

**Dallas Landmark Commission
Landmark Nomination Form**

1. Name

historic: Dallas Power & Light East Substation
and/or common: Powerstation. date: 3/11/98

2. Location

address: 3816 Commerce Ave
location/neighborhood: Between Deep Ellum and Fair Park
block: 3/817 lot: 1 land survey: Gaston Homestead Addn. tract size: 7910.25 s.f.

3. Current Zoning

PD-269

4. Classification

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

5. Ownership

Current Owner: 3700 Willow Company
Contact: Brady Wood Phone: 214-747-9663
Address: 2528 Elm Street Suite 200 City: Dallas State: TX Zip: 75226

6. Form Preparation

Date: 3/11/98
Name & Title: Brady Wood/ Owner (referring to Nomination form of the North Substation)
Organization: 3700 Willow Company
Contact: Brady Wood Phone: 214-747-9663

7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide) local state national 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: Dallas Power & Light Company

significant later owner(s):

9. Construction Dates

original: 1920

alterations/additions:

10. Architect

original construction: Dallas Power & Light Co. staff and Texas Construction Co.

alterations/additions:

11. Site Features

natural: none

urban design: The building itself has strong urban design qualities

12. Physical Description

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

Physical Description and Significance

The red brick building constructed at the corner of Willow and Commerce Streets in 1920 by Dallas Power and Light was one of the four substations built by the company in Dallas. The structure is said to have been built by the Texas Construction Co., evidently a subsidiary of DP&L, although no records have been found to substantiate the claim. Quite similar to the North Dallas substation located at the corner of Armstrong Avenue and Buena Vista Streets, the East facility appears to be the building illustrated in the DP&L advertisement which appeared in the August 7, 1924, Dallas Morning News.

The use of red brick by the DP&L for its power plants continued the pattern established when the Dallas Electric Company (forerunner of DP&L) built the Dallas Steam Electric Station in 1892 to furnish power for the Fair Park and Trinity Heights areas. (1) The East Dallas substation bears some resemblance to that building, with its white cornice and window sills. The substation, however, includes several architectural details which set it apart from what might normally have been expected in such a utilitarian building. The use of details in the cornice and the white medallions are results of Georgian influences, while the fluted columns and cornice which mark the main entrance are classically inspired. (2) The elegant light standards which flank the entrance are one of several decorative elements the total effect of which might be more readily found in a public building such as a library or courthouse, rather than a utility building.

Continuation Sheet

DP&L evidently designed its substations to help project the image the company wished to promote: one of stability, confidence in the future, and willingness to invest large amounts of capital to provide for its customers' demands for electric power.

While the East Dallas substation cannot be said to have been one of the outstanding, high style architectural achievements in Dallas at the time (the Santa Fe Building, Stoneleigh Terrace Hotel and Baker Hotel were being constructed during the same time period), it does represent an attempt by one Dallas company to take what might have been a rather ordinary structure and make it something more substantial.

(1) Dallas Morning News, September 7, 1983.

(2) McAlester, Virginia & Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses. Knopf. New York, 1984

Item # 12

(Page 3 of 9)

13. Historical Significance

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

The historical significance of the DP&L East Dallas substation can be found in the role it played in providing electric power to the Street Railway System of Dallas. DP&L viewed the availability of electric power as essential to the growth of the City of Dallas, and promoted its construction of the substation as evidence of its willingness to assist in the growth of the city.

In a telephone interview with Rick Loftis, real estate administrator at TU Electric, he said the primary function of the station was to convert the "AC" type current from the main power plant downtown to "DC" current. The trolley cars could only operate on "DC" current. There were also three large diesel generators located inside the station which, in case of a power interruption, could run the trolley cars for an additional four hours.

In 1920, the year the East Dallas substation went into operation, Dallas was the 42nd largest city in the U.S., but was considered the financial, medical and manufacturing center of the Southwest. (1) The population of more than 200,000 enjoyed the amenities of a large city, and the strength of the economy even then was attracting business at a healthy rate. To keep up with the demand for power, DP&L constructed three other substations.(2)

In a January 17, 1924 advertisement in the Dallas Morning News, DP&L noted that "Every Day the Demand for Electric Service Grows" and pointed out to readers that it "is by looking ahead and being able to build ahead [so] that good service can be supplied. And this factor of good electric service is one of the causes of rapid growth of this city. "

The DP&L East Dallas substation was an essential ingredient in the continued growth and prosperity of the city. DP&L recognized how essential its services were to the citizens of Dallas, and spelled this out in a series of advertisements in the Dallas Morning News in 1924. The May 22 advertisement sums it up: "Dallas could not be here without the aid of electric service. Industry would stop. There would be no light. Newspapers could not be issued. The telephone and telegraph would be silent." The East Dallas substation assured Dallas that its future power requirements would be met.

(1) Jones, Dallas, Its History, Its Development, Its Beauty, 1925.

(2) Dallas Morning News, July 19, 1923, p. 20; McDonald, Dallas Rediscovered; Saxon, Gerald, Reminiscences: A Glimpse of Old East Dallas.

14. Bibliography

See footnotes above

15. Attachments

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District or Site Map | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional descriptive material |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site Plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Footnotes |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos (historic & current) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Plans</u> |

16. Inventory of Structures-Historic District Only (Page 6 of 9)

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

Compatible

Non-contributing

excellent example of an architectural style that is typical of the district; retaining essential integrity of design

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

intrusive; detracts form the character of the district

e. Statement of Significance

APPENDIX

Preservation Criteria : DP&L Substation East

The Dallas Power and Light Electrical Substation will be renovated for use as a 3 unit condominium project. All existing original exterior elements of the building facades will be preserved, with the exception of doors, windows and lighting. Renovations, repairs and maintenance of the building shall conform to the following guidelines:

1. Surface Materials

Reconstruction, renovation or repair of the opaque elements of each facade shall employ only cast stone, concrete, and brick of equal texture, grain, color and module size of the existing main structure as is feasible. Existing brick facades shall not be painted.

Reconstruction, renovation or repair of existing cast stone or concrete cornice, banding, sills, sign, decorative features, and porch pediment shall employ only cast stone or concrete of equal texture, grain, color, or module size as similar to the original elements as is feasible.

2. Fenestrations and Openings

Existing doors and window openings in the protected facades shall remain intact and be preserved. No new window openings shall be allowed unless they add to the overall symmetry or design relationship of the facade. Three new door openings will be added to comply with city ordinances and will be of same material and style of existing openings. All window and door openings shall be renovated to a style and size as similar as practical to the original design. Existing facade symmetry and the relationship of solids to voids shall be maintained and preserved as is. The overhead door opening may be reconfigured to be reduced to a door or window opening. No reflective or tinted glass will be permitted in window openings or on any part of the facade. Windows shall be renovated to express similar mullion and light configurations that are found in the existing windows.

3. Roof

The existing roof shall be maintained and low profile vertical columns will be built overhead for a small area of shading. No additions allowed, except as may be required for stair access; however, the roof may be utilized for active/passive uses such as roof garden, and mechanical equipment may be placed on the roof. No projection above the roof parapet will be allowed above sight line from the parapet to the far R.O.W. line across Willow and Commerce Streets.

4. Color

The coloring of the existing facade materials will be reviewed by the Landmark Committee and City Plan Commission upon submission of Certificate of Appropriateness. Except as noted in Section 1 above, the brick material will not be sandblasted or painted; however, a sealant may be used. All other materials may be painted appropriate colors as approved in the review process.

5. Lighting

The exterior lamps on the north facade will be restored if possible or replaced with similar to be approved. New exterior lamps at other entrances will be permitted after design approval. Other exterior building trim lighting will be permitted upon approval.

6. Signs

The original DP&L sign on the south facade has been stolen/removed and can be restored, if possible. All other signs shall be designed in accordance with appropriate Dallas Development Code provisions and as approved by the Landmark Committee and City Plan Commission.

7. Public Improvements

All proposed public improvements of streets and associated R.O.W. abutting the structure shall be approved by the Landmark Committee and City Plan Commission prior to commencement of work.

8. Landscaping and Site Elements

Retaining wall planters of compatible brick material will be permitted in front yards within six feet of the building base and no higher than two and one-half feet, to allow planting material and soil to slope to concrete base of building wall. Parking screening walls, entrance gates and any other screening walls of no more than eight feet in height will be permitted along the frontage.

9. Protected Facades / No Build Zones / New Construction

New construction on the site and any alterations of the DP&L Building would be subject to review and approval for compatibility of materials, color and design elements only. The review shall not obstruct the owner from full utilization of all zoning development rights in the appropriate zoning category as defined by the Dallas Development Code at the time of passage of this ordinance. New construction may not utilize mirror glass, and must contain primary facade materials of brick, stone or concrete, and contain design elements compatible to the DP&L Substation.

Per city ordinance, an exterior steel stair case will be constructed on the west side of the building.

Designation Merit

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>A. Character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Dallas, State of Texas or the United States.</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>G. Identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city.</p> | <p>_____</p> |
| <p>B. Location as the site of a significant historical event.</p> | <p>_____</p> | <p>H. Embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, material or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation.</p> | <p>_____</p> |
| <p>C. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city.</p> | <p>_____</p> | <p>I. Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites or areas which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on historic, cultural or architectural motif.</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>D. Exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historical heritage of the city.</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>J. Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar feature of a neighborhood, community or the city.</p> | <p>_____</p> |
| <p>E. Portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.</p> | <p>_____</p> | <p>K. Archaeological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories or historic or prehistoric value.</p> | <p>_____</p> |
| <p>F. Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or specimen.</p> | <p>_____</p> | <p>L. Value as an aspect of community sentiment of public pride.</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> |

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:

 Neighborhood Designation Task Force

 Jim Anderson, Urban Planner
 Historic Preservation