



2914 Swiss (The Downing House)—The Downing House is the only house on the block not built by the Wilson family. It was moved to its current location on Swiss Avenue in 1982. Originally located on Cole Avenue where it was slated for demolition, the house was saved by the Meadows Foundation and placed on the vacant lot adjacent to the Wilson House, which the Wilsons had reserved as a play area for their children. The house was named for D. Keith Downing, the architect responsible for the rehabilitation of the Wilson block. A simplified version of the Queen Anne style, the asymmetric house features a steep hipped roof, classical columns and decoration in the gable. **Stampede Champions for Children, Inc.** raises funds for children's health initiatives at Dallas' Children's Medical Center.



2910 Swiss—Constructed in 1902, this house is one of the original rental houses built by the Wilson family. Badly damaged by fire in the 1970s, the house was extensively rebuilt and offers notable architectural elements, including the curved shingled sidewalls on the dormer, square columns and balusters and diamond-shaped panes in the upper windows. **Family Gateway** offers comprehensive services to families in crisis, including counseling, temporary housing and job placement services.



2906 Swiss—Another Wilson rental property, this house was also constructed in 1902 and was, at one point, occupied by a well-known local architect, Charles Hill. The house has an asymmetrical façade, steep hipped roof, wraparound porch and classical pediment decoration often associated with later Queen Anne houses. In addition, the house features an unusual projecting double window in the main gable. **Volunteers of America Texas, Inc.** is committed to serving people in need, strengthening families and building communities.



2902 Swiss (The Arnold House) & 2904 Swiss—The Arnold House is named for its best-known occupant, Dr. Theodore L.E. Arnold, a distinguished eye surgeon who immigrated to Dallas' Swiss colony in 1891 from Zurich. One of the most architecturally interesting houses on the block, the Arnold House features paired and tripled columns supporting arched lintels, diamond-paned windows, roof finials and a round-headed triple window in the main gable. The small house at the rear, **2904 Swiss**, was originally located on Floyd Avenue and was built by the Wilson's as one of three rental houses on the street. The other two Floyd Avenue rental houses burned.

The first nonprofit to occupy the house was the Historic Preservation League, now known as Preservation Dallas. The current tenant at **2902 Swiss**, **Audubon Texas**, is a branch of the National Audubon Society working to conserve and restore natural ecosystems. **Child Abuse Prevention**, at **2904 Swiss Avenue**, is dedicated to making a significant impact on breaking the cycle of child abuse.

*The Arnold House sits at the corner of Swiss Avenue and what is now **Liberty Street**. Liberty had originally been named **Germania Street** because of the many German-speaking residents in the neighborhood. In 1914, anti-German sentiment as a result of World War I led to the change of the street name to **Liberty**—considered a more patriotic reference at that time.*

*All of the houses in the block between **Liberty and Texas Streets** were moved here from other Dallas locations. All had been threatened with demolition on their original sites. The roses growing along the picket fence are antique varieties and robustly fragrant!*



2824 Swiss—This house features simple detailing with many of the characteristic features associated with Queen Anne architecture. **Camp John Marc** hosts special camps for children with special needs and works to improve the quality of life for children with chronic illnesses or physical disabilities.



2816 Swiss—This is a heavy-shingled Victorian house with low-pitched roof and triple-sash windows. Notice the spread of the main gable. The mission of **Avance-Dallas** is to build self-esteem within families through early intervention and education.



2812 Swiss—The Queen Anne cottage features angular window heads in the gable. The front door, with its squared panels, windows and shelf resembles the entryways seen on early 20th century doorways. **The Nature Conservancy of Texas** preserves plants, animals and natural communities by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.



2808 Swiss—This is the only “gingerbread” house in the district. Note the elaborate ornaments and spindles, which were made possible by the invention of the jigsaw. This house also features unusual separate porches. The **Suicide and Crisis Center** provides leadership in the field of suicide prevention and responds with quality services to people in crisis.



2800 Swiss (Beilharz House)—The Beilharz House was built in 1896 by German stonemason Theodore Beilharz; Mrs. Beilharz was the older sister of Henrietta Wilson. Mr. Beilharz's company provided masonry to such prominent North Texas structures as the Ellis County Courthouse in Waxahachie. Originally built on the lot diagonally across the street, the house was moved during the rehabilitation of the Wilson block. The house features a gambrel roof with a spreading main gable and arched openings, a bow window (similar to a bay window, but rounded) on one side and a low turret on the other. The front entryway is classical in its design, with Ionic columns and a classical entablature over the door. While the house appears to have been influenced by the Shingle style, it may simply reflect Mr. Beilharz's Germanic heritage, as he most likely designed the house himself. His background as a mason is evident in the limestone porch steps and rough-faced walls along Texas and Oak Streets. The columns on the front porch and those on the side are distinctly different, adding to the whimsical styling of the house. The Carriage House at the rear is original to the house. The **United Negro College Fund** provides funds to support more than three-dozen historically black colleges and universities.



2712 Swiss—Built in 1911 as St. Joseph’s Catholic Church for German-speaking Catholics, and designed by local architect Frank Woerner, this building and the historic school building adjacent to it are now privately owned. Located at the corner of **Swiss Avenue** and **Texas Street**, the church is a landmark for the neighborhood.



624 Good-Latimer Expressway (St. James African Methodist Episcopal Temple)—Located between Swiss Avenue and Flora Street, St. James African Methodist Episcopal Temple is an important example of the Neoclassical designs produced by African-American architect William Sydney Pittman (1875-1965). The building was constructed by African-American contractors and building crews. The **Mental Health America of Greater Dallas** mission is to lead, coordinate and involve the community in improving mental health by advocating for improved care and treatment of people with mental illness, conducting education and prevention programs, and raising public awareness about mental illnesses and mental health. **The Conference of Southwest Foundations** is a nonprofit membership association of grantmaking organizations.

The Wilson Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Preservation Dallas
2922 Swiss Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75204-5928
Phone (214) 821-3290
Fax (214) 821-3573
www.preservationdallas.org

Preservation Dallas is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that advocates for the preservation and revitalization of Dallas’ historic buildings, neighborhoods, and places in order to enhance the vitality of our city.

The Wilson Historic District Self-Guided Walking Tour



The Wilson Historic District, owned and operated by The Meadows Foundation, is comprised of twelve pristine blocks of turn-of-the-century Victorian houses and new compatible buildings. The district is unique not only in its architecture, boasting the largest collection of late nineteenth century houses in Dallas, but also in its current use as a model incubator project for local non-profit organizations.

The District was established in 1981 with a two-fold objective—to restore and preserve some of the last Victorian structures in the city, and to create a community of nonprofit agencies working collaboratively with one another. Today, the District encompasses 22 acres and provides homes for 40 nonprofit agencies both in restored homes and in the area’s new construction.



The **Wilson House** at **2922 Swiss Avenue** is both the namesake and centerpiece of the Wilson Historic District. Completed in 1899, this house was the home of **Frederick and Henrietta Wilson**, and was occupied by the family for over 75 years. The house is an excellent example of the Queen Anne Victorian style, which dominated American house design from about 1880 until 1910. Queen Anne houses typically have irregular steeply pitched roofs, asymmetrical facades and one-story front porches that wrap around one or both sidewalls. Areas of patterned wooden shingles are almost always found as decoration in gables and on walls. Queen Anne houses constructed before 1895 often have turned porch supports and spindlework ornamentation. Those built after 1895, as exemplified in the Wilson Block, generally have simple classical columns and other classical details, such as decorative dentils and garlands. Many high-style examples of Queen Anne houses, such as the Wilson House, also feature turrets. The Carriage House and Servants Quarters at the rear are original to the house. The **Wilson Carriage House (2924 Swiss)** has been adapted for use as meeting rooms for agencies in the district.

In 1977, the Wilson House was sold to a development company—which could have resulted in its demolition. Fortunately, Dallas’ Meadows Foundation intervened and in 1981, purchased not only the Wilson House, but all of the rapidly deteriorating houses in the block. The Foundation restored each of the houses on the block and moved its offices into the Wilson House. Since the completion of The Meadows Foundation’s new headquarters at Swiss Avenue and Oak Street in 1993, Preservation Dallas has occupied the Wilson House—offering tours, research assistance and other preservation services to the public.