

77 a - 8-17-77

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Wilson Block
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 2902, 2906, 2910 and 2922 Swiss
2901 and 2907 Floyd

CITY, TOWN	Dallas	VICINITY OF		NOT FOR PUBLICATION
STATE	Texas	CODE	048	CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
		COUNTY	Dallas	5
		CODE		113

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES, RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER vacan

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Dave Fox
STREET & NUMBER 2800 Surveyor Blvd
CITY, TOWN Carrollton VICINITY OF STATE Texas 75006

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Dallas County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN Dallas County STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic Sites Inventory
DATE 1977
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Texas Historical Commission
CITY, TOWN Austin STATE Texas

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The six residential buildings and their associated outbuildings which comprise the Wilson Block are unique for Dallas in that they represent the most cohesive multi-structure grouping of turn-of-the-century architecture in the city. Bounded by Swiss Avenue on the northwest, Oak Street on the northeast, Floyd Street on the Southeast, and Liberty Street on the southwest, the houses on the Wilson Block exhibit the form and massing reminiscent of the vanishing Victorian era, combined with the renewed interest in classical motifs associated with early 20th century architecture. The group of one and 1½-story residences which front on Swiss Avenue share many architectural elements (details) - frame construction, clapboard siding, hipped roofs with projecting gabled dormers irregular massing, decoratively corbeled brick chimneys, one-story porches attached below the eave line, classically detailed porch columns extensive use of decorative shingle patterns, ornately carved door moldings and stained or beveled door and window lights. The fine craftsmanship acts as a unifying element, although each building has a quality of its own expressed in the various combinations of structural and ornamental elements.

Largest and most dominant of the Wilson Block structures is the Wilson House at 2922 Swiss Avenue. Sited on the northwest corner fronting Swiss Avenue, the home was designed in 1899 for the Wilson family as their residence. The smaller and less ornate homes which comprise the remainder of the Wilson Block were built by 1902 by Wilson, but were constructed to serve as employee and rental housing. The asymmetrical plan of the 1½-story Wilson House is expressed by a multiplicity of gables and dormers, as well as the conical turret at the northeast corner which projects through the steeply pitched hipped roof. A texture is created by patterns of imbricated shingles applied as a continuous band above the first story windows upward to the boxed eave and within the gables and on the turret. Additional decorative detail is provided by the various moldings found beneath the bracketed eaves on the porch as well as the garland relief in the pediments over the main (north) and east entrances. The one-story porch extends from beneath the eave line across the north and a portion of the east elevations. Classical influence is indicated by the porch detailing, which includes turned balustrades, bracketed eaves, and the pedimented gables. Windows and doors vary in size, arrangement, and the number and arrangement of light. The front door, with its beveled oval glass, has two flanking oval sidelights and a single transom. Carved moldings decorate the door around the inset panel of glass. Two broadly proportioned windows on the north elevation contain a large, single clear pane below a smaller stained glass pane. Double hung windows in the upper story are comprised of a single clear pane in the lower sash, while the upper sash is divided by muntins arranged in a diagonal pattern. The rear (south) elevation rises a full two stories and is screened at both floors.

Associated outbuildings include the servant's quarters, and a 1½-story carriage house. The servant's house is a small rectangular building

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

with a gabled roof. Doors and windows are irregularly spaced and dimensioned. The carriage house more closely resembles the main house in its proportions and configuration. A pyramidal roofed cupola is centered on the top ridge of the roof. Irregularly spaced windows and doors are placed on each elevation. Shed additions are attached at the east and west elevations.

West of the Wilson House is 2910 Swiss Avenue, one of the three smaller homes built by Fred and Henrietta Wilson as rental property. Outstanding features on the $1\frac{1}{2}$ -story structure are the unique window arrangements in the gables and dormers, the tapered square fluted columns which support the porch and the careful attention to the detail of the door and pediment which mark the main entrance.

Immediately to the west is 2906 Swiss Avenue, another similar frame $1\frac{1}{2}$ -story residence. Elements associated with the other Wilson Block Homes, such as an asymmetrical plan, hipped roof, and decorated shingled dormers are present, but are enriched by details unique to this structure. These details include the foliated relief work in the upper portion of the front gable and in the pediment above the front door, and in the decorative millwork of the lap siding. Classically detailed round wooden columns support the porch on the north and a portion of the east elevations.

Almost as elaborate as the Wilson House, 2902 Swiss Avenue is not as large. Its physical characteristics reflect the irregular massing, detailing, hip roof and projecting gables of the other Wilson block residences. Wrapping around the north and west facades, the one-story porch is supported by paired round columns with molded bases and capital on brick piers. A shingled arched spandrel wall extends from each set of columns. This arched motif is repeated in a three part window group in the projecting gables of the north and west facades. The central window in the group is a single one over one sash window flanked by smaller triangular lights under a molded round arch. Sidelights and a three-part transom frame the broad front door which is pierced by round glass in the top half of the door. The house rests upon a raised pier foundation with brick foundation walls. A $1\frac{1}{2}$ -story wood frame carriage house at the rear exhibits a rectangular plan and cross gables projecting from a north-south main gable.

The houses at 2901 and 2907 Floyd Street demonstrate a similar appearance. The symmetrical front facades, and the attached porch reinforce the two buildings' similarities; however, the porch columns and the central dormers differ on each house. A triangular dormer and round porch columns

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

distinguish the house at 2901 from the smaller pedimented dormer and square fluted columns of the building at 2907 Floyd. A fire recently caused severe damage to 2907 Floyd. Originally, a third similar house was located east of 2907, but was destroyed by fire.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wilson Block, located near Dallas' Central Business District, consists of six houses and their associated outbuildings at the turn of the century. These Victorian period homes range in style from small, four room frame structures to a large Queen Anne style mansion complete with carriage house and barn. The houses stand in an area where many of Dallas' oldest residents, the La Reunion colonists, resettled after their utopian society collapsed.

La Reunion was the name given to a Fourierest colony of French, Swiss, and Belgian immigrants who settled along the banks of the Trinity River, just west of Dallas, in what is now Oak Cliff or Southwest Dallas. Arriving in the Spring of 1855, these idealistic immigrants, under the leadership of Victor Considerant, founded a colony based upon communistic principles, sharing everything within their society - work, food and chores. Most were highly skilled artisans and professional people, yet they were ill-suited and unprepared for the rigorous conditions and hardships of frontier life. Settling in an area of poor farming land, they were plagued by unusually bad weather conditions and crop failures, and soon discovered the practical application of their ideals differed from the original intentions. La Reunion never flourished as an organized society, and by 1857 the colony dissolved forcing the colonists to resettle in other areas.

Many of the La Reunionists and their descendents resettled in East Dallas. This part of the city began to grow when the Houston and Texas Central Railroad (later the Southern Pacific) came through the area in 1872. East Dallas was established as a town in 1882 and consisted of 1,429 acres. Three years later, it had grown into a fairly substantial city. The railroad station was located a mile from the business district that was near the courthouse square. The railroad encouraged people to move away from the Trinity River area and into the eastern suburb. In 1890, East Dallas merged with the city of Dallas as a single municipality.

During this period of rapid growth, many fine residences were built by the La Reunion colonists and their descendents. The Bolls, Frichots, and Nussbaumers were a few of the colonists who chose to live in this flourishing area. This was also the area where Fred Wilson decided to build his elegant Queen Anne style home in 1899.

Frederick P. Wilson, originally from Ontario, Canada, came to Texas in the late 1800's, and joined his wealthy brother, John B. Wilson, in the

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

cattle business. Fred was a leader in Dallas' civic affairs as a member of the Park Board and a charter member of the Citizen's Association. In the early 1900's, he was manager of the Wilson Building which was constructed in downtown Dallas by his brother in 1904. On June 6, 1894, Fred married Henrietta Frichot, the daughter of C.D. and Susanna Frichot

Henrietta's parents were both members of the La Reunion colony. Her mother, Sussanna Boll, was a native of Zurich, Switzerland. She came to Texas in 1856 with her parents and sister, Dorethea, to join her brother Henry in the La Reunion commune. On October 16, 1858, Susanna married Christopher Desire Frichot who had come to La Reunion with his brother and nephew in 1855. Christopher, a native Parisian, was a well-educated man who had mastered astronomy in the best schools and observatories in Europe. He and his brother, Pierre, left the La Reunion colony after its failure and established one of the first brick manufacturing plants in Dallas in the 1860's.

In 1898, Henrietta Frichot Wilson acquired the land where she and her husband, Fred, built their home. This tract of land had been owned by her aunt, Dorethea Boll Nussbaumer. Dorethea and Jacob Nussbaumer are believed to have built one of the first houses on Swiss Avenue. Henry Boll, the brother of Susanna Frichot and Dorethea Nussbaumer, also built his home in this area.

In keeping with this family tradition, the Wilsons built their home at 2922 Swiss Avenue and three adjacent houses at 2902, 2906, and 2910 Swiss Avenue. The Wilson homestead is a large one-and-a-half story house situated on a two-and-a-half acre lot. The house contains many fine Victorian architectural details such as patterned windows, jigsaw ornamentation, bullseye and flower moldings, and spacious porches. The foyer ceiling is painted in scenes depicting the four seasons; Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall. The music room also contains beautiful ceiling paintings.

The three adjacent houses on Swiss Avenue were built to be used as rent houses with the idea of the Wilsons being able to choose their own neighbors. Each of these homes is located on a 65 x 100 foot lot, and are not as large, nor as grand as the Wilson homestead. However, they do display fine craftsmanship and are good examples of smaller houses built during the Victorian period. Located behind the Swiss Avenue homes are two smaller, four room houses, 2901 and 2907 Floyd Street, which were probably used as servants' quarters.

The Wilson Block homes remained in the Wilson family even after Fred

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

Wilson's death in 1923. His son Laurence sold the property in 1977, and it is now owned by Dave Fox, a Dallas homebuilder. The property is included in a development plan for new inner city residences. These houses represent some of the finest examples of Victorian architecture left in Dallas and symbolize a period of Dallas' architectural history which has almost totally been lost to modern building trends.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet - Item 9

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,4	7 0,7 5,2,5	3,6 2 0 7,2,5	B	1,4	7 0,7 3,8,0	3,6 2,9 7,2,5
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,4	7 0,7 3,8,0	3,6 2,9 8,6,5	D	1,4	7 0,7 5,2,5	3,6 2,9 8,6,5

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The block bounded by Swiss Avenue, Oak Street, Floyd Street and Liberty Street

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Peggy Riddle / Historian of Dallas Historic Preservation League
Joe Williams / Project Director Danny Hardy / Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION Texas Historical Commission DATE August 1978

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 12276, Capitol Station TELEPHONE (512) 475-3094

CITY OR TOWN Austin STATE Texas

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Walter Johnson

TITLE

DATE 8-11-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



WILSON BLOCK HISTORIC DISTRICT DALLAS, DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS

UTM REFERENCES:

- A 14/707525/3629725
- B 14/707380/3629725
- C 14/707380/3629865
- D 14/707525/3629865