

**Dallas Landmark Commission
Landmark Nomination Form**

1. Name

historic: Lake Cliff Historic District

and/or common:

date:

2. Location

address:

location/neighborhood: Lake Cliff Park, Fifth Street, Sixth Street, Blaylock Drive and Marsalis Avenue

block:

lot:

land survey:

tract size:

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: Various

Contact:

Phone:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

6. Form Preparation

Date: 10/23/96

Name & Title: Jim Anderson, Senior Historic Preservation Planner

Organization: City of Dallas Department of Planning and Development

Contact: Jim Anderson

Phone: (214) 670-4131

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 III 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: Various
significant later owner(s):

9. Construction Dates 1900 - Present

original:
alterations/additions:

10. Architect

original construction: Various
alterations/additions:

11. Site Features

natural: Lake Cliff Park
urban design: Lake Cliff Residential Neighborhood

12. Physical Description

Condition, check one:			Check one:
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved(date _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> 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.

DESCRIPTION:

The Lake Cliff Historic District lies in the northeastern part of the original Oak Cliff townsite on relatively high, flat terrain overlooking downtown Dallas, roughly 1-1/2 miles to the north. The historic district covers approximately 75 acres including a public park with a central man-made lake dating from c. 1888. The district also includes all the residential half-blocks fronting the park on the east (Blaylock Drive), south (E. Fifth Street) and west (N. Crawford Street). East Sixth Street (from Beckley to Marsalis) and Marsalis (from East Sixth Street to Colorado Boulevard) are also included in the historic district. The boundary extends north to Zangs Boulevard to include the 13-story Lake Cliff Tower Hotel (1929-1932, 329 E. Colorado) The contributing properties are primarily 1920s to 1930s, 1- and 2-story houses and apartment buildings featuring craftsman and Prairie School influences. The remaining contributing properties include Lake Cliff Park (site), Lake Cliff (lake), and a handful of early park buildings. The properties listed as noncontributing comprise those constructed after 1944 or significantly altered and include the Lake Cliff Park tennis courts and pool (structures) and sculpture (object).

The Lake Cliff Historic District is generally flat, except for the excavated lake, and a diverted, fieldstone-lined creek that drains into it from the southwest. A slightly depressed area in the south part of Lake Cliff Park is the site of a demolished concrete bathing pool and bath house. Large trees, low shrubs and grass lawns are found throughout the district.

The park is the central focus of the district and the surrounding residential buildings are oriented to it. Oak and hackberry trees stand in natural clusters along the creek, while formal trees and ground cover plantings surround the lake. A sense of formality is suggested by regularly spaced hackberry trees along the west, south and east sides of the park. Concrete sidewalks and curbs surround the park, and curving walks lend public access to its grounds. Several contributing buildings, objects, and structures are found within the park site, including Lake Cliff and a large rustic style open-air pavilion and fountain complex to the northeast. Small Romantic and Rustic style buildings dot the southeast side of the park.

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The historic architecture surrounding the park is a mixture of 1- and 2-story single-family bungalows, four-square houses and apartment buildings. However, Oak Cliff's premier high-rise, the 13-story Cliff Towers Hotel (1929-1932) dominates the district to the north with its massing and solitary setting. The Mediterranean building (now known as the Lake Park Nursing Home) faces south toward E. Colorado Boulevard and Lake Cliff Park. The eclectic, highly detailed hotel is situated among trees, grass and a surface parking lot that do little to break its visual association with the park.

13. Historical Significance

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Lake Cliff Historic District includes much of the land that previously served as an early 20th-century amusement park. The district is significant at a local level for its association with the development of the Oak Cliff community, and its excellent state of architectural preservation. The historic district is representative of the promotional schemes that early developers of Oak Cliff utilized to encourage greater settlement of the Dallas suburb. The period of significance extends from the construction of the park c.1888 to 1944. The district is significant for its association with efforts to attract residents to the greater Oak Cliff community during its early years and for its architecture. The district is an excellent collection of early 20th century single and multi-family dwellings that typify Oak Cliff's growth in the 1920s and 1930s.

Most of the Lake Cliff Historic District lies within the original township of Oak Cliff, officially established on October 31, 1887 (see plat map). At that time, T.L. Marsalis and his partner, John S. Armstrong, began operating a steam-powered streetcar service from downtown Dallas to Oak Cliff. Once the line crossed the Trinity River, it branched into two sections. One part headed south toward an area that became Oak Cliff's commercial center. The other branch traveled along Colorado Boulevard, extending to Spring Lake (later known as Lake Cliff), a large man-made pond in northern Oak Cliff. The two lines were eventually reunited when a loop was completed in 1904.

The commercial center and Lake Cliff stops were important in Oak Cliff's early history. They figured prominently in Marsalis' promotional efforts to encourage greater interest in and development of the suburb. Marsalis stressed Oak Cliff's amenities such as its healthy environment and budding commercial center near Oak Cliff Park (now Marsalis Park) to the south. In addition to the significance of the residences and the streetcar stop, Lake Cliff is a significant feature of the district.

A social club, known as the Llewellyn Club, excavated the lake and built a clubhouse c.1888. Intended as a recreational area three blocks away from the streetcar line, the surrounding property nevertheless remained undeveloped for two decades (McDonald; Dallas County Plat). The lake became a focal point of the development and has remained unchanged, and is considered a Contributing structure in the district. Dr. Robert Spann purchased all of the property in 1899 and converted the old club house into a sanitarium which he operated for several years (McDonald 1978:227; Dreesen 1939:n.p.).

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In 1906, Oak Cliff businessman Charles A. Mangold and John F. Zang acquired land around Lake Cliff, anticipating their purchase of the "Spann Park and Sanitarium" that year. By investing heavily into the park, they subsequently transformed the area into a playground having "all the marvels, countless curiosities, and spectacular features of the great amusement resorts of the country." By creating a "playground" for citizens of Dallas, the men wanted to encourage Oak Cliff's development and drive up the value of land they had purchased previously.

Mangold also led efforts to construct a viaduct for the streetcar from Dallas across the river floodplain to Oak Cliff. This would provide additional access from Dallas to the dependent suburb, heightening its appeal and the value of his property.

The new amusement park at Lake Cliff proved immensely popular. Included among Lake Cliff Park's attractions were Shoot-The-Chutes (similar to today's log rides), Circle Swing, roller coaster, natatorium, skating rink which could accommodate 2000 patrons, and a 2500-seat Casino, in which "first class attractions" such as Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor performed.

The Dallas-based architectural firm of Lang and Witchell designed the buildings and structures in the park, and they were erected by local contractor L.B. Westerman. The Spann Sanitarium (former Llewellyn clubhouse) was moved in 1909 to the 300 block of E. Sixth Street, where it served as Mangold's home (Dallas Public Library vertical files).

Mangold's efforts were successful to some extent, as increased activity in the area resulted in the construction of several residences in the Miller and Stemmons and Crystal Hill additions. Unlike other parts of Oak Cliff however, this growth occurred in rather piecemeal fashion.

Despite its popularity, the Lake Cliff Amusement Park proved too expensive to operate and the land was sold to the city in 1913 (Dreesen 1939:n.d.). In 1921 many of the rides and buildings in the southwestern section of the park were razed to make room for a swimming pool and bathhouse (which themselves were subsequently demolished). A 1910s brick pumphouse building is the only remaining feature of the aquatic facilities.

Upon the decline of the amusement park came the reinterpretation and development of the park as a naturalistic site. Park buildings figured in this interpretation, including a c. 1920 brick public restroom, 1934 WPA stone arcaded shelter and formal garden with stone pavilions. The park's new role apparently encouraged residential development around the park perimeter, beginning in the 1920s.

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The residential development included popular 20th century architectural styles Bungalows, and four-squares with Tudor Revival, Prairie School or craftsman details are found throughout the district. The house at 520 East Fifth Street is Tudor Revival with details such as a steeply pitched, gabled roof with cross gables, massive chimney, and tall, narrow windows with multi-pane glazing (McAlester, pp. 354-55, 452-53). Prairie School details on the house at 414 East Fifth Street (1920), include the low-pitched hipped porch and main roof, widely overhanging eaves, and large square pillars. These features combine to emphasize the horizontal lines of the building.

Craftsman detailing is evident on the houses at 410-402 East Fifth Street (1920), including a low-pitched gabled or hipped roof, exposed overhanging eaves, exposed brackets and rafters, and tapered square porch columns. Another excellent example of craftsman detailing can be found on the bungalow at 402 East Fifth Street (1925), including the low-pitched, front gabled roof and partial front porch with square columns.

Most of the small apartments houses constructed in the 1920s and 1930s, such as the Tudor Revival style building at 816 Blaylock (1925) contribute to the feel of the district by exhibiting form and massing similar to the single-family houses. Noncontributing apartment complexes constructed after 1944 tend to be larger and less sensitive to the historic ambiance of the district. For example, the 3-story apartment building at 230 East Fifth Street lacks sensitivity to the style, massing or setbacks of nearby houses.

The Cliff Towers Hotel is separated from the residential areas to the south by East Colorado Boulevard and the park. A generous lawn fronts the building, creating a park-like setting. Therefore, the building's setting is appropriate to its proximity to the park and its 13-story height does not adversely impact the smaller contributing properties.

The hotel was first planned in 1926 as a 10-story apartment complex designed by Thompson and Swaine architects (Dallas Times Herald, June 19, 1926, p.10). The project failed with the construction partially complete, but was repurchased and revived by E.W. Morten and Charles Mangold in 1929. The latter had sold the property in 1924 to the first developers. Albert S. Hecht and Robert C. Williams of Dallas and Chicago redesigned the building. The original contractor, Bellows Maclay, apparently continued his work in 1929 and completed the building in 1932.

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The hotel was built at the intersection of two major thoroughfares, N. Zangs Boulevard and E. Colorado Boulevard, commanding the attention of travelers through the Oak Cliff area. Zangs Boulevard crosses the Trinity River, connecting Dallas with State Highway 80 (Davis Street), also known as the Dallas/Fort Worth Turnpike. The hotel's relaxed setting, and its proximity to downtown Dallas, made it very attractive to the visitors.

The neighborhood which surrounds Lake Cliff park dates to the mid-1920's. It consists of mainly single family homes with some apartment buildings of the same era. The larger homes in the area were owned by some of Oak Cliff and Dallas' more prominent families. C.M. Bolanz of Bolanz and Bolanz Real estate, Loans and Insurance lived at 606 Blaylock. J.D. Peterson, the manager of Hormel, lived at 626 Blaylock. Frank Reaugh, an outstanding regional artist, lived on East Fifth along with local photographer Frank Rogers. (City Directories for 1925-26 and 1930)

The development of the historic district's built environment and its naturalistic setting are the direct result of the marketing and suburban development of Oak Cliff in the Dallas area during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By the 1940s, virtually all physical remains of the amusement park were gone (McDonald 1978:227). While Lake Cliff Park has evolved over the years (including the recent addition of a baseball park and tennis courts), its overall integrity has not been compromised. Other contributing properties within the historic district retain a high degree of integrity. Noncontributing properties make up a very small portion of the total and do not detract substantially from the overall feel of the district.

14. Bibliography

Report created from the National Register Nomination for the Lake Cliff Neighborhood which is a portion of the Historic Resources Survey of Dallas Texas, Phase III, 1988-89 prepared by Hardy-Heck-Moore. Sources for this portion of the National Register Nomination are listed below:

Dallas Public Library vertical files.

Dallas Times Herald, June 19, 1926, p.10

Dreesen, Don

1939 "History of Oak Cliff". Oak Cliff Dispatch-Journal
March 6 - June 22 installments.

McDonald, William L.

1978 Dallas Rediscovered: A Photographic Chronicle of Urban Expansion 1870-1925. Riverside Pre

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester

1986 A Field Guide to American Houses. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

15. Attachments

District or Site Map

Site Plan

Photos (historic & current)

Additional descriptive material

Footnotes

Other: _____

16. Inventory of Structures-Historic District Only (Page ___ of ___)

Please complete this form for each structure in a proposed historic district

a. Location and Name

b. Development History

Original owner:

Architect/builder:

Construction/alteration dates:

c. Architectural Significance

Dominant style:

Condition:

Alterations:

d. Category

Contributing _____ <i>excellent example of an architectural style that is typical of or integral to the district; retaining essential integrity of design</i>	Compatible _____ <i>supportive of the district in age, style and massing but is not representative of the significant style, period and detailing, or area of significance typical of the district</i>	Non-contributing _____ <i>intrusive; detracts form the character of the district</i>
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e. Statement of Significance