

**Dallas Landmark Commission
Landmark Nomination Form**

1. Name

historic: Shiels House

and/or common: 4602 Reiger Avenue

date: c.1906

2. Location

address: 4602 Reiger Avenue

location/neighborhood: Peak's Addition

block: 2 799-1/2 PT

lot: 1

land survey: E.H. Ray's Addition

tract size: 80 x 160

3. Current Zoning

current zoning: Planned Development District

4. Classification

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

5. Ownership

Current Owner: Mark Gardner

Contact: Mark Gardner/ Katherine Seale

Phone: 214-979-7810/ 214-821-3290

Address: 100 Crescent Court, Ste. 1300 **City:** Dallas **State:** TX

Zip: 75201

6. Form Preparation

Date: June 12, 2006, November 27, 2006

Name & Title: Katherine D. Seale

Organization: Preservation Dallas

Contact: Katherine D. Seale, Director of Discover Dallas! Survey

Phone: 214-821-3290

7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide)	local	state	national	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Register
H.P.L. Survey (CBD)	A	B	C	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded TX Historic Ldmk
Oak Cliff			D	<input type="checkbox"/> TX Archaeological Ldmk
Victorian Survey				
Dallas Historic Resources Survey, Phase _____				
Discover Dallas! Survey, Significance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architectural <input type="checkbox"/> cultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> historical				
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 and Mary "Willie" Shiels

significant later owner(s):

9. Construction Dates

original: c. 1906

alterations/additions:

10. Architect

original construction: Thomas Shiels (contractor)

alterations/additions:

11. Site Features

natural: lies on a squared lot, slightly higher than street grade and is shaded with mature trees

urban design: located in a late nineteenth, early twentieth-century residential neighborhood of mostly 2-story frame houses built between the 1890s and 1920s.

12. Physical Description

Condition, check one:

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved (date _____)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

The Shiels House at 4602 Reiger is located at the southeast corner of Reiger and Colson Avenue, facing Reiger. It is in Old East Dallas, one block outside the Peak's Suburban Addition City Historic District. The Shiels House is a two-and-a-half story frame building designed in the Victorian and Prairie School styles with some Craftsman style influence. It sits slightly above street grade and has two concrete sidewalks in the front, one parallel to the street, the other perpendicular. The perpendicular sidewalk connects the street curb to the

front porch. Large live oak and pecan trees to the east and west of the house provide some shade with minimal, overgrown landscaping in the front. Four crate myrtles exist along the corner side yard, or southwestern side of the house.

The house is set back approximately 25 feet from the front of the lot. It is distinguished by its asymmetrical, stepped façade and wrap-around porch. The roof has broad, overhanging eaves and is punctuated with a gable dormer and large chimney on the west façade. The walls are wood framing and clad with drop siding with some wood shingles. The foundation is pier and beam and presumably made of brick and wood.

Each section of the front façade has its own steeply pitched hipped roof, which is made of composition shingles. A special design feature of the house is the broad band of alternating wood shingles seen at the cornice level. The band wraps around the entire façade and is interrupted by the second-story windows that protrude into it. The windows are narrow, one-over-one wood sash. The upper and lower lights are multi-pane and exhibit a typical Victorian pattern. The upper windows have a radiating central diamond-shaped pattern, while the lower windows have a simpler design. Several of the original windows have been replaced with single panes of glass. The walls are faced with drop siding. Cutaway corners are seen on the front façade, and are repeated on the sides and rear facades.

A large wrap-around porch was added to the house by the original owner sometime before 1927.¹ The porch has a broad roof and solid box wood columns atop stout brick supports. Attached to the columns are large decorative brackets, like those associated with the Craftsman style.

Overall, the Shiels House exhibits characteristics associated with the Victorian style including its strong vertical emphasis, which is particularly seen in the cutaway corners, second-story window placement, vertical corner boards, and the steeply pitched roof. However, the wrap-around porch contrasts sharply with the rest of the house and is clearly an early alteration. It bears little resemblance to a typical Queen Anne wrap-around porch with no turned balustrades, posts, or spindle work. Furthermore, its low, broad roof and stout piers give the house a horizontal emphasis, a characteristic espoused by the Prairie School architects. Beyond the porch's stylistic design, its placement is another indication that it was not original. The porch meets the wall at a cutaway corner on both sides, making an awkward juncture.

The northeastern façade of the house has many of the same features as seen on the front façade. Five one-over-one windows punctuate the second story and four one-over-one windows and one door punctuate the first floor. Cutaway windows also appear on a projecting bay. The other side of the house, or southwestern façade, is similar with 8 one-over-one windows on the second floor and four one-over-one windows and one door on the first floor. Cutaway windows also appear on a projecting bay. On the other side of the bay, towards the rear of the house, is an inset area on the second floor. Large decorative brackets are seen in both corners. Unlike the Craftsman style brackets on the wrap-around porch, these are thin and delicate and more typical of the Victorian style.

¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Dallas, TX, 1921, 1927, vol. 3, sheet 357.

The rear façade has one set of three one-over-one windows and two one-over-one windows on the second floor and two one-over-one windows on the first floor. At some later point in the building's history, a new door and large sidelights replaced the original back entrance.

Originally, the lot was 80 feet wide and 225 long. Three 1-story service buildings including a dwelling once stood at the rear of the property. These were all demolished by 1950 presumably by the second owner who purchased the house and lot in the mid-1940s.² It is also presumed that the second owner subdivided the lot and sold the rear portion. A two-story house and servants quarters were built on the rear lot, but do not exist today.

The interior retains many original features, particularly the milled woodwork. The first floor contains an entry hall, two parlors, a dining room, breakfast area, and kitchen. Two original fireplaces also exist. The flooring is custom milled woodwork made from the original owner's milling factory. The design in the entry way, dining room and parlor are made from varied oak and pine stripping and are arranged in unique custom patterns. The stair treads, hand rail and balustrade are quarter sawn oak. The landings display narrow boards in a unique custom design. The second floor has four bedrooms, and does not retain its original fabric.

At the time of this report, the Shiels House is unoccupied. The house recently sold and the current owner is seeking City of Dallas Landmark designation. Plans are underway to restore the house. Never significantly altered or updated, the Shiels House retains its original form and materials and thus possesses a high level of architectural and historic integrity.

² Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Dallas, TX, 1922, vol.3, sheet 157 and numerous Dallas City Directories, 1905- 1955.

13. Historical Significance

The Shiels House at 4602 Reiger Avenue is significant for its architectural style, a unique combination of Queen Anne Victorian and Prairie School with some Craftsman details. It is also important for its age. Now a century old, the Shiels House is the oldest one in the block and one of the most historic buildings in the neighborhood. The Shiels House is further significant for illustrating an important shift in east Dallas' history. It was built during east Dallas' most prolific period of residential construction (1903-1929). Furthermore, the house is identified with its original owner, Thomas Shiels, who contributed to the development of the city. As a carpenter and owner of a large East Dallas mill, Thomas Shiels played a considerable role in shaping the new east Dallas.

The Shiels House represents a hybrid of styles including Queen Anne Victorian and Prairie School, with some Craftsman influence. Typical of the Queen Anne Victorian style is the house's asymmetrical massing, the variety of materials used on the facade, the window patterning, and the vertical emphasis illustrated by the cutaway corners, second-story window placement, vertical corner boards, and the steeply pitched roof.

Over the past century, the neighborhood has undergone many changes, most radically in the 1960's when the area was rezoned multi-family. In 1995, the adjacent neighborhood, Peak's Suburban Addition, became a City of Dallas historic district. More recently, efforts have been underway to expand the historic district to include the 4600 block of Reiger. While several multi-family apartment complexes exist in the 4600 block, many of the original two-story frame houses dating to the same period of construction of the Shiels House survive.

The Shiels House is an example of the new type of housing offered to an emerging middle class. In 1882, when East Dallas incorporated, it was designed for wealthy Dallas businessmen and their families with large lots and stately houses. Development continued until the 1893 depression. A decade long weak economy resulted in limited construction projects. By 1903, east Dallas, was no longer its own town and the economy had recovered. Now annexed to the City of Dallas, the neighborhood began its second phase of construction. Railroads, cotton manufacturing and agriculture produced a healthy economy and a rising middle class. East Dallas in particular witnessed a burst in building activity and established older areas were dramatically altered. Former lots were divided and older two and three-story brick and stone houses were demolished for newer, one-and-a-half and two-story wood-frame houses. The Shiels House is representative of the shift seen throughout historic East Dallas.

The Shiels House is also significant because of its owner. Thomas Shiels was an immigrant who worked his way up from a carpenter to owning his own mill. He was born in 1861 in Glasgow, Scotland. At age ten, his family moved to Texas where he was trained as a carpenter. As an adult he displayed his talent and became vice-president of the Citizens Planning Mill, 4007 E. Grand Avenue. The Citizens Planning Mill specialized in customized woodwork for doors, sashes, and interior finishes. By 1920, Thomas Shiels owned his own

business with his brother and formed Shiels-Stacy-Shiels. The firm advertised themselves in the City Directories as manufacturers of high-grade mill work and interior finish. Given the elaborate millwork seen on the interior of the house, Thomas Shiels may have used his house like a gallery displaying different finishes and decorative wood flooring. In the mid-1920s, the mill moved to 4007 East Grand Avenue, simply named the Shiels Planning Mills Company. The Shiels raised their nine children in the house, two of which went into the mill business. Another son, James Henry, married Mary Robbins, for whom the Mary Shiels Hospital on Howell Street was named. James Henry and Mary lived behind their parents' house at 202 Colson Street, now demolished.

Thomas Shiels worked until his untimely death at age 64, when he lost his life to an accidental gun fire. Reportedly, Thomas and his son Alexander Young "A.Y." were at the mill when the gun misfired. The paper described the funeral as "one of the largest attended in Dallas in several years, though the weather was cold, rainy and disagreeable. The church auditorium was filled to capacity and many stood in the back of the auditorium, in the corridors, and in the Sunday school rooms."³ A.Y. became president of the mill after his father's death, although unable to recover from the accident, he took his life the following year. Thomas Elliott "Elliot" Shiels, the eldest of the boys, then became president of the mill. He renamed the mill Elliott Shiels Planning Mill and is reputed to have done all the interior millwork at Dallas Hall at Southern Methodist University.⁴ In 1934, he joined E.A. Adams and E. B. Ingram to form the Southwest Listing Bureau, Inc., an association for planning mill operators in Texas and Louisiana. He continued the mill under the name Elliott Shiels Planning Mill and was one of twenty-nine contractors feted by local architect George Dahl in 1953.⁵

Summary:

Built circa 1906 in the E.H. Ray Addition of Old East Dallas, the Shiels House is a stylistic

3 "Thomas Shiels' Funeral Held," *Dallas Morning News*, October 30, 1925.

4 Email correspondence with Gay Nell Shiels, June 10, 2006, see Thomas Shiels file at Preservation Dallas.

5 "Dahl Fêtes Contractors, Employees," *Dallas Morning News*, May 14, 1953.

hybrid representing the transition from Queen Anne Victorian to Prairie School that occurred in Dallas at the turn-of-the-nineteenth century. The house is defined by its steeply-pitched hipped roof, asymmetrical massing and wrap-around porch, characteristics associated with the Victorian style. The porch itself, with its low, broad roof and heavy supports, however, shows the influence of the Prairie School, while the brackets are Craftsman.

The Shiels House was built at the end of East Dallas' Victorian era when Dallas's newly emerging middle class stimulated a large construction boom, particularly in east Dallas. Grand Queen Anne houses began to be replaced by one-and-a-half and two-story American Foursquare Prairie School houses and Craftsmen bungalows. The Thomas and Willie Shiels House displays characteristics of both styles, and is a rare example of the old and emerging stylistic trends. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its combination of architectural styles and for representing east Dallas' most prolific period of building activity.

The Shiels House has had no major alterations or additions and retains a high level of architectural and historic integrity. While the Prairie/Craftsman porch may not be original to the house, a porch with its same configuration is shown on a 1922 Sanborn map. Thus, even if the porch was a subsequent major alteration to the house, its existence for more than 80 years make it a significant part of the house that helps convey the city's history of stylistic trends.

The Shiels House is one of the few unaltered houses dating back to the turn of the century. This is attributed to the fact that the house stayed in the Shiels family until the mid-1940s when it was sold to another family who lived in the house until the 1960's. Since that time, the home has changed hands only three times.

14. Bibliography

BOOKS

City Directories of Dallas, multiple years from 1905- 1925.

ARTICLES

National Register of Historic Places nomination for Thomas Shiels House, Phase IV, East Dallas DAL/DA 594, 1995.

“Death Follows Long Illness,” *Dallas Morning News*, 1916-03-13.

“James Shiels Dies at Leonard,” *Dallas Morning News*, 1916-03-12.

“Fire Destroys Planning Mill,” *Dallas Morning News*, 1916-06-03.

“Thomas Shiels’ Funeral Held,” *Dallas Morning News*, 1925-10-30.

“Thomas Shiels Fatally Shot, *Dallas Morning News*, 1925-10-29.

“Thomas Shiels Bullet Victim,” *Dallas Morning News*, 1925-06-20.

“Crowd at Dedication of Thomas Shiels Bible Class Chapel,” *Dallas Morning News*, 1927-08-29.

“Mrs. Shiels, Dallasite for 35 Years, Dies,” *Dallas Morning News*, 1941-09-25.

“Listing Bureau Opened By Planning Mill Men,” *Dallas Morning News*, 1934-03-07.

“Dahl Fetes Contractors, Employees,” *Dallas Morning News*, 1953-05-14.

MAPS

Murphy and Bolanz Block Books Dallas County 1880-1920, Block Book 1, Page 137, Dallas Public Library.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Dallas, TX, 1922, vol. 3, sheet 157.

OTHER

Email correspondence with Gay Nell Shiels, June 10, 2006. See: Thomas Shiels vertical file at Preservation Dallas.

15. Attachments

<i>District or Site Map</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Additional descriptive material</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Site Plan</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Footnotes</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Photos (historic & current)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other:</i>

16. Designation Criteria

- History, heritage and culture:** Represents the historical development, ethnic heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or country.
- Historic event:** Location of or association with the site of a significant historic event.
- Significant persons:** Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, state, or country.
- Architecture:** Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, landscape design, method of construction, exceptional craftsmanship, architectural innovation, or contains details which represent folk or ethnic art.
- Architect or master builder:** Represents the work of an architect, designer or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state or country.
- Historic context:** Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites, or areas which are eligible for preservation based on historic, cultural, or architectural characteristics.
- Unique visual feature:** Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city that is a source of pride or cultural significance.
- Archeological:** Archeological or paleontological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories of historic or prehistoric interest.
- National and state recognition:** Eligible of or designated as a National Historic Landmark, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, State Archeological Landmark, American Civil Engineering Landmark, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Historic education:** Represents an era of architectural, social, or economic history that allows an understanding of how the place or area was used by past generations.

17. 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 Committee***

***Chair
Designation Committee***

Historic Preservation Planner