



Fort Worth's

**MOST ENDANGERED  
PLACES**

2009

**MAY IS NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH**

Fort Worth's  
Most Endangered Places  
2009

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## 1. The Texas & Pacific Warehouse, 1930-31

Location: 300 Block West Lancaster Avenue

Threat: Neglect and deterioration

During the late 1920s, the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce coordinated a five-year program to build \$100 million of civic and business improvements in the city. Part of this plan was building



the Texas & Pacific Passenger Terminal, and its companion In-freight/ Out-freight Warehouses. (The Out-freight Warehouse is no longer standing.)

Wyatt C. Hedrick's architectural firm received the commission to design the T & P Buildings, which were built from 1930 to 1931. Herman Paul Koeppel designed the buildings, and P. O'Brien Montgomery of Dallas constructed them. Jobs made available through the construction of these buildings helped to blunt the immediate effects of the Great Depression.

Photo Title: The Texas & Pacific Warehouse

Credit: Historic Fort Worth, Inc.

Both the passenger terminal and the in-freight warehouse are stunning examples of Zig-Zag Moderne architecture. The warehouse is an enormous 8-story building measuring 100 feet by 600 feet built of masonry block with a reinforced concrete and steel frame. Clad in cream brick with limestone and blue tile trim, the warehouse features projecting end bays topped with octagonal towers that dominate each corner of the building. The In-Freight Warehouse features zigzags, ziggurats, triangles, and American Indian motifs rendered in polychrome brick.

Long-planned rehabilitation promised by the same owner for several years has never started. Rehabilitation and effective reuse of a building this size is a challenging project.

The warehouse continues to suffer from neglect. It remains vacant and accessible to vandalism, subject to water infiltration, with an inadequate roof. A significant building locally and nationwide, the T&P Warehouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (1978). The City of Fort Worth designated the warehouse as Highly Significant Endangered (1995). The Texas & Pacific Warehouse was named to *Historic Fort Worth's Most Endangered Places Lists* in 2004 and 2005 and placed on Preservation Texas' 2008 *Texas Most Endangered List*.

Historic Fort Worth wishes to work with the owner to provide assistance with available tax credits that could be leveraged to successfully rehabilitate the T & P Warehouse.

## 2. Neighborhoods 50 Years and Older Not Protected by Historic Preservation Zoning

Location: Examples includes the Bluebonnet, Crestwood, Berkeley, Oakhurst, Ridglea, Ridglea Hills, Samuels Avenue, South Hemphill Heights, Tanglewood, and Wedgewood neighborhoods

Threat: Demolition, development pressure.



Photo Title: Mid-Century Modern Ranch House  
Credit: Historic Fort Worth, Inc.

According to the 2000 census, half of the extant houses in the United States were built between the 1940's and 1960's. After World War II, home building and suburban development took place at an unprecedented rate. Thanks to federal loan programs and a massive federally subsidized home building program, home ownership became a reality for more and more Americans. A number of Fort Worth's neighborhoods are at the post-World War II mark and they include Bluebonnet, Crestwood, Berkeley, Oakhurst, Ridglea, Ridglea Hills, Samuels Avenue, South Hemphill Heights, Tanglewood, and Wedgewood.

Resources from the recent past face many of the same problems than condemned the buildings that came before—lack of public appreciation, perceived obsolescence, demolition, development pressure, and insensitive alterations and additions. They also face threats that their pre-war counterparts did not. Many were constructed with fragile, experimental, or short-lived materials. In addition, many of the houses constructed during this post-war period are often mistakenly considered ineligible for historic designation.

The best way to protect a historic property is at the local level. Ultimately, the intensity of development pressure will be a major factor in determining an appropriate strategy for protecting recent past resources in a community. In areas that are experiencing rapid development and the loss of significant resources, new zoning, overlay zones or districts, and conservation districts, might be needed to protect important properties while they can still be protected. Another advantage to zoning is the availability of rehabilitation tax credits for qualifying properties and assistance from city staff with project challenges.

If preservationists are not proactive, much of the best architecture of the mid-century and beyond will be lost. The challenge is to preserve significant examples of our recent past so they may become part of our far-reaching past.

### 3. Fort Worth Power & Light Company/TXU Electric Power Plant, 1911-13

Location: 100 to 300 Blocks, North Main Street

Threat: Neglect and deterioration

Fort Worth Power & Light built this original plant along the north bank of the Trinity River in 1911 to 1913. The concrete first story was topped with a second floor featuring 11 arched windows and ochre brick veneer. Over the years, the plant had four smokestacks. The first was built with the original construction, the second in 1913, another in 1922, and the last, a 320-foot concrete smokestack, in 1952.



Longtime landmarks along the city's north side, all of the plant's smokestacks have been demolished; the last two and several other historic structures on the site were torn down during the fall of 2005. The commanding smokestacks were always a visual statement of importance in our city and are depicted in the stained-glass windows at University Christian Church.



Now that it is standing vacant and unused, this significant historic building's future is unclear. It is currently owned by the Tarrant County College District, which has no immediate plans for its use. A nomination to the National Register of Historic Places has been researched and written for the power plant. Historic Fort Worth encourages the college district to forward the nomination to the Texas Historical Commission for review and listing. Historic Fort Worth will work with developers to help them secure federal tax credits during the rehabilitation of this important historic building.

Photo Titles: Fort Worth Power & Light Company, TXU Electric Power Plant

Credit: Historic Fort Worth, Inc.

#### 4. Fort Worth Public Market Building, 1930

Location: 1400 Henderson Street

Threat: Neglect and deterioration



Photo Title: Fort Worth Public Market Building

Credit: Joseph Haubert

Oklahoma City developer John J. Harden had this hall built in 1930 to provide market space for local farmers, vendors and retail businesses. Designed by B. Gaylord Noftsgger, also of Oklahoma City, it is an eclectic design that playfully incorporates traditional and modern elements.

The Public Market Building is masonry block, nearly square in plan, with towers at the three corners of its two principal façades. High arched windows are set in the walls. The parapet is trimmed in polychrome tile. The stepped entrance tower is remarkable, featuring polychrome terra cotta trim and tall vertical window panels with stained glass set in abstract patterns.

The interior space, originally one open story with a skylight and mezzanines along the east and south walls, has been altered. An L-shaped stall building, with similar but simpler materials and detailing, wraps around the main market building on the south and west.

The market was plagued with economic difficulties during the Depression and closed in 1941. It has since housed a number of businesses, but appears to have been vacant and in need of attention for quite awhile. The building was designated a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark in 1980, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and was designated with Demolition Delay zoning by the city (1995).

Historic Fort Worth welcomes the opportunity to work with the owners of the market to find a sustainable use for the building and help them look into federal rehabilitation tax credits.

## 5. Samuels Avenue, 1870s-1920s

Location: Samuels Avenue particularly on the west side overlooking the Trinity River  
Threat: Development pressure

Samuels Avenue is one of the oldest roads in Fort Worth and housing along it and its adjacent streets dates from the 1870s to the 1920s. Some of the houses situated on the west side on the bluffs overlooking the Trinity River, are imposing and set on large lots with substantial setbacks and mature trees. Pioneers Rest cemetery is a strong urban design element which reinforces the historic character of the area. Charles E. Nash Elementary School, a compatible use in a residential area, is the institutional focal point of the district.

When the Fort Worth Central Business District Survey was completed in 1991, Samuels Avenue was sufficiently removed from downtown to have escaped the sort of redevelopment that seriously eroded the once fine residential neighborhood along Summit Avenue.

Today Samuels Avenue is taking on a very different appearance as high rise development and residential townhouses are making their way down the street from Nash Elementary School to the very homes described as imposing and set on large lots with substantial setbacks. There is hope that individual properties can be surveyed and protected, but the days to do so are numbered.



Photo Title: Samuels Avenue, west side overlooking the bluff  
Credit: Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



Photo title: Samuels Avenue, Development along west side of bluff  
Credit: Historic Fort Worth, Inc.

## 6. The Stop Six Neighborhood, early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Location: Rosedale (north), Miller (west), Berry (south), IH 820 (east)

Threat: Demolition, neglect, vandalism, poor infill development



Photo Title: The Stop Six Neighborhood  
Credit: Historic Fort Worth, Inc.

Stop Six was the sixth stop on the old interurban train line that ran between Fort Worth and Dallas and was operated by the Northern Texas Traction Company. From 1902 to 1934, the electric-powered cars carried about 40 passengers each for the 90-minute trip from the Tarrant County Courthouse to Dallas. The interurban railroad provided labor force mobility between the neighborhood and the two cities.

The area encompasses several subdivisions that were developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Stop Six was annexed by Fort Worth in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sometime between 1924 and 1928, through a series of annexations, the first in 1944 in the Miller Avenue area and the last in



1955 where Loop 820 is now. In 1925, Fort Worth initiated a \$2,000,000 school building program to relieve overcrowding in the newly-annexed areas.

The architecture seen throughout the neighborhood is early 20<sup>th</sup> century vernacular. Many of these structures are simple wood-framed rectangular form houses with gable or hipped roof forms and symmetrical fenestration. There are two periods of significant development within the neighborhood: the era of the streetcar (pre-WWII, approximately 1920-1940) and suburbanization (1950-1970). The landscape retained a rural character that has historically been occupied, shaped and modified by African American families.

The Stop Six neighborhood is endangered due to deterioration, lack of fiscal investments, education, awareness and appreciation of existing historic resources. Most of the neighborhood has lost historic resources to demolition, neglect, vandalism, and poor infill development. The southern section of the neighborhood across Ramey Avenue, known as Stop Six Sunrise Edition is a historic district approved by city council in May, 2007. The historic district is only a small portion of the entire Stop Six community. It is hoped this listing will involve more members in the historic preservation of their community.

## 7. Heritage Park Plaza, dedicated 1980

Location: Downtown on Bluff Overlooking Trinity River

Threat: Neglect and deterioration



Photo Title: Heritage Park Plaza

Credit: John Roberts

In the late 1960's Fort Worth's Streams and Valleys, together with the philanthropic Amon G. Carter Foundation and Sid Richardson Foundation, Charles D. Tandy, and Ruth Carter Stevenson, commissioned internationally known landscape architect, Lawrence Halprin (1916- ) to design a public park to commemorate the establishment of the original military post of Fort Worth in 1849 as well as the upcoming United States Bicentennial celebration in 1976. The result was Heritage Park Plaza which featured a series of terraced walkways that were accompanied by a stream of water. Under-maintained for years, in 2007 the Plaza's pump stations were turned off and the park was fenced off from the public.

On December 8, 2008 the Texas Historical Commission determined that Heritage Park Plaza was eligible for listing in the National Register of

Historic Places even though the Plaza was not yet 50 years old. It was eligible under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture and Criterion G as a property that has achieved

significance in the last 50 years because it is widely recognized as a work of exceptional significance in a modernist landscape design.

*A dedication plaque reads: The 112-acre Heritage Park at the confluence of the Clear and West forks of the Trinity River will span the dimensions of time for this and future generations to know and enjoy by preserving the bluffs and river where Fort Worth was founded in 1849.*

The city is currently conducting meetings with experts to determine the future of Heritage Park.

## 8. Farrington Field, 1938-39

Location: 1501 North University Drive

Threat: Development pressure

Photo Title: Farrington Field

Credit: Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



Local architect Preston M. Geren designed this 20,000-seat public school athletic stadium in a Classical Moderne style. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Fort Worth school district funded the \$244,000 project. Fort Worth's General Construction Company built the stadium in 1938 to 1939.

Longtime athletic director for the Fort Worth Public Schools, Ervin Stanley Farrington, envisioned a new community public school athletic

facility. Its features include bas relief panels of athletes created by local artist Evaline Sellors, a member of the progressive and talented group known as Fort Worth Circle of Artists.

Thousands of school district games and athletic competitions have been held at Farrington Field since its construction, creating memories for generations of Fort Worth families. During the 1980s, an attempt was made to demolish the stadium to build a hotel and retail shops in its place. Like many of Fort Worth's publicly-owned historic resources, Farrington Field is not protected by historic preservation designation. Historic Fort Worth encourages the school district to work with local preservation organizations and have Farrington Field designated and protected as a Fort Worth Historic and Cultural Landmark.

## 9. Mid-Century Modern Buildings, 1940s – 1960s

Location: Examples include the Public Health Building and Tarrant County Medical Society Building

Threat: Lack of local protection

Mid-century is a term used to describe the wide variety of architecture constructed during or immediately after World War II, from the 1940's to the 1960's. This period of architecture encompasses the wide variety of types and styles built during or immediately after World War II. For some people the recent past is just too recent. "It can't be too historic because I remember when it was built!" Modern architecture is very familiar, but it is often poorly understood.

An increasing number of resources built in the post-war period are now reaching or have already reached the age when they are candidates for substantial alterations or even demolition. Some are being lost to the teardown trend—the practice of tearing down a structure to replace it with another. Market forces and the lack of protection make Mid-Century resources particularly vulnerable to removal and replacement.

The resources that do escape demolition are often subject to inappropriate alterations. Depending on the scale of the building, these additions can have profound impact on the property's appearance. Original materials are often removed or replaced because they are either difficult to repair, dated-looking or no longer manufactured.

One of the biggest barriers to preservations is that many of these resources lack protection at the local level. Educating the general public, policymakers, and others about the significance of the recent past are critical to any effort to preserve recent past resources.



Photo Title: Tarrant County Medical Society Building, Tulsa Way  
Credit: Historic Fort Worth, Inc.



Title: Public Health Center, 1800 University  
Credit: Susan Kline

## 10. The Fort Worth Recreation Building, 1927

Location: 215 W. Vickery Boulevard

Threat: Neglect and deterioration

Designed by E.W. Van Slyke & Co., the Fort Worth Recreation Building was erected by the City of Fort Worth in 1927 to serve as an auditorium and gymnasium for athletics, public meetings and theatrical events for its Southside residents. A photograph taken in the 1930's shows a children's exercise class at the Fort Worth Recreation Building.

The Fort Worth Recreation Building is a gabled red-brick structure, rectangular in plan, with steel-sash windows, some of which have been enclosed in brick. Although the building appears to be a two-story structure, the interior is a high single story. "The Rec" as it came to be known, was sold in 1955 and used as a factory and warehouse. The building is currently for sale. A number of its windows are missing and the building is in need of stabilization and restorative work.



Photo Title: Fort Worth Recreation Building  
Credit: Historic Fort Worth, Inc.