

Dallas Landmark Commission
Landmark Nomination Form

1. Name

historic: Talley/Polk House
and/or common:
date: 1909

2. Location

address: 2917 Reagan Street
location/neighborhood: Oak Lawn

block: 3/1328 **lot:** 4 & 5 **land survey:** Mellersh's Oak Lawn Add.
tract size: 85' x 145'

3. Current Zoning

current zoning: PD-

4. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	<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	Public	Accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Acquisition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes:restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> yes:unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> other, specify
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	

5. Ownership

Current Owner: Wayne Falcone

Contact: Wayne Falcone

Phone: 214.351.1605

Address:

City: Dallas

State:

Zip:

6. Form Preparation

Date: May 18, 2002

Name & Title: Ron Emrich, Principal

Organization: Urban Prospects

Contact: urbanpros@earthlink.net

Phone: 214.942.2202

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

8. Historic Ownership

original owner: Lynn P. Talley
significant later owner(s): Daisy C. Polk

9. Construction Dates

original: 1909
alterations/additions:

10. Architect

original construction: unknown
alterations/additions:

11. Site Features

natural: none
urban design: corner lot, street grid

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 Talley/Polk House (1909) is a two-and-one-half-story wood frame dwelling of the early 20th century period displaying high quality characteristics of the Arts & Crafts style. Restored in 1999 - 2000 to its present appearance, the house features an asymmetrical plan, a composition shingle roof composed of a monumental side gable punctuated by a centered, front gabled dormer, and a deep

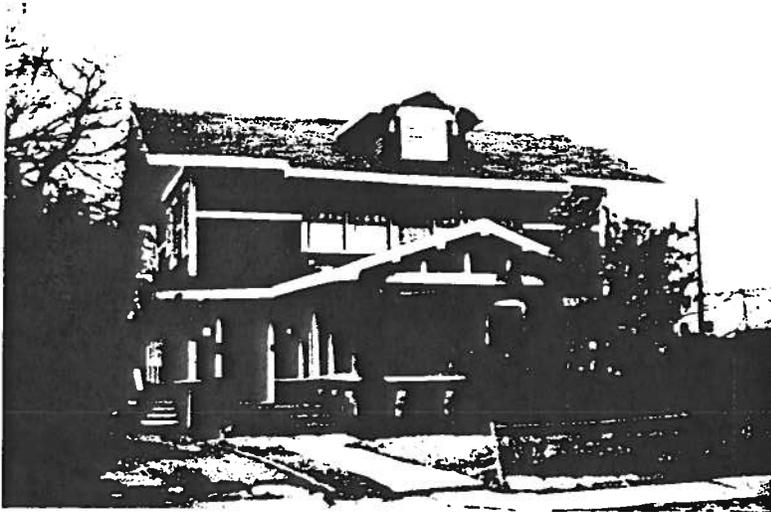
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front piazza springing forward from the main body of the house and topped with another front-facing gabled roof.

The house faces southeast on Reagan Street, set back behind a modest front and side lawn on an essentially flat building lot. Originally part of a middle class residential neighborhood of primarily single family residences, the Talley/Polk House remains as the most intact and finely detailed Arts & Crafts style dwelling in the city. It is surrounded by a mixture of commercial and modern multi-family uses, with a scattering of less finely designed single family residences. The property contains no other structures or buildings, its historic accessory buildings having been removed at some previous time.



General Characteristics

The immediate neighborhood surrounding the Talley/Polk House grew up during the first two decades of the 20th century and consisted of one- and two-story frame and occasionally brick residences. The remaining dwellings of the period, mostly one-story cottages and two-story residences dating from 1900 to 1925, are scattered among a variety of commercial, multi-family and other building types that date from the 1920s through the 1990s. The area is zoned as a Planned Development that allows for multiple residential and non-residential uses.

When built, the Talley/Polk House was located on a rectangular parcel, 85 feet wide by 145 feet deep, representing two original building lots in the Mellersh's Oak Lawn Addition. The house rests on a raised pier and beam foundation and is embellished with a variety of decorative

treatments reflecting high style Arts & Crafts architectural influences, including alternating bands of narrow drop siding and shingles, banks of large windows, robust square porch pillars, and muscular wooden brackets supporting dormer and porch roofs and other decorative elements. Fenestration patterns are varied on the asymmetrical elevations, with most of the large window openings taken up by double hung, nine-over-one sashes framed with smooth wide boards topped by simple flat cornices. A front facing, gable-roofed piazza projects forward from the primary elevation, centered on the body of the house, reached

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by three steps up from street level. The main entry is asymmetrically placed at the west end of the primary elevation, shaded by a shallow, side gabled roof that intersects with the more prominent piazza roof gable. The two-story, three-sided bay of an engaged octagon anchors the southeast corner of the house facing the intersection of Reagan and Dickason.

The original building permit entry appears in the index of permits for 1909, although neither the actual permit nor photographs from the historic period were located. The earliest Sanborn Insurance Map showing the area that includes the Talley/Polk House is dated 1921. The maps demonstrate that the house remains in its original plan configuration with no additions since its construction.

No information on original landscaping has been located. Mature deciduous trees shade the interior side yard and rear of the property and a concrete sidewalk placed perpendicularly to the sidewalk reaches the front door.

Exterior Features

The primary elevation of the Talley/Polk House faces southeast on Reagan Street, its asymmetrical façade separated into three vertical divisions. The main body of the building is sheathed primarily in simple, narrow drop siding, while a deep horizontal band beneath the open eaves of the massive gable roof is surfaced in painted wood shingles, as is a narrower horizontal band above the house's foundation that includes the solid balustrade and square columns of the piazza. The large mass of the house's side-gabled roof is broken by a gabled, front-facing attic dormer and louvered vent, located in the roof's center, that is supported by muscular, projecting knee braces with shaped ends.

The simple paneled wood entry door with multiple lights in its top third is located at the extreme southwestern corner of the house. Three concrete steps access the concrete-floor of the porch, the side-gabled roof of which is supported by robust knee braces with shaped ends. The entry porch floor extends northward from the doorway, the roof intersecting with the prominent front facing gable roof of the piazza that thrusts forward from the center of the body of the house. The piazza's deep soffit is supported by large knee braces at the corners and marked by exposed, projecting roof purlins with shaped ends. The porch's gable front, like the major gable ends on

the second story, is decorated with painted shingles interspersed with flat boards that appear as half-timbering. Two pairs of multi-light French doors that open directly into the livingroom provide access to the piazza. The square supporting columns are shingled, as is the solid balustrade, the openings decorated below with shallow wooden flower boxes supported by shaped-end knee braces.

A distinctive, continuous bank of five, double hung windows with nine-over-one sashes is centered in the front elevation of the second story, massive knee braces placed between each window and supporting a slight projection of the open-eaved overhanging roof with its exposed purlins. A simple flat belt of wood separates the drop siding sheathing the main body of the house from the shingling above, the belt intersecting the second story windows at the meeting rail dividing the sashes.

The secondary elevation on the house's north elevation, facing Dickason Street, is dominated by the deep overhang of the gabled main roof. A secondary gable extends from the first on the front-facing plane to shelter the two story engaged half octagon bay, which is pierced by large nine-over-one

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windows in the side faces, and smaller single sash, multi-light windows in the center face of the half-octagon.

The rear elevation is asymmetrical in composition, with mostly nine-over-one windows placed in various locations on the façade to correspond to secondary rooms and uses on the interior. A one-story, flat roofed enclosed rear porch projects outward from the primary mass of the house, topped by a roof deck with simple iron railing encircling its perimeter.



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 Lynn Talley/Daisy Polk House at 2917 Reagan Street is significant as probably the most distinguished, high-style example of large Arts and Crafts-style domestic architecture remaining in Dallas. Built in 1909, the home retains much of its integrity, particularly its outstanding exterior materials – wood shingles, drop siding and large exposed beams with shaped ends – beautifully composed to reflect the connection to the wooden building traditions of Northern Europe that were being popularly expressed during the period in which it was constructed. The elegant two-and-one-half story frame house, located on a visually prominent corner lot in the Oak Lawn area, relates to early 20th century American architectural influences that were emerging at the time, particularly from California by architects Charles and Henry Greene and their contemporaries. The Talley/Polk House remains as a distinguished and instructive example of high style Arts & Crafts architecture, its recent restoration further accentuating its long standing position as an established visual landmark in the Oak Lawn neighborhood.

Gustav Stickley, the New Jersey designer who popularized for Americans the “Arts & Crafts” or “Mission” style in architecture, furniture, and textiles, described his theory of what the middle class desired in a dwelling in his second volume of house patterns, *More Craftsman Homes*, published in 1912: “a style of building suited to the lives of the people, having the best possible structural outline, the simplest form, materials that belong to the country in which the house is built, and colors that please and cheer.” The common stock of ideas and creative energy that were infusing American house design just after the turn of the 20th century can be traced to the influences of the eminent Victorian-era writer John Ruskin and the father of the English Arts & Crafts movement, William Morris. It would be the built works of Southern California architect brothers Charles and Henry Greene, however, that would most firmly establish the brief popularity of the high style Arts & Crafts “bungalow,” built usually and predominately of finely fitted and joined wood, for the American middle classes.

The Arts & Crafts movement in the United States had as its philosophical basis a “doctrine of honesty in purpose, materials and manufacture,” as John Ruskin described it, that would create beautiful and functional shelter for the poor and working class Americans. It was ultimately taken up, however, by the more affluent who could both understand the cultural aesthetic on which it was based and afford the (usually) expensive handworked quality of the objects, furniture and houses in which the vocabulary was expressed. The Arts & Crafts movement flourished only during the last period of middle class American affluence before the First World War, when the progressive clients of architects like Frank Lloyd Wright and Greene & Greene were, in the words of James Marston Fitch, entranced by the “virtues of a suburban lifestyle and physical environment... (while embracing) women’s suffrage, progressive education, factory reform,.... and child care, diet and hygiene.” By the end of the war in the late 1910s, interest in the Arts & Crafts had already faded. It would be replaced with a more conservative interest in the Colonial Revival and other historical styles that reflected the waning of progressivism and the “striving

bourgeois ethic of plain living and high thinking” that had characterized the preceding decade and a half.

Lynn P. Talley, the assistant cashier of the City National Bank, filed for a Dallas building permit to construct a two-story dwelling at the corner of Reagan and Dickason Streets in September of 1909. Nothing more is yet known of Lynn and his wife Martha, who only lived at 2917 Reagan for two years, 1910 – 1911, and then sold the house and disappeared from the Dallas directories. The Talleys, however, were surely influenced by the rising popularity of the Arts & Crafts aesthetic, and they may have read Stickley’s *Craftsman* magazine and collected the metalwork and other artistic

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expressions of Elbert Hubbard’s Roycrofters guild or the art pottery from the kilns of Van Briggie or Rookwood. It is not known whether a local Dallas builder constructed the Talley’s imposing \$4,000 “bungalow” on Reagan Street from one of the many pattern books (including Stickley’s) available at the time, although the house’s distinguished and elegant detailing inside and out suggests that an architect may have been involved in its design.

It is most certainly likely that the client, the builder, and any architect that may have participated in the creation of the house on Reagan Street had seen and been influenced by the work of the few nationally recognized and published architects who were creating masterpieces of Arts & Crafts design at the time, not the least of whom were brothers Charles Sumner and Henry Mather Greene, of Pasadena, California.

By 1901, the Greene’s were exhibiting the influences of Stickley, Morris and other proponents of the Arts & Crafts in their mostly residential architectural practice in Southern California. The brothers were interested in and frequently read *The Craftsman*, and were experimenting with “natural” materials of river rock and redwood, materials indigenous to their part of the country. Charles Greene reputedly purchased a travel book about Japan from an itinerant bookseller in about 1903 and became enamored with Asian building techniques, particularly the visual expression of posts and beams and the roof as a predominant element of a structure. The 1903 house the brothers designed for their three sisters in Pasadena was the first time a special emphasis was placed on projecting beams and the timber structure of the roof over the entry to the residence. Already appearing as a theme in much of their work had been the running use of the half-octagonal form emerging from some portion of the design. Then in 1904, at the urging of a client, Charles evidently attended the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis and visited the Imperial Japanese Garden there, where he was further inspired by Japanese timber construction.

The 1904 Jennie Reeves House in Long Beach, California has been described by scholars as the “pivotal structure in (the Greenes’) embrace of the Arts & Crafts movement.” The use of shingles for cladding, an expressed timber structure, multiple gables, deeply overhanging roofs with projecting beams shaped on the ends, and horizontal bands of casement windows were all elements of the Reeves House, and are indeed significant character-defining features of the

Talley/Polk House in Dallas built five years later. Charles Greene explained to a client his reason for having the beams project from the gables: "(it) is because they cast such beautiful shadows on the sides of the house in this bright atmosphere." Certainly the bright Texas sunshine argued for a similar treatment.

Another similarly detailed Greene & Greene house also in Long Beach, that of Adelaide Tichenor, was marked by a great porte cochere, thrusting out from the main body of the house, which soon became another of the major features of some of the Greene's most distinguished homes. Also built in 1904, the Tichenor House was published in the *Architectural Record* in 1906, and the Greene's work began to gain wider notice. Gustav Stickley published articles about the brothers' work in *The Craftsman* magazine in 1907 and 1908 and featured two Greene houses, including Charles's own home, in his *Craftsman Homes* pattern book of 1909. Charles wrote an article for *Western Architect* magazine on "Bungalows" in 1908, and the Greenes' work was also featured in the *Ladies Home Journal*, *Architect & Engineer* and *House Beautiful* at the time.

Lynn and Martha Talley's house on Reagan Street – sadly undocumented as to its actual architectural design history -- exhibits nearly all of the design characteristics of the Greene's maturing Arts & Crafts work: the massive roof with multiple gables, exuberant blend of shingling and siding as wall cladding, the projecting roof beams and knee brackets with shaped ends.

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the engaged octagon form on the house's north elevation, and the continuous band of windows centered on the second story. Even the forward-thrusting piazza reads as if it were a porte cochere. Perhaps one can speculate that the Talleys, a solidly middle class family supported by Lynn's prominent position at an important Dallas bank, were one of the "progressive" readers of *The Craftsman* and followers of the dominant design fashion of the age. Certainly the Talleys house was a considerably simplified interpretation of the much more finely detailed works of the Greenes in California, yet the influences are clearly seen in it.

Regardless of the perhaps never to be known roots of the house's design inspiration, the Talley House remains as the best, and nearly only, example of the high style Arts & Crafts "bungalow" in Dallas. Few such distinguished examples were ever built in the first place; Dallas was conservative in every respect, including in matters of architectural taste and fashion. One of the few known comparable works in the Arts & Crafts style, the Mayfield House on Lakeside Drive in Highland Park, was demolished during the late 1980s, leaving the Talley/Polk House as the lone survivor.

Ironically, as in the rest of the country, the work of the Greene brothers and their compatriots was highly influential in the design of thousands of more modest, usually one story, dwellings. As described by Randell Makinson in his definitive book on the Greenes, "Insofar as the Bungalow is the product of (the Greene's) work, then they did indeed create a kind of normative building type...at the level of what normal (common, regular, ordinary) folks want to live in.... A half

century of small houses in the Western United States would not have been the same had the Greenes never produced their few exquisitely wrought houses for a tiny cultural elite.”

The Talleys evidently left Dallas by 1912, and the great bungalow on Reagan Street was bought and occupied by a series of managerial elites, like Norman Burwell, co-owner of the Appel-Burwell Rubber & Tire Co., and later Peter McInerney, president of the Amiesite Asphalt Co. Finally, in 1944, then owners Earle and Addie Lowe, sold 2917 Reagan to Daisy Polk for \$8,500.00. Daisy Polk, daughter of a railroad executive who was reared in Galveston, studied voice in the United States and abroad and by 1920 was gaining some renown as a concert singer. A 1920 *Dallas Morning News* article quotes a Chicago critic: “She is the most promising young American of the season, with voice, brains and beauty to commend her to the public.” A career of concertizing and teaching, including a year at the Hockaday School in Dallas and later at Texas Woman’s University, was apparently ended, as she described in a 1970s article in the *News*, when she was severely injured in an automobile accident.

By 1944, when she purchased and moved into the house at 2917 Reagan, Polk was teaching voice and music to young students, offering classes at the studio in her home until shortly before her _____ in 19____. The house in its later years, prior to the 1999-2000 restoration, was a visual landmark, although perhaps a somewhat shabby one, in its changing Oak lawn neighborhood, with its entirely mint green paint and overgrown shrubbery masking the simple but elegant architectural lines.

The Talley/Polk House at 2917 Reagan Street is a unique feature in the Oak Lawn neighborhood, reflecting an outstanding pedigree as the most distinguished remaining high style Arts & Crafts house in the city. Its representation of the early 20th century architectural fashions of the nation helps to form an understanding of middle class design values in Dallas during the period, and qualifies it as a Dallas Landmark of distinction.

14. Bibliography

Dallas City Directories, 1900 – 1955

Dallas Building Permit Index Books 1905 – 1909

James Martson Fitch, *American Building: The Historical Forces That Shaped It*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1947.

Clay Lancaster, *The American Bungalow, 1880 – 1930*, Abbeville Press, New York, 1985.

Randell Makinson, *Greene & Greene*, Peregrine Press, Salt Lake City, 1977.

Virginia & Lee McAlester, *Field Guide to American House*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1984.

Henry H. Saylor, *Bungalows, Their Design, Construction and Furnishings*, Robert M. McBride & Co., New York, 1917.

Gustav Stickley, *More Craftsman Homes*, The Craftsman Publishing Co., New York, 1912.

15. Attachments

- District or Site Map*
- Site Plan*
- Photos (historic & current)*
- Additional descriptive material*
- Footnotes*
- Other:* _____

EXHIBIT C : FENCE LOCATIONS

