settlement known as Little Mexico.

Dallas' rapid industrial growth and its position in the heart of a fertile farmland afforded many employment opportunities in manual labor making it a prime destination for the new seekers. The flow of immigrants was unlimited until 1929 when many Mexicans were repatriated during the depression, and when the legislature imposed a quota through the Texas Emigrant Agent Law.

By 1920, most of the city's 7,000 - 10,000 Mexicans were living within the cramped ten-block boundary of Little Mexico. In a contemporaneous news article, Felix Garcia described the area as having, "irregular, narrow, twisted, unpaved streets, flanked by ancient wooden houses and by wooden shacks grouped closely".

A concerned volunteer group, the War Camp Community Service, sought a suitable recreational area for the children. In 1919 they secured a lease to property on Caruth near its intersection with Griffin. The Park Board agreed to assume the lease and improve the lot which became known as Mexican Park although Latins were not restricted by ordinance to this park. By the end of 1919 facilities included playground equipment and free showers, and the park was the scene of fiestas. One of the celebrations in 1920 was attended by Alvaro Obregon, President of Mexico.

As the Spanish-speaking population expanded, activities shifted to Pike Park. Pike Park, originally called Summit Play Park, had its origin in 1912-1913. The establishment of a park in that vicinity coincided with a city-wide morality campaign which successfully extinguished the "red lights" of that district. When the legalized vice area located between Lamar and Akard, Ross and McKinney Ave. was voted out by the city, this section, which offered low rents, was settled by Mexicans.

Summit was the first park to be established under an innovative program of park design. The Park Board then purchased the necessary portions of land from several owners in an already established neighborhood to meet residential recreational needs.

The 4.39 acres which comprised Summit Play Park were purchased from Nat G. and James H. Turney and Mrs. Lou F. White in 1912-1914 at a total cost of $18,085.00 withdrawn from the board's ad valorem tax revenue. The name, which describes the park's location atop a hill overlooking the city, was $5.00 prize-winning entry of a young neighborhood girl participating in the name-the-park contest.
By April of 1915 most of the park's facilities were in place. The large two-story Turney house was sold for $300.00, moved and replaced with an elegant two-story fieldhouse. It was constructed at a cost of $23,759.00 by S. S. Self, contractor, and Lang & Witchell, architects. A free shower service was operated in the basement while the upper stories housed reading rooms, activity rooms, and assembly hall and a party room. The Park Board installed a flag pole and playground equipment, and at Scout Master Richmond's suggestion authorized a wading pool which was constructed by park labor at a cost of $1104. A retaining wall costing $8086.00 was built in 1915.

Employees at the park included two bath attendants, a custodian, a park policeman, a director of boys activities and a director of girls activities. There were crafts classes for the girls and sports activities for the boys. The Park Board provided baseball uniforms for team members. In 1916 free movies were shown outdoors at Summit Play Park at a cost to the city of $8.00 per month. They moved indoors in 1917.

Traditionally, the area around the park hosted an immigrant population of Anglo, German, French, Swiss, Irish and Scottish people with a predominance of Polish Jews just before the heavy influx of Mexicans in the early twenties. Gradually, Yucca plants replaced Kentucky bluegrass, Spanish names appeared on storefronts, Spanish colonial architecture characterized the churches, and by 1925 "Little Mexico" was established as an ethnic community.

During the transition period there were repeated efforts by Anglo factions to prevent Mexican Americans from using Summit Play Park, until the Park Board settled the matter by establishing regulations for Pike Park in 1931. (The name was changed July 12, 1927 to honor Edgar L. Pike who served as a member of the Park Board from 1908-1919.) The policy clearly delineated the joint use of Pike facilities by "Mexicans and Americans."

Even though the Mexican Colony used the park for fiestas as early as 1926, Hispanic leaders recall that daily use of the park for Mexican people was not allowed until the 1930's. Prior to this time Mexican-Americans were not allowed in the park. Mexican children were not allowed to play on the lawn or use playground equipment.

By the early thirties Pike Park was used almost exclusively by the Mexican American community, and the development of the neighborhood, mirrored in the park activities, followed the evolutionary pattern of Mexican colonies, patriotic Mexicanist organizations, newspapers, social clubs, small stores and restaurants were founded. Artisans began supplying Anglo-Americans with pottery and other art objects. Labor organizers worked for higher wages and improved working conditions. The park was the Center of the community's cultural and political life. Because most Mexican Americans entered the United States after World War I, their heritage is linked almost completely to Mexico's past, and the celebration of national Mexican holidays as an integral part of colony life.

This contemporaneous account describes Pike Park in the late thirties. "Pike Park Community Center, with its walled play park and Spanish style community house plays a particularly significant role in the life of Little Mexico. Its swimming pool and play park, under the supervision of the City Park Department, attract the underprivileged children of the neighborhood by hundreds, particularly during the warm months, and the field house, with its large playroom on the first floor and auditorium on the second floor, is the scene of innumerable dances, plays, and other community affairs.

In this park the Mexican colony enjoys its two most important fiestas of the year - Mexican National Day, Diez y Seis de Septiembre (September 16th), which celebrates Father Miguel Hidalgo's proclamation of the Independence of Mexico in 1810 and Cinco de Mayo (May 5th), commemorating the victory of the Mexican forces over the French invaders of Puebla on that date in 1862.

Pike Park first was used for the celebration of Diez y Seis de Septiembre in 1926. Between 1926 and 1937 it was annually a site of cultural exchange between the Mexican government and the city of Dallas as representatives of both who regularly attend the festival. Since 1937 the celebration has been managed by the Federacion de Organizaciones Mexicanos (Federation of Mexican Organizations), founded by Adolfo G. Dominguez, Mexican Consul.
The Center had a library, a sewing machine, a piano and radios, and in 1930 a drinking fountain donated by Mrs. Edgar L. Pike was installed at a cost of $350.00.41

During the thirties the Park Board cooperated with several social welfare programs. The WPA recreation program provided salaries for additional assistants or recreation leaders in lower-class areas. In addition to maintaining an active recreational program, the park served as a food distribution site, a medical Center35 and a routing station for Mexican American laborers on welfare work.44

In 1940 the park area was somewhat diminished by the donation of land for the widening of Turney Avenue35 (now Harry Hines Blvd.). However, Pike continued to be the focal point of the community. During the war years the club “Arte Manual” operated a “hospitality Center” for Mexican American servicemen passing through Dallas.36

The early fifties brought several changes. The Recreation building was painted and remodeled extensively by removing the second floor and by converting the first floor into a Spanish style structure.17 The retaining wall was removed,39 a lighted baseball diamond was constructed39 and the play area was expanded by utilizing a portion of the grounds leased from the neighboring Dallas Housing Authority.40

In 1953 a highly successful boxing program was initiated which gave direction and discipline to the lives of countless Mexican American youths.41 As recently as 1975, 90% of the boxers in the lower divisions of amateur competition were Latins and the basement of the Recreation Center remains a major training Center in Dallas.42

For many years Pike Park served a paradoxical role as it was a nucleus for the expression and reinforcement of Mexican identity while simultaneously drawing the community into active involvement in the American culture. Park directors encouraged children to finish their education,43 and gradually Spanish surnames began to appear on lists of prominent Dallas businessmen, doctors, attorneys and civic leaders. As families of newly acquired affluence moved to the suburbs, attention to Pike Park declined.

Other factors contributed to the decrease in usage of the park. The development of two major thoroughfares through the district severed the park from the area it served. Families displaced by the massive razing accompanying the building of the freeways and the expansion of the central business district were forced to move to other low-rent districts.

City officials considered closing the facilities at Pike Park, but a great cry of protest rising up from the people resulted in a re-evaluation of the park’s importance. Three dramatic events of the seventies clearly demonstrated that despite the increasing geographical diffusion of Little Mexico, Pike Park remained it spiritual heart.

Unanimously, participants identified Pike Park as the single most important place in Dallas where the heritage and the community meet.44 In intimate discussions held at the Center, the image of Pike Park emerged as the psychological home of the people, the root of their progressive and retrospective identity, the very symbol of the Mexican American presence in Dallas.

Responding to input from the User Design Team, the city completed a $400,000 renovation project in December of 1978. The Recreation Center was redesigned in a Mexican style with red-tile roof, curved parapet, row of arched windows and restored stucco walls. The old swimming pool in front of the building was moved and in its place a brick-patterned plaza was constructed. The most stunning addition is the graceful kiosco, a Mexican-style bandstand. The entire park then was landscaped beautifully and enclosed with a sturdy yet decorative wrought iron fence.

Today Pike Park continues to serve its local community through a variety of cultural, athletic and recreational programs. But its impact becomes more far-reaching as Mexican Americans, growing in numbers and economic capacity, disperse into the suburbs. For them the biannual pilgrimage to Pike Park for fiestas is going home.
15. Attachments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District or Site Map</th>
<th>Additional descriptive material</th>
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<tr>
<td>Site Plan</td>
<td>Footnotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photos (historic &amp; current)</td>
<td>Other: __________________________</td>
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16. Inventory of Structures-Historic District Only  
(Page ___ of ___)  

_a. Location and Name_

_b. Development History_

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_c. Architectural Significance_

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<td>Alterations:</td>
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_d. Category_

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<th>Non-contributing</th>
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<td>excellent example of an supportive of the district in age, intrusive; detracts form the architectural style that is typical of style and massing but is not character of the district or integral to the district; retaining representative of the significant essential integrity of design style, period and detailing, or area of significance typical of the district</td>
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_e. Statement of Significance_
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Location as the site of a significant historical event.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historical heritage of the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or specimen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, material or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar feature of a neighborhood, community or the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Archaeological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories or historic or prehistoric value.</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. Value as an aspect of community sentiment of public pride.</td>
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**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 (Name)

__________________________
Neighborhood Designation Task Force

__________________________
Jim Anderson, Urban Planner

__________________________
Historic Preservation
2 Achor, Shirley, Mexican Americans in a Dallas Barrio. (Tucson, Arizona, University of Arizona Press, 1978.)
4 Garcia, Felix, Dallas Morning News, October 1, 1935
6 Ibid. p. 29
7 Davis, Ethelyn Clara, Little Mexico: A Study of Horizontal and Vertical Mobility. Thesis M. A. Southern Methodist University, August, 1936. p. 18
9 Park Board Minutes, Vol. 3 p. 22-223
10 Ibid., p. 13, 144
11 Interview with Mrs. L. B. Houston
12 Park Board Minutes, Vol. 4 p. 80
13 History book of E. Beuhlah Cauley, Secretary of Park & Recreation Board 1920-1963
14 Park Board Minutes, Vol. 4 p. 85
15 Ibid., p. 83
16 Ibid., p. 33
17 Ibid., p. 148
18 Ibid., p. 231
19 Ibid., p. 149
20 Ibid., p. 190
21 Ibid., p. 212
22 Ibid., p. 150
24 Park Board Minutes, Vol. 5 p. 228
25 Ibid., Vol. 6 p. 256
26 Ibid., p. 241
27 Ibid., Vol. 8 p. 9
28 Ibid., Vol. 7 p. 184
30 Weber, David J., editor, Foreigners in Their Native Land. (Albuquerque, New Mexico, University of New Mexico Press 1973) p. 4
31 Park Board Minutes, Vol. 7 p. 87
32 Park Board Minutes, Vol. 7 p. 87
34 Park Board Minutes, Vol. 8 p. 79
35 Ibid., Vol. 10 p. 230
36 Ibid., p. 385
37 Ibid., Vol. 11 p. 229
38 Ibid., p. 531
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., Vol. 12 p. 23
41 Ibid., Vol. 11 p. 548
42 City of Dallas, El Barrio Study Phase I. 1975. p. 145
43 Interview with Frank Teranella
44 Dallas Morning News, November 23, 1975