

HISTORIC FORT WORTH, INC.



Fort Worth's

**MOST ENDANGERED  
PLACES**

2007

**MAY IS NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH**

Fort Worth's  
**Most Endangered Places**  
2007

-  Knights of Pythias Hall  
East Second and Crump Streets
  
-  William Coleman House  
1071 East Humbolt Street
  
-  R. Vickery School  
1905 East Vickery Boulevard
  
-  Stairway Entrance to Swift and Company Packing Plant  
500 block of Northeast 23<sup>rd</sup> Street
  
-  Wayside Church of God in Christ  
2100 Beckham Place
  
-  North Side of the Near Southside  
Medical District
  
-  Pioneer Cemeteries
  
-  3000 Block of University Drive
  
-  Remaining Single-Screen Theaters in Fort Worth
  
-  Chase Court  
West of Hemphill Street
  
-  Hemphill Street  
From Vickery Boulevard to Felix Street
  
-  Fort Worth Power and Light Company/TXU Electric Power Plant  
100 to 300 Blocks of North Main Street

**Knights of Pythias Hall, 1925—East Second and Crump Streets.**

The Key West Lodge of the Knights of Pythias built this African-American fraternal hall in 1925. It served as the group's lodge headquarters and fraternal meeting place until 1947, when it became home to several businesses. The original ground level storefronts of this two-story red brick building are intact, and this building, if



rehabilitated, may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Vacant for many years, the Knights of Pythias Hall is suffering from and endangered by continuous neglect. Increasing new development in the surrounding neighborhood also creates pressure on this historic building. It is one of the original remaining buildings in the East Second Street area.



**William Coleman House, c. 1930—1071 East Humbolt Street.**

A late example of a Prairie School-inspired residence, this two-story tan brick house stands out in a neighborhood largely composed of one-story wood-framed dwellings. It has a prominent hipped roof and a lower hipped-roof porch supported by massive brick piers. The arched brick porte cochere on the east side of the house is also notable. It was constructed for William Coleman,

vice president of the Fraternal Bank and Trust, the bank established by the prominent African American William Madison McDonald. The house is currently vacant and in poor condition. It is owned by the City of Fort Worth. It is a contributing resource in the National Register-listed Near Southeast Historic District.

**R. Vickery School, 1909-1910 and 1936-1937—1905 East Vickery Boulevard.**

The R. Vickery School is located in the far eastern portion of South Fort Worth in what was originally the community of



Glenwood. The firm of Waller, Shaw and Field designed the school and Buchanan & Gilder built it in 1909 to 1910, after the City of Fort Worth annexed Glenwood. Constructed of yellow rick, the school is three stories high and features two columned portals on the façade. Famed local architect Wyatt Hedrick designed a one-story auditorium and classroom wing added to the original building in 1936 to 1937. The school closed in the 1980s and is no longer owned by Fort Worth Independent School District. Since it was documented by the City of Fort Worth's School Survey of 2002 to 2003, the R. Vickery School, which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, has suffered from vandalism. Broken windows are now exposing the interior to damage by the elements.



**Stairway Entrance to Swift and Company Packing Plant, c. 1902—500 Block of Northeast 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in the Fort Worth Stockyards National Register District.** This remaining brick wall and stairway entrance to the Swift and Co. Packing plant is believed to have been built during the 1902 construction of the Swift and Co. plant in the Fort Worth Stockyards. Most of the wall, which originally enclosed the south, east, and west sides of the plant, is now gone, except for this portion with the curved double stairway and Swift insignia on the north side of Northeast 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. This important landmark in the Stockyard National Historic District has been allowed to deteriorate over the course of many years and trees are growing around and

through it, undermining its stability. The Swift insignia, a red, white, and blue “S” with arrow medallion, is constantly being vandalized and defaced with graffiti. Cleaning efforts and natural weathering have caused considerable fading. Development also endangers this historic landmark.

**Wayside Church of God in Christ, 1944-45—2100 Beckham Place.** Wayside Church of God in Christ is the last surviving remnant of Trezevant Hill, an African American community on Fort Worth's Southside, just east of the Mistletoe Heights neighborhood. The building was designed by the church's



pastor, Reverend R.E. Ranger (1899-1992). Ranger was appointed Presiding Bishop of the Church of God in Christ (Southeast) in 1956 and was the first African American bishop in Fort Worth. He was a pioneer in radio and television ministry with broadcasts conducted from the church. Bishop Ranger had an international audience that was estimated to reach six million people at its peak. During an era of segregation, it was not unusual for blacks and whites to worship together at this church. Although still owned by trustees of the church, this historic building is currently vacant and located in the midst of an ever-expanding medical district. It was designated as Highly Significant Endangered in 2004 by the City of Fort Worth and placed on Preservation Texas' Most Endangered list in 2005. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for its architecture, its association with Fort Worth's African American community, and with Bishop Ranger.



**North Side of the Near Southside—Medical District.** Bounded roughly by Lancaster Avenue, Bryan Avenue, Rosedale Street and the former Fort Worth and Rio Grande railroad tracks, the North Section of Fort Worth's Southside is home to some of the oldest historic resources in the area. The Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey documented more than 112 historic resources in this section in 1983. By 2006,

approximately 42 percent had been demolished or moved to other locations. After World War II, the residential flight from the central city contributed to the loss of original historic resources as commercial development, especially medical-related facilities, encroached into the neighborhoods. This encroachment continues today as the expanding medical district and redevelopment pressures threaten the remaining historic buildings. Recent examples of lost historic resources are the row of apartment houses in the 1000 block of South Adams. They were demolished in August 2006 for new residential development. The accompanying photograph was taken a few days before they were torn down.

**Pioneer Cemeteries.** Many of Fort Worth's historic cemeteries date to the early settlement period of the city. Some such as Oakwood and Pioneer's Rest are well known and have organizations working for their preservation.



Yet they remain endangered to such threats as vandalism as demonstrated by recent destructive events. Other lesser known cemeteries such as the Mitchell Cemetery near N.E. 28<sup>th</sup> and Decatur Avenue are threatened by road projects and repeated vandalism. The Polytechnic Cemetery near Vickery Boulevard and Bishop Street lies nearly forgotten. Some cemeteries are being threatened by encroaching development. The Markers and Cemetery Committee of the Tarrant County Historical Commission is using volunteers and partnering with local law enforcement officials to monitor the condition of these important cultural treasures. But their remoteness, lack of resources, maintenance, and ownership issues contribute to their continued vulnerability.



**3000 Block of University Drive.** Like Frye Street in Denton, the streetscape of the 3000 block of University Drive and its buildings are significant in the popular culture of the community. Home to businesses and entertainment venues that cater to the students of Texas Christian University, the 3000 block of University once featured the distinctive TCU Theater, which was built between the late

1940s and mid-1950s. The theater was torn down late one night during the summer of 2006. Today, the 3000 block of University Drive is home to Record Town, a locally owned music store that has been in business in the same location for 50 years. This block of mid-century buildings faces increasing pressure from development.

**Remaining Single-Screen Theaters in Fort Worth.** The remaining single-screen theaters in Fort Worth represent a cultural icon of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in our community. After the old 7<sup>th</sup> Street Theater was demolished, Historic Fort Worth named single-screen theaters to its list of Most Endangered Places in 2005, hoping to call attention to their significance to the community. Since then, the TCU Theater has been torn down. Today, just a handful



of single-screen theaters remain in Fort Worth, including the Ridglea, New Isis, Berry and Azle theaters. Last month, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* featured a story regarding the possible forced sale of the Ridglea Theater, which was built by the Luther brothers and opened in 1950. Some of the other old single-screen theaters are vacant, and they all face development pressures. With creative adaptive use strategies, these theaters could be preserved and remain part of our community.



**Chase Court—West of Hemphill Street, South of Magnolia Avenue, and North of Elizabeth Boulevard.**

Chase Court is a planned residential subdivision comprising one block that's bisected from east to west by an esplanade drive with landscaped islands. A low concrete wall extends partially around the perimeter of the block and clusters of ornate concrete pylons equipped with wrought-iron

gates flank the east and west entries to the central drive. Laid out in 1906 by the Consolidated Improvement and Construction Company of Fort Worth, Chase Court remains the earliest documented planned subdivision in the city, and is historically significant in the area of planning. Today, the distinctive esplanade drive, ornate concrete pylons and concrete wall that have graced the Chase Court subdivision for more than 100 years are in disrepair and the original brass ball finials that capped the twelve pylons are missing.

**Hemphill Street—From Vickery Boulevard to Felix Street.** Hemphill Street from Vickery Boulevard south to Felix Street was once lined with houses built from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century through the 1940s. Along with houses were apartment buildings, churches and



neighborhood businesses that catered to Hemphill Street residents. After World War II, the character of Hemphill Street began to change, with businesses replacing

many of the neighborhood houses. Since the The Tarrant County Historic Resources Survey in 1983, many of the historic houses along Hemphill Street have been demolished, including the two houses pictured here. Some of the old apartment buildings are vacant and suffering from neglect. Increasing new development is changing the historic character of Hemphill Street.

**Fort Worth Power & Light Company/TXU Electric Power Plant, 1912, 1952—100 to 300 Blocks, North Main Street.**

Fort Worth Power and Light built this original plant along the north bank of the Trinity River in 1912. The concrete first story was topped with a second floor featuring 11 arched windows and ochre brick veneer. One of the plant's distinctive smokestacks was built in 1921. In 1952, an additional six bays were added to the east end of the building, along with a 320-foot concrete smokestack. 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. Now standing vacant and unused, this significant historic building's future is unclear.



## HISTORIC FORT WORTH, INC.

*A 501C (3) ORGANIZATION DEDICATED  
TO PRESERVING FORT WORTH'S  
UNIQUE HISTORIC IDENTITY  
THROUGH EDUCATION & LEADERSHIP.*

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*Each year, Historic Fort Worth recognizes historic resources within our community that are threatened by a variety of circumstances including deterioration, neglect, vandalism, encroaching development or lack of financial resources. Owners of properties named as Most Endangered can receive assistance from Historic Fort Worth in developing tactics to address these issues.*

**Historic Fort Worth's  
2005 Most Endangered Places in Fort Worth**

Smith-Swinney Motor Company	Demolished
Remaining Single-Screen Theaters	TCU Theater Demolished
Bewley-Ellison House	Demolished
Swift & Company Office Building	Saved and Rehabilitated by XTO
Thistle Hill	Saved and Preserved by Historic Fort Worth

Other properties included in the 2005 list remain endangered

*You are cordially invited to join Historic Fort Worth and  
help to preserve Fort Worth's unique historic identity.  
For membership information, check our Web site  
at [www.historicfortworth.org](http://www.historicfortworth.org) or  
call 817-336-2344, extension 100.*

**Historic Fort Worth, Inc. is a Local Partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.**  
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