

**DEALEY PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

Historic Name: **DEALEY PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Other Name/Site Number:

**2. LOCATION**

Street & Number: Area Generally Bounded By: Not for publication:       

Pacific Avenue, Market Street, Jackson Street,  
and right of way of Dallas Right of Way Management Company

City/Town: Dallas Vicinity:       

State: TX County: Dallas Code: 113 Zip Code: 75202

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

Ownership of Property

- X :Private
- X :Public-local
- X :Public-State
- X :Public-Federal

Category of Property

- :Building(s)
- X :District
- :Site
- :Structure
- :Object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

- 8 :Buildings
- 2 :Sites
- 5 :Structures
- 2 :Objects
- 17 : Total

Noncontributing

- 2 :Buildings
- 0 :Sites
- 0 :Structures
- 0 :Objects
- 2 :Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 16

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_ 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):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic: Commerce/Trade  
Government  
Landscape

Sub: Business  
Government Offices  
Plaza

Current: Commerce/Trade  
Government  
Landscape

Sub: Business  
Government Offices  
Plaza

**7. DESCRIPTION**

Architectural Classification  
Chicago  
Classical Revival  
Romanesque  
International

Materials  
Foundation: Stone  
Walls: Brick, Limestone  
Roof: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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**DESCRIBE PRESENT AND HISTORIC PHYSICAL APPEARANCE.****SUMMARY<sup>1</sup>**

The block of Elm Street in Dallas where President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, is in the westernmost portion of the "West End," an early 20th century warehouse/government historic district in the city's downtown. The vicinity includes Dealey Plaza, its landscape and structures, adjacent city streets, perimeter buildings, and a part of the railyards immediately north of the Plaza.<sup>2</sup> In the 1960s, the commercial part of the West End was in decline, because rail traffic, which had nourished it, had diminished. Since local historic district designation in 1975 and listing in the National Register 3 years later, the area as a whole has undergone marked revival, spurred by both private and governmental investment.

The assassination scene, almost entirely within the West End Historic District, retains a very high level of historic integrity. The buildings and features included, with two exceptions--the Kennedy Memorial and the Sixth Floor Visitor Center--are those which may be seen from the assassination site and from which it may be viewed. Although the skyline of downtown Dallas has altered radically with the addition of high-rise structures since 1963, only one of these, the Hyatt Reunion complex, a quarter-mile southwest of the Plaza, is nearby.

Each major feature in the district will be described as originally built, as it appeared in 1963, and as it now appears. The primary name assigned to each property will be that used in 1963. (Except as noted all buildings and elements are contributing.)

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that it is not the intent of this study either to endorse or deny any controversial official findings or to support or cast doubt on any theory or speculation that has been advanced since 1963 regarding the identity of the assassin or assassins or the specifics of how President John F. Kennedy was murdered. The literature on this subject is vast and wildly discordant and far beyond the scope and purpose of this study to clarify. Thus, for example, the citation of the presence of witnesses or the presumed location of the assassin or assassins merely reflects the presence of this information in sources that discuss the assassination.

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<sup>1</sup> This description of Dealey Plaza has been prepared from various sources, including the 1978 National Register of Historic Places nomination form by Joe Williams, Danny Hardy, and David Moore, and a 1990 revision, expansion, and update by Conover Hunt based on her extensive work in the documentation of Dealey Plaza for the Sixth Floor Exhibit. The comments of James Steely, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer of the State of Texas, have also been especially valuable.

<sup>2</sup> West End Historic District National Register nomination, 1978. The entire nominated area, with the exception of the Federal Building abutting Commerce Street on the southern edge of the Plaza, is included in the West End Historic District, a warehouse and government tract. This National Register district is also a local historic district subject to design review by Dallas city ordinance.

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**DEALEY PLAZA**

This generally rectangular approximately 3-acre park was formed in 1934-40 from several blocks of Dallas founder John Neely Bryan's original land grant. The Plaza replaced residential and commercial buildings on the tract. The land was acquired by the City of Dallas during the 1930s to create a major gateway to the city from the west, and to relieve traffic congestion at the Union terminal railroad tracks which passed north-south at the western edge of the city. Originally called the "Elm-Main-Commerce Subway," the gateway was conceived as a "triple underpass" of streets, which afforded access to the western edge of downtown Dallas beneath the Union Terminal company tracks. To build the underpass, engineers regraded the area to slope gently down toward the west.<sup>3</sup> All plans for the Plaza showed a rectangular park traversed by three streets rearranged in a bisected triangle--Commerce to the south, Main in the middle, and Elm to the north--converging to the west in the Triple Underpass.

Elm Street was rerouted as a curving street running one-way west from the downtown, with Commerce on the south redrawn to curve as a one-way west-to-east street entering the city from the west. Main Street remained a two-way thoroughfare. Each of these three main Dallas streets traversing the Plaza were 40 feet in width, with 10-foot concrete sidewalks on the north side of Elm Street, on the west side of Houston, and on the south side of Commerce, with those on Elm and Commerce extending through the underpass. (The old routes of Elm and Commerce helped define the Plaza's boundaries and provided local access.)

The Plaza's declining grade, east to west, was about 3 degrees, which made the roadway at the Triple Underpass roughly 24 feet lower than the Houston Street level.<sup>4</sup> Main Street ran 425 feet from Houston to the underpass. The distance from Houston to the underpass on both Elm and Commerce (the curved streets) was 495 feet. The new railroad bridge was constructed west of old tracks, new tracks connecting Union Station terminal one block to the south with railyards immediately north of the Plaza.

The plaza and roadway were designed by city engineers, with assistance in the final plan from E.F. Mitchell, chief engineer for the Texas & Pacific Railroad and Union Terminal Company.<sup>5</sup> The joint Federal-city-railroad project was supervised by the Texas Highway Department. The park was named Dealey Plaza in 1935, in honor of George Bannerman Dealey (1859-1946), an outstanding civic leader who had advocated city planning for Dallas for decades already, publisher of The Dallas Morning News, crusader for improvements to the Trinity River corridor, and president of West of Commerce Realty Company, which had

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<sup>3</sup> Dallas Herald, March 18, 1934, File 411, George Bannerman Dealey Collection, Dallas Historical Society (hereafter cited as Dealey Collection, DHS).

<sup>4</sup> The President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, Report, Hearings, and Exhibits (Washington, D.C., 1964), 17: Exhibit 877. (Hereafter cited as Warren Report.)

<sup>5</sup> Dallas Dispatch, March 18, 1934.

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donated most of the right of way west of the underpass.<sup>6</sup> The Plaza was dedicated in 1936, the same year the park was placed under the administration of the City of Dallas Park Board, which still maintains jurisdiction over it.

The Triple Underpass with the railroad bridge atop it was constructed of concrete with square balusters and distinctive Art Deco stylistic detailing. The original square-column motif was repeated on a larger scale in garden structures and pylons elsewhere in the park. The bridge was unpainted; all of the architectural elements in the Plaza itself were concrete, painted white. Like the bridge, they were designed in a late simplified Art Deco style, somewhat typical of WPA projects of the late 1930s. In 1938-40, several garden structures were added to the Plaza and funds were allocated for landscaping in the latter year.<sup>7</sup>

Specific architectural features designed for Dealey Plaza included long twin concrete Reflecting Pools (Number 7 on the accompanying sketch map), with fountains, which ran north-south along the west side of Houston Street. These pools were separated by the cross intersection of Main Street; each pool was oval at the end facing toward the edge of the park, and rectangular along Main Street. To the west of the Reflecting Pools near Main Street were curved concrete Colonnades or Peristyles that ran to the north and south, ending in pylons. Between the Peristyles and the Reflecting Pools were rectangular concrete box planters holding oak trees.

Immediately east of the planter boxes on both the north and south sides of Main Street tall graduated concrete obelisks were planned.<sup>8</sup> The southern obelisk was replaced in 1949 by a 12-foot standing bronze Statue of George Bannerman Dealey mounted on a tall red granite plinth. The statue was sculpted by Felix de Weldon in 1948<sup>9</sup> and dedicated by the G.B. Dealey Memorial Association the next year.<sup>10</sup> Between the statue and the planter box the

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. See also correspondence July-September 1935, between G.B. Dealey, Ted Dealey, L.A. Stemmons and Park Board officials regarding the naming of the park, File 265, Dealey Collection, DHS; Ernest Sharpe, G.B. Dealey of the Dallas News (New York, 1955), pp. 250-253; Michael V. Hazel, "The Critic Club, Sixty Years of Quiet Leadership," Legacies II, 2 (Fall 1990): 9-17.

<sup>7</sup> "A Centennial History of the Dallas Parks Department," City of Dallas, typescript, 1976, in Dallas Public Library. (Hereafter cited as DPL.)

<sup>8</sup> There is no firm evidence that matching obelisks were built and no photos of the Plaza have been located for the years 1940-49, the latter year being that in which the Dealey Statue was placed. The strong symmetry of the rest of the park, however, with matching pergolas, colonnades, and reflecting pools, suggests that the designers would have planned matching obelisks.

<sup>9</sup> Felix de Weldon also sculpted the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington, Va., at the north edge of Arlington National Cemetery.

<sup>10</sup> Dated photographs of the dedication, File #A4999, DHS.

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Association placed a red granite quadripartite slab bearing four bronze bas relief tablets commemorating Dealey's philanthropic, civic, and journalistic work.

Covered Pergolas (8) (also with square columns of concrete), each reached by a set of broad concrete steps, were constructed in the grassy areas in the northwest and southwest corners of the Plaza. Both Pergolas had low, elbowed concrete walls with plinths splaying at an angle from each side of the main structure. A low concrete wall ran east from the easternmost edge of the north Peristyle, an arrangement mirrored in the southern structure. Landscaped areas to the north of Elm and the south of Commerce Streets were also a part of the final plan for Dealey Plaza, and were separated from adjacent properties by cedar picket fences. These grassy areas (9, 10) were planted along their outermost perimeters with oak trees and holly hedges.

By the 1950s Dealey Plaza had metal lamp posts placed within the sidewalks along both sides of Main Street, on the northern edge of Elm Street, along the southern edge of Commerce Street, and on the western edge of Houston Street. The posts were in the form of tapered, fluted columns, most probably with stylized Corinthian capitals and gaslight-style globes.<sup>11</sup>

Original plantings in Dealey Plaza included Burford holly hedges, in all straight areas around the Reflecting Pools and Colonnades; yaupon in curved areas of the Reflecting Pools; and live oak trees and cedar elms in the corner areas at the Colonnades.<sup>12</sup>

### Appearance in 1963

At the time of the Kennedy assassination, Dealey Plaza retained all of its original architectural features, its basic landscape plan, and the aforementioned lighting system. There was a large metal highway sign (13) mounted on posts in the grass just north of Elm Street at approximately 1/3 of the length of Elm, west of its intersection with Houston Street. This sign noted the entry to Stemmons Freeway, a major north-south highway west of the underpass. Another, similar, metal sign was mounted in the grass on the north side of Elm, west of the concrete steps leading up the "Grassy Knoll," as it came to be called, to the Pergola.

In 1958-62, the City Parks Department had performed a re-landscaping of the Plaza. Groupings of yaupon trees were planted along the old extensions of Elm and Commerce streets, with hedges of yaupon along the picket fences in the area between the Colonnades

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<sup>11</sup> See aerial photograph of Dealey Plaza, 1957, Squire Haskins Photography, Inc., Dallas. Inquiries to the City of Dallas Transportation Department indicate that pinpointing the placement of lamp posts in the Plaza would be extremely difficult. The Corinthian style capital appears most often in areas of the park known to have had lamp posts in 1963.

<sup>12</sup> Information about the evolution of specific landscaping in the Plaza was gathered by Philip Huey, Assistant Director, Dallas Department of Parks and Recreation. Horticulturist Huey joined the park staff in 1957 and is considered to be an authority on the history of plantings within the city system. See Conover Hunt, "History of Plantings in Dealey Plaza," February 18, 1991. (Typescript in DCHF files.)

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and the Triple Underpass on both the north and south perimeters of the Plaza. Ground cover of vinca was planted below the trees along the old street extensions, with liriopie beneath the hedges in front of the picket fences.

Also during the late 1950s a system of seasonal plantings was instituted. Lantana was placed in the corner areas of the Colonnades and copper plant along the edges of the Burford holly hedges to lend color for summer and fall--and was present on November 22, 1963. Flower boxes in the park held a variety of flowering plants, with liriopie present in the fall of 1963.<sup>13</sup>

The President and Governor John Connally were struck while the Presidential limousine was headed southwest on Elm Street toward the Triple Underpass, between approximately 116 and 231 feet from the Houston-Elm intersection. The latter point is directly in front of the Pergola and "Grassy Knoll" on the north side of the Plaza.

Abraham Zapruder took his famed film from the plinth at the western edge of the concrete steps leading into the Pergola. A number of conspiracy theorists rely on witness testimony of hearing shots or seeing smoke from that direction to support their belief that one or more assassins were concealed and fired from behind the stockade fence that bounds the Plaza on its north edge behind the Pergola.<sup>14</sup> Many other witnesses were scattered at locations throughout the Plaza.

### Current Conditions

The rectangular outline of the Plaza and the streets in it are in their mid-1930s alignment and have the same widths. All architectural features in Dealey Plaza, as well as both sides of the Triple Underpass, survive today; most have been refurbished and repainted since 1963. Certain incidental changes to the built features in the Plaza, described just below, have also been made.

The basic landscape plan is also intact; all remaining original trees are significantly larger, but are periodically trimmed, and some have been replaced; for example, the vegetation was trimmed to approximately its 1963 appearance for authenticity in the staging of a recent film.<sup>15</sup>

The cedar picket fences at the outer edges of the Plaza have survived in part; the fence to the north of Elm Street was restored by the City in 1988. The highway sign to the north of Elm Street has been removed and replaced with a triple overhead directional sign above Elm

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<sup>13</sup> See Note 12.

<sup>14</sup> Josiah Thompson, Six Seconds in Dallas (New York, 1967, 1976), pp. 152-170.

<sup>15</sup> See note 12.

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Street, just west of its intersection with Houston. The metal sign near the steps north of Elm has also been replaced. (These signs figured in photos and films of the assassination.)<sup>16</sup>

The alignment of the tracks over the railroad bridge crossing the Triple Underpass was altered in 1990, with some old track removed. The street names still appear on the west portals of the underpass in large plain letters; it is unclear whether they were on the east side in 1963.

During 1964-67, the lamp posts bordering streets in the Plaza were moved from the sidewalks 6 feet into the bordering grassy areas. Additional posts have also been placed on the south side of Elm Street and on the north side of Commerce Street. There are now three types of tapered fluted posts in the Plaza: those with Corinthian capitals, presumably original; others with simplified floral capitals; and another style with plain mushroom tops.<sup>17</sup>

Three historical markers have been added in the Plaza. A marker relating to the Kennedy assassination immediately west of the obelisk near Houston at Main Street was placed in 1967. It is a bronze bas relief mounted on red granite, with a design similar to the G.B. Dealey marker to the south. The bas relief illustrates the President's visit to Dallas in 1963, and includes a map of the motorcade route through the downtown. The marker was designed by George Dahl, chief architect of Fair Park (a National Historic Landmark).<sup>18</sup> Texas Historical markers dedicated to Dallas founder John Neely Bryan and to the pioneer Cockrell family were placed to the east of the Pergola north of Main Street and to the east of the southwestern Pergola, respectively, in the 1970s.<sup>19</sup>

In 1985, twin commemorative flagstaffs were installed in the center of the park on either side of Main Street.

A part of the northwest grassy slope (the "Grassy Knoll") north of Elm Street in the Plaza, and near the Triple Underpass, collapsed in the 1970s. Repairs resulted in a slight build-up of Elm Street in the area nearest the Triple Underpass, and a minor alteration in the

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<sup>16</sup> The city is vague on the exact date for this work. The time was provided by several researchers into the assassination. Conover Hunt, interviews with Gary Mack, 1988, and Jim Moore, 1989. Minute Books of the Dallas Parks Department, 14: 460, 472.

<sup>17</sup> Information from Ron Emrich, Chief Preservation Planner, City of Dallas Landmark Commission, August 1990. Reflects five different styles used in the city since 1930.

<sup>18</sup> This marker is described in the section of the history dealing with the years 1970-74, in "Centennial History of the Dallas Parks Department," op. cit., p. 714 f. The minutes of the Park Board narrate action on this plaque in the years 1964-67. Minute Books of the Dallas Parks Department, 14: 74, 313, 361, 502.

<sup>19</sup> Information on the markers.

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declination of the northwest grassy slope itself.<sup>20</sup> A part of this same slope caved in again in 1990, but repairs made no significant changes in the grade of the slope or its appearance.

Specific changes to the plantings in Dealey Plaza have been relatively minor, and the original live oaks and cedar elms mostly survive. Two small cedar elms have been added to Main Street, just west of Houston, one on each side of the street; a live oak on Houston just south of Elm was replaced with another in ca. 1966; and two small live oaks and four small redbuds have been placed on the north and south slopes of the park near the Triple Underpass.<sup>21</sup>

All original architectural elements of Dealey Plaza that were present in 1963, including its roadways and their alignments, the Triple Underpass, etc., contribute to the significance of the proposed historic district.

Architectural features, such as plaques and signs, introduced in Dealey Plaza since 1963 do not contribute to the significance of the proposed historic district.

### BUILDINGS AND FEATURES OUTSIDE THE PLAZA

In addition to Dealey Plaza, its features and the streets that run through and adjoin it, the buildings, structures, and lands adjacent to Dealey Plaza were, except for the Sixth Floor Visitor Center and the Kennedy Memorial and its Plaza, all part of the scene in 1963 and have figured in the investigations and speculation about the assassination.

Two of the buildings (the former Texas School Book Depository and the Dallas Textile Building), like others in the West End, began as early 20th-century Dallas warehouses for Chicago farm implement companies. Like their main commercial tenants, their architecture reflects the influence of Chicago--in this case, that city's early skyscraper construction. The other buildings have had governmental functions and reflect more traditional architectural styles.

The buildings and features are described below, running clockwise from the Dallas County Administration Building (the former Texas School Book Depository), which was the building closest to the precise assassination site. Because the Texas School Book Depository has been the building most closely associated with the assassination and the investigations of it and because its sixth floor--with the sniper's perch in the farthest east window on its south side--now contains a major historical exhibition on the career, death, and legacy of President Kennedy that has been the subject of much curiosity and comment, the Depository and its sixth floor are described in significantly more detail than the other elements.

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<sup>20</sup> See Note 16 above.

<sup>21</sup> See Note 12 above.

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**Texas School Book Depository (Southern Rock Island Plow Company Building)**  
**(now Dallas County Administration Building)**

411 Elm Street

This 7-story 80,000-square-foot red brick structure was built in 1901 by an unknown architect as a warehouse and showroom for the Rock Island Plow Company of Illinois; it replaced an 1898 structure that burned earlier the same year.<sup>22</sup> The free-standing warehouse, about 100 feet square, stands on the northwest corner of Elm and Houston streets. Its main facade is on Elm Street extended (the pre-1936 Elm Street) with the eastern side on Houston Street. The west side faces the rail and switching yards. The north side faces spurs of the railyards connecting with Pacific Avenue, the primary east-west rail transit way through downtown Dallas.

The warehouse, though it possesses certain characteristics of early Chicago skyscraper construction, was built with Classical details, including arched windows on all floors except seven, with those on six being round arched on the central five of the seven bays of each facade; multi-story pilasters (running floors two to six) with limestone capitals, and other stylized features characteristic of early 20th-century warehouses. It has masonry load-bearing walls with interior heavy pine square milled beams supporting the flooring. The brick used was a formed common style. A dropped metal ceiling, offices, and show windows were built on the first floor. The seventh-floor corporate offices included a dropped metal ceiling, with interior brick walls stained maroon, and interior window trim painted dark green.

The windows were wood, double hung, set in structural masonry arches with the exterior cornice of metal. A painted exterior sign, above the seventh-floor ceiling, read "Southern Rock Island Plow Co." The "Os" in the sign concealed louvers, which ventilated the attic spaces. (This sign was removed at an unknown date.) The building was set back on the northwest first-floor corner to accommodate the loading and unloading of heavy equipment from the adjacent rail track. The upper floors cantilevered out over the track on that side.

The Rock Island Plow Company and its successor, the Southern Rock Island Plow Company, retained ownership until 1937. In 1939, D.H. Byrd of Dallas purchased it and afterward leased it to a variety of tenants.

**Condition in 1963**

The building changed little. It was leased to the Texas School Book Depository Company, a private textbook brokerage firm not affiliated with the State of Texas, which nevertheless warehoused and supplied textbooks to Texas schools. The firm maintained corporate offices

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<sup>22</sup> The Rock Island Plow Company erected its first building in 1898, which burned in 1901. The company immediately rebuilt on the original foundations. Application Form for Official Texas Historical Marker, Dallas County Historical Commission, November 6, 1980, Dallas County Historical Commission Files (hereafter cited as DCHC Files). Also Broadside advertising the Southern Rock Island Plow Company Building, 1901, DPL.

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in the building, and used the upper floors for storing textbooks.<sup>23</sup> Several textbook company representatives also leased office space.<sup>24</sup>

A prominent feature of the exterior was a large metal and wooden billboard on the roof set diagonally northwest-southeast. In 1963, the sign advertised Hertz rental car Chevrolets and had a large digital clock on it. The original warehouse showroom windows had been filled in with screens of concrete blocks in a Greek fret pattern. An exterior metal fire escape was mounted on the east side of the building along Houston Street. Other exterior alterations from the 1901 configuration included the addition of a 1-story brick lean-to on the western side, which was used as a loading platform for an adjacent railroad spur, and large wooden loading docks on the north side.

Interior partitions had been added on the first floor, which had a packing room on the north side, a domino room for the employees, and several offices. An interior elevator on the east wall connected the first floor with upper floors. A staircase on the southeast corner connected the first and second floors.<sup>25</sup>

The second floor was divided into offices, and housed an employees lunchroom on the northern side diagonally to the south and east of an enclosed wooden staircase that connected all floors.<sup>26</sup> Along the north wall of the building were two freight elevators, one hydraulic and the other manual, which were used to haul inventory from the upper levels into the first-floor packing room.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The company remained in business elsewhere in Dallas.

<sup>24</sup> A building directory listing the names of manufacturers representatives who were in the building was among the artifacts transferred to the County when it purchased the building. The sign was mounted outside, on the wall at the corner of Elm and Houston. Collections of the Dallas County Historical Foundation (hereafter cited as DCHF).

<sup>25</sup> Warren Report, pp. 149ff; also Warren Commission Exhibit No. 1061.

<sup>26</sup> The lunchroom had walls of white wallboard with stained wooden trim. Built in painted wooden kitchen cabinets were situated along the north wall of the room with pale green plastic-covered banquettes running along the south and east walls. The floor was covered with mottled green linoleum. Color photographic murals mounted on cardboard lined the walls. A free-standing coin-operated soft drink machine and metal and formica tables and chairs completed the decor. The artifacts are in the DCHF collection. Official photographs of the lunchroom in 1963, from the Dallas County Sheriff's Department, are in the DCHF archives. For a complete floor-by-floor description of the building in 1963, see Mary Ferrell, "Description of the Texas School Book Depository," 1987. (Typescript in the DCHF files.)

<sup>27</sup> Mary Ferrell, "Description of the Texas School Book Depository," 1987, DCHF files. (Typescript.)

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The storage areas in the building on floors four, five, and six, typically filled with stacks of boxes of schoolbooks, were free of interior partitions, with wooden whitewashed ceilings, and whitewashed millwork beams set at 14-foot intervals supporting the floors. The interior brick walls were also whitewashed. The hardwood floors were rough. Access to these floors was by freight elevator or by the enclosed wooden staircase in the far northwest corner. Lighting was supplied by metal domed hanging fixtures with bare electrical bulbs. An exposed metal water pipe fire sprinkler system ran along the ceilings. All the electrical wiring was exposed conduit mounted on the horizontal and vertical wooden beams.

On November 22, 1963, workmen were laying a new flooring of rectangular plywood sheets over the existing flooring on the sixth floor of the warehouse. When the assassination occurred, at 12:30 p.m., the workmen were at lunch.<sup>28</sup>

### Post-1963

In 1970 the Depository Company moved out and Byrd sold the building to Aubrey Mayhew of Nashville, Tennessee, who planned to turn it into a commercial attraction centering on the association with the Kennedy assassination. Mayhew defaulted on his payments two years later. The building reverted to Byrd in 1972 shortly after an employee of Mayhew's set fire to the interior, which suffered only small damage.<sup>29</sup>

Between 1970 and 1977 the warehouse deteriorated; there was some discussion during the early 1970s of demolishing it, but the city refused to issue a demolition permit.<sup>30</sup> In late 1977, Dallas County purchased the old warehouse from Byrd, using funds voted in a public bond election.

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<sup>28</sup> An examination of photographs taken by investigators and the media on November 22, 1963, revealed that the corner window area on the far southeast corner and the corner staircase flooring had not been covered by the time of the assassination. Employees finished laying the new flooring after investigators left the building. Photographic archives, DCHF.

<sup>29</sup> Before his default, Mayhew removed all or part of the double window frame from the southeast corner of the sixth floor, replacing it with an identical frame from the north wall of the same floor. He claims to have both sides of the window. Byrd's descendants claim to have the same window, which remains stored with other family possessions in a Dallas vault. Foundation officials saw the "Byrd" window in the early 1980s, as did a local reporter in 1988. Examination of the window area by architectural historian Eugene George in 1978 confirmed that the framing has been removed. Neither claimed owner of the window has allowed examination by architectural experts. Mayhew has refused to even show photographs of it. See notes and correspondence files of the DCHF, 1978-88.

<sup>30</sup> Interview, Conover Hunt, with former Dallas Mayor Wes Wise, 1988. Also contemporary news files for 1971-73, microfilm, Dallas Public Library (hereafter cited as DPL).

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**Restoration**

Between 1978 and 1988, the County renovated five floors and the basement for use as administrative offices and as the seat of County government. James Hendricks was in charge of the renovations, which took place in phases in 1978-81 and 1985-87.<sup>31</sup> The fate of the sixth floor, which was sealed off and not exhibited to the public, remained an unsettled issue. A 1979 study funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities recommended that the floor be used for a major exhibition on the legacy and assassination of President Kennedy.<sup>32</sup> The results were accepted and acted upon by the Dallas County Commissioners Court.

**Exterior**--The roof was replaced and structural work was performed to support the roof deck. Exterior brick walls were cleaned, repaired, and tuck pointed. The remains of the original parapet were measured, photographed for future restoration, and removed. Restoration architects examined the Hertz sign atop the structure in 1978 and recommended its immediate removal to reduce continuing wind-load damage to the masonry walls of the building and its parapet. Accordingly, the sign was dismantled and stored that same year. The exterior fire escape, concrete block screening on the first floor, and old portable interior signage were also stored. (During the making of a film in 1991, some of these exterior changes were reversed temporarily, using impermanent materials.)<sup>33</sup>

After Dallas County purchased the building in late 1977, it learned that the west annex was built on railroad land; the MK&T required its removal, which was done after drawings and a photographic record were made. Minimal landscaping has been added along the west side of the building, where historic photographs indicated that trees had been planted in 1963. Conflicts with the property line, the need for on-site parking for County officials, and the requirement for handicapped access to the building forced the removal of the north loading dock. Drawings and photographs were made first. Finally, a sign stating the depository use of the building was removed from over the front door and stored. The incised stone building name, "Carraway Byrd," was preserved over the entry and covered. The County will eventually place a veneer sign over the stone lintel, indicating the structure's present use as the County Administration Building.

One small directional sign for the "Sixth Floor" exhibit has also been added to the facade of the old Depository beneath the Texas Historical marker on the southeastern face, with another on the eastern side. All other signage was attached to the new addition or suspended from nearby city lamp posts.

**Interior**--Before the phased renovation of lower floors, Dallas County sealed off the sixth floor, anticipating the placement of the Dallas County Historical Foundation's permanent historical exhibit in that space. The seventh floor of the depository remains unrestored.

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<sup>31</sup> Conover Hunt, interview with James Hendricks, 1987.

<sup>32</sup> National Endowment for the Humanities report in DCHF archives.

<sup>33</sup> "School book depository to be restored," Dallas Morning News, March 15, 1991.

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The adaptive use of the building led to several changes on other floors. A 2-story central hearing room was constructed for the Dallas County Commission (County Court), eliminating a portion of the second floor. The former second-floor lunchroom area, which was in space designated for the offices of the County Commissioners, could not be preserved in situ; it was photographed, measured and dismantled in 1980; its elements are stored.

The wooden window frames on floors one through five were replaced with modern metal fixtures that match the original wooden frames in style and size. Unfortunately, the building was designed with an inherent vice; the interior arches over the windows were structurally unsound. The flaw was corrected by the addition of exposed sister braces at the interior perimeter on the lower five floors. Interior brick walls were cleaned, and all wiring, plumbing, and fixtures replaced for the adaptive use as offices.

Sixth Floor Exhibit--In 1988-89, the County, in cooperation with the non-profit Dallas County Historical Foundation, restored the sixth floor, installed the permanent Sixth Floor exhibit, and constructed and opened a new Visitors' Center to the north of the warehouse.<sup>34</sup> The character of the exhibit and its non-intrusive use of historic space have won critical acclaim as well as a 98% approval rating from its approximately 300,000 annual visitors.<sup>35</sup>

No artifacts of a violent nature and no original evidence associated with the crime is on display in the multimedia exhibition, which documents and pays tribute to President John F. Kennedy's life and his era, as well as narrating the facts of his death. (For example, the most violent frames of the Zapruder film are not used.) Six films; graphics; over 300 historic photographs; and radio and tape recordings, including oral history recordings by witnesses and newsmen, are featured.

Restoration and adaptation of the sixth floor was done under the general supervision of architects Eugene George and James Hendricks. The exhibit content was largely the work of Conover Hunt, with design by the Washington, D.C., firm of Robert Staples and Barbara Charles. The films were the work of Allen and Cynthia Salzman Mondell; Martin Jurow was the executive producer. The Texas Historical Commission and the National Park Service were advisors.

The exhibit has been built with a special effort to maintain the historic integrity and feel of the wareroom space. All changes were planned to be reversible, to protect the two areas on the sixth floor associated with the assassination, and to maintain the view of the Plaza from the south wall of windows.

Entrance to the exhibit is through an aerial bridge that is inserted into an enlarged original window opening in the middle of the north wall. During the general renovation of floor three through five, in 1985-88, two emergency stair exits were installed on the sixth floor to meet safety codes, one in the west wall and one in the far northeast corner. A new elevator

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<sup>34</sup> The Visitor's Center is described following this section.

<sup>35</sup> "Exhibit helps heal the wounds," Dallas Times Herald, February 19, 1990. (Editorial.) See also other items in Bibliography on The Sixth Floor Exhibit.

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servicing offices in the building was designed to stop on six only through key access; it passes through the sixth floor on the middle of the east side facing Houston Street.

Climate controlled ductwork, track lighting, and security devices were suspended from the old ceiling. The old sprinkler system was restored, with piping added to meet present-day codes. The exhibition panels were designed to attach between the original exposed square millwork pine columns that support the flooring above with minimal damage to the beams. All beams were preserved; decayed ceiling elements were restored and weak structural elements braced.

Necessary mechanical room partitions of sheetrock were also designed to be reversible. All windows were restored. Touch-up painting was used to match the 1963 color. Many of the 1963 lighting fixtures and switches and nearly all the paint and graffiti in the space survived. Brickwork was restored and repointed to match the mortar color and composition of 1963. The architects also devised hidden steel lintels to correct the structural weakness in the brick window arches on the sixth floor. After installation of the lintels, the original brick arches and wooden lintels were repositioned. The original enclosed wooden corner staircase and the twin freight elevators that had provided access to the sixth floor in 1963 were both preserved.

The flooring on the sixth floor in 1963 had consisted of large rectangular plywood sheets that were being laid on the day of the shooting. It was not in place in the two main evidential areas at the time. In the restoration, the flooring that was in place before 1963 has been exposed in these two areas. Dallas County insisted that some sort of noise and debris barrier be placed between the sixth floor and the office spaces below. Thus all floor areas where the public would have access were covered, in 1985-88, with a 7" cement topping, buffered with gray carpet tiles matching the paint.

The two evidential areas--the sniper's perch in the far southeast corner and the area where the rifle was found, with a nearby stairwell and freight elevator--are kept from public access by clear glass walls. No evidence is on display in those areas; nearby exhibit copy discusses them. They are furnished with duplicates of cardboard boxes placed as they were arranged on November 22, 1963.<sup>36</sup> A clear plexiglass pane has been installed in the space on the far southeast partially raised corner window to indicate its position at the time of the assassination. As a safety measure, metal and glass barriers were installed in the concrete flooring in front of all windows accessible for public viewing. (The bottoms of the windows

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<sup>36</sup> The arrangement of boxes in the sniper's presumed perch was disturbed by the original investigators on November 22, 1963. The reconstruction was based on examination of some dozen photographs of the corner taken on the day of the assassination, including Dallas County Sheriff's Department photographs. DCHF Archives.

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are only 18'' from the floor.) All exposed window frames are also sealed shut with small brass screws.<sup>37</sup>

Sixth Floor Visitors Center  
Houston Street near Pacific Avenue

This 1-story over basement brick structure, designed by James Hendricks and completed in 1989, is immediately north of the Depository and mimics the elements and proportions of that building in its windows, cornice, materials, and color. The basement remains unfinished.

The center, which features an enclosed receiving area, is accessible from Houston Street, from the County parking lot to the west, and from the north. The center and its 65-foot free-standing brick elevator tower, which visitors enter only from the interior of the Visitor Center after checking all cameras and passing through a metal detector, were constructed as a separate structure from the Depository; a glass and stone hyphen on the first level serves as a connector between the two buildings and as a spacer to prevent the weakening of the foundation of the Depository. The center cannot be seen from Dealey Plaza, but its open porch is visible from the "Grassy Knoll."

In lieu of a ramp for handicapped access, the area immediately around the visitors center was graded to provide natural wheelchair access to both the exhibition and the Depository. The surrounding lot to the west and south of the center was resurfaced in 1988 and is used for County parking.

The center is a noncontributing addition to the district.

Dallas Textile ("Dal-Tex") Building (Kingman-Texas Building)  
(John Deere Plow Company Building)(2)  
501 Elm Street

This brick building, one of the earliest and most outstanding of the West End warehouses, was constructed in 1902 on the northeast corner of Elm and Houston streets.<sup>38</sup> Its main facade faces Elm Street just east of Houston Street. A 7-story building, probably designed by the local firm of Hubbell and Greene, it displays Sullivanesque three-part form and

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<sup>37</sup> For a comparison, by an outside observer, of the treatment of similar issues at Ford's Theatre, see Kristin Eddy, "The Death of a President," National Parks 64, 7-8 (July/August 1990): 25-29.

<sup>38</sup> This structure has long been identified as the John Deere Plow Company Building. However, a 1902 broadside advertising the completion of the structure as the Kingman-Texas Implements Building was recently found in the collections of the DPL. Furthermore, a 1905 map of Dallas shows the original building and its 1904 annex in place, with ownership ascribed to the Kingman-Texas Implements Company. The John Deere Plow Company occupied the northeast corner of that block, with the Tenneson Brothers Saddlery Company on the southeast corner. Vol. I, Map 3.

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detailing, including the stately solidity of the massing with heavy corner piers flanking the three bays, the unbroken pier central section, the projecting cornice, and the broad bands of geometric floral designs defining the main entrances. Similar in construction technique to the Depository, the structure has exterior brick load-bearing walls and an interior system of spaced millwork square beams with metal capitals. The 3-story brick annex to the north was added in 1904.

### Condition in 1963

At the time of the assassination, the building was occupied by Dallas textile manufacturers and sales personnel, and went by the name Dallas Textile, or Dal-Tex Building.<sup>39</sup> The structure had awnings in the first-floor windows and a metal fire escape on the west side near the corner of Elm and Houston streets.

The roof of the Dal-Tex Building and second and fourth floor windows have been identified as possible assassin's perches by conspiracy theorists.<sup>40</sup> The office of Abraham Zapruder, who took the dramatic "home movie" of the assassination, was in this building.

### Current Condition

In 1970-82, a private commercial business operated as the John F. Kennedy Museum in this building. It offered a film on the assassination and a diorama of the site and had a large commercial gift shop.

The building was extensively rehabilitated and remodeled in 1986 by architect Brent Byers.<sup>41</sup> The work included full exterior restoration, replacing metal windows with custom wooden frames, cleaning and re-pointing brickwork, and cleaning all interior surfaces. The interior of the annex was gutted and refitted as a parking garage. A terraced 3-story addition to the annex was effected and a multistory atrium created in the center of the building. In 1986 the awnings and fire escape were removed and discarded. In 1989 the first-floor corner window on Houston Street near Elm was replaced with a doorway serving the restaurant in that corner, closely following the window outline. Concrete steps that project on the Houston Street side were added into the sidewalk area for pedestrian access.

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<sup>39</sup> It was the location for small stores and offices for lawyers and insurance agents. See Texas Historical Marker Nomination, 1985, Dallas County Historical Commission (hereafter cited as DCHC) files.

<sup>40</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>41</sup> Information supplied by Brent Myers, the architect, 1990, from the files of Corgan Architects.

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**Dallas County Records Building and Annex (Hall of Records and Annex)(3)**  
500-505 Elm Street

Dallas County purchased land for a records building in 1926-27 and retained the prominent local firm of Lang & Witchell to design a fireproof building facing Record (then Jefferson) Street, between Elm and Main. Completed in 1928, the exterior of the rectangular (200' x 100') 6-story structure was faced in cut limestone with cast stone Gothic detailing. Cast metal window spandrels maintained the Gothic motif. The exterior featured flat Gothic arches in the English Perpendicular style. The interior included an entrance vestibule with walls of travertine and brass railings. The first floor had marble wainscoting; cast metal grillwork around the two elevators, which are framed in marble; elaborate ceiling moldings; and terrazzo floors. The fourth floor contained the County Commissioners Court, consisting of a rotunda and courtroom.

The Annex was built in 1955 by the Dallas firm of Smith, Worden, Nelson & Corgan, and the interior of the older portion was rearranged. The Annex was placed on the southeast corner of Elm and Houston, with its main facade on Elm, facing the Dal-Tex Building. The second facade occupied 80 feet on Houston Street facing Dealey Plaza and was abutted on the south by a small metal twin loading dock that separated it from the Criminal Courts Building. The Annex stands 96 feet high in 7 stories. The limestone-clad structure was designed in the International style, with plain lines and strong vertical fenestration massed toward the center of each facade. The Annex housed all but two of Dallas County's ten district courts, offices for the District Clerk and Tax Collector, and three floors of jail cells.

**Condition in 1963**

The complex changed little between 1955 and 1963.<sup>42</sup> The roof of the Records Building Annex has been suggested as a possible assassin's location.<sup>43</sup>

**Current Condition**

The exterior conforms to its 1963 appearance. Interior usage has changed. The County Commissioners moved into the former Depository in 1981. Construction of a new courts building elsewhere in 1988 has caused the removal of some of those functions and the growth of the records office has required several interior spatial reorganizations.

Both the Records Building and its Annex contribute to the significance of the district.

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<sup>42</sup> For a complete history, see Texas Historical Landmark nomination, 1985, DCHC files.

<sup>43</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 173

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Dallas County Criminal Courts Building ("Old Criminal Courts Building") (4)  
500 Main Street

Designed in an eclectic Renaissance Revival mode by Dallas architect A.H. Overbeck, this building was constructed in 1913-15 on the northeast corner of Main and Houston streets.<sup>44</sup> The 124-foot-tall building faces Main Street, with a secondary facade occupying 90 feet along Houston Street on Dealey Plaza. The steel and brick structure, 8 stories over a basement, is trimmed with granite and terra cotta in elaborate Classical motifs. The building was constructed to house two Dallas County criminal courts, the offices of the Sheriff's Department, and the County jail.<sup>45</sup>

Condition in 1963

The building retained its original use and occupancy in 1963. The high brick parapet (15' high and more than 2' wide) on the roof of this building and the secure character of its use has led to this building being discounted as a possible assassin's perch. Witnesses were outside and inmates were in the jail portion at the time of the assassination.<sup>46</sup>

Current Condition

The building retains its exterior details, which were restored by Komatsu Associates of Fort Worth in the mid-1980s. The County Sheriff's Department continues to occupy its space and prisoners are housed in the jail.

Old Dallas County Courthouse ("Old Red Courthouse")("Old Red") (5)  
Houston and Commerce Streets

M.A. Orlopp of Little Rock, Ark., was the principal architect and supervised the construction of this building in 1890-92. It became the sixth structure to serve as the Dallas County courthouse. The courthouse block was bounded by Main Street on the north, Commerce Street on the south, Houston on the west, and Jefferson (now Record) on the east.<sup>47</sup>

It was designed in Romanesque Revival style and constructed of Pecos red sandstone, with blue Little Rock granite. The exterior incorporated eight columns of Texas granite, two

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<sup>44</sup> For a complete history, see Texas Historical Landmark Nomination, 1985, Dallas County Historical Commission.

<sup>45</sup> Jack Ruby's trial took place in the Wilson Courtroom, an intact but unrestored chamber, overlooking Main Street, in this building. He was also jailed in it.

<sup>46</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>47</sup> National Register of Historic Places application for registration of the Old Red Courthouse (1976). Also Application for Designation as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, 1977. DCHC Files.

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placed at each of the four entrances. The main block of the structure was three stories high, capped by eight round towers, which reach a height of 118 feet. A main tower in the center of the building rose to 205 feet. The Courthouse measured about 189 feet in length and 107 in width.<sup>48</sup>

The building originally contained six courtrooms and two library rooms on the second and third floors. The first floor was designed to accommodate fifteen county offices. Seven offices were placed on the second floor and nine on the third. Eight were on the fourth. When completed the building had two elevators and provision for both gas and electric lights. The iron structural frame provided fireproof construction. The slate roof was laid in horizontal bands of red, blue, and green with the eight round towers covered in red. Four terra cotta acroterions were placed on the roof.

The interior featured flooring of encaustic and vitreous tile, wainscoting of Italian and Tennessee marble in the corridors, and of white oak elsewhere. The flooring in the courtrooms and libraries was covered with English linoleum tile.

The original belltower, with its Howard clock, was removed in 1919 because of structural failure.

### Appearance in 1963

The exterior retained its basic features, with the exception of the belltower. Piecemeal modifications and, in 1945, major repairs, had occurred. At the time of the assassination, the locally named John Neely Bryan cabin, a pioneer log structure dating from the mid-1800s, was located immediately south of the courthouse, having been moved there from another Dallas site in 1936.<sup>49</sup>

A number of witnesses were present in and around "Old Red" on November 22, 1963. It has not been regarded as a potential assassin's location.<sup>50</sup>

### Current Conditions

In 1967-68, Dallas County renovated the building, updating the mechanical systems. Two interior staircases were replaced, along with the walls and ceilings on the first floor. Solar bronze windows were also installed. Interior usage has changed radically since 1963. Dallas

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<sup>48</sup> These figures are taken from the 1976 National Register nomination for the property. Also see Warren Commission 17: Commission Exhibit 877.

<sup>49</sup> There is considerable debate in the community as to the original ownership of this cabin. The Dallas County Historical Commission has referred to the structure as a "Pioneer" cabin in recent years. See DCHC files. The cabin appears on the 1950 map of Dallas and was covered by a shed-like shelter at that time. Map of the City of Dallas, DPL.

<sup>50</sup> Excepting by one witness. See Thompson, op. cit., p. 175.

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County's new courthouse was dedicated on Commerce Street south across from "Old Red" in 1965, and "Old Red" has since been used for supplemental office space.

During the late 1970s Dallas County began long-range restoration of "Old Red." The slate roof was restored in 1987 as part of a refurbishment of the exterior. Some parts of the interior were restored as part of the work, by Dallas architect James Pratt. Future plans call for returning the offices to their 1892 configurations.<sup>51</sup>

The Bryan cabin was moved to the Plaza immediately east of the County Records Building in 1970, when an entrance to an underground parking garage under the new Kennedy Memorial was placed on the south side of the old courthouse.

United States Post Office Terminal Annex (Federal Building) (6)  
Southwest Corner of Commerce and Houston Streets

The Terminal Annex building was constructed in 1937 as a New Deal public works project by the well known local firm of Lang & Witchell.

It is a 5-story building 200' by 200' and is clad with granite, white limestone, and white brick in a simplified Art Deco or "stripped down Classical" style. Its main face is on Houston Street, with a secondary facade on the north along Commerce Street extended. The Terminal Annex handled bulk mail, most of which traveled by rail in the 1930-60s. Rail cars could be shunted to loading bays on the west off-street side, and trucks had a similar approach on the south facade.

The exterior is clad at the base with polished gray granite as a water table; then smooth-cut creamy limestone through the second office level, with a band of fluting just above the water table; and finally light tan brick to the unadorned parapet just above the sixth level. The roof is flat.

The Houston Street facade is a symmetrical and Classical composition, divided by shallow definition into end pavilions and central pilasters. The eight window bays between the pilasters are accented only between the third and fourth floors by octagonal reliefs in the limestone spandrels. The three window bays in the corner pavilions are accented with fluted limestone spandrels between each floor from three to six. Two public entry doors are centered on Houston Street and defined by gray granite door surrounds, carved with Classical and governmental motifs. Dark metal lamp compositions are mounted on the three pilasters that define the two entry bays. Applied metal letters name the building above the entry. Currently, they indicate "Federal Building." Whether they formerly read "Terminal Annex" is unknown.

The Commerce Street/Dealey Plaza facade has a similar pattern but with ten bays defined by pilasters between the end pavilions and no public entries.

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<sup>51</sup> DCHC records and interviews, Conover Hunt with James Pratt, 1988.

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A large 1-story interior vestibule admits foot traffic into the 2-story high lobby which, though small, is richly appointed. It is finished with terrazzo floors, Art Deco metal grills, and black marble kick panels, walls of light brown marble and plaster and abstract Deco pilaster capitals; oak and metal grill window accents; and coffered plaster ceilings with 8-pointed stars.

The lobby contains two large 1940 frescos, "Air Mail over Texas," over the entrance to offices off the lobby, and "Pioneer Homebuilders," covering the upper wall at the north end of the lobby. The murals are by well known Texas artist Peter Hurd.<sup>52</sup>

### Appearance in 1963

The exterior form and interior usage of the Annex remained unchanged from the 1930s.

An important witness to the assassination observed the motorcade, the assassination, and its immediate aftermath from the roof of this building.<sup>53</sup>

### Post-1963

The Post Office moved from the Annex to a bulk mail center in 1979. The railyard facade is no longer served by spurs and the area formerly occupied by them has been paved for parking. The truck loading facade generally retains its appearance, but the loading docks have been converted to pedestrian uses.

The Annex is presently administered by the General Services Administration and has been undergoing internal renovations and adaptations for government offices since 1987. The building is in excellent condition. An original interior atrium has been filled in, an alteration that is not visible from the street. The main lobby and its murals have been restored. Large globe light fixtures on the interior appear recent.

### Missouri, Kansas, & Texas (MKT) Railroad Yards (15)

South of Pacific Avenue, West of Houston Street, and North of Elm Street

The pertinent part of the yards, to the north and west of the Depository, includes the property extending south from Pacific Avenue to Dealey Plaza. It includes the surface right of way of the Triple Underpass. The north-south tracks on the western edge were moved in 1934-35 during the construction of Dealey Plaza; their previous configuration, to the east, is not relevant to this nomination.

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<sup>52</sup> James Steely, "Architectural Assessment of 1937 Terminal Annex Building, Dealey Plaza," Memorandum to Conover Hunt, August 28, 1990.

<sup>53</sup> Thompson, op. cit., pp. 161-163.

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Appearance in 1963

In November 1963 the railyards contained five curved spurs, six north-south tracks converging into four at the Triple Underpass, the Interlocking Tower (described immediately following), parking for railroad and Depository employees, and a small 1-story shed. The shed was constructed between 1930 and 1950, apparently as a railroad "office." It was east of the Interlocking Tower near Pacific Avenue, between the fourth and fifth outermost western spurs.<sup>54</sup>

Conspiracy theorists believe one or more assassins may have operated in the railyards and fired across the stockade fence at the Presidential limousine.<sup>55</sup>

Present Appearance

The railroad demolished the "office" in 1989. It has been replaced with a small brick building in approximately the same location. Some of the rail spurs were removed during the late 1970s, with the remainder removed in phases in 1987-90, when the area was resurfaced for parking. The old brick-surfaced Elm Street exists to a point just west of the Depository Building; the remainder was resurfaced for parking in 1988-90.

Triple Underpass (II)

Debatably the most famous roadway feature in America, the Underpass has been described above in the description of Dealey Plaza. Both, matching, sides of this structure are included in this nomination.

Witnesses observed the motorcade, and the assassination, from vantage points atop the Triple Underpass.<sup>56</sup>

Union Terminal Company Interlocking Tower (Switching Station)

MK&T railyards about 250 feet north of Dealey Plaza

This 2-story stuccoed concrete structure, painted white, was erected by the railroad in 1916 to serve trains passing along the Union Terminal Company right of way.<sup>57</sup> The builder is

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<sup>54</sup> A Fairchild Aerial survey photo of Dealey Plaza area, 1930, Squire Haskins Photography, Inc., shows only the Interlocking Tower. Map of the City of Dallas, 1950, I, 3; II, 103. DPL.

<sup>55</sup> Thompson, op. cit., pp. 152-170.

<sup>56</sup> Thompson, op. cit., pp. 72-75.

<sup>57</sup> The National Register nomination dates this structure to pre-1920. Its actual date of 1916 is based on research done after the 1978 nomination. See Institute for Earth and Man, Southern Methodist University, "Archaeological Resources Impact, Potential of P100 Alternatives, CBD, Dallas." Typescript report, March 22, 1988, p. 60. (Hereafter cited as

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unknown. The first floor contained mechanical equipment for the large switching control apparatus located in the center of the second floor. The second story was ringed with windows, which overlook the rail yards. A single stairway on the south side provided access to the second story control tower. Access to the mechanical room was through a separate door on the east side. The control room on the second floor consisted of one large area, dominated by the central wooden and electric switching console. The roof is hipped with large overhangs; the original material is unknown.

### Appearance in 1963

The interlocking tower was in use as a switching station for the Union Terminal Company in 1963.

The "tower man" operating the switching mechanism, Lee Bowers, was an important witness.<sup>58</sup>

### Present Appearance

The building now has a composition roof but appears to retain its original interior fixtures including the old switching control console, cracked putty-colored paint, and hardwood floors. The Union Pacific Railroad acquired the MK & T in 1988 and still uses the tower.<sup>59</sup>

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"SMU Archeological Report.")

<sup>58</sup> Thompson, op. cit., pp. 152-156.

<sup>59</sup> The management history was provided by Harold Brandt, Union Pacific Realty Company, Dallas; the partner railroads in the Union Terminal Company included the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad Company, The Santa Fe Railway Company, the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway Company, the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad Company, the Texas & Pacific Railway Company, the Southern Pacific Transportation Company, the St. Louis-Southwestern Railway Company, and the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company. In 1974 the Union Terminal Company dissolved and established the Dallas Right-of-Way Management Company, with the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas as the managing partner. Interview, Conover Hunt with Harold Brandt, November 1990. For a better breakdown of exact ownership of the land, see Huit-Zollars, "Survey of Light Rail Transit System Section OC-1, STA 89.35-96.00 and STA 96.00-105.00, August 10, 1990." Files of Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART). The future disposition of the switching tower is unknown but DART has indicated some interest in taking control of the tower and using it as a mechanical station for operation of its proposed rail line, which will pass nearby. Interviews, Conover Hunt with Charles Anderson, Executive Director, DART, 1990-91.

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Kennedy Memorial and Plaza (Courthouse Plaza)

## East Half of Double Block Shared With "Old Red Courthouse"

The major formal Memorial to the late President in Dallas is this cenotaph (empty tomb) designed by architect Philip Johnson. It is a 50-by-50 foot open space surrounded by 30-foot high vertically scored concrete walls, plain except for a circular design on the end panels. Narrow entranceways are open the entire height at the midpoints on the north and south sides. In the center of the space an 8-foot square gray-black granite slab with Kennedy's name engraved in gold has been placed.

The Memorial was constructed through unsolicited donations from private citizens in Dallas gathered beginning in 1964. Around the Memorial on the Plaza, which has been made part of the Old Courthouse's grounds by closing Record Street, are trees and benches. The Kennedy Memorial was constructed atop a parking garage that is under the plaza, in 1969-70.<sup>60</sup> The Memorial, because of its character and relationship to the history of the assassination and its aftermath, is regarded as contributing to the significance of the district.

ARCHEOLOGY

The area north of the Depository and west of Houston Street contains some of Dallas' most significant archeological sites.<sup>61</sup> Since the Plaza area was a part of the original land grant to Dallas founder John Neely Bryan in 1843, it is believed to include evidence of the first Anglo and African-American settlement of Dallas as well as prehistoric Native American settlements and some prehistoric animal deposits. During construction of Union Station in 1916, one block south of the Plaza, workers reportedly unearthed the remains of a Native American burial ground dating back 2,000-5,000 years. The remains of a woolly mammoth were also found in the area west of Houston Street, not far from Dealey Plaza, during construction of the Reunion Hotel and Tower in the mid-1970s.

Archeological survey indicates that potentially rich deposits exist beneath the railyards, around the Depository, beneath the Criminal Courts Building and Old Red Courthouse, and around the Post Office Terminal Annex. Most of Dealey Plaza was scraped during construction of the Triple Underpass and the slope toward it, but the area of the park immediately west of Houston Street may be intact. An archeological dig in 1988, before construction of the Sixth Floor Visitor Center north of the Depository, yielded a rich store of early Dallas historic artifacts from the 1840s to 1880s of both black and white settlers and some late Native American artifacts. The dig also unearthed part of John Neely Bryan's cornfield and evidence that the red sandstone blocks of the Old Red Courthouse were

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<sup>60</sup> "Memorial's Start, Dedication Slated," The Dallas Morning News, June 20, 1969; Lorraine Haacke, "JFK Memorial Design Guided by Simplicity," The Dallas Times-Herald, June 25, 1970; Tom Johnson, "Monument to Kennedy Dedicated," The Dallas Morning News, June 25, 1970.

<sup>61</sup> "SMU Archaeological Report," op. cit.. The exact date of the demolition is unknown.

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chiseled into shape behind the Depository site, before their installation in the nearby Courthouse.<sup>62</sup>

#### PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE AREA

The disposition and ultimate use of the Union Pacific railyards, which have been for sale since 1988, and the construction of a Dallas area light-rail system will impact the area. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) plans a surface light rail line across the Triple Underpass and then along Pacific Avenue. The currently proposed alignment will spare the Interlocking Tower. It will pass through the proposed Landmark only on the railroad bridge and at the far western end of the railyards just south of Pacific Avenue. Construction of the surface line in the area is expected to commence in 1992.

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<sup>62</sup> The dig took place in 1988. See press releases, SMU Institute for Earth and Man, 1988. DCHF files. Also interviews, Conover Hunt with Randall Moir, chief archaeologist, noted in files at DCHF.

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**DEALEY PLAZA CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS****Buildings**

Texas School Book Depository  
Dal-Tex Building and Annex  
Records Building  
Records Building Annex  
Criminal Courts Building  
Old Red Courthouse  
Terminal Annex  
Interlocking Tower

**Sites**

Kennedy Assassination Site  
Railyard Site

**Structures**

Reflecting Pool/Colonnade (2)  
Pergolas (2)  
Triple Underpass

**Objects**

Dealey Statue  
Kennedy Memorial

**NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES****Buildings**

Sixth Floor Visitors Center Building  
Railroad "Office"

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: \_\_\_ Locally: \_\_\_Applicable National  
Register Criteria: A X B X C X D \_\_\_Criteria Considerations  
(Exceptions): A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D \_\_\_ E \_\_\_ F X G X

NHL Criteria: 1, 2, 5

Exception: 8

NHL Theme(s): IX. Political &amp; Military Affairs After 1945

Area(s) of Significance	Period(s) of Significance	Significant Date(s)
<u>Politics-Government</u>	<u>1890-1963</u>	<u>November 22, 1963</u>
<u>Commerce</u>	<u>1901-1941</u>	
<u>Landscape Architecture</u>	<u>1934-1941</u>	

Significant Person(s): John Fitzgerald Kennedy  
Lyndon Baines JohnsonCultural Affiliation: N/AArchitect/Builder: Various

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**STATE SIGNIFICANCE OF PROPERTY, AND JUSTIFY CRITERIA, CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS, AND AREAS AND PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE NOTED ABOVE.****SUMMARY<sup>1</sup>**

The Dealey Plaza Historic District is significant for National Historic Landmarks criteria (1) an event--the assassination of the 35th President of the United States--that is identified with the broad national patterns of U.S. history; (2) important associations with persons nationally significant in U.S. history--i.e., President John F. Kennedy and his successor, President Lyndon B. Johnson; and (5) composed of integral parts of the environment that collectively compose an entity of exceptional national historical importance. These associations are so consequential in American history that, even though the event and associations are less than 50 years in the past, they are of extraordinary national importance, meeting criterion exception (8).

President John F. Kennedy's association with Dealey Plaza was momentary but eternal. The street approaching the Triple Underpass in what was then the main municipal plaza in downtown Dallas, a place hitherto an emblem of civic pride, where he was fatally shot on November 22, 1963--in front of his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, who was riding in the second car back;<sup>2</sup> several hundred eyewitnesses;<sup>3</sup> and the world--instantly became one of the most notorious sites in history. Hailed in 1936 as the "gateway to Dallas" and a place "that must surely play a great part in the future of this city,"<sup>4</sup> it has, since that fatal day, to the world outside Dallas, summoned all the emotions that only such a loathsome event can. In the United States there is only one other such site that is intact--Ford's Theatre.

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<sup>1</sup> This statement draws significantly from the previous work of Conover Hunt, formerly of the Dallas County Historical Foundation, who worked more or less continuously on many aspects of the Sixth Floor project for over a decade. Her most important contribution, as part of the team that devised the Sixth Floor exhibit, was to its content. Other individuals whose insights, critical comments, and advice are more or less directly reflected in this document include Mrs. Lindalyn Adams and former Dallas County Judge David Fox, both long active in the Foundation's affairs, and Bob Hays, the current Director of the Foundation. Jim Steely, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer of the State of Texas, and Neil Mangum, Historian in the National Park Service Southwest Regional Office, participated directly in the field work and offered numerous helpful observations on this aspect of the study. National Park Service historians Dick Sellers and Melody Webb worked with the Foundation during its late formative period, before the Sixth Floor Exhibit was completed; the Foundation credits their advice highly.

<sup>2</sup> Warren Report, pp. 43-46.

<sup>3</sup> Josiah Thompson, Six Seconds in Dallas (New York, 1968, 1977), Appendix A. He lists 268 witnesses. Other tallies vary and not all were ever identified.

<sup>4</sup> "Underpass Opening," Dallas Morning News, Friday, May 1, 1936.

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**EFFECTS OF THE EVENT**

The effects of the assassination were immediate and emotional, but practical and lasting as well. Dealey Plaza's high state of preservation has reinforced its association with the grisly episode and the controversy that has raged continuously since then.

Kennedy's stature as the leader of a superpower gave the assassination international impact and elicited concern, shock, grief, fear, and disillusion around the world.<sup>5</sup> His assassination, the fourth of an American President, came two full generations after that of McKinley in 1901 and was the first during the era of modern mass communications; its impact was almost instantaneous. Despite the fact that the transition of power to his successor took place in an orderly way, and, although no broad conspiracy aimed at the Government as a whole or the Nation was evident, the American people, who just a year earlier had teetered on the brink of nuclear war with the Soviet Union, endured one of the most traumatic shocks in their history.

Kennedy's personal characteristics, as well as the majesty of his office, deepened the agony. The first President born in the 20th century and the youngest ever elected, his youthful appearance and manner made his death at the age of 46 unimaginable. This impression was enhanced by the youth of his widow and his two children.<sup>6</sup> A hero of the Pacific Theater in World War II, he had endured painful and dangerous operations as a result of his injuries and had had previous close brushes with death. Even those who despised his politics might admire his personal courage and, failing that, respond to his family's bereavement, for he was to be buried on his only surviving son's third birthday. Thus, around the Nation and in many spots around the world, some reacted with numbed shock; others wept openly. It was a weekend of sorrow such as comes but once in a generation.

In Moscow, Communist Party chairman Khrushchev was the first to sign the U.S. embassy's book of condolences. The funeral was shown on Soviet television. Yugoslav Communist leader Tito, emotionally stricken, phoned the American embassy, read a statement on national radio, and like Khrushchev, journeyed to the U.S. embassy. In Algeria, Ben Bella, in tears, phoned the U.S. Ambassador. In Cambodia, Sihanouk ordered court mourning.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the unparalleled emotional impact, Kennedy's death spurred practical effects. Earlier Presidential assassinations and attempted assassinations wrought no fundamental changes in the law, but Kennedy's death was instrumental in the ratification of the Presidential succession amendment (Amendment XXV) to the U.S. Constitution (1967) and led to

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<sup>5</sup> William Manchester, The Death of a President (New York: 1967), p. 189ff, 497-500, 504-505, 557, 584-586.

<sup>6</sup> Manchester makes the point in op. cit., p. 623-647. The contrast between Kennedy's youth and the advanced age of many national leaders who attended his funeral was also noted by network broadcast anchormen. See NBC, CBS footage in DCHF archives.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. A Thousand Days, John F. Kennedy in the White House (Boston: 1965), pp. 937-939.

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strengthened efforts to protect elected officials.<sup>8</sup> Beyond that, it altered the relationship of the President and the people. Never again, it seemed, could a leader safely trust being close to the people.

Finally, Dealey Plaza, the scene of the assassination and the only readily identifiable site in Dallas associated with President Kennedy's 1963 visit that remains intact,<sup>9</sup> is also the crime scene of the greatest murder controversy of history. Who shot John F. Kennedy? If not Lee Harvey Oswald, as officially claimed, then who? The tragedy and its historical impact are compounded by the legacy of doubt and suspicion that has clouded his death and denied his family, friends, admirers, and the Nation even the certainty of knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt who his assassin was. This remains a key feature of Dealey Plaza's significance even though the site has been exhaustively documented and subjected to perhaps the most sophisticated and intensive scientific testing in the history of criminal investigations.

The debate has raged for nearly three decades and simply will not end. Merely taking cognizance of these divergent views and theories here does not imply any endorsement of them. They are part of the historical record of this epochal event in American history and they must be acknowledged.

#### DEALEY PLAZA: NO ORDINARY SITE

Dictators and emperors have leveled cities and sown their ground with salt for acts of regicide. But a democracy may place a harder test. It may encourage the preservation of sites of pain and horror, as well as triumph and grandeur. Dealey Plaza's sad fate is to have the former far outweigh the latter.

Thus Kennedy died and Dallas' pride in her civic complex, where he perished, was gravely shaken. But the place remains, at the city's heart.

Dallas is a great city that grew on the plains beginning a few years after a railroad crossed a small river. From the city's earliest days, the issues of accommodating the river, the rails, and the roads at the center of the city were critical. As the city's best architects built in the

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<sup>8</sup> News and magazine stories surrounding passage of the amendment clearly show the assassination as the impetus to passage, e.g., "If Anything Happens to the President," U.S. News and World Report, February 27, 1967, p. 70, and "Text of 25th Amendment," The New York Times, February 2, 1967. The Amendment, proposed by Congress to the States in 1965 and ratified in 1967, was first applied upon the resignation of President Nixon in 1974. Also see Warren Report, pp. 454-468 on the Secret Service and the need to provide better protection for elected officials.

<sup>9</sup> The Emergency Room area at Parkland Hospital was later obliterated in a major remodeling and expansion; however, the equipment in Trauma Rooms 1 and 2--those used to treat Kennedy and Connally--was preserved and stored. The locations where Air Force One was parked at Love Field, both before and after the assassination, remain as part of the runway system. A Texas Historic marker inside the main terminal commemorates the swearing-in of Lyndon B. Johnson as the 36th President.

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"West End" early in this century, that urban design dilemma kept asserting itself. The innovative 1930s solution, a park and Triple Underpass under the railroad lines in the "West End," though it may seem worn as a design solution to observers in the 1990s, was a civic accomplishment of no mean stature in its day and is still a fine example of the Art Deco design of that period and of Texas centennial fervor. (See illustration, "Plan for a Proposed Civic Center.")

And, for comparative purposes, it should be noted that California's first freeway had not yet been built. The building of the Underpass and the Plaza owed much, conceptually and financially, to the civic spiritedness of George Bannerman Dealey, editor-publisher of The Dallas Morning News, for whom the Plaza was named in 1935.<sup>10</sup>

But, since 12:30 pm. CST on November 22, 1963, when Dallas entered the world's headlines as the city of the Kennedy assassination, Dealey Plaza, as the immediate scene of the deed, has been a name synonymous not with a great city's civic pride, but a badge of shame that the city has worn around the world, with the disdain visited on the "City of Hate,"<sup>11</sup> a phrase that reflects the tendency nationally and internationally to blame Dallas and Dallasites--even those unborn or not in residence in 1963 and those who had come out, nearly 250,000 strong, to greet him--for the crime, to the extent that, when traveling, many have denied their Dallas origin.

It seemed as if Nelly Connally's last words to the President: "Mr. President, you can't say Dallas doesn't love you!" were destined to rankle and resonate with multiple irony into the indefinite future, making it difficult and wrenching for the Nation, as well as humane minded residents of Dallas, to visit or even contemplate the site.

Dealey Plaza, the scene of such a horror, some might suggest, merely exerts a morbid fascination. Visitors, who come in a steady stream, do ponder the site in excruciating detail. But it is an abnormally somber place. Even young children, who cannot comprehend its tragedy, do not disturb its solemnity. It remains intact, a mute testimony branded indelibly in the collective memory of a generation, reminiscent for all, but most painful to those for whom John F. Kennedy--no matter what revelations about his health or personal life may emerge--somehow will always be The President and Dallas and Dealey Plaza always the scene of his death. The latter need never even have visited it--in fact they may choose to avoid it, like many in Dallas. But it remains--the scene of a tragedy of epic proportions that cannot be dismissed or erased even were its buildings removed and its streets obliterated.

## THE TRIP TO TEXAS

It all began, and it all ended, just after noon on a sunny November day in 1963. The major reasons for President Kennedy's trip to his Vice President Lyndon Johnson's home State

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<sup>10</sup> See Sam Acheson, Dallas Yesterday (Dallas: SMU Press, 1977), pp. 198-199, 248-255, and especially pp. 284-287.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, John Henderson, "Climate of Hate Ruled City in 1963," Dallas Times Herald, November 17, 1983. DCHF files.

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were to gain support for their planned reelection campaign--every Democrat elected President since its admission had carried Texas--and to assist in mending a rift between prominent Texas Democrats Governor John Connally and U.S. Senator Ralph Yarborough.<sup>12</sup> A five-city, two-day visit was planned.<sup>13</sup> Community leaders, Governor Connally, and the President's advisers jointly planned the stop in Dallas. The Dallas Citizens Council arranged a non-partisan luncheon for 2,600 people at the World Trade Center (Trade Mart) on Stemmons Freeway, north and just west of downtown.<sup>14</sup>

The President's aides favored a public motorcade through the city on the way from the airport to the luncheon site. In fact, motorcades were planned for each city on the itinerary. The President was to fly to Dallas' Love Field from nearby Fort Worth on the morning of Friday, November 22, and the airport became the starting point for the motorcade, which would pass west along Main Street, in 1963 the major business artery in Dallas. At Dealey Plaza, the motorcade would turn north for one block on Houston at the entrance to the Plaza, and then make a sharp turn west onto Elm Street, pass through Dealey Plaza on its north side, and then follow Stemmons Freeway north from just west of the Triple Underpass. (There was no direct access to Stemmons Freeway from Main Street in Dealey Plaza in 1963.) The planned route was precisely mapped in The Dallas Times Herald on November 19, 1963. A description of the route, without a map, appeared in The Dallas Morning News.<sup>15</sup>

The sold-out luncheon address was to be the President's only major function in Dallas. The schedule called for the party to return to Love Field directly from the luncheon and fly to Austin.

Mrs. Kennedy accompanied the President on the trip to Texas. The official hosts were Governor and Mrs. John Connally. Vice President and Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson were also in the party and traveled in advance of the President to each site aboard *Air Force Two*. Kennedy aides, a contingent of Secret Service agents, a few politicians, and 70 members of the White House press corps composed the remainder of the official party.

Security for the visit to Dallas was particularly heavy, because of an incident on October 24, when United Nations Ambassador Adlai Stevenson had been heckled in a Dallas hotel and struck on the head by a placard. In addition, though likely not known to the security

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. House of Representatives, Select Committee on Assassinations, Report, Hearings, and Exhibits (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), pp. 36-37 (hereafter House Select Committee Report). Also Lyndon B. Johnson, The Vantage Point (New York: 1971), pp. 1-12.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> The Dallas Morning News; Dallas Times Herald, November 22, 1963. Microfilm collection, DPL.

<sup>15</sup> Dallas Morning News and Dallas Times Herald for that date, microfilm collection, DPL.

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personnel in Dallas, recent threats against the President in Chicago and Miami had been received.<sup>16</sup> Combined City, County, and Secret Service security forces, depending on how they were tallied, exceeded 700.<sup>17</sup> After the Stevenson incident was widely publicized, community leaders, churches, and major newspapers all urged that a cordial welcome be given the President and Vice President.<sup>18</sup> Dallas schools agreed to release students from classes if their parents wanted to take them to see the motorcade.

*Air Force One* landed at Love Field about 11:38 a.m. The President asked that the bubble top be removed from his Lincoln Continental convertible limousine.<sup>19</sup> Several thousand greeted him and the First Lady. In an impromptu act, they spent several minutes shaking hands at a security fence near the plane. The motorcade left Love Field at 11:50 a.m. Nearly 250,000 people--out of a metropolitan population then 1 million--lined the streets, and the President ordered the car stopped on several occasions to shake hands.

The President was scheduled to arrive at the luncheon at 12:30 p.m., but the enthusiasm of the crowds delayed the motorcade, which did not enter Dealey Plaza, five minutes by car from the World Trade Center, until 12:29 p.m. The limousine followed the announced route exactly. After it turned sharply left and started down Elm southwest toward the Triple Underpass, traveling in the middle lane of the three-lane street, several shots rang out. According to the clock in the Hertz sign atop the Texas School Book Depository, it was 12:30 p.m.<sup>20</sup>

The Presidential limousine sped to Parkland Hospital, Dallas' primary trauma care facility, and arrived at the emergency entrance about 12:34 p.m. During treatment by a team of doctors, the President appeared to have a gunshot wound in the frontal neck and a massive and fatal head wound.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Jim Marrs, Crossfire, The Plot that Killed Kennedy (New York, 1989), pp. 240-243.

<sup>17</sup> Although much has been written about local security arrangements for the Dallas portion of the trip, a good summary exists in Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry's JFK Assassination File (Dallas: 1969), pp. 8-40. Estimates on the total number of security personnel vary.

<sup>18</sup> Editorials in The Dallas Morning News and Dallas Times-Herald, November 15-22, 1963. Microfilm files, DPL.

<sup>19</sup> Manchester, op. cit., pp. 122 ff.

<sup>20</sup> House Select Committee Report 6 ("Photographic Evidence"); see also Richard E. Sprague, "John F. Kennedy: The Application of Computers to the Photographic Record," Computers and Automation (May 1970), pp. 52-56. More than 250 witnesses in Dealey Plaza either saw, or heard, the shooting. Some two dozen individuals took motion pictures or photographs that recorded all, or parts, of the event.

<sup>21</sup> See testimony of the Parkland doctors, Warren Commission 6: 1-82. For a summary of events immediately following the assassination, see Warren Report, pp. 65-72.

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A Catholic priest administered the Last Rites to him; doctors listed the official time of death as 1:00 p.m. Nurses then prepared the body for autopsy at Parkland, in accordance with the State's laws regarding murder investigations.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, Governor Connally, who had been sitting directly in front of the President, underwent extensive, but successful, surgery for his gunshot wounds.

Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, the only man ever to have witnessed the savage act of assassination that made him President, was sequestered in a small room nearby at Parkland Hospital as President Kennedy's life slipped away. At the urging of the Secret Service, Johnson decided to return to *Air Force One*, which they believed afforded better protection and had advanced communication systems. At that point, the threat of a wider conspiracy or a foreign attack could not be ruled out. Johnson secretly slipped away from the hospital to Love Field at 1:22 p.m. Meanwhile, rumors circulated that he had suffered a heart attack. President's Kennedy's death was announced at 1:33 p.m. CST. At 2:38 p.m., aboard *Air Force One*, United States District Judge Sarah T. Hughes, a Kennedy appointee, administered the Presidential oath of office to Lyndon B. Johnson.

Although Johnson's aides urged him to return to Washington at once, he refused to leave Dallas without Mrs. Kennedy, who had remained at Parkland to be near her husband's body. She, in turn, refused to leave without him, so Kennedy aides obtained a casket and removed the President's remains without the autopsy required by State law. Mrs. Kennedy and President Kennedy's casket were aboard *Air Force One* when Johnson took the oath of office. The plane departed Love Field for Washington's Andrews Air Force Base at 2:47 p.m.<sup>23</sup>

#### DEALEY PLAZA AS A CRIME SCENE

Dealey Plaza instantly became the central forensic and ballistic criminal investigation scene. Three Dallas policemen in the motorcade dropped off to investigate. Two ran up the northwest embankment near the Triple Underpass. Finding no physical evidence, they interviewed witnesses in that area. A third ran into the Texas School Book Depository and sought access to the upper floors, running up the northwest corner stairs because both freight elevators on the north side were on upper floors.<sup>24</sup>

Lee Harvey Oswald was confronted entering the second-floor employees' lunchroom, about 12:32, but released when he was identified as an employee of the Depository company. More officers were called to the scene to look for evidence and interview employees. In a roll call at 1:03, several of the latter, including Oswald, were absent. Police sent out a

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<sup>22</sup> It is an important distinction that in 1963 the assassination of a President violated no Federal statutes. Jurisdiction for the crime remained with local authorities. See Warren Report, pp. 454-456.

<sup>23</sup> Manchester, op. cit., pp. 305-335, offers the best summary of this confusing period.

<sup>24</sup> Dallas Police Tape Transcript, DCHF files. For a summary of evidence associating the Texas School Book Depository with the crime, see the Warren Report, pp. 74-112.

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bulletin to locate him for questioning. At 1:12 investigators found an arrangement of boxes, three spent cartridges, and a paper bag near the far southeast corner window of the sixth floor of the Depository. At 1:22 they found a rifle with a telescopic sight and its cartridge clip, jammed down between boxes of books, several feet south of the entrance to the northwest corner staircase, diagonally across from the corner window.

Investigators searching the north embankment of Dealey Plaza found footprints and cigarette butts in the parking lot immediately behind the picket fence, just west of the Pergola and the steps leading up the embankment. Search of the area was called off when the rifle and shells were discovered in the Depository.

Witness interviews in Dealey Plaza yielded a variety of opinions as to the point of origin and number of shots.<sup>25</sup> Opinions on the number of shots ranged from one to eight or more, with most citing three. Opinions on the origin of the shots were similarly varied, but two distinct patterns emerged. One group felt the shots had come from the Depository; several witnesses stated that they had seen a gunman in or firing from one of the upper floors. Another group thought the shots had come from the area of the north embankment of Dealey Plaza, west of the Pergola and east of the Triple Underpass, an area one witness described as a "grassy knoll."<sup>26</sup> A few thought there had been a crossfire.

Among the items of physical evidence associating Dealey Plaza with the assassination were the following: a chipped curbstone on the south side of Main Street near the Triple Underpass, which investigators decided might have been caused by a deflected bullet; bullet fragments found inside the Presidential limousine; and a dent in the windshield frame inside the limousine and a crack in the glass. And, at 2:00 p.m., an employee at Parkland Hospital, moving a stretcher outside the Trauma Rooms where Kennedy and Connally had been treated, found a nearly whole bullet.<sup>27</sup>

Lee Harvey Oswald was apprehended at 1:50 p.m., miles away from Dealey Plaza, and arrested for the murder of a policeman who had been shot shortly after 1 p.m. He was taken to Dallas Police Headquarters downtown on Harwood Street. (This building is not included in the proposed Dealey Plaza Historic District.) He was later charged with the murder of President John F. Kennedy.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The Warren Commission interviewed 171 witnesses who had been in Dealey Plaza. The House Select Committee reevaluated and expanded this list. For a summary of how the two investigations differed in their approach to witness testimony, see G. Robert Blakey and Richard N. Billings, The Plot to Kill the President (New York: 1981), pp. 87-91. Blakey was the staff director of the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

<sup>26</sup> See Blakey and Billings, op. cit., pp. 87 ff. Interview, Conover Hunt with Jean Hill, 1988.

<sup>27</sup> Both major investigations relied on essentially the same physical evidence. See Warren Report, pp. 79-156.

<sup>28</sup> Office M.N. McDonald's testimony in the Warren Commission 3:295-304.

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The initial investigation was handled jointly by the Dallas Police Department, the Dallas County Sheriff's Department and the Texas Attorney General's office. Forensic and ballistic evidence was turned over to the FBI. Investigators linked Oswald with the crime in the following areas: some boxes in the so called sniper's perch contained his finger and palm prints; the FBI traced purchase and receipt of the rifle found on the sixth floor to Oswald; his palm print was found beneath the rifle stock; and ballistic tests showed that the spent cartridges, the fragments, and the nearly whole bullet found at Parkland Hospital had been fired from the Oswald rifle. One witness testified that Oswald had carried a brown paper package into the Depository that morning. Oswald's prints were found on such a package.<sup>29</sup>

Police questioned Oswald late on November 22, as well as on the 23rd, and on the morning of the 24th. He protested his innocence. As required by Dallas ordinance, he was to be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Dallas County Sheriff's Department--for incarceration in the County jail in the Criminal Courts Building on Dealey Plaza--within 72 hours of arraignment. At 11:21, on November 24, when the authorities were taking him out through the basement of Police headquarters, he was shot in the abdomen at point blank range by Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby. Oswald died early that afternoon, at Parkland Hospital.

**DEALEY PLAZA'S INSTANT INFAMY**

On November 22, 1963, Dealey Plaza instantly became one of the most well-known sites in the world. Newly developed global satellite communications systems in place in 1963 made it possible for news of the assassination to be carried by radio and television live to locations around the world. The first report of the shooting was issued from the motorcade itself--by a press car telephone at 12:34 p.m.<sup>30</sup> An AP photographer took photographs of the actual shooting and ran--literally--to his Dallas bureau chief. The AP story was on the wires at 12:39.<sup>31</sup> One minute later, seeing the AP story, Walter Cronkite of CBS broke into afternoon television programming. There were 70 journalists with the Presidential party, who filed reports immediately after the shooting; within hours they had been joined by hundreds more.

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<sup>29</sup> Warren Report, pp. 113-183.

<sup>30</sup> See Merriman Smith's account in United Press International and American Heritage Magazine, Four Days: The Historical Record of the Death of President Kennedy (New York: 1964), pp. 22-24.

<sup>31</sup> See article by Bob Johnson, Dallas AP Bureau chief in 1963, in Associated Press, The Torch is Passed (n.p.: 1963), pp. 14-16. Also taped interview with Bob Johnson, 1988, DCHF files.

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All television commercial advertising was virtually suspended until after the President's state funeral, on the 25th. It has been estimated that the average American watched 32 hours of the virtually continuous television coverage that weekend.<sup>32</sup>

## THE INVESTIGATIONS

The long history of official investigation into the event and the large volume of critical literature published about the site has been both inspired by the assassination site's remarkable state of preservation and has helped to preserve it. The combination of official and unofficial descriptions of the area has affixed importance to virtually every element in the district. Dealey Plaza continues to serve as an active crime scene in an endless debate. In addition, despite posthumous debunking biographies, revelations, and allegations, John F. Kennedy remains a remarkably popular figure nearly three decades after his death.<sup>33</sup> Materials pertaining to his life and death have continued to be of high popular interest; this fact, along with the continuing skepticism about the conclusions of the official investigations, has kept Dealey Plaza in the media spotlight. It has thus become one of the most exhaustively investigated sites in the world, measured, photographed, acoustically tested, and virtually placed under a microscope by nearly every American investigative agency and a bevy of sophisticated consultants and critics. Few Americans, even those born after 1963, have escaped the media coverage devoted to this one corner of Dallas, with the result that Dealey Plaza is known to people all over the world.

### The FBI, the Secret Service, and the Warren Commission

In 1963, the murder of a President was not a Federal crime, but had initially to be handled as a murder investigation under State and local ordinance. Thus the FBI did not enter the investigation until November 24, in response to a motion by a local Federal judge, who ironically cited a violation of Oswald's civil rights<sup>34</sup>, because of his murder by Ruby. One week after the shooting, President Johnson appointed the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, generally known as the Warren Commission because it was chaired by Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren. The Commission relied on existing governmental investigative agencies to gather evidence, and issued its formal 1-volume report in September 1964, releasing 26 additional volumes of testimony and exhibits one month later.

The FBI and Secret Service also had conducted their own investigations. In December 1963, the Secret Service reenacted the shooting in Dealey Plaza. Both agencies, concurring that Oswald was the lone assassin, turned over their findings to the Warren Commission. The FBI conducted another reenactment in May 1964, at the request of the Commission.

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<sup>32</sup> "A World Listened and Watched," Broadcasting, December 2, 1963, pp. 36-46, and "TV's Biggest Audience," Broadcasting, February 3, 1964, p. 54. DCHF files.

<sup>33</sup> National survey showing Kennedy still regarded as among the greatest American Presidents, Roper file, 1988, DCHF.

<sup>34</sup> Manchester, op. cit., p. 528.

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The Commission's official conclusion was that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, had fired three shots at the President: the first missed; the second entered the President's back, exited his neck, and hit Governor Connally, causing multiple wounds to the Governor; and the third hit the President in the back of the head and killed him.<sup>35</sup> The Commission also concluded that Oswald fired the shots from the far southeast corner window on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository.

Dealey Plaza's association with investigations of the assassination merely began with the Warren Report. The Commission's conclusions were generally accepted at first, but its apparent oversights and inconsistencies launched a controversy that has led to more than two decades of official and unofficial inquiries, a succession of sensational revelations, and vast skepticism on the part of the public.<sup>36</sup> Although some of the investigations were not site-specific, the following involved reexamination of the site, physical evidence found or generated there--such as films and photographs, and eyewitness interviews. The layout of the Plaza in terms of timing and trajectories of shots figured in all inquiries.

#### Clark Panels (1966-68)

Attorney General Ramsey Clark convened medical panels that reviewed the findings of the official autopsy, which had been conducted at Bethesda (Maryland) Naval Hospital on the night of November 22-23, 1963, and had not been fully reviewed by the Warren Commission. The panels examined the validity of the Warren Report's finding that shots hit the President from the back; they upheld the Commission's finding on the number and direction of shots, but located the President's head entry wound higher than the Commission.<sup>37</sup>

#### Rockefeller Commission (1975)

Although concerned primarily with allegations that the CIA had been involved directly or indirectly in assassination and other illegal activities in the United States, this Commission, chaired by then Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, also convened a medical panel which upheld the Warren Commission's original conclusion that the President was killed by a shot that came from behind the limousine.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Warren Report.

<sup>36</sup> The issue of inconsistencies is not in doubt. The Warren investigation was officially criticized by the Clark Panels, the Rockefeller Commission, and the House Select Committee on Assassinations. For one summary, see Blakey and Billings, op. cit., pp. 40-62, 71-87.

<sup>37</sup> For a coherent summary of the investigations, see Blakey and Billings, op. cit., pp. 40-61.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

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Church Committee (1976)

Senator Frank Church of Idaho chaired this further investigation into possible CIA involvement in the assassination. The Committee cleared the CIA, but determined that the FBI, CIA, and Secret Service had withheld information from the Warren Commission, "which might have substantially affected the course of the investigation."<sup>39</sup>

House Select Committee on Assassinations (1976-78)

This inquiry into both the Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., slayings was spurred in significant part by doubts raised when the Zapruder film was first publicly released. The Committee issued its 12-volume Report in 1979. The Committee concluded that the President was killed as a result of a conspiracy, sponsored by a person or persons unknown.<sup>40</sup>

The Committee reexamined the site, physical evidence and witness testimony, applying sophisticated scientific techniques. A key element in this investigation was analysis of a copy of a police dictabelt tape, which might have recorded the sounds of the assassination.<sup>41</sup> Committee scientists also examined witness films and photographs that were not reviewed by the Warren Commission.

After preliminary results of an acoustical analysis of the police tape indicated a probability that three to five shots were fired at the limousine, the Committee sponsored another reenactment of the assassination in Dealey Plaza in 1978. Trained sharpshooters fired from the sixth floor of the Depository and from the grassy knoll. The test involved creating an exact measurement of the Plaza, its surrounding environment, and all of its internal features. Adjustments were made to accommodate virtually every change that had occurred in the area.

A comparison of the sounds from the reenactment with the initial analysis yielded correlations that were refined using physics and geometry to reach the conclusion that there

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> House Select Committee Report, p. 635. For subsequent scientific work, see Bruce E. Koenig, "Gunshot Analysis: The Kennedy Assassination and Beyond," FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin 52, 11 (November 1983): 1-9 and 52, 12 (December 1983): 1-9. A specific impetus to the formation of the House Select Committee was public airing of a computer enhanced version of the Zapruder film on a national network in March 1975. (A copy of the program is in the DCHF archives.) This same version of the film was shown to Members of Congress, which subsequently passed legislation, sponsored by Rep. Thomas Downing of Virginia, to establish the House inquiry. See Blakey and Billings, op. cit., pp. 40-61, and House Select Committee Report, with introduction by Downing. Also Interview, Conover Hunt with Thomas Downing, 1988.

<sup>41</sup> The police tape was brought to the Committee by Dallas researcher Mary Ferrell. See Blakey and Billings, op. cit., pp. 65-93.

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was a 95% or greater probability that four shoots were fired at the limousine: three from the corner window on the sixth floor of the Depository and one from the grassy knoll from the area behind the picket fence.<sup>42</sup>

The Commission also requested that the Justice Department conduct additional analysis of photographic evidence.

#### Acoustical Investigations--FBI and NAS (1980, 1982)

A 1980 FBI laboratory review of the House Select Committee's acoustical analysis concluded that Committee scientists erred in their determination that there was a second gunman.<sup>43</sup> In 1982 the Justice Department asked the National Academy of Sciences to convene a panel to review the acoustical analysis developed by the House Committee. The report concluded that the House Committee's findings relative to acoustical analysis were inaccurate, and that the subject tape recorded sounds outside Dealey Plaza approximately one minute after the assassination.<sup>44</sup> The Justice Department officially closed its investigation in 1988, stating that "persuasive evidence" could not be identified to support the theory of a conspiracy.<sup>45</sup>

#### Private Studies and "Investigations"

In addition to the official reviews, the incomplete and somewhat erroneous record compiled by the Warren Commission has been scrutinized by dozens of authors working independently.

Some private studies have been serious scholarly efforts that contribute to clarifying a murky and incomplete record. Others have exploited the public's doubts about and insatiable desire for an answer to the "case of the century." Immediately after Oswald's death, for example, 52% of the population doubted his guilt. Late in his life, Lyndon B. Johnson expressed his doubts. In 1983, only 11% of the American people were of the firm opinion that Oswald had acted alone.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> House Select Committee Report, pp. 63-103. Also WETA Television, Committee hearings aired live on December 29, 1978. Copy in DCHF files.

<sup>43</sup> FBI Report, DCHF files.

<sup>44</sup> National Research Council, Report of the Committee on Ballistics Acoustics. Washington, D.C., 1982.

<sup>45</sup> Conover Hunt, The Sixth Floor (Dallas: Dallas County Historical Foundation, 1987), p. 47.

<sup>46</sup> The last survey of public opinion about the motive for the assassination was conducted in 1988; 80% of respondents stated their belief that the President was the victim of a conspiracy. The Dallas Morning News, November 20, 1988. DCHF files.

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A bewildering array of theories has been advanced, which would be impossible to review here. The climate around the issue is so fraught with skepticism that there is even speculation that some of the theories are disinformation by government agencies. While none of these essays has offered a solution to the crime generally accepted by official agencies or the general public, their cumulative impact on public opinion and in inspiring the continuing series of official investigations has been profound.<sup>47</sup>

A consistent thread running through private inquiries into the assassination, however, has been an attempt to secure information from Federal and other agencies that have withheld or classified records. The legal efforts of Harold Weisberg, in particular, are important for the way in which they have contributed to the amendment and broadening of the Freedom of Information Act, as well as for yielding valuable critical information regarding the conduct of earlier investigations.<sup>48</sup> The physical layout of Dealey Plaza has been a prime focus in most of the flood of conspiracy publications, more than 5,000, that have been issued since 1964.<sup>49</sup>

#### DEALEY PLAZA'S CONTINUING AND COMPLEX ROLE

Dealey Plaza is of particular historical importance to Dallas, a city that in the last three decades has evolved from a mid-sized Southwestern "town" into one of the Nation's premier urban centers. Dealey Plaza, once the focus of the small city's civic pride, but unknown outside Dallas, is a site of worldwide infamy by which today's thriving metropolis is known. The assassination led to widespread condemnation of the citizenry, who were called murderers and conservative extremists.<sup>50</sup> They remember, if no one else does, that there were threats against Kennedy in Chicago and Miami that same month.<sup>51</sup> Given this history, it is natural that Dallasites are of many minds about Dealey Plaza and how to reconcile the site's earlier history with the tragedy.

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<sup>47</sup> Blakey and Billings, op. cit., pp. 40-62, offer a complete summary of the major critical work.

<sup>48</sup> See DeLloyd J. Guth and David R. Wrone, The Assassination of John F. Kennedy...1963-1979, A Bibliography (Westport, Conn.: 1980), which discusses Weisberg's lawsuits at pp. 49-66.

<sup>49</sup> Guth and Wrone, op. cit., is the best bibliography and contains valuable annotations, analysis, and comment on sources.

<sup>50</sup> The community's reputation for extremism was examined in depth by both the Warren Commission and the House Select Committee. See Warren Report, p. 54, 224-230, and House Select Committee Report, pp. 22-31. Evaluation of visitation to the Sixth Floor after its first year of operation showed that 85% of all visitors came to the display from outside the Dallas area. DCHF files.

<sup>51</sup> Marrs, op. cit., pp. 240-242.

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For this spot is where the City and County of Dallas were founded and had long remained at the center of civic life. Dealey Plaza embraces a part of the original land grant given to Dallas founder John Neely Bryan in 1843 and includes the original town site,<sup>52</sup> at the spot where a natural crossing of the Trinity River had been used by native Americans.<sup>53</sup> Here were built a succession of County courthouses, as well as the city's first bridge, first hotel, and an important railroad crossing. Adjacent to it grew up the main switching yard for Dallas' immensely successful commercial rail shipping industry. Around the railroads, reflective of their success, grew up the "West End" of warehouses.<sup>54</sup> And along Main Street was the commercial district. The area drew the city's best architects and builders.

The construction of the Plaza in the 1930s was hailed as an engineering marvel statewide, and, intended as it was to provide a dramatic automobile gateway and setting for the city, reflected a very contemporary approach to urban design. It still provides a fine example of Art Deco influenced New Deal era construction.

Additionally, because it was named for one of the city's leading figures, George Bannerman Dealey (1859-1946), who was intimately associated with practically every aspect of efforts for the city's betterment over many decades, the Plaza's international notoriety for the assassination has been gall in the mouths of Dallasites, who would otherwise be able to enjoy a fair measure of pride in their city's history and in Dealey, the English lad who had become their adopted "native son."

Dealey was an appropriate figure with whom to express that pride. He was not only the publisher of The Dallas Morning News, but had actively promoted city planning in Dallas since at least 1908 and crusaded for improvements to the Trinity River corridor; he had also been responsible for the land donation that made the Underpass and the Plaza possible. Fittingly, his statue has stood since 1949 in the park his vision and his contributions largely made possible.<sup>55</sup>

But, as the site where a young and vibrant world leader was killed, Dealey Plaza remains inextricably linked to the memory of John F. Kennedy. Morbid fascination does not suffice to account for it. Since the day of the assassination, when Dallasites began placing wreaths and cards on the grassy knoll, visitors have left flowers and other memorial tributes in the Plaza.<sup>56</sup> Even though no official memorial activities are conducted, thousands gather solemnly at the site on anniversaries of the assassination. On the 25th, for example, a quiet

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<sup>52</sup> William L. McDonald, Dallas Rediscovered (Dallas: 1978), pp. 7-19, and Darwin Payne, Dallas, An Illustrated History (Woodland Hills, Calif.: 1982), pp. 11-33.

<sup>53</sup> SMU Report.

<sup>54</sup> McDonald, op. cit. p. 19-63.

<sup>55</sup> G.B. Dealey Collection, Files 265 and 411, DHS.

<sup>56</sup> Several years of these cards are preserved in the DPL. Photographs of mourners were taken by Dallas Morning News photographer Jack Beers; copies in DCHF archives.

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crowd of 3,000 gathered, placing a mound of flowers and rosaries in the middle of Elm Street at 12:30 p.m.

Dallasites remain very sensitive to the assassination and for many years most shunned the site and ignored the steady stream of visitors to the Plaza, although in 1970 the City's official memorial, a cenotaph by Philip Johnson, was erected behind the Old Red Courthouse off the Plaza. However, continued heavy visitation to the Plaza through the 1970s and the intense curiosity about the Depository building and its sixth floor led some in the community, notably Mrs. Lindalyn Adams and the County Commissioners, to devise the idea of establishing a professionally prepared educational historical exhibit on the life, death, and legacy of John F. Kennedy. Among the distasteful prospects this proposal sought to fend off were the demolition of the site in whole or part and the proliferation of private ventures that could capitalize on the area's history by emphasizing the grisly, morbid, and controversial aspects of the assassination and the persons of the presumed assassin, his murderer, and alleged conspirators.<sup>57</sup>

Planning began in 1979 with the idea of locating the display on the sixth floor of the Depository. It was completed and installed in 1989. (For a description of the Sixth Floor Exhibit, see the Description section of this study.) A representative sample of the opinions of nearly 300,000 visitors each year has shown that most come to the Plaza to pay their respects to the President and to educate their children about an important event in American history that is shrouded in vast controversy and confusion.<sup>58</sup> These sentiments are more movingly expressed in the memory books in which visitors can note their reactions as they leave the Exhibit.

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<sup>57</sup> Placing an educational display on the sixth floor was central to the overall plan to interpret the death of the President to international audiences. Because of its importance to official investigations into the crime, County officials felt that the sixth floor would have to be preserved, at least in part. Its strong negative historical associations made it unsuitable for use as County offices. Finally, the planners realized the need to place interpretive information at or very near Dealey Plaza, since the site was already a strong visitor destination point within the city. The Sixth Floor exhibit, then, became a combined historic preservation and museum-like interpretive program.

<sup>58</sup> Planners conducted a preliminary survey of visitors in Dealey Plaza in 1978. DCHF files. In 1981 the Chairman of the Dallas County Historical Commission placed a visitor book in the lobby of the newly reopened Depository building. Visitors to the area recorded their remembrances of Kennedy and their reasons for coming to the site in the book, which remained in the lobby periodically from 1981 to 1989. The expressions of this audience were instrumental in shaping the content of the Sixth Floor exhibit. The book is kept in the DCHF archives. The subject of catharsis as it relates to visiting the Kennedy assassination site is discussed by Southern Methodist University Professor James Pennebaker, in Opening Up (New York: 1990), pp. 168-174 et passim.

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**CONCLUSION**

His untimely and violent death will affect the judgment of historians, and the danger is that it will relegate his greatness to legend. Even though he was himself almost a legendary figure in life, Kennedy was a constant critic of the myth. It would be an ironic twist of fate if his martyrdom should now make a myth of the mortal man.<sup>59</sup>

Theodore Sorensen, 1965

The proud cradle of a city's history was instantly transformed into an internationally notorious murder site. For the Nation, Dealey Plaza is a symbol of a horrible death that transformed John F. Kennedy into a martyr, denying history forever the opportunity to assess fairly his potential for success or failure, despite those like Sorensen, who "think it more important that John Kennedy be remembered not for how he died but for how he lived."<sup>60</sup>

It is from profound tragedies such as this that much of the world's literature has, since the Greeks at least, derived its topics, the facts of history falling into the abyss of legend. But the site remains, to rescue in part from the mists of legend at least the awful brutality of the deed. As painful as that is to contemplate, it may help in some measure to bring John F. Kennedy's brief life into focus for the generations that have come after his Presidency. Or, as the only text of consequence on the Kennedy Memorial in Dallas states, that they might at least come to know that:

It is not a memorial to the pain and sorrow of death, but stands as a permanent tribute to the joy and excitement of one man's life.

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<sup>59</sup> Sorensen, *op. cit.*, p. 758.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

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County Plats

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**Dallas County Historical Commission****Research Files for Texas Historical Commission Historic Landmark Nominations:****Dallas County "Old Red" Courthouse****Dallas County Criminal Courts Building****Dallas County Records Building****Dallas County Administration Building****(former Texas School Book Depository)****File on John Neely Bryan Cabin****File on Old Red Courthouse****Dallas County Historical Foundation****Research Files for the Sixth Floor Exhibit, 1980-91****Press Clippings, 1972-1991****Photographic Files****Correspondence****Dallas Historical Society****G.B. Dealey Collection****Photographic Files****Dallas Public Library, Texas and Dallas History Collection****Dallas City Directories****Dallas City Maps****Photographic Files****Microfilm Newspaper Files****Subject Files on the Kennedy Assassination****General Services Administration, Region 7, Fort Worth, Texas****Files on the U.S. Post Office Terminal Annex Building**

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**PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):**

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (**Partially**)
- 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
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other: Specify Repository: Dallas County Historical Foundation

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**Acreage of Property: 15 acres

UTM References:	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
	A 14 705320 3628870	B 14 705540 3628700
	C 14 705590 3628520	D 14 705340 3628470
	E 14 705150 3628660	

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:**

Beginning at the intersection of the south edge of the right of way of Commerce Street with the east edge of the right of way of Market Street, then west along the south edge of the right of way of Commerce Street to its intersection with the east edge of the right of way of Houston Street, thence south along the east edge of the right of way of Houston Street to a point 268' south of the south edge of the right of way of Commerce Street, thence N 75° 35' E for 200' to a point, thence S 14° 33' E for 28' to a point, thence 75° 35' E for 80' to a point, thence S 32° 57' 18" E for 253.16' to a point, thence S 14° 33' E for 177.46' to a point, thence N 89° 44' 45" E for 170.95' to a point, thence N 30° 55' 32" W for 19.65' to a point, thence N 75° 35' E for 94.83' to a point.

Thence generally north along the west edge of the right of way of the Dallas Right-of-Way Management Company to its intersection with the north edge of the right of way of Elm Street, then east along the north edge of the right of way of Elm Street to its intersection with the east edge of the right of way of the proposed Dallas Area Rapid Transit line, then north along said east edge of the right of way to its intersection with the south edge of the right of way of Pacific Avenue extended.

Then east along the south edge of the right of way of Pacific Avenue extended and Pacific Avenue to the east edge of Lot 3-4, Block 14/21, thence south 200' along the east edge of said lot and adjacent Lot 5-6, Block 14/21, to Elm Street, then east along the north edge of the right of way of Elm Street to its intersection with the east edge of the right of way of Record Street, then south along the east edge of the right of way of Record Street and an abandoned portion of Record Street to its intersection with Main Street, east along the north edge of the right of way of Main Street to its intersection with Market Street, and south along the east edge of the right of way of Market Street to the point of beginning.

**DEALEY PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:**

The district includes the entirety of Dealey Plaza, as well as street rights of way and entire buildings and structures adjacent to the Plaza that are visible from the exact assassination site (Elm Street between Houston Street and the Triple Underpass) and that have been identified as the locations of witnesses or as positions of the possible assassin or assassins. In addition, the Kennedy Memorial Plaza, as Dallas' first effort to honor the slain President, has been included in its entirety. Lastly, the area owned by Dallas County and occupied by the Sixth Floor Visitor Center has been included for convenience.

**DEALEY PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

**Page 56**

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/Title: Ms. Conover Hunt, for the Dallas County Historical Foundation,  
as revised and edited by James H. Charleton, Historian

Organization: History Division, Washington Office, National Park Service

Street/#: P.O. Box 37127

City/Town: Washington

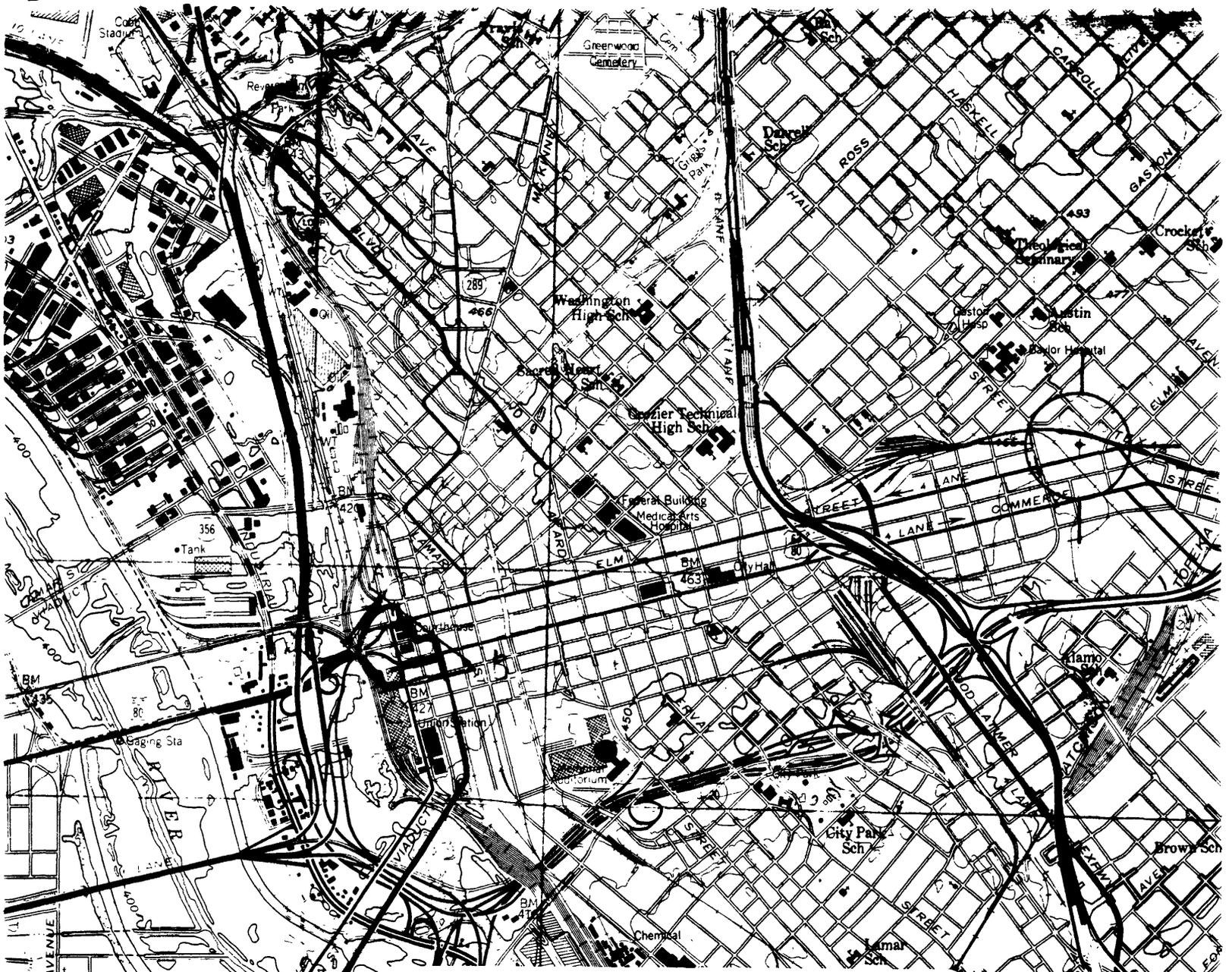
State: District of Columbia

ZIP: 20013-7127

Telephone: (202) 343-3793

Date: August 1, 1991

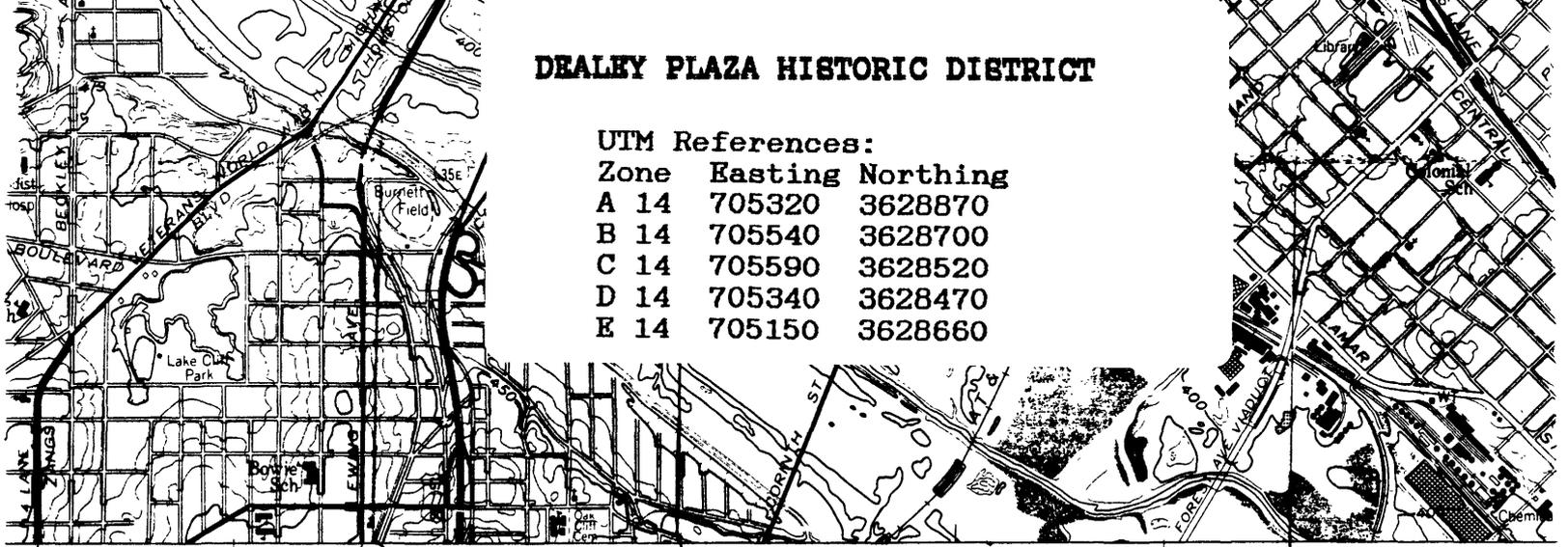
August 6, 1991



### DEALEY PLAZA HISTORIC DISTRICT

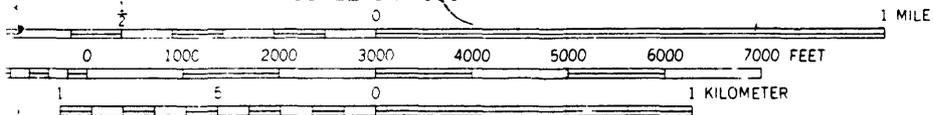
**UTM References:**

Zone	Easting	Northing
A 14	705320	3628870
B 14	705540	3628700
C 14	705590	3628520
D 14	705340	3628470
E 14	705150	3628660



OAK CLIFF LANCASTER II MI.  
6649 III NE

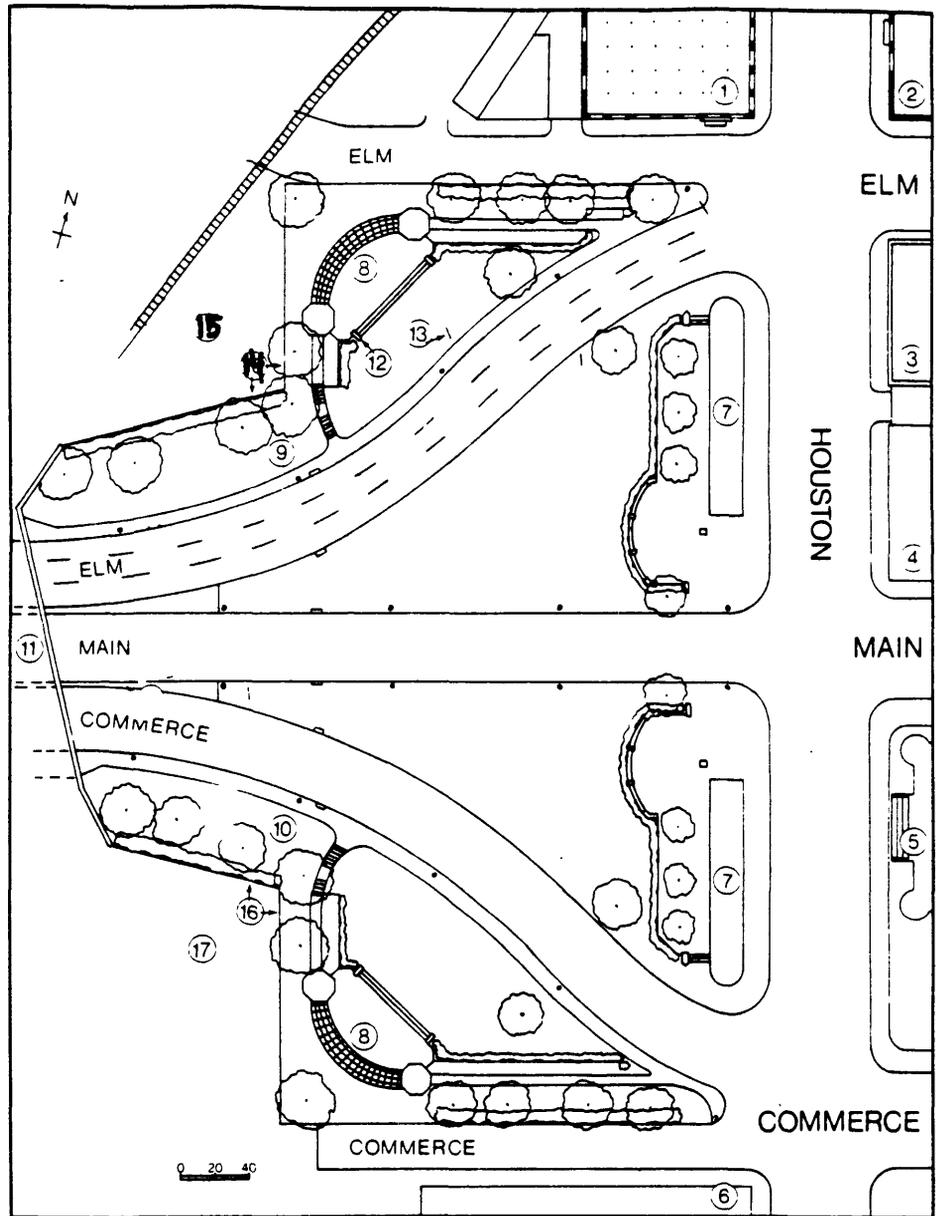
SCALE 1:24,000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

TEXAS

55



- |                                      |                                |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Texas School Book Depository       | 10 Grassy Knoll South          |
| 2 Dal-Tex Bldg                       | 11 Triple Underpass            |
| 3 Dallas County Records Bldg Annex   | 12 Abraham Zapruder's Position |
| 4 Dallas County Criminal Courts Bldg | 13 Stemmons Freeway Road Sign  |
| 5 "Old Red" Courthouse               | 14 Stockade Fences             |
| 6 Terminal Annex                     | 15 Railroad Yard Parking Lots  |
| 7 Peristyles and Reflecting Pools    |                                |
| 8 Pergolas                           |                                |
| 9 Grassy Knoll North                 |                                |

SOURCE: Adapted from Map 2, in DeLloyd J. Guth and David R. Wrone, The Assassination of John F. Kennedy, A Comprehensive Historical and Legal Bibliography, 1963-1979 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980).

