

Texas Historical Commission staff (BB), 9/17/2008, rev 9/22/08
27" x 42" Official Texas Historical Marker with post
Harris County (Job #08HR16) Subject (Atlas) UTM: 14 000000E 0000000N
Location: Houston, 1101 Elder Street

JEFFERSON DAVIS HOSPITAL

THIS SIGNIFICANT MEDICAL FACILITY, COMPLETED IN 1924 AND OPERATED JOINTLY BY THE CITY OF HOUSTON AND HARRIS COUNTY, WAS BUILT ATOP THE 1840 HOUSTON CITY CEMETERY, WHICH WAS ACTIVE UNTIL THE 1880s. AS THERE WAS NO WIDESPREAD REMOVAL OF GRAVES FROM THE SITE, THE BUILDING'S BASEMENT WAS ERECTED ABOVE GROUND. AT THE REQUEST OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES, THE HOSPITAL WAS NAMED FOR THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, IN HONOR OF THE MANY CONFEDERATE VETERANS BURIED HERE. JEFFERSON DAVIS HOSPITAL MARKS THE BEGINNING OF CITY-COUNTY COOPERATION IN PROVIDING CENTRALIZED MEDICAL CARE FOR INDIGENT PATIENTS.

CITY ARCHITECT W.A. DOWDY PRESENTED HIS PLANS TO THE HOSPITAL BOARD IN 1923, WITH THE MAIN BUILDING DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE 150 PATIENTS. THE PHYSICAL PLANT ALSO INCLUDED A NURSES' HOME, ISOLATION UNIT, GARAGE AND POWER HOUSE. THE NEOCLASSICAL STYLE BUILDING REMAINS A PROMINENT LANDMARK IN THE FIRST WARD NEIGHBORHOOD. THE THREE-STORY STRUCTURAL CONCRETE AND CLAY TILE BUILDING HAS A RED BRICK AND CAST STONE VENEER. NOTABLE ELEMENTS INCLUDE ITS CENTRAL PROJECTING PORTICO WITH FLUTED COLUMNS AND IONIC CAPITALS, CAST STONE DETAILING, PEDIMENTED ENTRY DOORS AND BRICK CORNER QUOINS.

THE HOSPITAL SERVED ITS INTENDED PURPOSE FOR ONLY THIRTEEN YEARS, AS A RAPIDLY GROWING POPULATION REQUIRED NEW FACILITIES. IN 1937 A NEW HOSPITAL ON BUFFALO DRIVE (NOW ALLEN PARKWAY) TOOK THE NAME "JEFFERSON DAVIS HOSPITAL." THIS SITE, THEN CALLED "OLD JEFFERSON DAVIS HOSPITAL," SERVED MULTIPLE PURPOSES INCLUDING A PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, JUVENILE DETENTION WARD, FOOD STAMP DISTRIBUTION CENTER AND RECORDS STORAGE FACILITY. AFTER SEVERAL YEARS STANDING VACANT, THE HISTORIC BUILDING WAS REHABILITATED INTO RESIDENTIAL LOFTS IN 2005.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK – 2008

MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

**RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS:
2008 Official Texas Historical Marker
Sponsorship Application Form**

Valid November 1, 2007 to January 15, 2008 only

This form constitutes a public request for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to consider approval of an Official Texas Historical Marker for the topic noted in this application. The THC will review the request and make its determination based on rules and procedures of the program. Filing of the application for sponsorship is for the purpose of providing basic information to be used in the evaluation process. The final determination of eligibility and therefore approval for a state marker will be made by the THC. This form is to be used for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (building marker) requests only. Please see separate forms for either Historic Texas Cemeteries or subject markers.

Proposed marker topic (official title will be determined by the THC): **Jefferson Davis Hospital**

County: Harris

Town (nearest county town on current state highway map): **Houston**

Street address of marker site or directions from town noted above:
1101 Elder Street, Houston, TX 77007

NOTE: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers must be placed at the structure being marked.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers definition: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) markers are awarded to structures deemed worthy of preservation for their historical associations and architectural significance. RTHL is a legal designation and comes with a measure of protection; it is the highest honor the state can bestow on a historic structure, and the designation is required for this type of marker. The RTHL designation becomes effective upon approval by the THC. Official Texas Historical Markers signify the RTHL designation, which comes only through application to and approval by the THC and must include public display of an Official Texas Historical Marker. Owners of RTHL-designated structures must give the THC 60 days written notice before any alterations are made to the exterior of the structure. RTHL status is a permanent designation and is not to be removed from the property in the event of a transfer of ownership. Only the THC can remove the designation or recall the marker. The marker must remain with the structure and may not be removed or displayed elsewhere until or unless the THC gives express approval in writing for such action. Once designated as RTHL, properties are subject to provisions of Texas Government Code, Section 442.006(f).

Criteria:

1. **Age:** Structures eligible for the RTHL designation and marker must be at least 50 years old.
2. **Historical significance:** Architectural significance alone is not enough to qualify a structure for the RTHL designation. It must have an equally significant historical association, and that association can come from an event that occurred at the site; through individuals who owned or lived on the property; or, in the case of bridges, industrial plants, schoolhouses and other non-residential properties, through documented significance to the larger community.
3. **Architectural significance:** Structures deemed architecturally significant are outstanding examples of architectural history through design, materials, structural type or construction methods. In all cases,

eligible architectural properties must display integrity; that is, the structure should be in a good state of repair, maintain its appearance from its period of significance and be considered an exemplary model of preservation. Architectural significance is often best determined by the relevance of the property to broader contexts, including geography. Any changes over the years should be compatible with original design and reflect compliance with accepted preservation practices, e.g., the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

4. **Good state of repair:** Structures not considered by the THC to be in a good state of repair are ineligible for RTHL designation. The THC reserves the sole right to make that determination relative to eligibility for RTHL markers.

Special National Register considerations for RTHL marker applications: If a structure has been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under either Criterion A or B and Criterion C (Architecture), the historical text compiled as part of the National Register nomination process may be submitted as part of the marker process, provided it includes the required reference notes and other documentation. Acceptance of the National Register information for the purposes of the marker process will be up to the sole determination of the THC. Listing in the NRHP does not guarantee approval for an RTHL marker. See the THC web site at <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madnrcrit.html> for National Register criteria.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Any individual, group or county historical commission (CHC) may apply to the THC to request an Official Texas Historical Marker for what it deems a worthy topic. Only complete marker applications that contain all the required elements and are submitted online as required can be accepted or processed by the THC. For RTHL markers, the required elements are: sponsorship application form; narrative history; documentation; online map (see details below); site plan; floorplan; historic photograph; and current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure.

- Completed applications must be duly reviewed, verified and approved by the county historical commission (CHC) in the county in which the marker will be placed.
- The sponsorship application form, narrative history and documentation must be submitted as Microsoft Word or Word-compatible documents and sent via email attachments to the THC by no later than January 15, 2008.
- Required font style and type size are a Times variant and 12-point.
- Narrative histories must be typed in a double-spaced (or 1.5-spaced) format and include separate sections on context, overview, significance and documentation.
- The narrative history must include documentation in the form of reference notes, which can be either footnotes or endnotes. Documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of all available resources, both primary and secondary.
- Applications for RTHL markers must include a current city or county map through TopoZone.com that clearly denotes the proposed marker location. Instructions for using TopoZone.com are available on the THC web site.
- Upon notification of the successful preliminary review of required elements by the THC, a non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required. The fee shall be submitted to the THC within ten working days of application receipt notification.

APPROVAL BY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The duly appointed marker representative (chair or marker chair) noted below for the county historical commission will be the sole contact with the THC for this marker application. To ensure accuracy, consistency and efficiency, all information from and to the THC relative to the application—and throughout the review and production processes—will be via direct communication with the CHC representative. All other inquiries (calls, emails, letters) to the THC will be referred to the CHC

representative for response. By filling out the information below and filing the application with the THC, the CHC representative is providing the THC with notice that the application and documentation have been reviewed and verified by the CHC and that the material meets all current requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker program.

As chair or duly appointed marker chair, I certify the following:

- Representatives of the CHC have met or talked with the potential marker sponsor and discussed the marker program policies as outlined on the THC web site. CHC members have reviewed the history and documentation for accuracy and made corrections or notes as necessary. It is the determination of the CHC that the topic, history and documentation meet criteria for eligibility.

CHC comments or concerns about this application, if any:

Name of CHC contact (chair or marker chair): Patrick Van Pelt

Mailing address: 1218 Webster Street **City, Zip:** Houston, Texas 77002-8841

Daytime phone (with area code): (713) 289-6252 **Email address** (required): chairman@harrischc.org;
J. K. Wagner [jkwco@yahoo.com]

PERMISSION OF PROPERTY OWNER FOR MARKER PLACEMENT

Property owner:

Jefferson Davis Artist Lofts Limited Partnership
c/o Dean Crowell, Artspace Projects, Inc., Managing General Partner for
Jefferson Davis Artist Lofts Limited Partnership

Address: 250 Third Avenue North, Suite 500 **City, state, zip:** Minneapolis, MN 55401-1641

Phone: 612-465-0232 **Email address:** dean@artspaceusa.org

Legal Description of the property (metes and bounds, lot and block, etc.): 1.6350 acre tract of land out of a called 2.5853 acre tract described by deed filed July 11, 1988 from Harris County Hospital District to Harris County and recorded under film code number 121-72-2563 of the Real Property Records of said County. Said 2.5853-acre tract being out of the Old City Cemetery tract as recorded in Volume F, Pages 373-374 of the Deed Records of Harris County in the John Austin Survey, Abstract 1. Bearings based on the East line of called 2.5853-acre tract as recited in aforementioned deed. Said 1.6350-acre tract is more particularly described by metes and bounds as described on attached two pages, being Exhibit A of Special Warranty Deed from Harris County to Jefferson Davis Artist Lofts Limited Partnership, dated September 25, 2003 and recorded under film code number 576-02-0690 to 576-02-0703 of the Real Property Records of said County.

Upon receipt of the application, the THC will provide the owner with a letter that outlines the legal responsibility of ownership under the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark statute. The letter must be signed by the owner and returned to the THC before the evaluation can be completed.

NOTE: The property owner will not receive any additional copies of correspondence from the THC. [All other correspondence—notice of receipt, request for additional information, payment notice, inscription, shipping notice, etc.—will be sent via email to the CHC representative, who is encouraged to share the information with all interested parties as necessary.] Given the large volume of applications processed annually and the need for centralized communication, all inquiries about applications in process will be

referred to the CHC for response. The CHC is the sole liaison to the THC on all marker application matters.

SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT INFORMATION

Prospective sponsors please note the following:

- Payment must be received in full within 45 days of the official approval notice and must be accompanied by the THC payment form. The THC is unable to process partial payments or to delay payment due to processing procedures of the sponsor. Applications not paid in the time frame required may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be cancelled or postponed.
- Payment does not constitute ownership of a marker; Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers and other Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas.
- If, at any time during the marker process, sponsorship is withdrawn, a refund can be processed, but the THC will retain the application fee of \$100.
- The Official Texas Historical Marker Program provides no means of recognizing sponsors or property owners through marker text, incising or supplemental plaques.

Marker sponsor (may be individual or organization): United Daughters of the Confederacy

Contact person (if applicable): Vanessa Burzynski

Mailing address: 10933 Highway 90 North **City, zip:** Bedias, Texas 77831

Email address (required): vaburzynski@earthlink.net **Phone:** (936) 874-3074

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, neither post office box numbers nor rural route numbers can be accepted. To avoid additional shipping charges or delays, use a business street address (open 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Name: Mary Lawler c/o Avenue CDC

Street address: 2505 Washington Avenue, Suite 400 **City, zip:** Houston, Texas 77007

Daytime phone (required): (713) 864-8099 **Email** (required): maryl@avenuecdc.org

TYPE AND SIZE OF RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS

As part of its review process, the THC will determine the appropriate size marker and provide options, if any, for the approved topic based on its own review criteria, including, but not exclusive of, historical significance, replication of information in other THC markers, relevance to the Statewide Preservation Plan and the amount of available documented information provided in the application narrative. In making its determination, however, the THC will also take into account the preference of the CHC, as noted below.

The sponsor/CHC prefers the following size marker:

- 27" x 42" RTHL marker with post (\$1500)
- 27" X 42" RTHL marker without post* (\$1500)
- 18" x 28" RTHL marker with post (\$1000)
- 18" x 28" RTHL marker without post* (\$1000)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque with post (\$750)

RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque without post* (\$750)

*For an RTHL marker without post, indicate to what surface material it will be mounted:

- wood
- masonry
- metal
- other (specify)

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION (via email required)

When the CHC has determined the application is complete, the history has been verified and the topic meets the requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, the materials should be forwarded to the THC via email at the following address: markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us.

- The CHC or marker chair should send an email containing the following attachments (see attachment function under file menu or toolbox on your computer):
 - This application form
 - A TopoZone.com map of the proposed marker location
 - The narrative history (including documentation)

RECORDS RETENTION BY CHC: The CHC must retain hard copies of the application as well as an online version, at least for the duration of the marker process. The THC is not responsible for lost applications, for incomplete applications or for applications not properly filed according to the program requirements. For additional information about any aspect of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, see the Markers page on the THC web site (<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madmark.html>).

Application for Recorded Texas Historical Landmark
Jefferson Davis Hospital*
by Vanessa Burzynski¹

Context

The first Jefferson Davis Hospital, built in 1924 and operated jointly by the City of Houston and Harris County, is located at 1101 Elder Street in Houston, Texas, about one mile northwest of the Harris County Courthouse. When built, it was six blocks from the very active Grand Central Station,² used by the Houston and Texas Central Railroad and other subsidiaries of the Southern Pacific. Today the main hospital building, now used as Artist Lofts, is one block west of the intersection of Interstate 10 and Interstate 45.

It was constructed on one of the oldest sites in Houston, the 1840 Houston City Cemetery, which was in active use from 1840 to the 1880s.³ The 1840 Houston City Cemetery was designated as a State Archeological Landmark (SAL) by the Texas Historical Commission in 1995.⁴ “Since there was no widespread removal of graves from the site of the proposed hospital, it was agreed that the hospital would be built with its basement above ground.”⁵

This structure and its associated Power Plant were designated as a Historic Landmark by the City of Houston in 2002. The Landmark Designation Report⁶ and its associated files provide much of the basis of the present narrative. Quoting from that report,

[It] replaced scattered facilities for indigent care. One of those sites, the old Camp Logan Hospital, which had been given to the city in 1919, was only 60 beds and always overflowed to other scattered leased sites. The physicians often depended on donated equipment, even linen supplies. It was the Camp Logan Staff doctors and the Harris County Medical Association who generated enough public sentiment to endorse a [\$100,000] bond issue for building a new, permanent structure. ...

Jefferson Davis Hospital marks the beginning of city-county cooperation in providing hospital services to indigent patients. Prior to 1925, the city provided charity care for indigent citizens living within the city limits, and the county provided for those outside the city limits. Ultimately this partnership would culminate in the formation of the Harris County Hospital District and the building of Ben Taub Hospital in the famed Texas Medical Center.

* This application is for the main building of the first Jefferson Davis Hospital complex, 1101 Elder, which was in use as the first city-county hospital from 1925 to 1937. The second Jefferson Davis Hospital, 1801 Allen Parkway, was in use from 1938 to 1963 (when Ben Taub Hospital was opened), and was demolished in 1999.

Overview

In the early 1920s, as today, people who did not have the means to pay for hospital care relied on the government to care for them if they needed medical services. Those who lived within the Houston city limits could use the Municipal Hospital, which the city had acquired in 1919 when Camp Logan closed. However, the Camp Logan buildings, built quickly and not intended for a long life, were also simply too small for the demand. Many cases had to be turned away for lack of room. Doctors at the Municipal Hospital served without pay, helping to hold down the cost. The indigents who lived in Harris County outside the city were sent to private hospitals, with the county paying a daily rate for their care. There was no facility for the insane, so they were housed at the county jail awaiting transfer to the state hospital.⁷ By the end of 1921, it was clear that a better facility was needed.⁸

On February 2, 1922, three members of the hospital board of Houston proposed to Mayor Holcombe that Houston needed a new municipal hospital of 200 to 250 beds, with room for expansion. Even with the free 200-bed Hermann Hospital that was just about to be built, Houston's ratio of municipal hospital beds to population would lag far behind that of New York City without an additional municipal hospital.⁹ The proposal quickly became a plan for a joint city-county hospital, with the city and county to each pay \$100,000 for its construction. A city hospital bond issue of \$100,000 was approved May 6, 1922,¹⁰ and after much legal wrangling,¹¹ was apparently put to the voters again in November 1922.

The first proposal was to build "a modern unit hospital of at least 200 beds on the 65-acre tract now partly occupied by the City-County Tuberculosis Hospital at Shepherd's Dam."¹² But by June 1922, it was proposed to build the new hospital on the old city cemetery site:

The question of using the old city cemetery as a site for the \$200,000 city-county municipal hospital is still in the hands of the hospital board.

Mayor Holcombe today assured Tom Padgitt of Waco, who had written him that his mother, grandmother, brothers and sisters are buried in the old cemetery, that their graves would not be disturbed and that a suitable memorial would be erected to those buried there, and the ground kept always under care.

In this letter Mr. Padgitt reminded the mayor that some twenty years ago he had gone to court to prevent the city's using the cemetery as a site for a public school, and had stopped the plan to put a school there. He has no objection to a hospital being built, he added, provided due respect was shown to his family plot, which is fenced in, and provided the grounds would be kept properly in the future. The mayor assured him that this would be done.¹³

In February 1923, almost exactly one year after the initial proposal, the *Galveston Daily News* reported that a hospital board had been selected, consisting of four members appointed by county commissioners court, four appointed by city council, and the chairman, Judge Sam Streetman, named jointly. The story added,

The contract under which the hospital is to be operated was submitted to the county commissioners court. As soon as it is agreed upon by the county and signed the plans will be drawn and bids asked.

The city has \$100,000 in bonds voted in November and the county will appropriate \$100,000 from its special building funds to erect the first \$200,000 unit of the hospital.

An insane ward, to take care of patients now confined in the county jail awaiting room in asylums, and drug addicts being treated there, will be an important part of the new hospital. It will be built on the site of the old city cemetery, in the first ward, just northwest of the Grand Central station.¹⁴

The hospital property occupies about one-third of the original five-acre cemetery. It was described in 2002 as follows:

It is situated on a 1.6350 acre tract of land out of a called 2.5853 acre tract described by deed filed July 11, 1988 from Harris County Hospital District to Harris County and recorded under film code number 121-72-2563 of the Real Property Records of said County. Said 2.5853-acre tract being out of the Old City Cemetery tract as recorded in Volume F, Pages 373-374 of the Deed Records of Harris County¹⁵ in the John Austin Survey, Abstract 1. Bearings based on the East line of called 2.5853-acre tract as recited in aforementioned deed. Said 1.6350-acre tract is more particularly described by metes and bounds therein.¹⁶

Houston City Architect W. A. Dowdy presented his plans for the \$200,000 City-County Hospital here to the hospital board on March 22, 1923:

The hospital will be 175x50 feet of colonial architecture. The central portion will be four stories high and the two wings three stories. ...The building will be entirely fireproof, of reinforced concrete construction, faced with brick and trimmed with stone. ... A nurses' home to house thirty student nurses, and an isolation unit will be erected on the hospital site, which includes the old cemetery, six blocks northwest of the grand central station.

The hospital is designed to accommodate 150 patients. Additional units can be added easily. On the first floor will be a free clinic, the admission department, heating plant, dining room for the nurses and two wards for negroes, one for men and one for women. On the second floor will be surgical and medical wards for men, waiting rooms and living quarters for internes [*sic*]. The third floor will have wards

for women patients and a specially equipped isolated ward for insane patients. On the fourth floor will be a balcony on which convalescent children will play.¹⁷

The contractor was Russell Brown Company of Houston, who was given a contract of \$182,000 for construction of the four-story City-County Hospital in September 1923.¹⁸ The final cost, including several additional buildings in the complex, was ultimately nearly twice the above plan. The City Book of Houston includes the following projects planned and supervised by the City Architect's Department, 1921-1928:¹⁹

1924	Jefferson Davis Hospital – Main Building	\$287,636.07
1925	Jefferson Davis Hospital – Garage	7,680.00
1925	Jefferson Davis Hospital – Nurses' Home	50,610.60
1929	Jefferson Davis Hospital – Power House	32,334.00
1929	Jefferson Davis Hospital – Remodel Basement	<u>5,065.00</u>
	Total	\$383,325.67

The Landmark Designation Report provides a detailed architectural description of this building:

The hospital was designed and constructed in the Neoclassical style and remains today the only building of its prominence and stature in the First Ward neighborhood.

The building consists of a high-raised basement and three stories. ... The building has a three bay central section with wings. The center bay projects from the building plane and has a cast stone portico with monumental, fluted columns with Ionic capitals. The building is structural concrete frame with clay tile back up with a red brick veneer. The cast stone detailing, brick corner quoins and the entry portico are all elements of the Neoclassical style popular in the early 20th century. Other classical elements include the cast stone keystones over the basement windows and the pedimented entry doors both on the main façade. Above the second floor windows, a belt course surrounds the building just below the cast stone cornice. Above the central three bays, the third floor or attic rises. The space above the outer wings has a modest parapet. The roof is hip on hip and the roof overhang is ornamented with dentilation. The elevator equipment room located on the rear flat roof terrace also has a small, hipped roof. The roof framing of the main building is wood with composition shingle roof cladding. The building has a full, at grade basement.²⁰

Nearly two years after the original proposal to build the new city-county hospital on top of the old cemetery, it was still called simply “the city-county hospital.” But as construction progressed, the surviving Confederate veterans and their descendants became concerned about what they saw as possible desecration of graves, both Confederate and non-Confederate, even

though care was taken to disturb as few graves as possible by building the basement above ground.

While there are probably numerous Confederate veterans buried in the cemetery, they represent a small fraction of the total graves (believed to be close to 10,000).²¹ The one identifiable Confederate section that contains the graves of “Thirty-Two Confederate Soldiers Who Died in Their Country’s Service” lies west of the hospital. The number of Confederate veterans who died after the war and are interred in various family lots and single spaces throughout the cemetery is unknown. Still, it was the Confederate organizations that seem to have been most concerned about showing proper respect for the dead.

In the Spring of 1924, “General” James Calvin Foster, who entered the war as a private at age 16 in 1864,²² was Commander of the Dick Dowling Camp 197, United Confederate Veterans (UCV). His wife, Anna B. Foster, belonged to the Jefferson Davis Chapter 1637, United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC)[®]. At a meeting of the Dick Dowling Camp on April 20, 1924, she proposed that Camp adopt a resolution recommending that the new hospital be named for Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865, and the resolution was so adopted.²³ Presumably the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) and the several UDC chapters adopted similar resolutions. By mid-July 1924, the name Jefferson Davis Hospital appeared in the newspapers.²⁴

The hospital building was formally dedicated on December 2, 1924 during the annual convention of the Texas Division UDC and opened to the public on April 6, 1925.²⁵ During the dedication ceremony, Gen. Foster, then Commander of the Texas Division UCV, and his wife, then Vice President of the Jefferson Davis Chapter 1637, assisted Chapter President Mrs. Whit Boyd in presenting a large portrait of Jefferson Davis to the hospital board.²⁶

On June 12, 1927, the Albert Sidney Johnston Camp 67 SCV dedicated a bronze plaque, measuring about 48” high by 30” wide and located on the exterior wall of the hospital building, just to the left of the main entrance. The plaque recognized all Confederate veterans buried in the cemetery, known and unknown, whether buried near or under the hospital or elsewhere on the cemetery grounds. Gen. Foster, by now the Commander-in-Chief of UCV, presided at the event. The inscription, composed by Mrs. Foster, read:

Dedicated by the Albert Sidney Johnston Camp, Sons of Confederate Veterans,
Norman H. Beard, Commander, December 2nd 1924

In loving memory of our Confederate soldiers, whose sacred dust lies buried in the shadow of this building. The great soul of the South can never forget her heroes so long as liberty, honor and love of country and the heroic deeds of the brave and good are cherished as virtues, and so long will their names live in bright letters in the pages of history. From the earliest dawn of civilization down the corridors of time to the present day, no army of soldiers in any clime or age ever excelled them in patriotism, valor, chivalry, honor and devotion to home and country. They have ceased from their fighting, they have finished their labors, and have entered into the glorious reward that awaits the faithful.

The bronze plaque and Jefferson Davis' portrait are both missing at this time.

The nurse's residence building that was built in 1925 on the northeast corner of this property was built in the same architectural style. This building was later used by Harris County as a clinic and is still in use by the County. Behind the hospital was an incinerator or boiler building, also referred to as the "power plant". This building was built in 1929 and is still on the property but is in very poor condition and is not occupied. An additional wing of the hospital in the rear of the building was used as a clinic but has been torn down and replaced by a parking lot for the Artist Lofts.

Sadly, the main hospital building only served its intended purpose for twelve years. It soon became apparent that a larger hospital was needed, due to the rapid growth in population. A new hospital building was completed on October 28, 1937 at 1801 Buffalo Drive (now Allen Parkway) and also named Jefferson Davis Hospital.^{27,28} That building was demolished in 1999.²⁹

What had just become the "Old Jefferson Davis Hospital" on Elder Street ceased to operate as the city-county hospital as of January 1, 1938.³⁰ However, the building "continued to be used for related medical purposes including a psychiatric hospital, juvenile detention wards, food stamp distribution center, Cenikor, and ... records storage facility for the Harris County Hospital District."³¹

By 2002, the building was in a state of disrepair and had been vacant for a number of years. Feasibility studies determined that the building was suitable for rehabilitation. The U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency awarded a \$200,000 grant to remove petroleum substances from the site and renovate the building into loft-style living.^{32,33}

“The Avenue Community Development Corporation (CDC), a local non-profit organization specializing in the relocation and rehabilitation of houses, [partnered] with ArtSpace Projects, Inc. of Minneapolis to rehabilitate the building as affordable artist live/work spaces. The additions [were] maintained with the exception of the addition at the rear, which [was] a collapsed stucco building and [was] demolished.”³⁴

The building was featured by HGTV’s “*Restore America*” initiative in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The hospital received a \$50,000 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to transform the hospital into a residential building with 34 live/work units for artists and their families. The renovation was completed in “October 2005 and was fully leased by November 2005. One unique feature of the building is a ‘green’ or vegetative roof system that conserves energy. Some of the lofts were leased to New Orleans jazz musicians who were displaced by Hurricane Katrina.”³⁵

Historical Significance

Jefferson Davis Hospital was built in 1924 upon the five-acre 1840 Houston City Cemetery, where many Confederate veterans are buried. United Confederate Veterans commander James Foster, his wife Anna Foster, and other Houstonians who believed that building anything over Confederate graves was disrespectful, persuaded city and county officials to name the new hospital for Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865. The new hospital was dedicated in December 1924 by the Jefferson Davis Chapter 1637 UDC®. A large bronze plaque added by the Albert Sidney Johnston Camp 67 SCV in 1927 honored the “patriotism, valor, chivalry, honor and devotion to home and country” of the Confederate soldiers “whose sacred dust lies buried in the shadow of this building.” The name “Jefferson Davis Hospital” is still clearly visible above the front door.

As the forerunner of the Harris County Hospital District and Ben Taub Hospital, this building commemorates the beginning of city-county cooperation in providing hospital services to indigent patients. Prior to this time the county was caring for its poor by contracting with private hospitals and housing some of the insane in the county jail, while the city was making do with the old and inadequate Camp Logan Hospital, which had only 60 beds. Jefferson Davis Hospital was built as a modern facility with 150 beds, later expanded to 240 beds, including an insane ward.

This Neoclassical style hospital, three stories with basement above ground, displays elements of a classic style popular in the early 20th century. The prominent forward portico, supported by fluted ionic columns and pilasters is flanked by symmetrical wings of equal height. The construction utilized a structural concrete and clay tile frame clad in a red brick veneer with cast stone keystone detailing. Brick quoins over basement windows and pedimented entry doors represent elements of the Neoclassical style.

Soon overcrowded, a second, larger Jefferson Davis Hospital was erected in 1938 on the south side of Buffalo Bayou, but later demolished for a newer version in the Medical Center. After being vacant for years, this building was saved from demolition in 2005 and rehabilitated into 34 affordable artist live/work spaces.

Documentation

¹ Prepared by Vanessa Burzynski, President, Varina Howell Davis Chapter 2143 UDC®, with assistance from Bernice Mistrot and Janet Wagner, Harris County Historical Commission. Revised January 14, 2008.

² *Galveston Daily News*, Friday, March 23, 1923, p. 3, col. 1, “Hospital Will Be Modern Structure, Plans Complete For New \$200,000 Building At Houston.” (The tiny Amtrak station, successor to the grand S.P. station, has moved several blocks west, and is only two blocks from the hospital.)

³ While the city stopped using this cemetery for indigent burials after a “New City Cemetery” was opened in 1879 on Buffalo Drive (now Allen Parkway), at the site of what became the Allen Parkway Village housing development in 1940, burials continued in family lots for several more years.

⁴ Letter from Texas Historical Commission to Mayor Bob Lanier dated October 25, 1995.

⁵ City of Houston Landmark Designation Report dated February 8, 2002.

⁶ City of Houston Landmark Designation Report dated February 8, 2002. Corrections to this report include: (a) The bond issue approved for the city’s portion of the project was not \$500,000, but \$100,000, as noted in the *Galveston Daily News*, Wednesday, February 7, 1923, p. 3, col. 2 & 3, “Announce Control Board For New Houston Hospital” and several other sources. (b) Other cemeteries in use in Houston between 1840 and 1847 include Founders, Episcopal, and Beth Israel, as noted by Trevia Wooster Beverly in *At Rest: A Historical Directory of Harris County, Texas, Cemeteries (1822-2001) Including Burial Customs* (2001, Tejas Publications & Research, Houston), p. 159. (c) The name Jefferson Davis Hospital was selected before the hospital was completed, not after. The earliest mention of the name Jefferson Davis Hospital found to date is in the *Galveston Daily News*, Saturday, July 12, 1924, “Peace Conference to be held Here Today; Strike on Part of Building Trades Expected from Houston Situation.”

⁷ *Galveston Daily News*, Monday, February 20, 1922, p. 3, col. 2, “Daily Cost of Patients is \$2.12. Many Worthy Cases Must Be Turned Away From Houston Hospitals.”

⁸ *Galveston Daily News*, Thursday, December 15, 1921, p. 3, col. 2, “Houston Mayor Will Back New City Hospital Plant”

⁹ *Galveston Daily News*, Thursday, February 2, 1922, p. 3, col. 1, “Move for New City Hospital to Start, Three Members of Board to Place Project Before Mayor Today”

¹⁰ *Galveston Daily News*, Sunday, May 7, 1922, p. 1, col. 2, “Bond Issue Wins By Big Majority”

¹¹ *Galveston Daily News*, Thursday, June 15, 1922, p. 9, col. 1, “Houston Bond Case Before High Court”

¹² *Galveston Daily News*, Monday, February 20, 1922, p. 3, col. 2, “Daily Cost of Patients is \$2.12. Many Worthy Cases Must Be Turned Away From Houston Hospitals.”

¹³ *Galveston Daily News*, June 13, 1922, p. 3, col. 1, “Houston Offers Site For New Central Library.”

¹⁴ *Galveston Daily News*, Wednesday, February 7, 1923, p. 3, col. 2 & 3, “Announce Control Board For New Houston Hospital.”

¹⁵ Deed to Old City Cemetery filed July 16, 1840

¹⁶ Legal Description of property, attached to City of Houston Resolution No. 2002-27, adopted August 21, 2002, designating Jefferson Davis Hospital and Power Plant Building as a Historic Landmark.

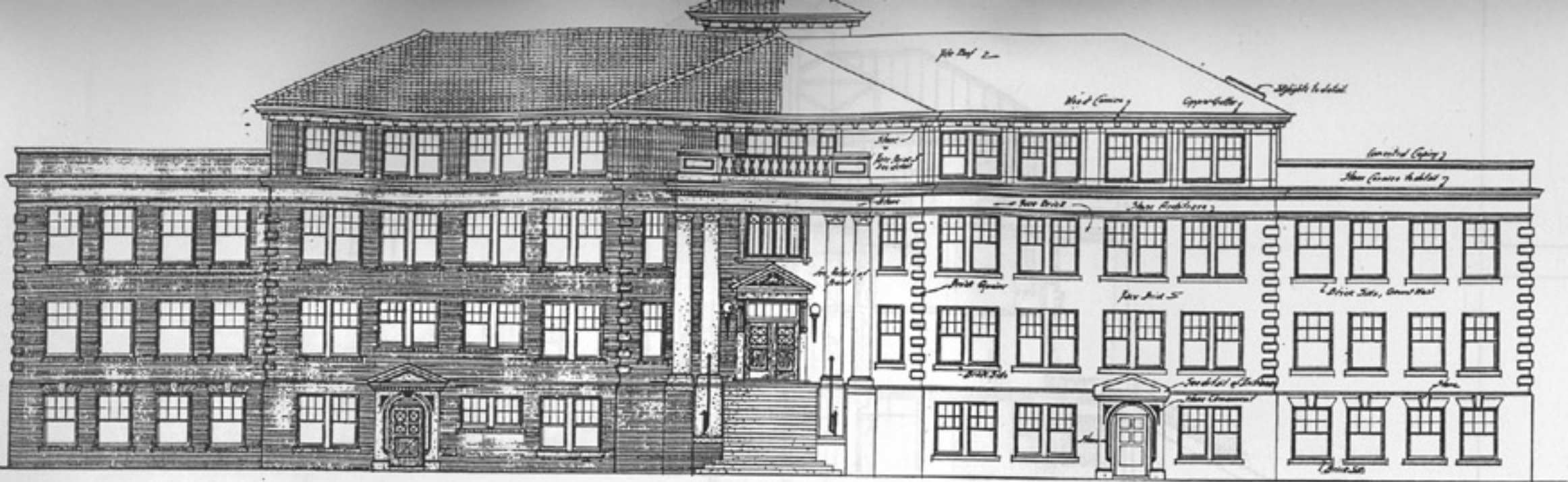
¹⁷ *Galveston Daily News*, Friday, March 23, 1923, p. 3, col. 1, “Hospital Will Be Modern Structure, Plans Complete For New \$200,000 Building At Houston.”

¹⁸ *T.G.C.A. [Texas General Contractors Association] Monthly Bulletin*, September 1923, p. 33.

¹⁹ Municipal Book, City of Houston, period ending December 31, 1928, pp. 111-112.

²⁰ City of Houston Landmark Designation Report.

-
- ²¹ Frank Dwyer, Houston City Engineer, in a 1905 report, repeated in 1923 and cited on page 25 of the Abstract in the State Archeological Landmark (SAL) file for this cemetery.
- ²² *Galveston Daily News*, Monday, December 29, 1924, p. 1, col. 2, "Gen. Foster May Be Head of Veterans, Houstonian Mentioned as Next Leader of United Confederate Vets."
Galveston Daily News, Friday, August 3, 1928, p. 1, col. 3, "Death Takes Aged Confederate Chief."
- ²³ Dick Dowling Camp Minutes, 1919-1925, Book 60, page 113, in Texas Division UDC collection at Haley Memorial Library and History Center, Midland, TX.
- ²⁴ *Galveston Daily News*, Saturday, July 12, 1924, "Peace Conference to be held Here Today; Strike on Part of Building Trades Expected from Houston Situation."
- ²⁵ Drake, C. H. P. W., "Jefferson Davis Hospital," 6-page typescript history, ca. 1936, with references.
- ²⁶ *Houston Chronicle*, December 3, 1924, "New Hospital is Dedicated Here Tuesday."
- ²⁷ W.P.A., Houston, A History and Guide (1942, The Anson Jones Press, Houston), pp. 323,326.
- ²⁸ Harris County Hospital District, "History" <<http://www.hchdonline.com/about/history.htm>>, accessed 22 November 2007.
- ²⁹ *Houston Chronicle*, May 14, 1999, "Jefferson Davis Hospital to be demolished this weekend."
- ³⁰ "History of the Houston-Harris County City-County Hospital, 1923-1963," no author, ca. 1963, Jefferson Davis File, Box 1003, Harris County Right of Way Division Public Infrastructure Department, Harris County, TX.
- ³¹ City of Houston Landmark Designation Report.
- ³² *Houston Business Journal*, June 23, 2003, "Local loft project receives federal cleanup grant."
- ³³ EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant
- ³⁴ City of Houston Landmark Designation Report dated February 8, 2002.
- ³⁵ *Brownfields At-A-Glance*, August 2006. Jefferson Davis Artist Lofts, LP, TX, Cleanup Grant EPA-560-F-06-228, <http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/success/houston_tx_BRAG.pdf>, accessed 12 September 2007.





KAPONS

KAPONS

JEFFERSON DAVIS HOSPITAL