

**Dallas Landmark Commission
Landmark Nomination Form**

1. Name

historic: Dallas Power & Light Historic Overlay District
and/or common:
date April 28, 2003:

2. Location

address: 1512 Commerce and 1506 Commerce
location/neighborhood:

block: 78 1/4 lot: 1-8 land survey: Revised Edition
 Murphy and Balanz Map tract size: 43,500 s.f.

3. Current Zoning

current zoning:
CA -1 with a SP (special pedestrian overlay)

4. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	<u> </u> museum
<u> </u> x district	<u> </u> public	<u> </u> occupied	<u> </u> agricultural	<u> </u> park
<u> </u> building(s)	<u> </u> x private	<u> </u> x unoccupied	<u> </u> x commercial	<u> </u> residence
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u> </u> educational	<u> </u> religious
<u> </u> site	Public	Accessibility	<u> </u> entertainment	<u> </u> scientific
<u> </u> object	Acquisition	<u> </u> x yes: restricted	<u> </u> government	<u> </u> transportation
	<u> </u> in progress	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial	<u> </u> other, specify
	<u> </u> being considered	<u> </u> no	<u> </u> military	<u> </u>

5. Ownership

Current Owner: Hamilton DPL, LP
Contact: Lawrence E. Hamilton

Phone: 303-340-3623

Address: 12101 E. Second Avenue, Suite 205 City: Aurora State: CO Zip: 80011

6. Form Preparation

Date: April 28, 2003

Name & Title: Lawrence E. Hamilton, Manager Partner

Organization: Hamilton DPL, LP.

Contact: Lawrence E. Hamilton

Phone: 303-340-3623

7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide) local state national X 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: 1506 Commerce – Dallas Power & Light Company; 1512 Commerce – J.W. Crowdus Realty.
significant later owner(s): 1512 Commerce - Continental Supply Company; 1506 & 1512 Commerce - Texas Utilities, and TXU Corporation.

9. Construction Dates

original: 1506 Commerce – 1931; 1512 Commerce – 1903.
alterations/additions: 1512 Commerce – 6th floor added in 1935; floors 7-14 added in 1940; limestone facades and granite base on lower 6 floors of Commerce and Lane Street facades added between 1940 and 1963; bronze framed dark tinted commercial windows added in 1980's; 1506 Commerce - bronze framed dark tinted commercial windows added at dates unknown, probably in the '80's.

10. Architect

original construction: 1506 Commerce - Lang & Witchell; 1512 Commerce - unknown
alterations/additions: 1512 Commerce – unknown.

11. Site Features

natural: no distinctive natural features.
urban design: important Commerce Street presence diagonally across the street from Neiman Marcus on the east and Magnolia Building and Adolphus Hotel on west.

12. Physical Description

Condition, check one:

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

unaltered

altered

Check one:

original site

moved(date _____)

Physical Description of the District and the three buildings therein:

A. The District. The district consists of a full city block bounded by Commerce Street on the north, Lane Street on the east, Jackson Street on the south, and Browder Street on the west. Three buildings are situated on the property along with two parcels of vacant land at the southeast and northwest corners of the block, respectively. The southeast vacant parcel is a surface parking lot, and the northwest vacant parcel is a landscaped area. On the southwest corner of the property is a 19 story building, constructed in 1931, that occupies a footprint of approximately 100' by 100'. A two story annex building that sits on a footprint of approximately 65' by 99' was constructed contemporaneously with the 19 story building and adjoins it at the northeast corner. Adjacent to the west of the two story building and on the northeast corner of the block is a 14 story building occupying a footprint of 95' by 95'. This building was originally constructed in 1903 as a five story building with a 6th floor added in 1935, and the upper eight floors added in 1940 at which time it reached its full 14 story height.

B. DP&L Annex (Two Story Building). This building having a street address of 1506 Commerce has a full basement and two stories above grade, is rectangular in shape, and has 64.8 feet of frontage on Commerce Street, and 98.6 feet of depth. The building has a flat built-up asphalt roof with a four foot high parapet. The west face is constructed of brick without any fenestration or openings. The Lang and Witchell designed art deco north face has a central door opening with three brass framed glass entry doors. Above the doors is an historic stained glass transom, designed by Georgia Jenson and Roger McIntosh (of Pittsburgh Plate Glass), depicting Thor creating electricity and artificial light. Large store front display windows are on either side of the entry doors. The base of the building, and window openings are trimmed in polished black granite with black granite urns mounted at the top sides of the door-transom opening. White limestone fluted pilasters with art deco capitals divide vertical window openings with black cast metal spandrel panels. Second floor windows are divided light casement windows. At the upper corners of the Commerce elevation are carved limestone portrait busts of Edison, and Steinmetz (the advocates of direct current, and alternating current, respectively).

C. Main DP&L Building (19 Story Building). This building shares the street address of 1506 Commerce and has a base, and first floor entry/window surrounds of polished black granite identical to that used in the two story building. There are triple brass framed glass entry doors on both the Jackson and Browder Street sides of the building with black granite pilasters, and headers etched with the words "Dallas Power & Light" above which are black granite friezes. The predominant material for the skin of the building is a light buff colored brick accented with white terra cotta accents molded with art deco detailing. The windows are organized in vertical insets separated by green terra cotta spandrel panels with finely detailed white terra cotta finishing the base and crown of each plane of windows. The building steps back at the 4th, 6th, 10th and 12th

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floors creating a tiered mass that emphasizes the building's height. The floor plate at the base of the building is approximately 100 ft. by 100 ft. but after the various step backs is about 100 ft. by 50 ft. by the time it tops out. At the 17th floor double rows of windows come together and the 17th

and 18th floors are expressed as single openings with two story arched terra cotta surrounds. The north face is buff brick with insets that mimic the lines of windows of the other three faces but without any windows other than at the 19th floor. The terra cotta arched surrounds of the 17th and 18th floors are also repeated but with brick insets as opposed to glass. Windows are a mixture of historic windows and newer commercial bronze framed single light windows. The remaining historic windows are a combination of double hung one over one, and double hung two over two. The building has built up asphalt roofing on the terraces created by the building step backs, and a built up asphalt roof on top of the building with a brick penthouse and a cooling tower that is set back from the edge of the roof.

D. J.W Crowds/Continental Supply Building (14 Story structure). The lower six floors of this building have a footprint of 100 ft. by 100 ft. The upper eight floors are stepped back 25 ft on the north and south such that the upper footprint is 50 ft. by 100 ft. On the Commerce and Lane Street sides of the building, the lower six story portion is faced in white limestone with very little detailing. The base of these sides is of polished black granite. The upper 8 story section of the building on these two faces is tan brick with white limestone pilasters separating the rows of windows. The lower six story portion on the south face is painted brick in a light color and the upper 8 story section matches the skin on the north face. The west face is tan brick. Windows are all commercial type dark bronze metal framed side by side single light windows. The building has a flat roof of built up asphalt with an elevator penthouse and no cooling tower. On the east side of the south face of the building an open exterior metal stair has been constructed from the 14th floor to the 1st floor.

13. Historical Significance

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

This block has occupied a strategic location near the commercial center of downtown Dallas virtually from its small town beginnings to the present day. Across Browder Street to the west of the subject is the Dallas headquarters of SBC Corporation. Across Commerce Street to the northwest are the Magnolia Building, and the Adolphus Hotel, downtown's preeminent hospitality facilities. Across Commerce street to the east is the flagship Neiman Marcus store, the retail heart of the central business district. In an earlier day, the historic Interurban Building, now vacant and directly across Jackson Street to the south, was Dallas's transportation hub.

Of the buildings now extant in the District itself, the first to be erected in 1903 was the J.W. Crowds Building (now 1512 Commerce Street). At that time Crowds occupied the ground floor space for its drug store operations and the balance of the building was used as a multi-tenant commercial-warehouse facility. The balance of the block was occupied by smaller structures one of which became headquarters of Dallas Power & Light, a company formed in 1917 under the direction of Colonel J.F. Strickland. From 1883 to 1917 the City had been served by eleven different electric utilities which Strickland bought out and consolidated. One of the merged companies was Dallas Electric and Power Company which had been headed by William Henry Gaston, who then became Vice President of Dallas Power & Light. Gaston was also a prominent Dallas banker, and real estate investor, and Gaston Avenue is named for him.

In 1930 the growing company decided to expand by acquiring several other properties within the subject block with an aim of constructing on the site a skyscraper befitting its image as one of the most important businesses in Dallas. It retained the prominent architectural firm Lang & Witchell to design the new building. Lang & Witchell had virtually reshaped the skyline of downtown Dallas with its work on the Adolphus Hotel, the American Exchange National Bank, the Southland Life Insurance Building, the Sanger Brothers Department Store, the Southwestern Life Insurance, the Busch-Kirby Building, and the Magnolia Building. While the firm had been influenced by many architectural styles and trends including Louis Sullivan's Chicago style, and later Frank Lloyd Wright's prairie style, in the 1930-31 period the firm was to produce three important buildings in downtown Dallas all in an exceptional Art Deco motif: the Tower Petroleum Building, the Dallas Gas Company/Lone Star Gas Building, and perhaps the best example of all, the Dallas Power & Light. Of the three, the latter has suffered the fewest modifications and is closest to its original condition. So the District has a great deal of historical and architectural significance because of the survival in good condition of the Lang & Witchell masterpiece.

By 1935, the Crowds Building had been acquired by the Continental Supply Company which added a 6th floor to the five story building. In 1940 eight more floors were added although they were stepped back some 25 feet on both the north and south facades. By approximately 1982, the entire block had been acquired by Dallas Power & Light which it, or its successors, has occupied continuously thereafter until January, 2003.

16. Inventory of Structures-Historic District Only (Page 1 of 1)

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

a. Location and Name: 1512 Commerce Street, J.W. Crowdus Building/Continental Supply Building

b. Development History

Original owner: J.W. Crowdus Realty

Architect/builder: Unknown

Construction/alteration dates: 1903 original/1935, 1940 alterations

c. Architectural Significance

Indicative of various periods in the architectural evolution of downtown Dallas. The building was originally a five story commercial warehouse type building in a Richardsonian Romanesque style that later evolved to a charming but eclectic melange of styles.

d. Category

Contributing *excellent example of an architectural style that is typical of or integral to the district; retaining essential integrity of design*

Compatible *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*

Non-contributing *intrusive; detracts from the character of the district*

e. Statement of Significance

The building is part of the shared history of downtown Dallas having been at the heart of the commercial, physical and architectural development of the City. According to City Directories, the building was first built in 1903 as a five story commercial warehouse building by J.W. Crowdus Company. At that time its style was Richardsonian Romanesque with an entirely brick skin, although the architect is unknown. In 1935 a sixth story was added to the building in the same style as the 1903 building. In 1940 an eight story addition was added to bring the building to its full 14 story height. Photographic records indicate that between 1940 and 1963 the lower six floors were clad in a white limestone skin with black granite base on the Lane and Commerce facades. This addition gave the building its present architectural charm by bringing it into harmony with the DP&L two story Annex to the west. The prime occupants have included J.W. Crowdus Drug Company, Continental Supply Company, which according to a 1940 article in Southwest Business was one of the largest oil well supply companies in the world, Texaco Oil Company, and finally Texas Utilities and TXU Corporation. In the 1960's the 1512 building was home to many smaller jewelry companies and was reportedly one of the last buildings in Dallas to allow jewelers to work with open flame equipment. From the early 1980's to 1995 it was part of the headquarters complex of successively, Dallas Power & Light, Texas Utilities, and TXU Corporation, a Fortune 100 company and one of the region's most important utility and energy companies.

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Germany attended the University of Karlsruhe matriculating in 1888 as a structural engineer. Shortly thereafter he came to Dallas to work for the Texas & Pacific Railroad. Frank Witchell (1879-1947), hailed from Wales originally but moved to San Antonio as a child and in 1898 was engaged by the prominent Ft. Worth architectural firm of Sanguinet and Staats. The two men joined forces in 1905 and Lang & Witchell was to become an architectural juggernaut that would reshape the skyline of downtown Dallas.

Their prodigious output would include the Southland Life Insurance Building (1910; demolished), the Sanger Brothers Department Store (1910; now El Centro Community College), the Adolphus Hotel (1912; in association with Barnett, Haynes & Barnett) placed on the National Register in 1983, the Southwestern Life Insurance Building (1913; demolished), the Sears Warehouse complex (now Southside on Lamar), the Busch-Kirby Building (1913; in association with Barnett, Haynes & Barnett) National Register 1980/1996, the Magnolia Building (1922; in association with Sir Alfred Bossom) which at 29 stories was the tallest building in Dallas and the 16th tallest in the U.S. at that time, the Majestic Theater (1923), the Hilton Hotel (1925; now the Holiday Inn Aristocrat) which at 14 stories was to be the world's foremost hotelier, Conrad Hilton's, first highrise and the first hotel to bear his name upon opening, the Gulf States/Collum Building (1929), the Southwestern Bell Building (1930), the Tower Petroleum Building (1931), and Dallas Gas Company/Lone Star Gas (1931).

The three 1931 buildings, Tower Petroleum, Dallas Gas Company, and Dallas Power & Light would be representative of some of the first Art Deco designs in Dallas with Dallas Power & Light, in particular being exceptional. According to Marcel Quimby in Lang & Witchell Shaping the Dallas Skyline, Legacies, Fall, 1997, DP&L was characterized as "one of the finest examples of Zigzag Moderne style in Dallas and reflects many of the typical features of this style: strong vertical elements, stepped back or faceted vertical planes, cast stone decorative cornice (with a stylized broad leafed abstracted plant), and Art Deco accents." In addition to its design theme, the building was innovative in its engineering concept being the first welded steel frame building to be constructed west of the Mississippi.

The building is historically significant on account of its having been the headquarters of the local electric utility company. Dallas Power & Light was succeeded by Texas Utilities after the acquisition of Lone Star Gas and eventually became TXU Corporation, a Fortune 500 company and one of the most important firms in Dallas. The subject was headquarters facility until 1995.

17. Designation Criteria

x__ History, heritage and culture: Represents the historical development, ethnic heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or country.

____ **Historic event:** Location of or association with the site of a significant historic event.

____ **Significant persons:** Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, state, or country.

x__ Architecture: Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, landscape design, method of construction, exceptional craftsmanship, architectural innovation, or contains details which represent folk or ethnic art.

x__ Architect or master builder: Represents the work of an architect, designer or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state or country.

x__ Historic context: Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites, or areas which are eligible for preservation based on historic, cultural, or architectural characteristics.

x__ Unique visual feature: Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city that is a source of pride or cultural significance.

____ **Archeological:** Archeological or paleontological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories of historic or prehistoric interest.

x__ National and state recognition: Eligible of or designated as a National Historic Landmark, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, State Archeological Landmark, American Civil Engineering Landmark, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

x__ Historic education: Represents an era of architectural, social, or economic history that allows an understanding of how the place or area was used by past generations.

Recommendation

The Designation Task Force requests the Landmark Commission to deem this nominated landmark meritorious of designation as outlined in Chapter 51 and Chapter 51A, Dallas Development Code.

Further, the Designation Task Force endorses the Preservation Criteria, policy recommendations and landmark boundary as presented by the Department of Planning and Development.

Date:

***Chair
Designation Task Force***

***Chair
Designation Task Force***

Historic Preservation Planner