





## 12. Physical Description

Condition, check one:

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

unaltered

altered

Check one:

original site

moved (date \_\_\_\_\_)

*Describe present and original (if known) physical appearance. Include style(s) of architecture, current condition and relationship to surrounding fabric (structures, objects, etc). Elaborate on pertinent materials used and style(s) of architectural detailing, embellishments and site details.*

The Joseph F. and Lucy (Largent) Parks House faces north on a knoll at the corner of Worth and Paulus in East Dallas. This 2-story 1924 Mission style brick house is a commanding presence surrounded by the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century residential neighborhood known as Abrams-Brookside. A flat roof with raised parapet covers the house that is set on a pier and beam foundation over a partial basement. A pent roof of green glazed tile supported by heavy wooden brackets break the planar principal elevation. Smooth-faced ivory-colored brick provides a veneer over a wood frame structure. A fenestration of wooden double-hung windows 5/1, 6/1 or 7/1 further defines the elevations. The center bay of the principal facade consists of a single wooden door approached by an uncovered stoop and entryway. In c. 1957 the YMCA of Dallas removed the sun terrace on the east elevation, and extended the kitchen on the west. A pool on the southern side of the house remains from the period of YMCA acquisition. In 2001, a previous owner initiated a restoration that remains unfinished. The house is in fair condition.

The Parks House is an impressive 2-story Mission style house facing north on Worth Street. The corner lot, once approximately three acres, is now subdivided into four lots leaving the original house on the largest parcel. The house rests on a knoll rising above the streets of Paulus and Worth. Surrounding houses are mostly one-story in height and date from the 1940s and 1950s. These houses lie in the Parks Estates subdivision created by Joseph Parks after the 1920s and today part of an active neighborhood association of Abrams-Brookside.

The house is of wood frame construction with a brick veneer of ivory or cream color and rests on a brick pier-and-beam foundation over a half basement. A flat roof below a parapet covers the house defined at the top with corbelled brick. Six brick chimneys rise above the roofline while each elevation is broken by wooden double-hung windows divided as 5/1, 6/1 or 7/1, sometimes single and other locations paired or tripled. A pent roof supported by massive wooden brackets lies approximately one to two feet below the roofline and is covered in green glazed terra cotta tiles.

One-story extensions from the main block of the house once existed – a sunroom terrace to the east and kitchen to the west. The YMCA removed the terrace c. 1957 and extended the kitchen to the south at the same time. The original door and window openings remain behind the new construction.

The principal (north) facade is defined by a single wooden door in the center bay of the first floor and sets of windows on the first and second floors. Rising above the parapet in the center bay is an arching Mission element typical of the style. The front door is accessed by an uncovered concrete stoop.

Early photographs of the house indicate a two-color paint scheme that emphasized the ornate wooden brackets. Heavy "ziggurat" pergolas on the east and south side also are visible with Doric columns supporting them. The attic space once concealed the original ventilation system of the house with the soffit containing integrated vents while a mechanical ventilator set on the roof. These were later replaced with modern HVAC systems.

The interior contained significant features of the time. The front vestibule rests on a poured in place terrazzo burnt red and cream floor. To the side of the doorway are original benches with storage for garments. Etched glass doors open to the front of the stair hall. The stair is made of American Walnut and the floor is quarter-sawn white oak with walnut inset border. All walls are plaster over lathe. Pocket doors are walnut. The house holds six original Bachelder tiled fireplaces. The first floor originally contained a center hall with staircase, dining room, living room and butler's pantry; the second floor included four bedrooms and two bathrooms.

### ***13. Historical Significance***

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

The Joseph F. and Lucy (Largent) Parks House is located at the corner of Worth and Paulus Street in what is today known as the Abrams-Brookside neighborhood in East Dallas. When constructed in 1924, the 2-story Mission style house was situated on a knoll in the center of 22 acres, bounded by Junius Paulus and the Lakewood Country Club. At that time, little had been built in the area and the house's verandahs offered commanding views of the countryside and the distant downtown. The Parks House served as the home of the prominent and well-known family. Joseph Parks is credited with the developed of the adjacent development of Parks Estates (Abrams-Brookside).

Prior to 1920s, Joseph F. Parks purchased approximately 22 acres in East Dallas near the present-day Lakewood Country Club. This small working farm provided basic produce for the Parks family for a number of years before the family decided to relocate from their c.1900 Victorian house at 4321 Swiss Avenue. Until the early 1920s few roads extended out to the farm and access by the family required crossing several small farms before reaching the acreage. In 1924 when the house was completed, the city extended Gaston Avenue to White Rock Lake and created access to the new house, a growing Lakewood shopping area and emerging neighborhoods. Later the streetcar extended down Tremont Street in front of the Parks House.

In 1922-23, Joseph and Lucy Parks began the planning for a new house. Joseph Parks served as a leading banker in the First National Bank of Dallas and later president/founder of Lakewood Bank. The Parks were a respected family of Dallas in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Parks hired architect Charles W. Bulger to design the residence. After practicing 12 years in Galveston, Bulger moved to Dallas in 1902. Bulger's prior work consisted of both residential and commercial designs in largely Victorian styles. In Dallas Bulger developed a successful practice that continued well into the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. His best known works include Criswell College; Dallas's first skyscraper, the Praetorian Building; and the Hard Rock Café (formerly McKinney Avenue Baptist Church.) Bulger's son, Clarence C., later joined his practice and the team designed more than 100 churches in the Southwest.<sup>1</sup> The firm is among the city's most respected 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural firms.

Bulger deliberately chose a design that represented the American southwest. Many American architects at this time were turning their backs on European influences and developing a more indigenous style. "If real craftsmen are to be born in this country, ...we must be freed from foreign craftsmen(,)"<sup>2</sup> reads the first line of a newspaper article about the Parks Estate dated April 27, 1924. It continued, "(o)f the high excellencies attained by Dallas craftsmen, ...there is eloquent proof in the new home of Joseph F. Parks."<sup>3</sup> The house is an excellent example of the Mission style. The raised parapet, tile pent roofs, and materials are typical of the style. The Parks House is among a handful of Mission style houses remaining in Dallas.

Joseph Parks gradually subdivided the adjoining acreage to the house in Parks Estates. Many of the street names in the neighborhood are after family members. Largent Avenue is named for Mrs. Parks' family. The neighborhood today is known as Abrams-Brookside.

In 1957, the Parks family donated the house and remaining acreage to YMCA for East Dallas. The YMCA made several alterations to the original house in order to adapt it for a new purpose including adding a swimming pool, removing the sun terrace, and adding on to the kitchen. The YMCA continued to operate in this location until the 1990s when it was sold to private owners. The new owner began an ambitious program of rehabilitation and restoration. This effort is incomplete.

## **17. Designation Criteria**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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