

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

962



1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Johnson Rooming House
Other name/site number: NA
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 1026 N. Beckley Avenue
City or town: Dallas State: Texas County: Dallas
Not for publication: [ ] Vicinity: [ ]

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
[X] national [ ] statewide [ ] local

Applicable National Register Criteria: [X] A [ ] B [ ] C [ ] D

Signature of certifying official / Title: Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: 10/3/14
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
[X] entered in the National Register
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register
[ ] other, explain:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action: 11/26/2014

Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

**Category of Property**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:** Domestic/multiple dwelling

**Current Functions:** Domestic/ multiple dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:** Late 19<sup>th</sup> And Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements: Craftsman

**Principal Exterior Materials:** BRICK, WOOD

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 6 through 9)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

X	<b>A</b>	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	<b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
	<b>C</b>	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	<b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Government/Politics

**Period of Significance:** 1963-1964

**Significant Dates:** 1963

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** NA

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 10 through 13)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheets 14)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** Approximately 0.16 acres.

### Coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 32.755807° Longitude: -96.822655°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** Block 1/3433 Lot 10, B. F. Davis Addition, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

**Boundary Justification:** The nomination includes the entire residential lot containing the garage and the house. This boundary includes all property historically associated with the buildings.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Nancy McCoy and Sam Childers  
Organization: Preservation Dallas  
Street & number: 2922 Swiss Avenue  
City or Town: Dallas State: Texas Zip Code: 75204  
Email: director@preservationdallas.org  
Telephone: 214 821-3290  
Date: DRAFT June 17, 2013

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheet 15)  
**Figures** (see continuation sheets 16 through 32)  
**Photographs** (see continuation sheets 5 and 24 through 33)

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**Photographs**

Johnson Rooming House  
Dallas County, Texas  
Photographed by Nancy McCoy, August 1, 2013

Photograph Number: 0001  
Description: Looking east from Zang Blvd. toward Beckley Ave.

Photograph Number: 0002  
Description: Looking east from N. Beckley Avenue at west facade

Photograph Number: 0003  
Description: Looking east at close-up of west façade, front porch

Photograph Number: 0004  
Description: Looking south-east at north facade

Photograph Number: 0005  
Description: Looking north-west at south facade

Photograph Number: 0006  
Description: Looking south-west at east façade, with door to basement

Photograph Number: 0007  
Description: Looking north-east at west façade of Garage Apartment Building

Photograph Number: 0008  
Description: Looking east front door toward Dining Room, with Oswald's room on left

Photograph Number: 0009  
Description: Looking west in Oswald's room, view similar to that used by the Warren Commission

Photograph Number: 0010  
Description: Looking east in Oswald's room; furniture is from time of the assassination

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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## **Narrative Description**

The 1923 Johnson Rooming House, at 1026 N. Beckley Avenue in Dallas, Texas, is a 1-story residence with basement just outside of the Lake Cliff Historic District (NRHP 1994), a residential neighborhood built primarily in the 1910s through the 1930s. The Craftsman style dwelling is roughly square in plan with intersecting gable roofs. Across the front façade and extended over the driveway is a wood pergola supported by iron columns. The pergola is punctuated by a barrel vaulted roof marking the entrance in the center of the facade. The walls are of brick with wood trim, windows and doors, and the perimeter foundation wall is concrete. As the property slopes to the east, the concrete walls and narrow windows of the basement become visible. A rear addition is clad in lapped wood siding. The roof is of red composition shingles. Behind the main dwelling is a 2-story garage apartment building with eight rooms. Combined, the house, the basement and the garage apartment building at one time provided the Johnson family with 18 rooms to rent, one of which was occupied by Lee Harvey Oswald for approximately six weeks in October and November of 1963. The property retains its 1963 appearance to a remarkable degree but is in fairly poor condition. While the significant materials and features are intact, on-going deterioration left unaddressed will lead to the loss of historic integrity with respect to materials and workmanship. However, the location, design, setting, feeling and association with the assassination event remain strong.

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The Johnson Rooming House faces west and is located second from the corner of an intersection of a busy commercial street, Zang Boulevard, with a two-lane commercial and residential street, North Beckley Avenue. The lot is 50 feet wide and 142 feet deep, with access to a two-lane street at the front and an alley at the rear. To the north is a two-story multi-family residential building built around the same time as the subject property and to the south the block is filled with single family residences, also of the same era. Across Beckley from the house is a triangular site on which sits a gas and service station, originally Humble Oil, which Mr. Johnson reportedly owned and ran with a business partner as a Mobile Oil station in 1963 (Hall interview). To the north are a few commercial buildings and to the east is the Lake Cliff Historic District (NRN 94000609); the subject property sits just outside of the National Register District. To the south is a residential neighborhood and to the west, the remaining residential properties along Zang Boulevard are transitioning to commercial uses. This immediate context is very similar to that which existed in 1963. The property is designated as a contributing property within the local Lake Cliff Historic District; preservation criteria for this district protect the neighborhood's primarily 1920s and 1930s buildings and Lake Cliff Park.

## Exterior

The west façade facing N. Beckley consists of two rectangular forms with its gable ends facing north and south intersected by a rectangular form with its gable ends facing east and west. A small portion of the west gable end, simply adorned with a wood vent, is visible on the west façade. A central wood entrance door and a decorative wrought iron screen door is flanked by sets of three one-over-one wood windows with aluminum screens. The brick walls are laid in American stretcher bond with standard sized brick in a range of reddish-brown colors. Wood trim consists of a fascia board at the eave, beaded board soffits and the mullions between windows; all wood is painted a white color. Across the façade is a wood pergola supported by wrought iron columns that extends over a concrete porch and the driveway. In the center of the façade is a barrel-vaulted roof element that provides cover for the entrance. The vaulted element contains an arched pediment with the address "1026" in metal numbers. The concrete porch and entrance steps are partially covered with green outdoor carpet and a hedge is planted to each side of the steps. The front door is of wood with three glass lights that step diagonally. The driveway on the south side of the house is composed of two strips of concrete separated by grass and it extends to the rear of the property to the single car garage that is part of the garage apartment building located a few feet from the property line at the alley.

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The north façade contains a variety of sizes of wood windows, typically with a one-over-one light configuration. On this façade, the original Craftsman-style window screen design (which can be seen in the c.1940 and the 1963 photographs) featuring a decorative pattern at the upper window sash remains. This screen style is no longer in place on the west façade. There is a grouping of four wood windows with wood mullions which face the adjacent multi-family dwelling, that belong to the room that Lee Harvey Oswald rented in 1963 on this façade. The south façade is similar to the north façade.

The east façade facing the back yard consists of brick at the north and south corners and a large addition across the façade of wood lapped siding with multiple windows. A door is located on the south end of this addition. In the center of the addition is a doorway of wide shiplap siding and a gable front that serves as the entry to the basement from the exterior. The doorway leads to steps down into the basement, which is approximately half below grade.

Interior

The interior consists of a large living room that is entered directly from the front door, with a fireplace on the north wall with built-in shelving. Windows flank the fireplace. To the south of the entrance are double doors with painted glass that lead into one of the 18 rooms that at one time were occupied by renters in this boarding house (Room 1). An interior thin brick veneer planter (dating to the 1950s) divides the dining room from the living room. To the north of the dining room is another opening that once held double doors with painted glass which leads into a narrow room (5 feet by 14 feet) with a set of four windows. This is the Room 3, which Oswald rented in 1963. A hall off of the dining room led to Room 2, the master bedroom and to the single bathroom. East of the dining room is a hall that contains a butler's pantry to the south and a small room that housed the housekeeper, Earlene Roberts, in 1963 to the north. Through the butler's pantry, which retains labeling on the shelving for linens, is the large eat-in kitchen with a window into the rear addition and another set of windows on the north façade. To the right of the kitchen is a small hall that leads to a door to the rear addition. The rear addition is a single space with evidence of a partition that separated it into two rooms (Rooms 4 and 5). A door on the south side of the room leads to the outdoors. The attic is not usable.

The basement can be accessed from the main floor through the closet in the southwest corner bedroom with a floor hatch and from the exterior entrance on the east façade. The basement contains 5 rooms, No. 5-10, each with its metal number and with the last city inspection notice taped to the door. The rooms are accessed off of a narrow central hallway that contains two bedrooms beneath the rear addition and another three rooms and a bathroom under the house. The rooms vary in size but each has a small window or two; those on the north side are raised by one step giving them a ceiling height of less than 7 feet. The smallest of the rooms is approximately 6 feet wide x 8 feet deep.

Garage Apartment Building

The 2- story garage apartment building, identified at the same address as the main house in the county's appraisal district records as "Garage Apartment," is clad in lapped wood siding, with a hipped composition shingle roof with exposed rafters, wood windows and doors, and a metal staircase leading to the second floor entrance landing. This building was constructed in 1953 as a "garage, wash rm. and servant's quarters," according to the city's construction permit. However, the permit contains remarks from the building inspector that state: "one room only of accessory bldg. to be occupied by bona fide servants employed on premises." The garage portion of the building is on the south end and includes a one-car garage door and the wash room is on the north; both are one story. A single central door provides access to each level of the apartment building; the landing of the second floor serving as a cover for the first floor entrance. On each floor are four small rooms, two on each side of a narrow hallway and

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a bathroom with shower at the end of the hall for a total of eight additional rooms. The building is set back a few feet from the alley and occupies almost the entire width of the property.

The rear yard is formed by the rear addition and the Garage Apartment Building and runs the full width of the lot. A clothesline remains on the north side of the yard. A very large and healthy pecan tree has grown horizontally into the yard due to the close location of another pecan tree to its west. The trees together provide a broad canopy and shade to the entire rear yard and most of the building roofs.

### **Alterations and Changes to the Property**

Changes to the property during its initial 17 years are not well documented. The Sanborn map dated 1927 and updated in 1950 indicates a small garage building separate from the main house and no addition on the rear of the house. The garage is confirmed by a black and white photograph obtained from Ms. Hall and assumed to be from the date of purchase around 1940. Building permit records show that the garage apartment building was constructed in 1953 and that the original garage was torn down at that time. Information on the addition has not been found. Ms. Hall's recollection from her grandmother's ownership period is that the garage apartment building and the rear addition both existed when Mrs. Johnson purchased the property and that the apartment building was actually a place that the doctor used to house patients that needed overnight attention. The basement was the doctor's office and treatment rooms. City directories indicate that the doctor only resided at this address for two or three years and the 1953 permit dispels the garage apartment building portion of this story.

The c.1940 photograph documents changes that occurred between the date of the photograph and 1963, which includes the replacement of the original Doric wood columns with iron, replacement of the Doric capitals and the replacement of the front door screen with a decorative screen door featuring a bucking bronco. The interior of the house was adapted to provide a total of 18 rooms for rent, consisting of five rooms in the main house, five rooms in the basement, and eight rooms in the Garage Apartment Building. However, the floor plan on the main floor was not altered. Glass doors were painted to provide privacy where they served as rental rooms and room numbers were added on or above the doors.

During this period, two live oak trees were planted flanking the sidewalk leading to the front door in the narrow strip of grass area between the street and the sidewalk. By 1963, the trees had fairly broad canopies that can be seen in photographs of the era.

### **Johnson Rooming House, 1963-2012**

Gladys Johnson, rooming house owner during the time Oswald rented a room there, continued to operate the rooming house until her death in 1986, at which time her daughter, Stella Fae (Fay) Arrant Puckett, took over the operation of the rooming house and eventually moved into the house herself (DMN, Michael Granberry). During that time, only the basement and outbuilding were rented. Fay Puckett died in 2008 and her daughter, Patricia Puckett-Hall moved in to take care of her in the last years of her life and to maintain the rooming house operations. Patricia Hall continued to rent rooms until 2012. A Certificate of Occupancy dated 2004 indicates the property serves as a "Group Residential Facility;" this certificate indicates that Ms. Puckett-Hall was the owner in 2004, four years before her mother died.

Between 1963 and the time of Fay Puckett's death in 2008 alterations on the exterior include the replacement of the bucking bronco front door screen with a wrought iron security door. The Craftsman-style window screens on the west façade were replaced with aluminum screens with a diamond pattern. The front porch was partially covered in outdoor carpet and the light fixture and mail box were replaced. On the interior, Oswald's room was replaced with a



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library and display shelving, the double wood and glass doors were removed and the wood floor covered with carpet.

Many photographs of the house were taken in connection with its use in the 1991 filming of director Oliver Stone's *JFK*. The appearance of the front porch was restored with temporary materials and the interior spaces leading to Oswald's room, including the kitchen, dining room, and Oswald's room was restored using the family's furniture from the 1963 period. One change was made that facilitated the filming but not the accuracy of the film: the two live oak trees in the front lawn were removed, and without permission (Hall interview).

Recent Changes and Condition 2012-2013

Sometime after 1991 the roof was replaced with a red composition shingle, without the diamond shape shingle of the original roof. In 2012, the roof was again replaced with the same replacement shingle material. The remainder of the exterior appears to be unchanged in recent years, with the exception of the addition of a handrail at the steps to the porch. On the interior, Oswald's room, the living room and dining room have been furnished with much of the same furniture that existed at the time of the assassination. In Oswald's room, this furniture includes the bed, a dresser and mirror, and a wardrobe.

Aside from the roof, there has been little maintenance work undertaken in recent years. The wood beams of the front porch pergola are rotted at their ends and where they connect to the fascia board. The wood windows are in fair condition, as is the front door. The aluminum screens in front of the windows are in poor condition. The brick is starting to pull away from the sheathing, presumably due to corroded anchors, over a substantial portion of the house; in order to repair this condition, the brick in these areas would need to be taken down and reset, using stainless steel anchors. The wood trim and siding has localized areas of rot, particularly where it is in contact with the ground along the rear facade. The windows to the basement are in poor condition. The windows and doors of the main floor level are in fair to poor condition. Window air-conditioners have accelerated deterioration of wood at window sills, mullions and frames.

On the interior, the main spaces of the house are in fair condition. In the living room, the windows on each side of the fireplace have been covered but the covering is easily removed. Not all the interior spaces were accessible at the time of this evaluation. There is localized water damage in the basement.

The Garage Apartment Building is in poor condition on the exterior. The wood siding, wood windows and doors remain but a leak in the roof and general deterioration exists. The treads of the stairs to the second floor are missing, leaving this floor inaccessible. The interior of the ground floor is in good condition.

The house was put up for sale on June 1, 2013 for \$500,000, which received international media coverage.

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### Statement of Significance

The 1923 Johnson Rooming House is a Craftsman-style home located at 1026 North Beckley Avenue in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas, Texas and dates from a period of development in the area that followed the establishment of Lake Cliff Park in Dallas. The unassuming house is best known as the last residence of Lee Harvey Oswald and for its association with the Kennedy assassination and the event's immediate aftermath in Dallas. Because the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, was murdered two days after Kennedy's death, many questions regarding the details of the assassination remain to this day. Sites related to the Kennedy assassination have and continue to be the subject of intense interest. Although Oswald had lived briefly at a number of sites in Dallas before the assassination, the rooming house at 1026 North Beckley was his residence on November 22, 1963, was where he returned shortly after the assassination to allegedly retrieve a handgun used a short time later in the murder of a Dallas police officer, and was the site of crime scene investigations by Dallas police and the FBI. Officials removed Oswald's belongings from the home for use in the subsequent investigations and the house's owner and employee provided testimony to the Warren Commission, the government's official probe into the assassination. Along with Dealey Plaza, the Paine House in Irving, the Texas Theatre and the Dallas Municipal Building, the Johnson Rooming House serves to remind and helps to reconcile the events in Dallas on November 22, 1963 and after. It is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the national level of significance in the area of Politics and Government for its association with key persons and artifacts connected to the assassination of President Kennedy.

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The fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy afforded an opportunity to review properties associated with the event and determine which unlisted sites still resonated with the public as important places connected with the assassination and therefore could be eligible for listing on the National Register. A group of Dallas historians and preservationists listed all sites in North Texas associated with the Kennedy assassination and verified their status. Dealey Plaza and the Texas Theatre are both listed on the National Register. The Dallas Municipal Building, where interrogations took place and where Oswald was held and shot, was classified in 2013 as a nationally-significant contributing building in the Downtown Dallas National Register Historic District (NR 2006, amended 2013). The other sites considered included the Paine House, where Oswald lived on and off with his wife Marina, and the Johnson Rooming House (both of which are being nominated to the NRHP), as well as Jack Ruby's residence, other rooming houses where Oswald resided, Jack Ruby's nightclubs, and Lee Harvey Oswald's grave. Of these sites, the Texas Historical Commission in consultation with the National Register indicated that only the Johnson Rooming House and the Paine House were significant enough to meet the National Register criteria. Jack Ruby's grave in Illinois was also determined to be ineligible for listing.

### History of Johnson Rooming House

Oak Cliff began to develop in 1887, when Thomas Marsalis and John Armstrong purchased 2,000 acres of property and renamed Hord's Ridge for the large oak trees in the area. The City of Oak Cliff was annexed into Dallas in 1903. Businessman Charles Mangold, often referred to as the "Father of Oak Cliff," built Lake Cliff Park, a private amusement park in the northeast section of Oak Cliff in 1906. Situated around what was once known as Llewellyn Lake, Lake Cliff Park featured amusement rides, a swimming pool, a clubhouse, food concessions and the "largest theater in the South" (*The Dallas Morning News*, June 17, 1906, p. 14). In 1914, the City of Dallas purchased a portion of the site for use as a public park for \$55,000 (*The Dallas Morning News*, p. 8). In 1919, city planner George Kessler created a master plan for the park that added athletic fields, new swimming pools and a formal rose garden. A large bathhouse, designed by noted architects Foshee and Cheek was built in 1921 (*Slate*, 2010: 35).

The improvement of the site as a city park led to the construction of homes in the area during the 1920s and early 1930s, primarily bungalows, four-squares and small apartment buildings. The majority of the single-family homes

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were built in the Tudor Revival, Prairie School and Craftsman styles. As the neighborhood developed, small commercial buildings were constructed, particularly along Colorado and Zang (formerly Zang's) Boulevards and somewhat fewer on Beckley Avenue.

William C. Barns, an Oak Cliff businessman and civic leader built the house at 1026 North Beckley in 1923. Owner of the Barns Lumber Company, Barns served as president of the Oak Cliff-Dallas Commercial Association, was a board member of the Jefferson Bank and Trust, the Continental Southland Savings and Loan Association and the Metropolitan Building and Loan Association. He was a founder of the "Own Your Own Home" campaign of 1922-23. In addition, he was a charter member of the Dallas City Plan Commission established by Dallas Mayor Joe Lawther in 1919. He, his wife Clara, and their three sons resided at 1026 North Beckley until 1929.

For the next decade a succession of short-term occupants lived at 1026 North Beckley, according to Dallas City Directories of the period. In 1930, Mrs. Jennie Huckaby, widow of E. Hurt Huckaby, occupied the home. From 1931 to 1933, Elbert Logan, an insurance agent for the Physicians Health and Accident Insurance Company, and his wife Violet, resided there. Dr. Jason H. Cox and his wife Clota lived at 1026 North Beckley from 1934 to 1936. Dr. Cox, a naturopath, operated his practice out of 1026 N. Beckley. According to Patricia Puckett Hall, the current owner of the house, Dr. Cox used the five basement rooms as offices and rooms of the separate building as patient hospital rooms. Rex V. White, Superintendent of All American Bus Lines and his wife Ada lived there from 1937 to 1938. Nev H. Williams, a linotype operator and his wife Marguerite and Mrs. Katherine Sanders, a nurse, lived in the home for a single year in 1939 (Dallas City Directories, 1930 – 1940). The first record of the property being utilized as a rooming house was a 1939 classified advertisement (The Dallas Morning News, June 19, 1939) that offered "Two southeast bedrooms, brick home, reasonable."

In 1940, Mrs. Amy Gladys Key Arrant purchased the property. Mrs. Arrant, originally from Alto, Texas, was a hard-working entrepreneur. She owned and managed Arrant's Café at 1029 Young Street in downtown Dallas. She also earned income by converting some rooms in the house and the entire basement and the Garage Apartment Building into accommodations she rented to tenants, all single men. She employed a housekeeper to oversee the rooming house operations while she operated the restaurant. In 1947, Mrs. Arrant married Arthur Carl Johnson, a Kentucky native who moved to Dallas with his parents as a child (Warren Commission Hearings, Vol X: 301). Mr. Johnson was a carpenter, but after his marriage to Mrs. Johnson, he assisted her in managing the restaurant, which was renamed Johnson's Café. According to his granddaughter, Patricia Puckett Hall, Johnson also owned and operated the Mobil service station with a business partner (ca. 1929, extant) directly across the street.

On the afternoon of October 7, 1963, Mrs. Johnson was home after working at the restaurant. Oswald appeared at the door inquiring about a room after seeing a "For Rent" sign posted outside (Warren Commission Hearings, Vol X: 293). Mrs. Johnson told him that she had just rented the last room but to check again if the sign was up. On October 14, 1963 he returned after Mrs. Johnson had again posted the "For Rent" sign and agreed to rent a small room off of the dining room for \$8 per week. He signed the register with the name "O.H. Lee." Mrs. Johnson allowed Oswald television privileges and allowed him to use the refrigerator. Oswald typically lived at the Johnson Rooming House during the week and at the Paine House in Irving where his wife Marina lived, on the weekends. According to Mrs. Johnson, he was a quiet, clean and well-mannered tenant who ate his dinners of sandwiches alone in his room and who rarely spoke to others in the house (Warren Commission Hearings, Vol X: 295-297).

Oswald uncharacteristically spent the evening of November 21, 1963 at the Paine home in Irving and rode to his job at the Texas School Book Depository in downtown Dallas the next morning with a co-worker, Buell Frazier. Oswald carried a long wrapped package that he told Frazier contained curtain rods. It was later determined that the package contained Oswald's Mannlicher Carcano rifle.

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President Kennedy was fatally shot in Dealey Plaza at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, November 22, 1963. The Warren Commission investigation determined that Oswald left downtown via first by bus and then by taxi. He left the cab in the 700 block of North Beckley, three blocks from his rooming house and two blocks from his former residence at 214 West Neely Street. The Neely Street house (extant) is where a well-known photograph of Oswald posing with a rifle was taken. At about 1 p.m. Oswald arrived at the Johnson Rooming House. The housekeeper, Mrs. Earlene Roberts, was surprised to see him at midday and remarked to him that he seemed to be in quite a hurry. He made no reply. Emerging from his room moments later, Mrs. Roberts saw Oswald zipping up a jacket as he rushed out of the house. Approximately 14 minutes later a man that fit Oswald's description shot and killed Patrolman J. D. Tippit of the Dallas police near the intersection of 10th Street and Patton Avenue, about nine-tenths of a mile from the rooming house. A few minutes later Oswald was arrested after fleeing into the nearby Texas Theater. The Dallas Police recovered evidence nearby, including shell casings and Oswald's jacket, which was discovered behind a Texaco service station at Crawford and Jefferson streets (extant). That evening, Oswald was arraigned for the murder of Officer Tippit, and formally arraigned for the murder of President Kennedy at 1:30 am the following day. On Sunday November 24, Jack Ruby, a Dallas nightclub owner, shot and killed Oswald in the basement of the Police and Courts Building (Dallas Municipal Building) while he was being transferred to the Dallas County jail (Warren Commission Report, Vol. 1, 6-16).

Dallas Police, Secret Service agents, investigators from the FBI, and reporters soon converged on the Johnson Rooming House. Authorities removed Oswald's possessions from his rented room. Both A.C. and Gladys Johnson, along with their housekeeper Earlene Roberts, were questioned and subsequently provided testimony to the Warren Commission. Most of the investigations surrounding the Johnson Rooming House focused on the timeline of Oswald's movements after the assassination of the president and the murder of Officer Tippit.

In the years following the assassination, the Johnson Rooming House attracted the curious from around the world. Reporters, writers, conspiracy theorists and ordinary sightseers stopped to take pictures and to knock on the door to ask to see inside. The Johnsons did not like the attention and attempted to carry on with their lives. They continued to operate their restaurant and the rooming house. A.C. Johnson died in 1976 and Gladys Johnson in 1986. The house passed on to their daughter Stella Fay Puckett. She too, did not like the unwelcome attention, but continued to rent rooms in the home. In the early 1990s she told a man who approached the house that he looked like Norman Mailer and he replied that he was. He interviewed Mrs. Puckett for research for his book *Oswald's Tale*. Around the same time, she allowed filmmaker Oliver Stone inside the home to shoot scenes for the movie *JFK*, but regretted the decision when the filming took weeks and Stone disregarded details and descriptions of events she considered important. When Mrs. Puckett died in 2008, she left the home to her daughter Patricia Puckett Hall, who continued to rent rooms until 2012 and resides there to this day. (*The Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 23, 2008, p. 8)

The Johnson Rooming House has remained in the same family for nearly seventy-five years, but Mrs. Puckett listed the home for sale on June 1, 2013. (*The Dallas Morning News*, June 1, 2013, p.1) Notice of the sale has attracted media attention and interest from the public from around the world.

### **Historic Context**

The murders of President Kennedy and Officer Tippit became the subject of several official investigations, themselves attracting international attention. The two principal investigations produced conflicting opinions. In 1964, the Warren Commission concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, shot the President from the sixth-floor of the Texas School Book Depository. In 1979, the House Select Committee on Assassinations determined that Oswald, firing from the sixth-floor window, had murdered the President, but that Oswald was probably part of a conspiracy.

Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Along with the official reports of these investigations, a vast body of literature has developed about the assassination. The House Select Committee's 1979 report noted that over one thousand articles and books had been written analyzing the details of the assassination--an event that occurred within a period of only 8 seconds. Much of this material focuses on one or more of the conspiracy theories, speculating about whether or not Oswald acted alone, and correspondingly, whether or not foreign countries, such as Cuba or Russia, had been involved in any way. Numerous books and television programs have been produced in the ensuing years on Oswald's role and motives in the assassination and speculation about the trial that never occurred would have been decided. A British television company produced a 5½-hour program entitled, "On Trial: Lee Harvey Oswald," using a judge and jury, and also cross-examinations and heard testimony from people associated in some manner with the assassination. The jury voted 7 to 5 that Oswald acted alone. In his 1995 book *Oswald's Tale*, Norman Mailer described Oswald's short time as a resident of the Johnson Rooming House and said of the false name he provided to Mrs. Johnson, "It was this alias, O. H. Lee, that may have brought him to the end of the drama that was his life."

The Johnson Rooming House is virtually unchanged from its appearance in 1963, and is intact to evoke the setting of November 22, 1963. Fifty years after the assassination, it and the Paine House in Irving remain as important residential structures that continue to attract worldwide interest due to the roles they played in events surrounding President Kennedy's assassination. The house was thrust into the national spotlight after the crime became a part of the American political landscape and the ongoing search for answers following the death of President John F. Kennedy. The site's national significance is based upon its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American history, and its association with the lives of persons significant in America.

Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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“Park at Lake Cliff,” *The Dallas Morning News*, June 17, 1906, p. 14.

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Report of the President’s Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy. United States Government Printing Office, Washington.

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1964

Warren Commission Hearings. United States Government Printing Office, Washington.

Puckett-Hall, Patricia

2013 Interview with Patricia Puckett-Hall, granddaughter of Gladys Johnson, in the house on several occasions in May of 2013 by Nancy McCoy and Sam Childers. Access was provided to the family’s photographs and other records related to the assassination.

## Other Sources

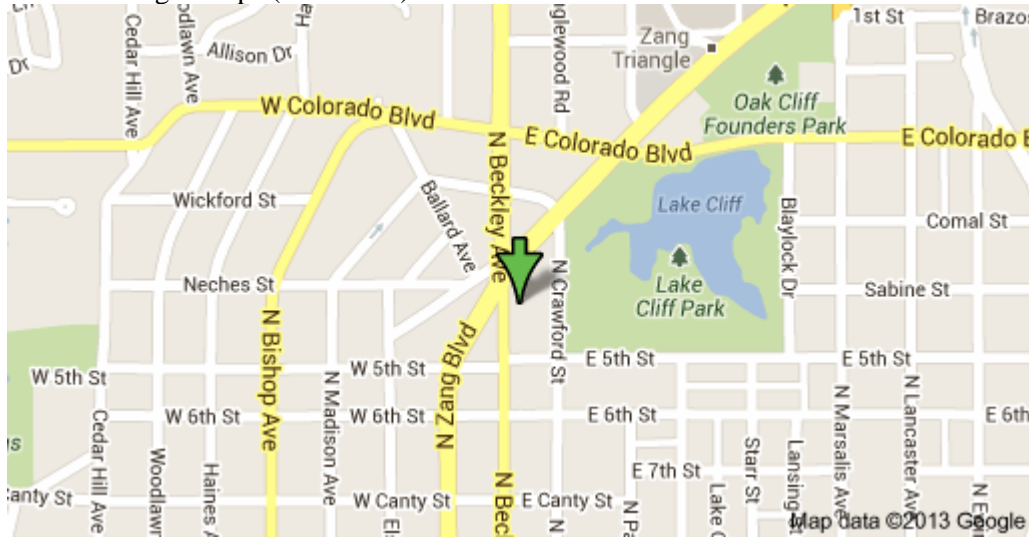
“Dealey Plaza Historic District, Dallas County, Texas,” National Register Listing 93001607

“Texas Theatre Dallas County, Texas,” National Register Listing 03000187

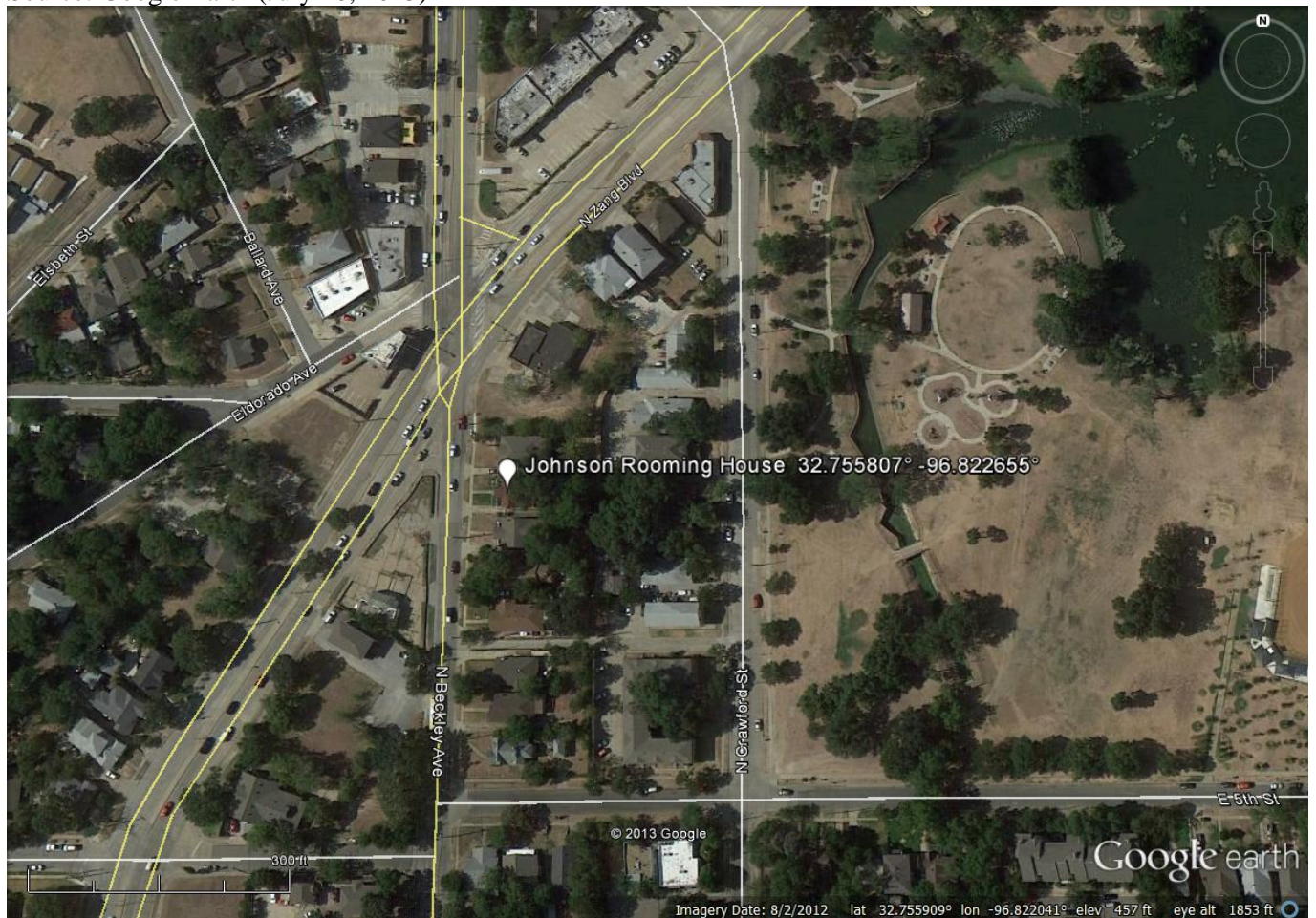


Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

Source: Google Maps (June 2013)

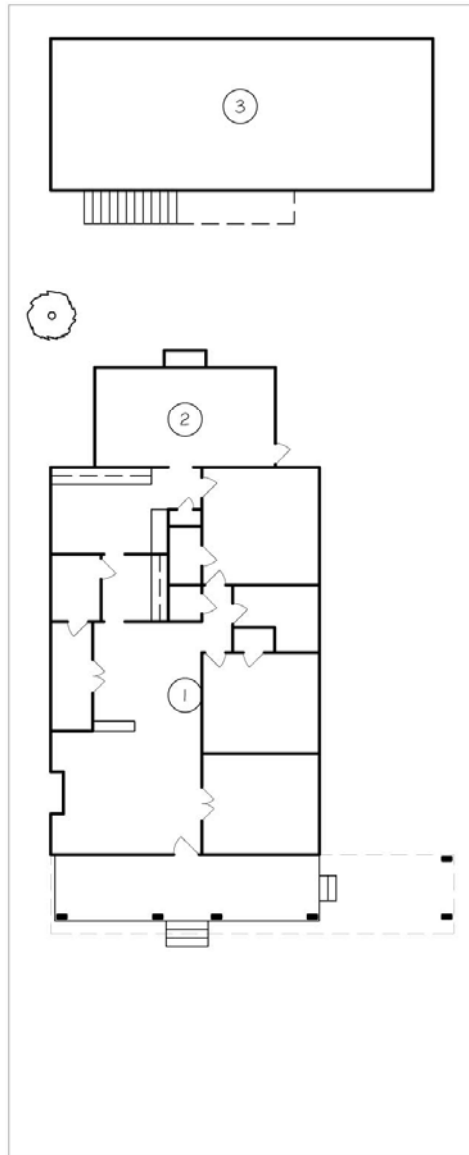


Source: Google Earth (July 18, 2013)



Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

Site Plan



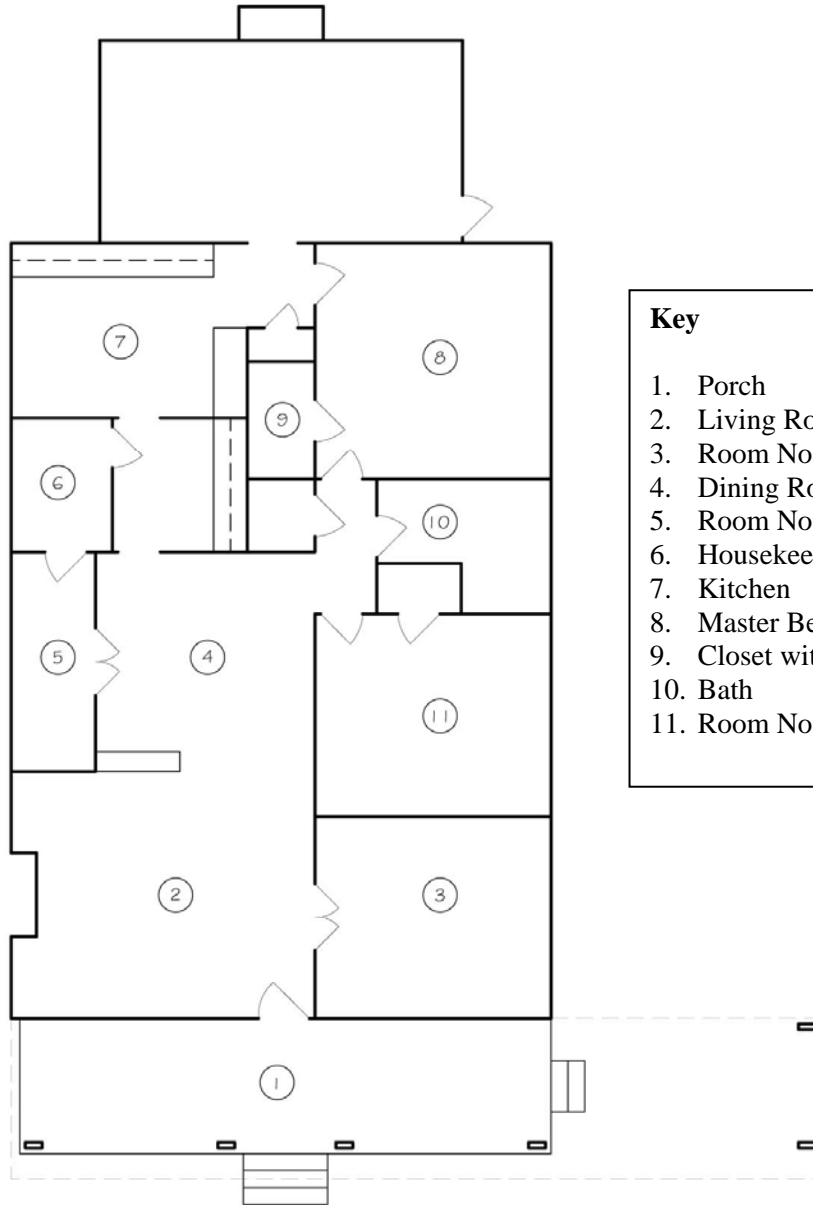
**Key**

- 1. Main house
- 2. Rear addition
- 3. Garage Apartment Building



Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

**Main House Floor Plan**

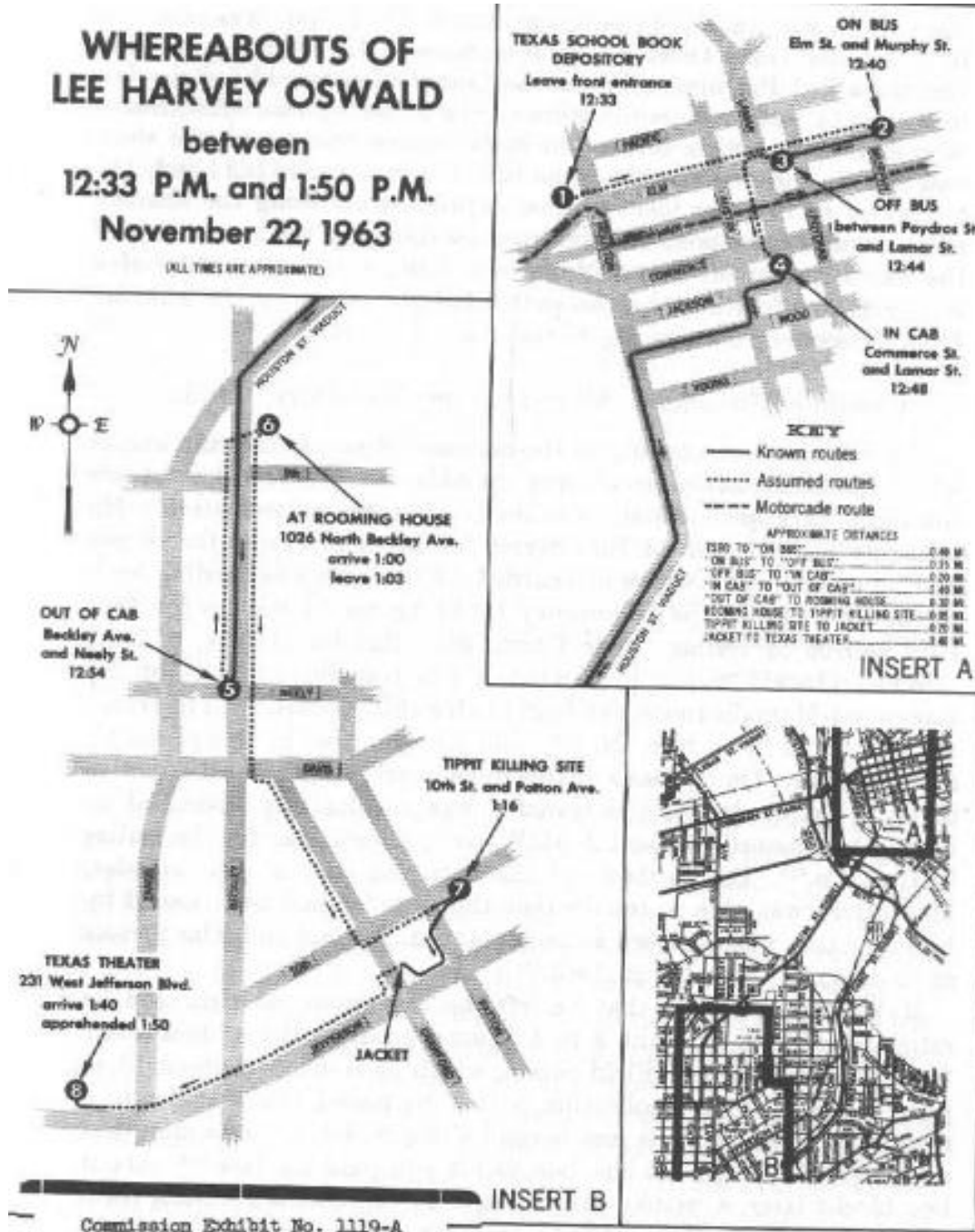


- Key**
- 1. Porch
  - 2. Living Room
  - 3. Room No. 1
  - 4. Dining Room
  - 5. Room No. 3 (Oswald's room)
  - 6. Housekeeper's Room
  - 7. Kitchen
  - 8. Master Bedroom
  - 9. Closet with access to basement
  - 10. Bath
  - 11. Room No. 2.



Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

Warren Commission Report Exhibit 1119A: *Whereabouts of Lee Harvey Oswald between 12:33 PM and 1:50 PM .*



Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Johnson Rooming House, c.1940. Possibly taken at the time Gladys Arrant purchased the house.



Photograph of 1026 North Beckley taken November 22, 1963; *Fort Worth Star Telegram* Collection, Special Collections Division, University of Texas Arlington Libraries.



Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Color photograph taken by a news photographer a day or more after November 22, 1963, from owner's collection.



Color photograph taken by a news photographer a day or more after November 22, 1963, from owner's collection.





Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Color photograph taken by a news photographer a day or more after November 22, 1963, from owner's collection.



Color photograph taken by a news photographer a day or more after November 22, 1963, from owner's collection (room configuration has been changed since November 22, 1963 as room is again ready for a new tenant).



Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Gladys Johnson in room rented by Oswald .  
Photographed by LIFE magazine photographer Allan Grant on November 22, 1963.



Gladys Johnson (background) and Earlene Roberts (foreground) in the house during police investigation on November 22, 1963. *Fort Worth Star Telegram* Collection, Special Collections Division, University of Texas Arlington Libraries.



Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Photograph depicting changes to window screens and front door grill  
(Puckett Studio, Dallas, before 1983).



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Photograph taken before 1991 (Puckett Studio, Dallas), prior to removal of trees for filming of "JFK," depicting roof with diamond pattern.



Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Johnson Rooming House  
Dallas County, Texas  
Photographed by Nancy McCoy, August 1, 2013

Photograph Number: 0001  
Description: Looking east from Zang Blvd. toward Beckley Ave.





Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Photograph Number: 0002

Description: Looking east from N. Beckley Avenue at west façade



Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Photograph Number: 0003

Description: Looking east at close-up of west façade, front porch





Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Photograph Number: 0004  
Description: Looking south-east at north facade



Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Photograph Number: 0005  
Description: Looking north-west at south façade





Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Photograph Number: 0006

Description: Looking south-west at east façade, with door to basement





Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Photograph Number: 0007

Description: Looking north-east at west façade of Garage Apartment Building



Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Photograph Number: 0008

Description: Looking east front door toward Dining Room, with Oswald's room on left





Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Photograph Number: 0009

Description Looking west in Oswald's room, view similar to that used by the Warren Commission





Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas, Texas

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Photograph Number: 0010

Description: Looking east in Oswald's room; furniture is from time of the assassination



- fin -











1026

**PRIVATE  
PROPERTY**  
NO TRESPASSING



























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Johnson Rooming House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Dallas

DATE RECEIVED: 10/10/14      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/03/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/18/14      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/26/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000962

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: Y    NATIONAL: Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

\_\_\_ACCEPT    \_\_\_RETURN    \_\_\_REJECT    \_\_\_\_\_DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**The Johnson Rooming House meets National Register Criterion A at the national level in the area of Politics/Government for its association with key persons and artifacts connected to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The modest 1923 rooming house was the last, short-term Dallas residence of alleged Kennedy assassin Lee Harvey Oswald and was directly associated with significant events and investigations associated with the Kennedy case. The identification and nomination of the Johnson Rooming House was the result of a comprehensive analysis of sites in North Texas associated with the Kennedy assassination undertaken by local and state historians and preservation experts. The listing provides an opportunity for a better understanding and appreciation of the full context of events associated with that period.**

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Criterion A

REVIEWER Paul R. Lusignan      DISCIPLINE HISTORIAN

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE 11/26/2014

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
*real places telling real stories*



TO: Edson Beall  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)  
Washington , DC 20005

FROM: Gregory Smith  
National Register Coordinator  
Texas Historical Commission

RE: Johnson Rooming House, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

DATE: October 1, 2014

The following materials are submitted:

	Original National Register of Historic Places form on disk.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the National Register of Historic Places nomination amendment for the Johnson Rooming House
	Resubmitted nomination.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Original NRHP signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
	Multiple Property Documentation form on disk.
	Resubmitted form.
	Original MPDF signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CD with TIFF photograph files and PDF
	Correspondence

COMMENTS:

- SHPO requests substantive review (cover letter from SHPO attached)
- The enclosed owner objections (do ) (do not ) constitute a majority of property owners
- Other:

